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MONDAY NIGHT NOTES

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JETS IN FIRST & LAST: Monday night's game between the Jets and Patriots signals the end of an astounding 36-year run of *NFL Monday Night Football* on ABC, the longest-running primetime entertainment series in television history. The Jets own a distinctive role in the ABC series, having played in its first game (September 21, 1970 at Cleveland) and its last this Monday night. Next year, *Monday Night Football* moves to ESPN.

AFC EAST RIVALS CLASH IN '05 MONDAY NIGHT FINALE

Rivals since their earliest days, the New England Patriots and New York Jets lock horns for their 90th regular season meeting this week on ABC's *NFL Monday Night Football* as both seek momentum – the Patriots, for a playoff run; the Jets, for an upswing into 2006.

Opposing team leaders will square off when Patriots quarterback and AFC All-Star **TOM BRADY** calls signals while peering into the steely eyes of Jets middle linebacker **JONATHAN VILMA**. The always-poised Brady leads the NFL with a career-high 3,888 passing yards. Vilma's 162 tackles top the Jets, with a club-best nine tackles for losses.

Points against the Patriots are coming awfully hard these days. The AFC East champions have allowed a miniscule 10 total points in their past three games – the fewest points surrendered in any three-game stretch in franchise history. One ingredient to such success is the team's ability to slam the door on opponents' rushing attacks. New England has allowed a meager average of 28.3 rushing yards per game in its past three contests.

A look at New England's all-time stingiest three-game stretches in points allowed:

DATES	OPPONENTS (SCORES)	POINTS
Dec. 4-17, 2005	Vs. NYJ (16-3), at BUF (35-7), vs. TB (28-0)	10
Sept. 29-Oct. 13, 1974	Vs. LA Rams (20-14), vs. BAL (42-3), at NYJ (24-0)	17
Dec. 24, 2004-Jan. 16, 2005	At NYJ (23-7), at SF (21-7), vs. IND* (20-3)	17
Dec. 12-26, 2003	Vs. CIN (7-2), at CLE (20-17), vs. IND (38-0)	19
Dec. 20, 1987-Sept. 4, 1988	At BUF (13-7), at MIA (24-10), vs. NYJ (28-3)	20

* Playoff game

Jets quarterback **BROOKS BOLLINGER** enters Monday's game after having experienced his finest day as a pro, blazing through a formidable Miami defense for 327 yards on 28-of-42 passing (66.7) and a pair of TDs without an interception for a glittering 106.0 passer rating. Rookie rusher **CEDRIC HOUSTON** also tasted success last week with 84 yards on 15 carries for a 5.6-yard average against the Dolphins. In addition to Vilma, New England will face the Jets' AFC All-Star cornerback and former Patriot **TY LAW**, who leads all players in this game with six interceptions.

New England appears to be a different team than it was a few short weeks ago. In grand Patriots fashion, the defense has seamlessly meshed newcomers with established veterans in stopping foes and helping lift the club's record from 6-5 to 9-5. Pro Bowl defensive lineman **RICHARD SEYMOUR** and linebackers **TEDY BRUSCHI** and **WILLIE MC GINEST** continue to stifle opponents. Rookie cornerback **ELLIS HOBBS** has started the past six games and owns a team-best three interceptions, including two in the past three games. New England has effectively juggled its lineup this year, starting 22 players each on offense and defense.

Since **HERM EDWARDS** took hold of the Jets' reins in 2001, no club has accumulated fewer penalty flags than New York's 384. The next-closest team, Seattle (420), has 36 more infractions. The Jets' consistent disciplined style of play continues this season. Below is a look at the five least-penalized teams in the NFL through 15 weeks of the season:

TEAM	2005 PENALTIES	YARDS PENALIZED
Carolina Panthers	79	628
New York Jets	83	692
Indianapolis Colts	83	610
Dallas Cowboys	84	617
Seattle Seahawks	84	758

MONDAY NIGHT MUSINGS – NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS AT NEW YORK JETS

I'D LIKE TO BUY A VOWEL

- Earlier this month, Patriots wide receiver **DEION BRANCH** and Jets linebacker **JONATHAN VILMA** joined 13 other current and former NFL players to take part in a 10th anniversary installment of "Wheel of Fortune's NFL Players Week," which will air on ABC on January 23-27.

Contemporary NFL stars such as Atlanta's **WARRICK DUNN**, Washington's **SANTANA MOSS** and Miami's **JASON TAYLOR** will be featured, with legends like **BOB GRIESE**, **FRANCO HARRIS** and **GALE SAYERS** rounding out the star-studded list.

Each participant will donate his prize money to his favorite charity, with Branch's winnings benefiting the Deion Branch Charitable Foundation. The New England wide receiver created the organization to help ease the struggles of people who suffer from meningitis.

The fun-filled week will benefit many charitable causes, but expect nothing less than 100 percent effort from this collection of competitive-minded players.

"I wondered when we started, would the players kind of take it as a lark and not take it too seriously," said Wheel of Fortune host **PAT SAJAK**. "That was far from the case. You forget they're competitors. They grew up wanting to win, whether they're on a football field or playing a TV game show."

JET SET TO SAY GOODBYE

- Jets 19-year quarterback **VINNY TESTAVERDE** will likely make the last *Monday Night Football* appearance of his career as a backup for steadily-improving **BROOKS BOLLINGER**. But don't be surprised if head coach **HERMAN EDWARDS** finds a few series for Testaverde, a fan favorite in New York.

After the Jets lost **CHAD PENNINGTON** and **JAY FIEDLER** to injuries early in the year, the team called on the recently-retired Testaverde to return to the field. Testaverde became the third oldest QB in history to start and win in the NFL, leading New York to a 14-12 victory over Tampa Bay on October 9.

"He came back to try to help us win," said Edwards. "He won a game for us his first time out. That says a lot about him and what he has done for this organization. I think it is fitting for him to play a little bit and I am going to try and get that done for him."

TOUCHDOWN SCORED BY...FRAUD MONITORING?

- Patriots tackle **TOM ASHWORTH** may be best known as one of the "five layers of protection" in **TOM BRADY**'s recent VISA commercials. But a few more fans might know his name after last week's 28-0 Patriots victory over Tampa Bay, as Ashworth lived out every lineman's dream by catching a touchdown pass.

"It's always cool to see a lineman catch a touchdown pass," says Ashworth's fellow lineman, **RUSS HOCHSTEIN**, who particularly enjoyed the scoring play.

Ashworth lined up as a fullback in front of running back **COREY DILLON**, which seemed to indicate the Pats' everyday right tackle would be paving the way for Dillon with a devastating lead block. But Brady play-faked to Dillon and threw a strike to Ashworth, who ran to the flat and easily corralled the pass for his first-ever NFL touchdown.

"I wasn't expecting the ball to come to me," says a surprised Ashworth, who ironically never caught a touchdown in the two years he played tight end at Colorado. "I knew there was a chance. I was hoping. But I wasn't expecting it. It was fun."

A TASTY TREAT

- Turkey Hill Dairy has created a new ice cream flavor called "Sundae Blitz" to commemorate a charitable gesture by the Jets' defensive line. For each sack by a Jets lineman, the unit will donate \$1,400 to the Jets Foundation, which provides resources for local youth initiatives that encourage education and physical fitness.

Through 14 games, the line has recorded 19 sacks for a total of \$26,600.