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## NFC PRO BOWL NEWS

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# **BEARS & FALCONS LEAD NFC WITH SIX PLAYERS ON ALL-STAR SQUAD; SIXTEEN FIRST-TIME SELECTIONS ON NFC ROSTER**

## **-- BARBER BROTHERS MAKE RETURN TRIP TO PRO BOWL --**

It will be the biggest sighting of Bears in Hawaii in more than a decade, as six members of the playoff-contending Chicago Bears are headed to Honolulu.

The Bears and Atlanta Falcons each placed a conference-high six players on the National Football Conference All-Star team that will face the American Football Conference All-Stars in the 2006 Pro Bowl on Sunday, February 12 in Honolulu, Hawaii (ESPN, 6:00 PM ET), the NFL announced today.

The Pro Bowl starting lineups will be announced during the NFL Wild Card playoff games on Saturday, January 7 on ABC-TV.

Sixteen NFC players will participate in their first Pro Bowl, including Carolina Panthers quarterback **JAKE DELHOMME**, who is one win away from leading the Panthers to their second NFC South Division championship in his three seasons as the club's starting quarterback.

Delhomme, who helped the NFL Europe League's Frankfurt Galaxy to a championship in 1999, is the third former NFL Europe League quarterback to be selected to the Pro Bowl, joining **KURT WARNER** and **BRAD JOHNSON**. NFL Europe can claim three of its own as All-Stars this year, with Delhomme joined by Kansas City Chiefs guard **BRIAN WATERS** (Berlin, 2000) and Buffalo Bills punter **BRIAN MOORMAN** (2000-01).

Four of the Bears' Pro Bowl players -- linebacker **LANCE BRIGGS**, safety **MIKE BROWN**, defensive lineman **TOMMIE HARRIS** and cornerback **NATHAN VASHER** -- are also first-time All-Stars. They join five-time All-Stars **OLIN KREUTZ** and **BRIAN URLACHER** to form the largest Chicago contingent in Hawaii since six Bears were chosen to participate in the 1991 Pro Bowl.

New York Giants two-time All-Star running back **TIKI BARBER** again will join his brother, **RONDE**, a cornerback and three-time Pro Bowl choice from the Tampa Bay Buccaneers -- on the NFC squad. The Barbers last year became the seventh set of NFL brothers to be named to the Pro Bowl and third in the same season (**BRUCE** and **CLAY MATTHEWS**, 1989-90; and **SHANNON** and **STERLING SHARPE**, 1993-95). They are the only set of twins to be chosen for the Pro Bowl.

Falcons quarterback **MICHAEL VICK** has been named to the NFC squad for the third time, as has teammate **WARRICK DUNN**, who makes his first trip with Atlanta after two previous appearances with Tampa Bay. Cornerback **DE ANGELO HALL** and defensive lineman **ROD COLEMAN** are each first-time All-Stars while five-time All-Star linebacker **KEITH BROOKING** and three-time Pro Bowl tight end **ALGE CRUMPLER** round out the Falcons headed to Hawaii.

Joining Delhomme and Vick at quarterback is Seattle's **MATT HASSELBECK**, the second passer in franchise history (**DAVE KRIEG**, '85, '89-'90) to be selected to the Pro Bowl in multiple seasons ('04). Teammate **SHAUN ALEXANDER**, who is four touchdowns from eclipsing **PRIEST HOLMES'** NFL season record (27, '03), joins Barber and Dunn as the NFC running backs.

Seattle fullback **MACK STRONG** has been rewarded for helping pave the way for Alexander's NFL-leading 1,668 rushing yards, as the 13-year veteran will make his first All-Star appearance. Also honored from the NFC West champions are perennial All-Stars **STEVE HUTCHINSON** and tackle **WALTER JONES**. Hutchinson has been selected for three consecutive seasons at guard while Jones is a six-time choice at tackle.

The NFL's leader in receptions and receiving yards, Carolina's **STEVE SMITH**, makes his first All-Star appearance as a wide receiver. Smith's previous Pro Bowl trip in 2002 was as the NFC return specialist. Arizona's **LARRY FITZGERALD** and Washington's **SANTANA MOSS** are each All-Star rookies while the dean of the wideouts is St. Louis' **TORRY HOLT**,

a five-time honoree.

Another standout pass-catcher, Giants tight end **JEREMY SHOCKEY**, has been selected to the Pro Bowl for the third time in his four seasons.

The New Orleans Saints will be represented in Hawaii by center **LE CHARLES BENTLEY**. He was previously selected to the 2004 game as a guard.

Joining Hutchinson at guard is Carolina's **MIKE WAHLE**, who makes his first All-Star game in his first season with the Panthers. Cowboys veteran **LARRY ALLEN** is the most tenured of all current NFC Pro Bowlers, having been chosen to the NFC squad for the 10th time at guard.

Manning the tackle spot with Jones is **ORLANDO PACE** of the Rams, a seven-time choice, and **CHRIS SAMUELS** of the Redskins, a three-time All-Star.

New York defensive end **OSI UMENYIORA**, tied for second in the NFL with 12.5 sacks, makes his first All-Star appearance. Umenyiora will have his mentor to show him the ropes in Hawaii, as fellow Giants defensive end **MICHAEL STRAHAN** makes his seventh appearance. The pair will be the first defensive end teammates to play in the Pro Bowl since Miami's **TRACE ARMSTRONG** and **JASON TAYLOR** in 2001. **JULIUS PEPPERS** of the Panthers joins the Giants' duo at defensive end, earning honors for the second consecutive season.

