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## **CHIEFS RB LARRY JOHNSON, JAGUARS LB MIKE PETERSON & COLTS P HUNTER SMITH NAMED AFC PLAYERS OF MONTH FOR DECEMBER/JANUARY**

Running back **LARRY JOHNSON** of the Kansas City Chiefs, linebacker **MIKE PETERSON** of the Jacksonville Jaguars, and punter **HUNTER SMITH** of the Indianapolis Colts are the AFC Offensive, Defensive and Special Teams Players of the Month for December/January, the NFL announced today.

### **OFFENSE: RB LARRY JOHNSON, KANSAS CITY CHIEFS**

- Kansas City running back **LARRY JOHNSON** led the NFL in rushing in his five December/January games with 782 yards and a whopping 11 touchdowns on 145 carries for a 5.4-yard average. Johnson also caught 13 passes for 123 yards (9.5-yard average) and an additional TD. The State College, PA native rushed for more than 130 yards in each of the five games and scored multiple-touchdowns in every contest as well, supplying the Chiefs with 905 yards of total offense. A third-year veteran from Penn State, Johnson chalked-up 140 yards in a 31-27 win against Denver; 143 yards the following week in a 31-28 loss at Dallas; 167 yards in a 27-17 road defeat against the Giants; 131 in a 20-7 home win against San Diego's No. 1-ranked rushing defense; and 201 on New Year's Day against Cincinnati in a 37-3 win.

Johnson is the first AFC offensive player to earn monthly conference awards in consecutive months since 1998 when New York Jets quarterback **VINNY TESTAVERDE** won November and December honors.

### **DEFENSE: LB MIKE PETERSON, JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS**

- Leading the Jaguars' defense as the team went 4-1 in December/January games, linebacker **MIKE PETERSON** notched 58 tackles, including three 10-plus tackle performances. The seven-year veteran registered a sack in three of the five games as Jacksonville claimed a 12-4 record for the second-highest win total in the club's 11-year history. The team's leading tackler for 2005 with 190, Peterson's month of productivity included 18 tackles and a sack in a 20-14 win at Cleveland on Dec. 4. The next week against the Colts, Peterson totaled a season-best 19 tackles in a 26-18 loss to his former team – a game that saw Peterson become the third player in Jaguars history with 500 tackles. On Dec. 18, in his 100th career start, Peterson notched a team-high nine tackles with a sack in a 10-9 win over San Francisco. The 6-1, 235-pounder tallied 11 tackles and one sack on Dec. 24 for a 38-20 divisional win at Houston. Jacksonville earned the AFC's No. 5 playoff seed and will play at New England Saturday night.

This is the first Player of the Month distinction of Peterson's career. He is the first Jaguars defender to earn monthly honors since **TONY BRACKENS** in November 1999.

### **SPECIAL TEAMS: P HUNTER SMITH, INDIANAPOLIS COLTS**

- The Colts' **HUNTER SMITH** punted 19 times for 860 yards (45.3-yard average) with eight punts inside the 20-yard line while yielding only two touchbacks in five December/January games. Smith had three punts inside the 20 on three attempts at Seattle on Dec. 24, and landed three of his five punts inside the 20 against Arizona on New Year's Day. Seven of Smith's 19 punts during December/January games exceeded 50 yards. The 28-year-old launched punts of more than 50 yards in four of five games, including three punts of 55, 57 and 58 yards against Arizona. Smith increased his seasonal average to 44.3 yards per punt, fifth-best in the NFL, and increased his net average to 37.1, a career best. The AFC's No. 1 seed receives a bye this weekend and will host an AFC Divisional Playoff next Sunday afternoon.

In his seventh year from Notre Dame, this is Smith's second Player of the Week award (Sept. 2000).

### 2005 AFC PLAYERS OF THE MONTH

	<u>Offense</u>	<u>Defense</u>	<u>Special Teams</u>
<b>September</b>	QB Carson Palmer, Cincinnati	DE Dwight Freeney, Indianapolis	P Chris Hanson, Jacksonville
<b>October</b>	RB Edgerrin James, Indianapolis	DE Derrick Burgess, Oakland	P Todd Sauerbrun, Denver
<b>November</b>	RB Larry Johnson, Kansas City	CB Champ Bailey, Denver	P Brian Moorman, Buffalo
<b>Dec./Jan.</b>	RB Larry Johnson, Kansas City	LB Mike Peterson, Jacksonville	P Hunter Smith, Indianapolis