



AFC NEWS 'N' NOTES

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CONTACT: STEVE ALIC (212/450-2066)

AFC QBs BRADY & COLLINS KICK OFF NFL SEASON THURSDAY NIGHT

One has shined time and again on the NFL's greatest stage while the other aims to return to it.

Quarterbacks **TOM BRADY** and **KERRY COLLINS** throw the 2005 NFL season into high gear this Thursday when Brady and the defending Super Bowl champion Patriots host Collins and the tuned-up Oakland Raiders in Foxboro (ABC, 9:00 PM ET). Brady can become the first quarterback to lead a team to three consecutive Super Bowl titles while Collins aims to become the first quarterback since **CRAIG MORTON** (Dallas, 1970; Denver, 1977) to lead two different teams to a Super Bowl (N.Y. Giants, 2000).

Although Brady and Collins dominate the spotlight Thursday, quarterbacks across the NFL aim to make 2005 a banner year and lead their team to Super Bowl XL in Detroit on February 5.

Below is team-by-team look at the men who will play quarterback in the AFC in 2005:

BALTIMORE: One of 12 NFL quarterbacks to start every game in 2004, **KYLE BOLLER** (3,819 yards) stands No. 2 on the Ravens' all-time passing list, trailing only **VINNY TESTAVERDE** (7,148). Boller established his career-low INT percentage (2.4) last season, tying him for the fourth-best mark in the AFC. He posted four games last season with a passer rating above 100.0. Boller (20) needs six more TD passes to own the second-most in team history (Testaverde, 51).

BUFFALO: Second-year pro **J.P. LOSMAN** makes his first career NFL start Sunday at home against Houston. He is the AFC's lone QB making his NFL starting debut this weekend. Before Losman, the last QB Buffalo drafted in the first round was Pro Football Hall of Famer **JIM KELLY** (1983). On Kickoff Weekend, Losman will be the AFC's third youngest starting QB at 24 years, six months (Roethlisberger, Pittsburgh; 23 yrs, 6 mos.; Boller, Baltimore; 24 yrs, 3 mos.).

CINCINNATI: **CARSON PALMER** enters his second season as the Bengals' starter and has a TD pass in his past six starts. Palmer posted a passer rating of 100.0+ in each of his final three games last season. Comparing his first seven starts in 2004 to his final six, Palmer improved his completion percentage from 55.1 to 68.6 (+13.5 pct.) and his TDs per game from 0.7 to 2.2.

CLEVELAND: The last two seasons that **TRENT DILFER** has started all 16 games, he passed for 21 touchdowns in each year. The last Browns QB to pass for more than 21 was **BERNIE KOSAR**, who posted 22 in 1987. Dilfer is one of four QBs since 1970 to currently reside or retire 10 games above .500 as a starter after reaching a point of being 10 games below .500 – an impressive 20-game swing (was 8-19, is now 49-39). The other three on this list: **TROY AIKMAN** (3-18 to 94-71), **PEYTON MANNING** (5-15 to 66-46), and Pro Football Hall of Famer **STEVE YOUNG** (3-17 to 94-49).

DENVER: With 4,000 passing yards in 2005, **JAKE PLUMMER** would become the first quarterback in Broncos history to record two 4,000-yard seasons. Plummer passed for a club-record 4,089 yards in 2004. Since 2003, Plummer is 19-8 (.704 pct.) as the Broncos' starter, good for the fourth-best winning percentage among all QBs in that span. Last year, the nine-year veteran became the first Denver QB to take every snap from center for an entire season.

HOUSTON: In 2004, **DAVID CARR** notched career-highs in passing yards (3,531), completion percentage (61.2 pct.), TD passes (16) and passer rating (83.5). Carr has started every game for Houston in two of the past three seasons. He registered seven games with a passer rating of 90.0+ in 2004 and finished fifth among AFC QBs in passing yards. Carr topped AFC QBs in rushing last season with 299 yards on 73 carries (4.1 avg.).

INDIANAPOLIS: With 4,000 passing yards in '05, **PEYTON MANNING** would become the NFL's first QB to record seven 4,000-yard seasons in a career (currently tied with HOFer **DAN MARINO** at six seasons). Sunday night at Baltimore, Manning will make the 113th consecutive start to begin his career – the longest such streak by a QB in league history. No QB in history has passed for more yards in his first seven seasons (29,442). Manning has thrown a TD pass in 100 of 112 career games. Last season, he became the first QB in history to pass for 25+ TDs in seven consecutive years.

