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PANTHERS WR STEVE SMITH, FALCONS DT ROD COLEMAN & CARDINALS K NEIL RACKERS NAMED NFC PLAYERS OF MONTH FOR OCTOBER

Wide receiver **STEVE SMITH** of the Carolina Panthers, defensive tackle **ROD COLEMAN** of the Atlanta Falcons, and kicker **NEIL RACKERS** of the Arizona Cardinals are the NFC Offensive, Defensive and Special Teams Players of the Month for October, the NFL announced today.

OFFENSE: WR STEVE SMITH, CAROLINA PANTHERS

- Wide receiver **STEVE SMITH** was a vital cog in a Carolina Panthers offense that averaged 28.8 points per game in October, helping the team to a sparkling 4-0 month and a share of first place in the NFC South at 5-2. Smith continued to display his big-play ability, finishing the month with three consecutive 100-yard receiving games, totaling 27 receptions for 455 yards and four touchdowns. He ended October on a high note, posting a franchise single-game record with 201 receiving yards on 11 catches in a 38-13 win over Minnesota, adding a 13-yard touchdown catch as well as a 69-yard grab to the Vikings' one-yard line. Long receptions were the norm for Smith during the month, as he scored on a 65-yard touchdown catch in a 24-20 win at Arizona on October 9 and added an 80-yard touchdown catch in a 21-20 triumph at Detroit on October 16. Smith leads the NFL with 50 receptions, 797 receiving yards and eight touchdown receptions.

In his fifth season from Utah, this is Smith's first Player of the Month award. He joins **PATRICK JEFFERS** (December, 1999) as the only Panthers offensive players ever to win Player of the Month honors.

DEFENSE: DT ROD COLEMAN, ATLANTA FALCONS

- ROD COLEMAN** has been a key player along the Atlanta defensive line, as the Falcons have compiled a 5-2 record and own a share of first place in the NFC South. Coleman's production in October helped the team to a 3-1 mark in the month, as he totaled 11 tackles, two forced fumbles and 4.0 sacks. Coleman's four sacks resulted in a loss of 31 yards. He began the month on October 2 with a 2.0-sack effort in a 30-10 win over Minnesota, adding a forced fumble that was recovered by Atlanta and led to a field goal. Then two weeks later in a win over New Orleans, Coleman registered a season-high six tackles with 1.0 sack. He ended the month with 1.0 sack and forced fumble against the Jets that was returned by teammate **CHAUNCEY DAVIS** 24 yards for a touchdown, giving Atlanta a 17-0 lead en route to a 27-14 win. Coleman is tied for fourth in the NFL with 7.0 sacks and leads all interior linemen in the category.

In his seventh season from East Carolina, this is Coleman's first Player of the Month award and marks the second consecutive season an Atlanta defender has been honored (**PATRICK KERNEY**, September 2004).

SPECIAL TEAMS: K NEIL RACKERS, ARIZONA CARDINALS

- Arizona kicker **NEIL RACKERS** enjoyed a stellar month as his leg helped the Cardinals to a 2-2 record in October. Rackers connected on a perfect 12 of 12 field goal attempts, including seven of seven from 40 yards and beyond. He helped the club to its first win of the season, a 31-14 triumph over the San Francisco 49ers on October 2 in Mexico City, hitting a career best and 2005 NFL season high six field goals. Rackers added two field goals in each of the following three games. The St. Louis native leads the NFL with 20 touchbacks on kickoffs, and his 13 touchbacks in October alone would be good enough to lead the league in the category.

In his sixth season from Illinois, Rackers is the first Cardinal to earn Special Teams Player of the Month honors. The award is the first of his career.

2005 NFC PLAYERS OF THE MONTH

	<u>Offense</u>	<u>Defense</u>	<u>Special Teams</u>
September	QB Donovan McNabb, Philadelphia	S Adam Archuleta, St. Louis	P Chris Kluwe, Minnesota
October	WR Steve Smith, Carolina	DT Rod Coleman, Atlanta	K Neil Rackers, Arizona