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SAINTS RB REGGIE BUSH & TEXANS LB DE MECO RYANS NAMED NFL ROOKIES OF MONTH FOR DECEMBER

Running back **REGGIE BUSH** of the New Orleans Saints and linebacker **DE MECO RYANS** of the Houston Texans are the NFL Offensive and Defensive Rookies of the Month for December, the NFL announced today.

OFFENSE: RB REGGIE BUSH, NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

- The Saints' Bush (first round, USC) rushed for 234 yards, had 24 receptions for 311 yards and scored seven touchdowns as New Orleans captured the NFC South. The No. 2 overall selection in the 2006 NFL Draft compiled two 100-yard receiving games and recorded the first 100-yard rushing game of his career. Against San Francisco, Bush opened the month by tying the franchise record with four touchdowns in a game. The rookie running back, who earned NFC Offensive Player of the Week honors for his performance, rushed for three scores and caught nine passes for 131 yards with one touchdown. The next week, facing Dallas on Monday night, Bush had six receptions for 125 yards, including a 61-yard touchdown. The 2005 Heisman Trophy winner rushed for 126 yards and a score on December 24 versus the New York Giants, the first 100-yard rushing game of his young career. In the season finale against Carolina, Bush only played on the opening drive since the Saints had locked up a first-round bye in the playoffs. The rookie had three carries and two receptions, capping the drive with a touchdown run. For the season, Bush led the team with 88 receptions, the most in NFL history for a rookie running back.

Bush is the second Saint to earn Offensive Rookie of the Month honors this year. Wide receiver **MARQUES COLSTON** was named the Offensive Rookie of the Month for October.

DEFENSE: LB DE MECO RYANS, HOUSTON TEXANS

- Houston Texans linebacker Ryans (second round, Alabama) posted 57 tackles in five December games, helping the club post a 3-2 record in the month. Ryans recorded double-digit tackles in four of the five games. For his December 3 performance against Oakland in a 23-14 road win, Ryans was named AFC Defensive Player of the Week. The 6-4, 236-pounder finished with 15 tackles (14 solo), an interception, a fumble recovery, a sack, a forced fumble and three passes defended. Ryans became the only player in the NFL this season to record double-digit tackles, a sack, interception, forced fumble and fumble recovery in one game. In a 26-20 overtime loss to Tennessee the following week, Ryans compiled 14 more tackles and a pass defended. The Bessemer, AL native racked up eight tackles in a 27-24 Week 16 win against Indianapolis, limiting the NFL's No. 2-ranked offense to only 319 total yards – more than 60 yards below its average output. Ryans closed out the season with 10 more tackles against Cleveland for a 14-6 win to conclude the year with consecutive victories.

Ryans is the first Texans defensive player to be named an NFL Rookie of the Month and is the second player from Alabama to receive the honor in the past three months (**MARK ANDERSON**, Chicago, October).

2006 NFL ROOKIES OF THE MONTH

	<u>Offense (College)</u>	<u>Defense (College)</u>
September	T Marcus McNeill, San Diego (Auburn)	S Donte Whitner, Buffalo (Ohio State)
October	WR Marques Colston, New Orleans (Hofstra)	DE Mark Anderson, Chicago (Alabama)
November	RB Joseph Addai, Indianapolis (LSU)	LB Clint Ingram, Jacksonville (Oklahoma)
December	RB Reggie Bush, New Orleans (USC)	LB DeMeco Ryans, Houston (Alabama)

Other nominees for December NFL Offensive Rookie of the Month were:

- Jacksonville running back-kick returner **MAURICE JONES-DREW** (second round, UCLA), who scored eight TDs in five December games and rushed for at least 98 yards in three of those contests. Jones-Drew also returned 10 kickoffs for a 33.9-yard average, including a 93-yard return for a touchdown.
- New York Jets center **NICK MANGOLD** (first round, Ohio State), who in anchoring the team's offensive line helped the club rush for 590 yards and gain 1,107 yards through the air in five games en route to a 4-1 December record and a playoff berth.
- Tennessee quarterback **VINCE YOUNG** (first round, Texas), who led the Titans to a 4-1 December record and one win shy of a playoff berth. Young completed 70 of 125 pass attempts (56.0 percent) for 876 yards and four TDs while rushing for 258 yards and three more touchdowns.

Other nominees for December NFL Defensive Rookie of the Month Award were:

- Chicago defensive end **MARK ANDERSON** (fifth round, Alabama), who had 4.0 sacks and a forced fumble as the Bears went 4-1 during the month to clinch homefield advantage. Anderson led all rookies with 12.0 sacks this season.
- Kansas City defensive end **TAMBA HALI** (first round, Penn State), who helped the Chiefs reach the playoffs with a sack in each of the team's final three games. Hali finished the year with 8.0 sacks, the third-most by a rookie in club history.
- Cleveland linebacker **KAMERION WIMBLEY** (first round, Florida State), who registered 4.5 sacks in five December games along with two forced fumbles and a fumble recovery. Wimbley delivered 11.0 sacks on the season, which tied for sixth-most in the AFC and set a Browns rookie record.