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## AFC NEWS 'N' NOTES

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### AFC NORTH & NFC WEST QBs WRAP UP KICKOFF WEEKEND ON MNF

Kickoff Weekend 2007 will conclude in doubleheader fashion this Monday night as two All-Star veteran AFC North quarterbacks and two promising NFC West quarterbacks square off.

In the first game, **STEVE MC NAIR** and his Baltimore Ravens will swoop into town to face the explosive air attack of **CARSON PALMER** and his Cincinnati Bengals (ESPN, 7:00 ET). McNair, a 13-year veteran, has tossed 21 touchdowns against the Bengals in his career. Palmer looks to improve upon a Bengals record 4,035 passing yards last season while utilizing receivers **CHAD JOHNSON** and **T.J. HOUSHMANDZADEH**.

Round Two Monday night consists of Arizona's second-year QB **MATT LEINART** returning to his home state of California to meet the San Francisco 49ers as fellow quarterback -- and the No. 1 overall pick in 2005 -- **ALEX SMITH** takes the field for his third NFL season (ESPN, 7:15 PT). Fresh off an impressive rookie campaign when he took over as the starting quarterback in Week 5, Leinart will start his first game on Kickoff Weekend. Smith, a former first-round pick in '05, is determined to continue his development after setting career-highs in every passing category in 2006.

Below is a team-by-team look at the quarterback position in the AFC in 2007:

**BALTIMORE:** **STEVE MC NAIR**, a proven winner with an 89-58 (.605) record, enters his 13th NFL season and second year with the Ravens. In 2006, McNair led the charge as the Ravens won the AFC North and posted a franchise-best 13-3 (.812) record. McNair also joined two Pro Football Hall of Famers -- **FRAN TARKENTON** and **STEVE YOUNG** -- as the only quarterbacks in history to throw for 30,000 yards and rush for 3,500 yards.

**BUFFALO:** A first-round pick in the 2004 NFL Draft, **J.P. LOSMAN** showcased his skills while starting all 16 games last year for first time in his career. The former Tulane standout set career highs with 3,051 passing yards, 268 completions, 429 attempts, 19 touchdowns and an 84.9 passer rating. Losman became only the second quarterback in team history to finish a season with all the team's pass completions (**JOE FERGUSON**, 1977).

**CINCINNATI:** In four seasons as the Bengals' starting quarterback, **CARSON PALMER** has a 25-20 (.556) record and is 2-1 on Kickoff Weekend. The '06 Pro Bowl MVP shattered the club's 20-year single-season passing yards record last year set by **BOOMER ESIASON** (3,959 yards, 1986) with 4,035 passing yards. Palmer's prize receivers **CHAD JOHNSON** and **T.J. HOUSHMANDZADEH** combined for 177 receptions for 2,450 yards.

**CLEVELAND:** Third-year veteran **CHARLIE FRYE** earned the starting job for the second consecutive year after battling stiff competition throughout the preseason. Last season, Frye started 13 games and had the second-highest season completion percentage (64.1) in Browns history. Frye was raised in Willard, Ohio, which is 75 miles southwest of Cleveland.

**DENVER:** After starting the Broncos' last five games of 2006, second-year signal-caller **JAY CUTLER** is ready to kick off the '07 season surrounded by All-Star wide receiver **JAVON WALKER** and newly acquired Pro Bowl running back **TRAVIS HENRY**. The highest quarterback drafted in Broncos history (No. 11 overall) became the first rookie in NFL history to throw multiple touchdown passes in each of his first four regular-season games.

**HOUSTON:** Acquired by the Texans in a trade with the Falcons in March, the **MATT SCHAUB** era will officially begin on Sunday. The fourth-year veteran has totaled two starts and has completed 84 of 161 passes (52.2) for 1,033 yards and six touchdowns. Schaub displayed a glimpse of his efficient play in the preseason, completing 72.7 percent of his passes with two touchdowns and no interceptions.

