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COWBOYS QB DREW BLEDSOE, 49ERS DT BRYANT YOUNG & SAINTS K JOHN CARNEY NAMED NFC PLAYERS OF WEEK 1

Quarterback **DREW BLEDSOE** of the Dallas Cowboys, defensive tackle **BRYANT YOUNG** of the San Francisco 49ers and kicker **JOHN CARNEY** of the New Orleans Saints are the NFC Offensive, Defensive and Special Teams Players of the Week for games played on NFL Kickoff 2005 Weekend (September 8, 11-12), the NFL announced today.

OFFENSE: QB DREW BLEDSOE, DALLAS COWBOYS

- Bledsoe helped ensure his debut with the Cowboys would be a victorious one, completing 18 of 24 attempts for 226 yards, three touchdowns and no interceptions in a 28-24 road-win against the San Diego Chargers. Bledsoe became the 10th player in NFL history with 40,000 passing yards, as his 226 yards brought his career total to 40,034. Bledsoe's 143.4 passer rating was a Week 1 NFC-high and his best since posting a 144.4 rating on September 14, 2003 versus Jacksonville.

In his 13th season from Washington State, this is Bledsoe's eighth career Player of the Week Award.

DEFENSE: DT BRYANT YOUNG, SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

- Young led the way defensively for the 49ers in an exciting 28-25 win over the NFC West-rival St. Louis Rams at Monster Park. The four-time Pro Bowler totaled four tackles and a Kickoff Weekend-best 3.0 sacks, resulting in losses of 20 yards. Young's three-sack effort tied a career high and was his 18th career multiple sack game. The last 49er to post 3.0 sacks was **CHRIS DOLEMAN** on November 8, 1998 (3.5) against Carolina while the last time a 49er posted 3.0 sacks in Week 1 was **JEFF STOVER** in 1986.

In his 12th season from Notre Dame, this is Young's third career Player of the Week Award.

SPECIAL TEAMS: K JOHN CARNEY, NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

- Carney played a key role in the Saints' thrilling 23-20 win against the Carolina Panthers at Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte. The veteran kicker connected on three of three field goal attempts (29, 48, 47), including a game-winning 47-yarder with three seconds remaining. Carney's game-winner was the 13th of his career and fifth since joining New Orleans in 2001. The Saints have earned NFC Special Teams honors for an unprecedented five consecutive weeks dating back to 2004. The award was first instituted in 1993.

In his 16th season from Notre Dame, this is Carney's 11th Player of the Week Award.

2005 NFC PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

	<u>Offense</u>	<u>Defense</u>	<u>Special Teams</u>
Week 1	QB Drew Bledsoe, Dallas	DT Bryant Young, San Francisco	K John Carney, New Orleans

Other nominees for NFC Offensive Player of Week 1 were:

- Atlanta running back **WARRICK DUNN**, who rushed for 117 yards on 21 carries, helping the Falcons to a 14-10 win over Philadelphia.
- Arizona wide receiver **LARRY FITZGERALD**, who totaled Week 1 and career-highs with 13 receptions for 155 yards, including a one-yard touchdown catch against the New York Giants.
- Washington running back **CLINTON PORTIS**, who carried 21 times for 121 yards in a 9-7 win against Chicago.
- Tampa Bay rookie tight end **ALEX SMITH**, who had four receptions for 34 yards, including touchdown catches of 23 and two yards.
- Tampa Bay rookie running back **CARNELL "CADILLAC" WILLIAMS**, who rushed for 148 yards on 27 carries, including a 71-yard touchdown run in the waning moments to seal a 24-13 triumph over Minnesota.

Other nominees for NFC Defensive Player of Week 1 were:

- Tampa Bay linebacker **DERRICK BROOKS**, who led the team with eight tackles and added an interception on Minnesota's final drive of the game.
- Atlanta defensive tackle **ROD COLEMAN**, who totaled three tackles, 1.0 sack, one pass defended and one quarterback pressure.
- Arizona linebacker **KARLOS DANSBY**, who posted three tackles, 1.0 sack and two interceptions, including one which he returned 18 yards for his first career touchdown.
- Washington defensive tackle **CORNELIUS GRIFFIN**, who had two tackles, 1.0 sack, one forced fumble and one fumble recovery.
- Dallas cornerback **ANTHONY HENRY**, who had a team and career high 13 tackles and added one interception and five passes defended.
- Tampa Bay cornerback **BRIAN KELLY**, who tied a career high with two interceptions, helping force five turnovers in the win.
- Detroit safety **KENNY KENNEDY**, who recorded four tackles, two passes defended and one interception in a 17-3 home win over Green Bay.
- New York Giants linebacker **ANTONIO PIERCE**, who totaled 11 tackles, including seven solo, 0.5 sacks and one pass defended in a 42-19 win over Arizona.
- Tampa Bay defensive end **SIMEON RICE**, who posted three tackles, 1.0 sack, one tackle for loss and one forced fumble.
- Detroit defensive tackle **SHAUN ROGERS**, who had 1.0 sack and six quarterback pressures.
- Minnesota safety **DARREN SHARPER**, who finished with eight tackles and returned an interception 88 yards for a touchdown.
- New York Giants defensive end **MICHAEL STRAHAN**, who had seven tackles and 1.5 sacks.

Other nominees for NFC Special Teams Player of Week 1 were:

- San Francisco rookie punt returner **OTIS AMEY**, who returned one punt 75 yards for a touchdown.
- New York Giants punter **JEFF FEAGLES**, who averaged 42 yards on six punts, pinning four inside the 20. His six punts bring his career total to 1,370, surpassing **SEAN LANDETA** for most in NFL history.
- Washington kicker **JOHN HALL**, who accounted for all his team's scoring, connecting on three of three field goals from 40, 43 and 19 yards.
- Detroit punter **NICK HARRIS**, who averaged 41.9 yards on seven punts, including four inside the 20. Handled kickoff duties in the second half due to an injury to kicker **JASON HANSON**.
- Minnesota rookie punter **CHRIS KLUWE**, who averaged 54.3 yards on four punts with a 42.5 net average and a long punt of 62 yards.
- New York Giants kickoff returner **WILLIE PONDER**, who returned four kickoffs for 191 yards, including a 95-yard touchdown. He also added one tackle on kickoff coverage.