Detroit's **SHAUN ROGERS** also makes his second appearance in a row, joining Coleman and Harris along the defensive interior line. At linebacker, Tampa Bay's **DERRICK BROOKS** has been chosen to represent the Buccaneers for a franchise record ninth consecutive time, joining Brooking and Briggs on the outside.

The inside linebacking duties will be handled by Urlacher and Philadelphia's **JEREMIAH TROTTER**, making his fourth Pro Bowl trip.

Vasher is the first Bears cornerback honored since **DONNELL WOOLFORD** saw action in the 1994 game. Hall joins **RAY BUCHANAN**, **SCOTT CASE** and **DEION SANDERS** as the fourth Falcons corner to be honored.

Rounding out the defensive backfield are Minnesota's **DARREN SHARPER** at free safety – tied for second in the NFL with eight interceptions – who makes his third Pro Bowl appearance and first with the Vikings, and Dallas' **ROY WILLIAMS**, a three-time honoree who joins Brown at strong safety.

A quartet of All-Star rookies will handle special teams duties. **JOSH BIDWELL** is the first Buccaneers punter ever named to the Pro Bowl while Cardinals kicker **NEIL RACKERS** is also Hawaii-bound. With 36 field goals, Rackers needs four in the club's final two games to surpass **OLINDO MARE** and **JEFF WILKINS** for the NFL single-season record.

Minnesota's **KOREN ROBINSON** is the return specialist while New York's **DAVID TYREE** is the special teamer.

The 42-man NFC squad is comprised of 21 offensive and 17 defensive players plus four specialists. A 43rd "need" player will be chosen by the NFC head coach and must be a cornerback, defensive end, linebacker, or long snapper.

The NFL is the only professional sports league that combines voting by fans, coaches and players in determining its all-star teams. The consensus vote of each group counts one-third towards the total. Each team submits two ballots – those of the coach and the players with no one permitted to vote for a player on his own team.

This year, a record 70.5 million votes were cast on NFL.com, in stadiums and via Sprint wireless.

The American Conference defeated the National Conference 38-27 last season in the Pro Bowl and leads the all-time series, 18-17. The 2006 NFC coaching staff will be from the NFC Championship Game runner-up team.

The selected players with the most votes at each position are the designated starters, and will be announced on January 7. Under terms of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, each player on the winning Pro Bowl team receives \$40,000, while each player on the losing squad earns \$20,000.

## **2006 NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE ALL-STARS**

**AFC-NFC PRO BOWL, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2006, ALOHA STADIUM, HONOLULU, HAWAII**

(\* First-time Pro Bowl selection)

(Note: Starters will be announced January 7 on Wild Card Saturday on ABC-TV)

### **OFFENSE**

<b>WIDE RECEIVERS</b>		<b>TIGHT ENDS</b>
* Larry Fitzgerald, Arizona		Alge Crumpler, Atlanta
Torry Holt, St. Louis		Jeremy Shockey, NY Giants
* Santana Moss, Washington		
Steve Smith, Carolina		<b>QUARTERBACKS</b>
		* Jake Delhomme, Carolina
<b>TACKLES</b>		Matt Hasselbeck, Seattle
Walter Jones, Seattle		Michael Vick, Atlanta
Orlando Pace, St. Louis		
Chris Samuels, Washington		<b>RUNNING BACKS</b>
		Shaun Alexander, Seattle
<b>GUARDS</b>		Tiki Barber, NY Giants
Larry Allen, Dallas		Warrick Dunn, Atlanta
Steve Hutchinson, Seattle		
* Mike Wahle, Carolina		<b>FULLBACK</b>
		* Mack Strong, Seattle
<b>CENTERS</b>		
LeCharles Bentley, New Orleans		
Olin Kreutz, Chicago		

### **DEFENSE**

<b>ENDS</b>		<b>INSIDE/MIDDLE LINEBACKERS</b>
Julius Peppers, Carolina		Jeremiah Trotter, Philadelphia
Michael Strahan, NY Giants		Brian Urlacher, Chicago
* Osi Umenyiora, NY Giants		
		<b>CORNERBACKS</b>
<b>INTERIOR LINEMAN</b>		Ronde Barber, Tampa Bay
* Rod Coleman, Atlanta		* DeAngelo Hall, Atlanta
* Tommie Harris, Chicago		* Nathan Vasher, Chicago
Shaun Rogers, Detroit		
		<b>STRONG SAFTIES</b>
<b>OUTSIDE LINEBACKERS</b>		* Mike Brown, Chicago
* Lance Briggs, Chicago		Roy Williams, Dallas
Keith Brooking, Atlanta		
Derrick Brooks, Tampa Bay		<b>FREE SAFETY</b>
		Darren Sharper, Minnesota

### **SPECIALISTS**

<b>PUNTER</b>		<b>KICK RETURN SPECIALIST</b>
* Josh Bidwell, Tampa Bay		* Koren Robinson, Minnesota
<b>PLACEKICKER</b>		<b>SPECIAL TEAMER</b>
* Neil Rackers, Arizona		* David Tyree, NY Giants