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## NFL PRESS BOX NOTES – AFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

**HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS:** The Denver Broncos host their fifth AFC Championship Game this Sunday, moving them into a tie for fourth place among teams hosting the most title games. Denver has never lost an AFC Championship at home (4-0) and aims to tie the Washington Redskins (5-0) for the best home record in conference championship games since 1970.

Following are the teams that have hosted the most conference championship games and those with the highest winning percentage in home championship games since 1970:

<u>TEAM</u>	<u>HOME CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES</u>	<u>TEAM</u>	<u>RECORD</u>	<u>PCT.</u>
Pittsburgh Steelers	9	Washington Redskins	5-0	1.000
San Francisco 49ers	8	<b>Denver Broncos</b>	<b>4-0</b>	<b>1.000</b>
Miami Dolphins	6	Buffalo Bills	3-0	1.000
Dallas Cowboys	5	Dallas Cowboys	4-1	.800
Oakland/LA Raiders	5	Miami Dolphins	4-2	.667
Washington Redskins	5	Minnesota Vikings	2-1	.667
<b>Denver Broncos</b>	<b>5*</b>			

\*Includes this Sunday

**YOUNG ONE:** With a victory in Sunday's AFC Championship Game, Pittsburgh's **BEN ROETHLISBERGER** will become the second youngest starting quarterback to advance to the Super Bowl. Sunday's game against Denver will make Roethlisberger the only quarterback to start in a conference championship game in each of his first two seasons.

The youngest quarterbacks to start a Super Bowl:

<u>QUARTERBACK</u>	<u>TEAM</u>	<u>SEASON</u>	<u>AGE</u>
Dan Marino	Miami	1984	23 years, 127 days
David Woodley	Miami	1982	24 years, 97 days
Tom Brady	New England	2001	24 years, 184 days
Drew Bledsoe	New England	1996	24 years, 347 days
Joe Namath	NY Jets	1968	25 years, 226 days

**Ben Roethlisberger Pittsburgh 2005 23 years, 340 days\***

\* As of Super Bowl XL on February 5.

**RUN & STOP THE RUN:** The Denver Broncos and Pittsburgh Steelers had success this season both running the football and stopping the run. Denver led the AFC in rushing offense (158.7) and ranked second in run defense (85.2). Pittsburgh's ground game (138.9) placed third and their defense allowed the third fewest yards on the ground (86.0).

Over the past five seasons, both teams rank among the NFL's best in both categories.

The top five rushing teams in yards gained and allowed since 2001:

<u>TEAM</u>	<u>RUSH YARDS GAINED</u>	<u>TEAM</u>	<u>RUSH YARDS ALLOWED</u>
<b>Denver Broncos</b>	<b>11,644</b>	<b>Pittsburgh Steelers</b>	<b>6,986</b>
Atlanta Falcons	11,297	<b>Denver Broncos</b>	<b>7,461</b>
<b>Pittsburgh Steelers</b>	<b>11,069</b>	Tennessee Titans	7,961
Kansas City Chiefs	10,986	Baltimore Ravens	7,981
Seattle Seahawks	10,237	San Diego	8,117

**FROM WILD CARD TO SUPER BOWL:** Wild Card teams/non-division winners have advanced to the Super Bowl eight times – including the Baltimore Ravens in 2000 when they became the fourth Wild Card team/non-division winner to win a Super Bowl. The Kansas City Chiefs performed the feat in 1969, the Oakland Raiders in 1980 and the Denver Broncos in 1997.

The Pittsburgh Steelers can become the ninth Wild Card/non-division winner and first sixth seed to reach the Super Bowl. The Steelers and Carolina Panthers in the NFC also can join the 1985 New England Patriots as the only teams to win three road games to advance to the Super Bowl.

The eight Wild Card/non-division winners to play in a Super Bowl:

<u>SEASON</u>	<u>TEAM</u>	<u>SUPER BOWL RESULT</u>
1969	Kansas City Chiefs	Defeated Minnesota in Super Bowl IV, 23-7
1975	Dallas Cowboys	Lost to Pittsburgh in Super Bowl X, 21-17
1980	Oakland Raiders	Defeated Philadelphia in Super Bowl XV, 27-10
1985	New England Patriots	Lost to Chicago in Super Bowl XX, 46-10
1992	Buffalo Bills	Lost to Dallas in Super Bowl XXVII, 52-17
1997	Denver Broncos	Defeated Green Bay in Super Bowl XXXII, 31-24
1999	Tennessee Titans	Lost to St. Louis in Super Bowl XXXIV, 23-16
2000	Baltimore Ravens	Defeated New York Giants in Super Bowl XXXV, 34-7

**DENVER STRIVES TOWARD PERFECT 10 AT HOME:** The Denver Broncos were 9-0 at INVESCO Field at Mile High this season, including last week's victory over New England in the Divisional Playoffs. The Broncos can become the 10th team in NFL history to compile a 10-0 home season record.

Of the previous nine teams to accomplish the feat, seven won the Super Bowl. The nine teams that have gone 10-0 at home in a season:

<u>TEAM</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>SUPER BOWL RESULT</u>
Pittsburgh Steelers	1979	Defeated Los Angeles Rams, 31-19
Chicago Bears	1985	Defeated New England, 46-10
New York Giants	1986	Defeated Denver, 39-20
Cincinnati Bengals	1988	Lost to San Francisco, 20-16
Buffalo Bills	1990	Lost to New York Giants, 20-19
Green Bay Packers	1996	Defeated New England, 35-21
Denver Broncos	1998	Defeated Atlanta, 34-19
St. Louis Rams	1999	Defeated Tennessee, 23-16
New England Patriots	2003	Defeated St. Louis, 20-17

**SMITH STRETCHES FIELD IN PLAYOFFS:** Denver Broncos wide receiver **ROD SMITH** has 45 catches for 799 yards and six touchdowns in 12 career playoff games. Smith is the club's playoff career leader in receiving yards and needs three catches to pass **SHANNON SHARPE** (47) for the most playoff catches in team history. Smith's 17.8 yards-per-catch average ranks sixth in NFL history (minimum 40 receptions), trailing, among others, former Steelers and Pro Football Hall of Famers **LYNN SWANN** (18.9) and **JOHN STALLWORTH** (18.5) and Broncos great **VANCE JOHNSON** (17.9).

The players with the highest yards-per-catch average in playoff history (minimum 40 receptions):

<u>RECEIVER</u>	<u>YARDS PER CATCH</u>
Paul Warfield	19.3
Lynn Swann	18.9
James Lofton	18.5
John Stallworth	18.5
Vance Johnson	17.9
<b>Rod Smith</b>	<b>17.8*</b>
*Active	

**LAMAR HUNT TROPHY:** Pro Football Hall of Fame quarterback **BOB GRIESE** will present the **LAMAR HUNT TROPHY** to the winner of the AFC Championship Game. Griese won three AFC titles and two Super Bowls (VII, VIII) with the Miami Dolphins.

Hunt, the founder of the Kansas City Chiefs and American Football League, helped professional football attain its stature as America's No. 1 sport. In the 10-year history of the AFL, his team posted the most wins (87) and earned berths in two of the first four Super Bowls, including a victory in Super Bowl IV. In 1972, Hunt became the first person from the AFL to be enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.