



AFC NEWS 'N' NOTES

FOR USE AS DESIRED
AFC-N-11 10/25/05

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION,
CONTACT: STEVE ALIC (212/450-2066)

TALENTED AFC ROOKIE CROP CONTINUES TO GROW

They carried doughnuts into meeting rooms during training camp, but now NFL rookies are carrying their weight – and then some – by making significant contributions to their clubs.

On the AFC's first-place teams alone, rookies can be found playing in six consecutive games at cornerback for a team allowing the fewest points in the league per game (**CB MARLIN JACKSON**, Indianapolis); starting every game on an offensive line to open holes and protect one of the game's premiere quarterbacks (**G LOGAN MANKINS**, New England); hauling in four TD passes and threatening to surpass a 21-year-old club rookie TD record (**TE HEATH MILLER**, Pittsburgh); and starting in a defensive backfield while posting the AFC's fifth-best punt-return average (**CB-KR-PR DARRENT WILLIAMS**, Denver).

As the NFL approaches the half-way mark of 2005, below is an AFC team-by-team look at some of the rookies making standout contributions:

BALTIMORE: Selected No. 22 overall from Oklahoma, **WR MARK CLAYTON** has earned a first down on four of his 12 receptions. Clayton, an effective blocker as well as a game-breaker, is on pace to surpass the club's rookie record of 28 catches (**TRAVIS TAYLOR**, 2000).

BUFFALO: Selected in the second round, **WR ROSCOE PARRISH**, whose college career at Miami illustrated a quick burst and breakaway speed, played in his first NFL game last week after recovering from a wrist injury.....**CB ERIC KING** of Wake Forest (fifth round) has served as the team's nickel-back in three consecutive games.....Fourth-round pick **DUKE PRESTON** (Illinois) has seen extensive action in reserve roles at guard and started in Week 5 against Miami.

CINCINNATI: **LB ODELL THURMAN** of Georgia (second round) paces the AFC North leaders in tackles (64) and has two interceptions, including one returned 30 yards for a TD. Thurman earned the NFL's Rookie of the Month honor for September.....**WR CHRIS HENRY**, a 6-4, 200-pounder from West Virginia, leads all NFL rookies with eight third-down receptions.

CLEVELAND: The team's longest TD of the season from scrimmage (80 yards) was scored by **WR BRAYLON EDWARDS**. The No. 3 overall pick from Michigan has 12 catches and averages 16.3 yards per reception.....**S BRODNEY POOL** (Oklahoma) is part of Cleveland's dime package and has 1.0 sack with two passes defended.....Free agent **WR-KR JOSHUA CRIBBS**, who played QB at Kent State, posted a 90-yard kickoff return for a TD in Week 7.

DENVER: **CB DARRENT WILLIAMS**, a 5-8, 188-pound playmaker from Oklahoma State (second round), has started three consecutive games and has tallied 32 tackles for the AFC West first-place Broncos. Williams has returned 10 punts for an 8.4-yard average (fifth-best in AFC) and has a 24.7-yard average on nine kickoff returns.....In his past four games, third-round choice **CB DOMONIQUE FOXWORTH** has 29 tackles and an interception.

HOUSTON: **S C.C. BROWN**, a sixth-round selection from Louisiana-Lafayette, stands second on the team with 47 tackles. A starter in five of the Texans' six games, Brown is a member of the Mississippi National Guard.....First-round pick **DE TRAVIS JOHNSON** of Florida State, an accomplished saxophone player, has 17 tackles and a pair of quarterback pressures in six games, starting three of the team's past four.

INDIANAPOLIS: **CB MARLIN JACKSON**, a 6-0, 196-pounder from Michigan who the Colts selected 29th overall, has played in six consecutive games and has 17 tackles. Jackson has contributed to a defense ranked No. 1 in the NFL in points allowed per game (11.0). Indianapolis has allowed eight TDs on the year. The fewest touchdowns surrendered in a single season in club history is 16 in 1968 (14-game season).