JACKSONVILLE: In the past two seasons, **BYRON LEFTWICH** has completed TD passes to 13 different receivers – tied for the most in the NFL (**JOEY HARRINGTON**, Detroit). Among AFC starting QBs last season, the business-degree holder from Marshall posted the third lowest interception percentage (2.3), trailing only the Chargers' **DREW BREES** (1.8) and the Colts' Manning (2.0).

KANSAS CITY: The Chiefs' offense, led by **TRENT GREEN**, has ranked No. 1 or No. 2 in NFL scoring in each of the past three seasons. Since 2002, Green (12,320) has passed for the second most yards in the NFL, trailing only Indianapolis' Manning (13,024). Green has thrown for 300+ yards in eight of his past 12 starts and has the most career 300-yard games (20) in club history. Entering his 12th season, the Kirkwood, Missouri native is the sixth highest-rated passer in NFL history (87.9).

MIAMI: **GUS FREROTTE** will be the Dolphins' starter in their opener. Frerotte worked under new Miami offensive coordinator **SCOTT LINEHAN** while both were with Minnesota the past two seasons. In his most recent first start for a new club (2003), Frerotte set a Minnesota Vikings record with a 157.2 passer rating by completing 16 of 21 attempts for 267 yards and four touchdowns (September 22 vs. San Francisco).

NEW ENGLAND: Since the advent of the Super Bowl (1966), **TOM BRADY** (48-14, .774) owns the best winning percentage among QBs with 40 or more starts. Second on the list is Hall of Famer **ROGER STAUBACH** (85-29, .746). Brady is 7-0 in career overtime games, including playoffs. No other quarterback in NFL history has a career overtime record of better than 5-0. The 199th selection of the 2000 NFL Draft is 19-2 (.905) in games decided by six points or less (including playoffs). In 2005, Brady can help the Patriots become the first team in history to win four NFL championships in a five-year span.

NEW YORK: **CHAD PENNINGTON** is just about flawless in the red-zone. He is 85 of 131 (65.6 pct.) for 519 yards with 39 TDs vs. 0 INTs for a 112.2 passer rating in the zone. Pennington possesses a franchise-best career passer rating of 93.7. With 8,091 career yards, Pennington needs 3,630 yards to surpass **VINNY TESTAVERDE** to become the fourth leading passer in club history. He aims to become the second Jets quarterback to lead the team into the playoffs three times (**KEN O'BRIEN**, 1985-86, 1991).

OAKLAND: In the last seven weeks of 2004, Oakland's **KERRY COLLINS** posted the second-most touchdown passes in the NFL (16), trailing Indianapolis' Manning (18). Collins threw for two or more TD passes in five of the Raiders' final seven games. He also tied for the third-most pass completions of 25-or-more yards in that span with 17 such completions. The 11-year pro aims for his sixth consecutive 3,000-yard passing season.

PITTSBURGH: **BEN ROETHLISBERGER** became the first quarterback in club history to earn AP Offensive Rookie of Year honors and is the first QB to begin his career with 13 consecutive victorious starts. The 23-year-old can become the first QB since 1970 to win a playoff start in each of his first two NFL seasons. Last season the Findlay, Ohio native stood second in the NFL in yards per attempt (8.88), trailing only Indianapolis' Manning (9.17). He led the NFL in fourth-quarter passer rating (118.5).

SAN DIEGO: **DREW BREES** recorded the NFL's greatest improvement since 1970 in year-to-year passer rating in 2004, posting a 104.8 passer rating after his 67.5 mark in 2003 (+37.3). Brees became the first San Diego quarterback to post a single-season passer rating of 100.0+. Winner of the 2004 Associated Press Comeback Player of the Year Award, Brees passed for 20 TDs vs. 1 INT inside his opponents' 20-yard line last year and was 11-for-11 on third-and-one rushing attempts. Brees can become the first Chargers QB to pass for 20+ TDs in consecutive seasons since Hall of Famer **DAN FOUTS** (1980-81).

TENNESSEE: **STEVE MC NAIR** is the franchise's winningest quarterback (72-45, .615) and is its most accurate passer ever, completing 2,013 of 3,395 attempts for a 59.3 career percentage. With 3,000 passing yards and 400 yards rushing this year, McNair would become the first QB in history to gain "3,000/400" in a single season four times. Since 1999, among QBs with at least 50 starts, McNair's winning percentage of .658 (52-27) is the NFL's fourth highest. McNair and head coach **JEFF FISHER** have combined for 72 victories together, the most among active NFL quarterback-head coach duos.