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BENGALS WR T.J. HOUSHMANDZADEH, JETS S KERRY RHODES & COLTS PR-WR TERRENCE WILKINS NAMED AFC PLAYERS OF WEEK 3

Wide receiver **T.J. HOUSHMANDZADEH** of the Cincinnati Bengals, safety **KERRY RHODES** of the New York Jets and punt returner-wide receiver **TERRENCE WILKINS** of the Indianapolis Colts are the AFC Offensive, Defensive and Special Teams Players of the Week for games played the third week of the 2006 season (September 24-25), the NFL announced today.

OFFENSE: WR T.J. HOUSHMANDZADEH, CINCINNATI BENGALS

- Houshmandzadeh caught nine passes, including two fourth-quarter touchdowns, for a 28-20 road victory against division rival Pittsburgh. Playing in his first game of the season following a heel injury, Houshmandzadeh hauled in four first-half receptions, two coming on third-down plays to move the chains. The Bengals trailed 17-14 with 9:55 remaining and had been stopped by Pittsburgh on their five previous possessions when a Steelers muffed punt return gave the visitors first-and-goal on the Pittsburgh nine-yard line. On the next play, Bengals quarterback **CARSON PALMER** connected with Houshmandzadeh for the 21-17 go-ahead score. Following a Pittsburgh fumble on its ensuing possession, on the very next play once again, the 6-1, 199-pound Houshmandzadeh made a 30-yard circus catch for his second touchdown and a 28-17 cushion. Cincinnati has now won five consecutive AFC North road games and stands at 3-0 in back-to-back seasons for the first time in the team's 39-year history.

In his sixth year from Oregon State, this is Houshmandzadeh's first Player of the Week Award.

DEFENSE: S KERRY RHODES, NEW YORK JETS

- New York's Rhodes racked-up 10 tackles, including 2.0 sacks and a pair of key forced fumbles on well-executed blind-side blitzes in a 28-20 win at Buffalo. Rhodes' first sack and forced turnover came on a Buffalo third-and-four play on the Jets' 19-yard line 10 minutes into the opening quarter as the Bills held a 7-0 lead. The New York safety reached Buffalo's backfield to jar the ball from the quarterback, which was recovered by linebacker **JONATHAN VILMA** to halt a 54-yard Buffalo drive and keep the Jets (2-1) within a one-possession score. Rhodes struck again in the third quarter, knocking the ball loose on his second sack, which linebacker **VICTOR HOBSON** picked up and returned 32 yards for a touchdown and a 21-10 Jets lead that they would not relinquish. Rhodes, who had not caused a fumble in his career prior to last week, now has three.

In his second year from Louisville, this is Rhodes' first Player of the Week honor.

SPECIAL TEAMS: PR-WR TERRENCE WILKINS, INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

- In another tightly-contested divisional matchup Sunday, Indianapolis' Wilkins was a major difference-maker in the Colts' 21-14 home victory against Jacksonville. Trailing the Jaguars 7-0 early in the second quarter, Wilkins fielded a 48-yard punt on the Colts' 18-yard line, juked a pair of would-be tacklers, and sprinted 82 yards to tie the score at 7-7 and electrify the RCA Dome crowd. The play tied the third-longest punt return in club history and was the club's first punt return for a touchdown since Wilkins recorded a 78-yard punt return for a score against the Jets in 2001. Indianapolis has now won 11 consecutive games against its AFC South rivals.

In his sixth season from Virginia, this is Wilkins' first Player of the Week distinction. He is the second Colts player to earn the award in the season's three weeks as kicker **ADAM VINATERI** earned the honor in Week 1.

2006 AFC PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

	<u>Offense</u>	<u>Defense</u>	<u>Special Teams</u>
Wk 1	QB Chad Pennington, New York	LB Ray Lewis, Baltimore	K Adam Vinatieri, Indianapolis
Wk 2	QB Peyton Manning, Indianapolis	CB Rashean Mathis, Jacksonville	S Coy Wire, Buffalo
Wk 3	WR T.J. Houshmandzadeh, Cin.	S Kerry Rhodes, New York	PR-WR Terrence Wilkins, Ind.

Other nominees for AFC Offensive Player of Week 3 were:

- Baltimore wide receiver **DERRICK MASON**, who pulled in seven receptions for 132 yards, including receptions of 38 and 37 yards, in a 15-14 victory at Cleveland to boost the Ravens to 3-0.
- Buffalo running back **WILLIS MC GAHEE**, who posted a career-high 150 rushing yards on 26 carries (5.8-yard average) against the Jets. McGahee leads the NFL with 311 rushing yards.
- Pittsburgh running back **WILLIE PARKER**, who rushed for two touchdowns and 133 yards on 31 carries for a 4.3-yard average against Cincinnati. Parker also caught one pass for 13 yards.
- Denver wide receiver **JAVON WALKER**, who caught three passes for a game-high 130 yards and two touchdowns in a 17-7 Sunday night win at New England. Walker's 83-yard TD reception accounts for the ninth-longest scoring pass in franchise history.

Other nominees for AFC Defensive Player of Week 3 were:

- Indianapolis safety **MIKE DOSS**, who compiled nine tackles, a victory-sealing interception, and another pass defended.
- Pittsburgh linebacker **JAMES FARRIOR**, who tallied seven tackles and recovered a fumble.
- Pittsburgh linebacker **LARRY FOOTE**, who led the Steelers with nine tackles with 1.0 sack and a forced fumble.
- Denver linebacker **IAN GOLD**, who led the Broncos with 13 tackles to help limit the Patriots to 50 rushing yards on 21 carries.
- Pittsburgh linebacker **CLARK HAGGANS**, who tied a career-high in sacks with 2.0 and forced a fumble. Haggans posted five tackles on the day.
- Baltimore linebacker **BART SCOTT**, who chalked up nine tackles – including 2.0 sacks – and defended a pair of passes. Scott also applied pressure on the quarterback to force a fourth-quarter interception that led to the team's game-winning field goal in the final minute of regulation.
- Pittsburgh cornerback **DESHEA TOWNSEND**, who recorded seven tackles, including 1.0 sack, an interception and another pass defended, along with a forced fumble.
- Miami defensive tackle **KEITH TRAYLOR**, who notched five tackles and 2.0 sacks in a 13-10 win at home against Tennessee. Traylor, playing in his 203rd career game, posted multiple sacks for the first time in his career.

Other nominees for AFC Special Teams Player of Week 3 were:

- New York punter **BEN GRAHAM**, who punted seven times for a 44.3 net average. Four of his seven punts reached inside the 20-yard line.
- Miami punter **DONNIE JONES**, who kicked six punts for a 52.7-yard average with a net of 40.8. Four of Jones' kicks traveled 50 yards or longer.
- Baltimore kicker **MATT STOVER**, who connected on all three of his field goal tries (32, 43, and 52 yards), two of which came in the fourth quarter of a one-point win. Stover's final kick of 52 yards split the uprights with 20 seconds remaining in the game. He also kicked off five times, attaining three touchbacks.