JACKSONVILLE: **RB ALVIN PEARMAN** of Virginia (fifth round) has contributed 165 scrimmage yards to the Jaguars' offense and has become the team's primary return specialist. The 5-10, 206-pound rusher ranks first among rookies with an 8.9-yard PR average.....First-round pick and speedy, playmaking **WR MATT JONES**, at 6-6, has sure hands and has lined up as a WR (12 catches for 109 yards and 1 TD) and QB to keep opponents off balance.

KANSAS CITY: **LB DERRICK JOHNSON** (No. 15 overall) has made the immediate impact many expected from the 6-3, 242-pounder from Texas. Johnson has started all Chiefs games and stands second on the team in tackles (51) with 1.0 sack, four QB pressures, two passes defended and one fumble recovery to help Kansas City reach 4-2.....**P DUSTIN COLQUITT** from Tennessee has five punts of 50 or more yards.

MIAMI: Through only six games, **RB RONNIE BROWN**, the No. 2 overall selection in the last April's draft, already claims the second- and third-longest runs by a rookie in club history (65 and 58 yards). The ground-gainer from Auburn needs one more 100-yard rushing performance to become the sixth Dolphins rookie to have at least two such games. The team's rookie record of four 100-yard games was accomplished by **KARIM ABDUL-JABBAR** (1996).

NEW ENGLAND: **G LOGAN MANKINS** (No. 32 overall) has started all six games after earning his post in the preseason. From Fresno State, the 6-3, 307-pound agriculture education major grew up on a 10,000-acre cattle ranch in Catheys Valley, CA and as a youngster aspired to become a professional steer roper.....Also from Fresno State, **S JAMES SANDERS** (fourth round) has earned a starting job in place of the injured **RODNEY HARRISON**.

NEW YORK: Selected in the second round, **CB-KR JUSTIN MILLER** (Clemson) stands fifth in the NFL with a 27.8-yard kick-return average.....**K MIKE NUGENT** (second round) of Ohio State has made five of eight FG attempts and all 11 of his point-after tries.....Fourth-round pick **KERRY RHODES** of Louisville has started all seven games at safety. Rhodes has been a consistent part of a Jets defense which ranks No. 5 in the NFL against the pass (163.3 yards per game).

OAKLAND: **CB FABIAN WASHINGTON** (first round) of Nebraska has seen action in all six games with a pass defended in two of his past four games. The speedy 5-11 corner also is a consistent contributor on special teams.....Free agent **CB CHRIS CARR** is the team's top return man and leads the club with 719 all-purpose yards. The 5-9, 185-pounder from Boise State is averaging 6.7 yards on 19 punt returns, fourth-best among AFC rookies.

PITTSBURGH: Chosen in the first round from Virginia, **TE HEATH MILLER** (No. 30 overall) has impressed. The 6-5, 256-pounder with soft hands and a hard running style after the catch is second on the team with 16 receptions – four going for TDs. The club's rookie receiving TD record is nine (**LOUIS LIPPS**, 1984).....Free agent **GREG WARREN** handles the team's long-snapping duties. From North Carolina, Warren snapped for Steelers kicker **JEFF REED** in college in 2001.

SAN DIEGO: Diminutive in size, but large in production, 5-6 **RB DARREN SPROLES** (fourth round) averages 26.8 yards per kickoff return – sixth-best in the NFL. From Kansas State, Sproles aims to surpass the club's seasonal kickoff return average record of 28.4, set by **KEITH LINCOLN** in 1962.....**DT LUIS CASTILO** (No. 28 overall) from Northwestern starts on a formidable defensive line, helping the Chargers allow only 76.0 rush yards per game – second-fewest in the NFL.

TENNESSEE: Third-round choice **BRANDON JONES**, a receiver from Oklahoma, tops NFL rookies with 21 catches for 274 yards and two TDs.....**MICHAEL ROOS**, a 6-7, 315-pound tackle from Eastern Washington selected in the second round, has started every game this season.....**CB PACMAN JONES** was chosen sixth overall and has racked up 24 tackles and five passes defended along with ranking third in the NFL with a 28.6 kick-return average. Jones has started at corner for the Titans four weeks in a row.

###