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## **TITANS QB VINCE YOUNG, CHARGERS LB SHAWNE MERRIMAN & TEXANS K KRIS BROWN NAMED AFC PLAYERS OF WEEK 16**

Rookie quarterback **VINCE YOUNG** of the Tennessee Titans, linebacker **SHAWNE MERRIMAN** of the San Diego Chargers and kicker **KRIS BROWN** of the Houston Texans are the AFC Offensive, Defensive and Special Teams Players of the Week for games played the 16th week of the 2006 season (December 21, 23-25), the NFL announced today.

### **OFFENSE: QB VINCE YOUNG, TENNESSEE TITANS**

- Doing all he can to keep his team in playoff contention, Tennessee's rookie quarterback threw two touchdown passes and rushed for another to engineer his fourth comeback in the fourth quarter or overtime in a 30-29 win at Buffalo. The win lifts Tennessee to 8-7 after beginning the season 0-5. Young, who is now 8-4 (.667) in 12 career starts, helped the Titans overcome a 29-20 deficit in the final 12 minutes. The rookie connected with receiver **BRANDON JONES** for a 29-yard touchdown pass with 11:05 to play and then engineered a 14-play, 75-yard drive which resulted in a field goal with 2:10 left for the one-point lead and eventual victory. However, Young's most electrifying play came at the end of the first half, when he scored on a 36-yard keeper on a fourth-and-2. The No. 3 overall pick in last April's draft completed 13 of 20 passes for 183 yards with two TD passes without an interception for a glittering season-high 127.7 passer rating. Tennessee converted four of five third-down conversion tries in the fourth quarter. Two were Young scrambles and the other two came on the accuracy of his right arm.

In his rookie year from Texas, this is the first Player of the Week Award for Young.

### **DEFENSE: LB SHAWNE MERRIMAN, SAN DIEGO CHARGERS**

- Helping keep the Seattle offense off-balance last Sunday was San Diego All-Star linebacker Merriman, who posted five tackles, including 3.0 sacks, two other quarterback pressures and a pair of passes defended in a 20-17 road win to maintain possession of the inside track for the AFC's No. 1 playoff seed. With a win at home against Arizona Sunday, the Chargers (13-2) will earn homefield advantage throughout the playoffs. The victory was the Chargers' 13th of the season, establishing a franchise record. Merriman sacked the Seattle quarterback on the first play from scrimmage which led to an eventual punt. His second sack later in the first quarter put the Seahawks in a 2nd-and-15 situation where the Chargers capitalized on an interception two plays later. His final sack of the day came on the Seahawks' final drive to stymie a Seattle comeback attempt. Merriman's disruptions in the backfield helped limit the Seattle quarterback to the second-lowest passer rating in his career as he completed on 17 of 37 (45.9 percent) on the day. The Chargers lead the NFL with 60 sacks.

In his second season from Maryland, this is the second Player of the Week Award of Merriman's career.

### **SPECIAL TEAMS: K KRIS BROWN, HOUSTON TEXANS**

- In the team's first win against Indianapolis in 10 meetings, Houston's Brown came through in the clutch with a pair of fourth-quarter field goals from beyond 40 yards, including a 48-yarder as time expired, to seize a 27-24 home victory. The team's win over the Colts dislodged Indianapolis from the AFC's No. 2 seed, allowing Baltimore to vault over the AFC South champions entering Week 17. Brown split the uprights from 42 yards with 6:52 left in the game to give Houston a 24-17 lead. After the Colts answered to tie the game, Brown was worthy of the task to earn Houston its fifth win of the year under rookie head coach **GARY KUBIAK**.

In his eighth season from Nebraska, this is the fifth Player of the Week Award for Brown and his third as a Texan.