**INDIANAPOLIS:** Two-time MVP **PEYTON MANNING** aims to make his 145th consecutive regular season start (the most ever by an NFL quarterback), but his first as a Super Bowl defending champion. Manning ranks second in Colts history with 92 wins (**JOHNNY UNITAS**, 118) and his 89 regular-season wins since 1999 ranks first among NFL quarterbacks. In the last eight Kickoff Weekend contests, Manning is 7-1 as a starter (.875).

**JACKSONVILLE:** Named the starting quarterback at the conclusion of the preseason by head coach **JACK DEL RIO**, **DAVID GARRARD** enters his first season as the Jags starting quarterback. A fourth-round pick in 2002, Garrard set career highs in games started (10), completions (145), attempts (241), passing yards (1,735) and touchdowns (10) in 2006. The elusive quarterback has a 10-8 (.555) record as a starter.

**KANSAS CITY:** The Chiefs aim to make the playoffs for the second year in a row and will be led by veteran QB **DAMON HUARD**, who started a career-high eight games last season. Huard totaled 1,878 yards with 11 touchdowns – all career highs. He posted a 5-3 (.625) record as a starter in '06 and ranked second in the league with a 98.0 passer rating.

**MIAMI:** Acquired by the Dolphins from the Chiefs in a June trade, **TRENT GREEN** reunites with head coach **CAM CAMERON**, who served as his quarterbacks coach for two years in Washington (1995-96). The two-time All-Star spent six seasons with Kansas City, and posted 21,459 passing yards, which ranks second in team history to **LEN DAWSON** (28,507) and ranks sixth in the NFL since 2001.

**NEW ENGLAND:** Three-time Super Bowl-winner **TOM BRADY** enters his eighth season with lethal offseason additions at the receiver position featuring **RANDY MOSS**, **DONTE' STALLWORTH** and **WES WELKER**. The Patriots all-time winningest quarterback has an 82-26 (.759) record and is the only quarterback in history to start and win three Super Bowls before his 28th birthday.

**NEW YORK JETS:** Rebounding from an injury-shortened '05 season, **CHAD PENNINGTON** led the Jets to a postseason appearance last year while garnering AP Comeback Player of the Year honors. Pennington needs 385 yards to rank fourth in franchise history for all-time passing yards (12,358). An efficient pocket passer, he ranks second all-time in the NFL with a 65.10 (min. 1,500 attempts) passer rating (**KURT WARNER**, 65.59).

**OAKLAND:** The Raiders revamped the quarterback position in the offseason by signing free agent **DAUNTE CULPEPPER** and trading for veteran **JOSH MC COWN**. Culpepper needs 3,000 passing yards and 400 rushing yards this year to become the first quarterback in history with five seasons with those totals. McCown spent the first four seasons of his career with Arizona. He has played in 35 games with 22 starts, completing 498 of 862 passes for 5,431 yards and 25 touchdowns.

**PITTSBURGH:** Under new head coach **MIKE TOMLIN**, **BEN ROETHLISBERGER** is primed to return the Steelers to the playoffs. With a 29-11 regular-season record as a starting quarterback, his .725 winning percentage ranks fourth in the NFL among active QBs. The four-year veteran will look to Steelers all-time reception leader **HINES WARD** and multipurpose back **WILLIE PARKER**.

**SAN DIEGO:** In his first year as a starter, **PHILIP RIVERS** made a major impact last season after serving in a reserve role for two years behind Drew Brees. Rivers was named to his first Pro Bowl, while the Chargers compiled an NFL-best 14-2 (.875) record. He had the league's highest fourth-quarter passer rating (116.6) and led the Bolts to three fourth-quarter comebacks.

**TENNESSEE:** **VINCE YOUNG**, a multi-dimensional threat, approaches his second season as a starting quarterback. In 2006, Young led the Titans to an eight-win season while being named Associated Press Offensive Rookie of the Year and became the first rookie quarterback since **DAN MARINO** (1983) to make an AFC Pro Bowl roster. Young's poise took the Titans to five victories in which the team was tied or trailed in the fourth quarter.

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