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MATT BIRK, BRIAN DAWKINS, KURT WARNER NAMED FINALISTS FOR WALTER PAYTON NFL MAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

WINNER TO BE ANNOUNCED AT SUPER BOWL XLIII

Three community-minded NFL players will be recognized during Super Bowl week as finalists for the **WALTER PAYTON NFL MAN OF THE YEAR AWARD**, it was announced today. Vikings C **MATT BIRK**, Eagles FS **BRIAN DAWKINS** and Cardinals QB **KURT WARNER** are the top candidates for this year's award, named for the legendary Chicago Bears running back who died in 1999.

The Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award is the only league award that recognizes a player's off-the-field community service as well as his playing excellence.

The winner of the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award will be announced live on NBC before Super Bowl XLIII on February 1. Birk, Dawkins, and Warner will be in Tampa Bay during Super Bowl week and participate in a press conference on Friday, January 30, with the late Walter Payton's wife, **CONNIE PAYTON**.

On Super Bowl Sunday, one of the three finalists will join an esteemed list of winners of the annual award, including 17 Pro Football Hall of Famers. Recent winners of the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award include **JASON TAYLOR** of the Washington Redskins (2007), **DREW BREES** of the New Orleans Saints and **LADAINIAN TOMLINSON** of the San Diego Chargers, co-winners in 2006 and **PEYTON MANNING** of the Indianapolis Colts (2005). *A complete list of winners is below.*

The three finalists were chosen by a blue-ribbon panel from the 32 team nominees for the award, all of whom receive a \$1,000 donation to the charity of their choice. The three finalists will receive an additional \$5,000 donation in their name. The selection panel is comprised of NFL Commissioner **ROGER GOODELL**, former NFL Commissioner **PAUL TAGLIABUE**, Pro Football Hall of Famer **ANTHONY MUÑOZ**, Sports Illustrated football writer **PETER KING**, football greats **FRANK GIFFORD** and **JACK KEMP**, **CONNIE PAYTON** and 2007 winner **JASON TAYLOR**.

The winner of the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award will receive the Gladiator statue, an original art creation by the noted sculptor, **DANIEL SCHWARTZ**. In addition, the player's favorite charity will receive a \$20,000 donation in his name.

KURT WARNER

For all of his on-field accomplishments, including a Super Bowl XXXIV win and four Pro Bowl selections, Warner's community work remains his biggest source of pride. After visiting flood-ravaged regions in 2008, Warner created a partnership with Habitat for Humanity to sponsor home builds throughout the Midwest. To date, he has raised over \$450,000, including a \$100,000 personal contribution, \$100,000 from his foundation, and \$100,000 each from the Arizona Cardinals and the NFL Disaster Relief Fund. Warner established the First Things First Foundation in 2001 and has personally contributed more than \$1.5 million since then to fund

trips for Make-A-Wish families, home builds for underprivileged families, and PPK clinics with Special Olympians. Warner is an active participant in both league-wide and team-based community programs, including NFL Network's Keep Gym in School initiative and the NFL PLAY 60/American Heart Association What Moves U in-school fitness program.

WALTER PAYTON NFL MAN OF THE YEAR WINNERS

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>PLAYER, POSITION</u>	<u>TEAM</u>
2007	Jason Taylor, Defensive End	Miami Dolphins
2006	Drew Brees, QB (N.O.) and LaDainian Tomlinson, RB (S.D.)	
2005	Peyton Manning, Quarterback	Indianapolis Colts
2004	Warrick Dunn, Running Back	Atlanta Falcons
2003	Will Shields, Guard	Kansas City Chiefs
2002	Troy Vincent, Defensive End	Philadelphia Eagles
2001	Jerome Bettis, Running Back	Pittsburgh Steelers
2000	Derrick Brooks (Tampa) and Jim Flanigan (Chicago)	
1999	Cris Carter, Wide Receiver	Minnesota Vikings
1998	Dan Marino, Quarterback	Miami Dolphins
1997	Troy Aikman, Quarterback	Dallas Cowboys
1996	Darrell Green, Cornerback	Washington Redskins
1995	Boomer Esiason, Quarterback	New York Jets
1994	Junior Seau, Linebacker	San Diego Chargers
1993	Derrick Thomas, Linebacker	Kansas City Chiefs
1992	John Elway, Quarterback	Denver Broncos
1991	Anthony Munoz, Tackle	Cincinnati Bengals
1990	Mike Singletary, Linebacker	Chicago Bears
1989	Warren Moon, Quarterback	Houston Oilers
1988	Steve Largent, Wide Receiver	Seattle Seahawks
1987	Dave Duerson, Safety	Chicago Bears
1986	Reggie Williams, Linebacker	Cincinnati Bengals
1985	Dwight Stephenson, Center	Miami Dolphins
1984	Marty Lyons, Tackle	New York Jets
1983	Rolf Benirschke, Kicker	San Diego Chargers
1982	Joe Theismann, Quarterback	Washington Redskins
1981	Lynn Swann, Wide Receiver	Pittsburgh Steelers
1980	Harold Carmichael, Wide Receiver	Philadelphia Eagles
1979	Joe Greene, Defensive Lineman	Pittsburgh Steelers
1978	Roger Staubach, Quarterback	Dallas Cowboys
1977	Walter Payton, Running Back	Chicago Bears
1976	Franco Harris, Running Back	Pittsburgh Steelers
1975	Ken Anderson, Quarterback	Cincinnati Bengals
1974	George Blanda, Quarterback	Oakland Raiders
1973	Len Dawson, Quarterback	Kansas City Chiefs
1972	Willie Lanier, Linebacker	Kansas City Chiefs
1971	John Hadl, Quarterback	San Diego Chargers
1970	Johnny Unitas, Quarterback	Baltimore Colts