## 2006 AFC PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

	<u>Offense</u>	<u>Defense</u>	<u>Special Teams</u>
<b>Wk 1</b>	QB Chad Pennington, New York	LB Ray Lewis, Baltimore	K Adam Vinatieri, Indianapolis
<b>Wk 2</b>	QB Peyton Manning, Indianapolis	CB Rashean Mathis, Jacksonville	S Coy Wire, Buffalo
<b>Wk 3</b>	WR T.J. Houshmandzadeh, Cin.	S Kerry Rhodes, New York	PR-WR Terrence Wilkins, Ind.
<b>Wk 4</b>	WR Andre Johnson, Houston	DE Jarvis Green, New England	KR-WR Joshua Cribbs, Cleveland
<b>Wk 5</b>	QB Damon Huard, Kansas City	DT Jamal Williams, San Diego	K Lawrence Tynes, Kansas City
<b>Wk 6</b>	QB Philip Rivers, San Diego	S Troy Polamalu, Pittsburgh	TE Casey Cramer, Tennessee
<b>Wk 7</b>	QB Peyton Manning, Indianapolis	DE Derrick Burgess, Oakland	KR-RB Laurence Maroney, NE
<b>Wk 8</b>	RB Larry Johnson, Kansas City	S Sean Jones, Cleveland	K Adam Vinatieri, Indianapolis
<b>Wk 9</b>	RB LaDainian Tomlinson, SD	DE Jason Taylor, Miami	P Brian Moorman, Buffalo
<b>Wk 10</b>	RB Willie Parker, Pittsburgh	DT Dewayne Robertson, New York	DE Trevor Pryce, Baltimore
<b>Wk 11</b>	RB LaDainian Tomlinson, SD	DE Jason Taylor, Miami	KR B.J. Sams, Baltimore
<b>Wk 12</b>	RB Joseph Addai, Indianapolis	CB Asante Samuel, New England	PR Roscoe Parrish, Buffalo
<b>Wk 13</b>	QB David Garrard, Jacksonville	LB DeMeco Ryans, Houston	K Rob Bironas, Tennessee
<b>Wk 14</b>	RB LaDainian Tomlinson, SD	DE Aaron Schobel, Buffalo	KR-RB Maurice Jones-Drew, Jac.
<b>Wk 15</b>	RB LaDainian Tomlinson, SD	DE Dwight Freeney, Indianapolis	P Brian Moorman, Buffalo
<b>Wk 16</b>	QB Vince Young, Tennessee	LB Shawne Merriman, San Diego	K Kris Brown, Houston

### Other nominees for AFC Offensive Player of Week 16 were:

- Baltimore wide receiver **MARK CLAYTON**, who caught seven passes for a game-high 108 receiving yards and a touchdown in a 31-7 win at Pittsburgh.
- Houston running back **RON DAYNE**, who posted career-bests in attempts (32) and rushing yards (158) and scored a pair of TDs. Dayne also rushed for 11 first downs, tied for the second-most in a game this season.
- Tennessee running back **TRAVIS HENRY**, who rushed for 135 yards on 25 carries in his return to Buffalo, where he starred from 2001-04.
- Jacksonville rookie running back **MAURICE JONES-DREW**, who rushed for two TDs and 131 yards on 19 carries (6.9-yard average) along with a game-high six receptions for 41 yards in a 24-21 loss to New England.
- New York quarterback **CHAD PENNINGTON**, who completed 14 of 29 for 237 yards and a touchdown without an interception in a 13-10 win at Miami.
- New England rookie tight end **DAVID THOMAS**, who posted season-highs in receptions (five) and receiving yards (83), including his first NFL touchdown on a 36-yard catch-and-run.

### Other nominees for AFC Defensive Player of Week 16 were:

- Denver cornerback **CHAMP BAILEY**, who had two first-half takeaways – an interception and fumble recovery -- that led to 14 points in Denver's 24-23 win against Cincinnati. Bailey also added six tackles in the critical victory. Denver earns a playoff berth with a win this week against San Francisco.
- New England safety **RODNEY HARRISON**, who returned to the lineup after missing six games to provide veteran leadership during the Patriots' AFC East division-clinching 24-21 road win against Jacksonville. Harrison notched three tackles and sealed the victory by recovering a fumble with less than two minutes remaining in the fourth quarter.
- New York defensive end **BRYAN THOMAS**, who registered four tackles, including a sack, in a three-point road victory.

### Other nominees for AFC Special Teams Player of Week 16 were:

- Kansas City punter **DUSTIN COLQUITT**, who punted three times for a 53.7-yard average, including a 72-yard punt downed on the three-yard line in a 20-9 road win against Oakland. Colquitt placed two of his three punts inside the Raiders' 20 and his 72-yarder ties for the fourth-longest in the league this season.
- New York kicker **MIKE NUGENT**, who was two for two in field goal tries, splitting the uprights from 22 and 30 yards. Nugent's 30-yarder was the game-winner with 10 seconds remaining in regulation.