

NFL ROSTERS FEATURE 31 PAST FINALISTS

HOUSTON- When the NFL opens its 2005 season this weekend, 31 past finalists for the Rotary Lombardi Award will open the season on active rosters.

The 31 players are spread among 19 NFL teams, with Tampa Bay (Derrick Brooks, Simeon Rice and Matt Stinchomb), Detroit (Shaun Cody, Dominic Railoa, Cory Redding) and Indianapolis (Rocky Calmus, Dwight Freeney and Cory Simon) each having three past finalists on their rosters. The Lions have a four past finalist in their front office, as 1978 finalist Matt Millen is entering his fifth season as the President and CEO of the club.

Sam Adams opens his 12th season on Sunday (AP Photo/David Kohl)

Houston native Sam Adams who was a finalist for the award in 1993, opens his 12th NFL season when the Buffalo Bills host the Houston Texans. It will be the 166th game of his NFL career, tying Tony Casillas for 14th on the Rotary Lombardi Award career list. With a full season of 16 games under his belt, he would move up to eighth (181) by the end of the season. Jim Ritcher holds the record, having played in 218 games in his career.

Brooks is opening his 11th season, all with the Bucs. He has the longest streak of service with his original team among active finalists, followed by Jonathan Ogden, who is opening his 10th season with the Baltimore Ravens.

Each member of the past four classes of finalists will be active this season (14 total) and 20 of the last 22 finalist for the award will be in action this season.

The 36th Rotary Lombardi Award Dinner will be held on December 7, 2005 at the Hilton Americas Hotel in Houston. For more information, please call (713) 973-9936. All media inquiries should be directed to Chuck Pool by email or by calling (713)973-9936

The Rotary Club of Houston, in operation since 1912, is an association of more than 350 successful business professionals, all prominent in their individual fields of endeavor, who volunteer their efforts through the work of some two dozen club committees. Assistance is provided to such diverse groups as troubled youngsters, former prison inmates, business oriented high school students, families of cancer patients, deserving college scholarship candidates and the nation's cancer research efforts. The club's most recent community project is the East End Healthy Children's Collaborative which provides much needed access to primary health care for residents on Houston's East side.