

J.J. Watt 2012 AFC Defensive Player of the Year

Written by Admin

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Two offensive players who came back from serious injuries to lead their teams to the playoffs and two second-year defensive standouts will join coaches who engineered two of the league's best stories as the 2012 winners of the annual NFL 101 Awards - the nation's premier football awards event dedicated exclusively to the National Football League.

The 2012 season award winners will be presented with trophies at the 43rd Annual NFL 101 Awards gala in Kansas City Saturday, March 2, 2013, at the Westin Crown Center. The prestigious black-tie awards event was founded in 1969 and is presented this year by Perfect Output and ECCO Select.

Denver quarterback Peyton Manning has been selected as the AFC Offensive Player of the Year after returning from an injury that sidelined him in 2011 to lead a new team – the Denver Broncos – to a 13-3 record and the AFC West title. A seven-time 101 Award winner, Manning finished the regular season with 4,659 passing yards and 37 touchdowns through the air. His passer rating of 105.8 was tops in the AFC and his 68.6 completion percentage tied for first in the NFL. He was named to a record 12th Pro Bowl. Statistically, it was the second-best season of his 15-year NFL career. Minnesota Vikings running back Adrian Peterson has been selected as the NFC Offensive Player of the Year. Similar to Manning, Peterson returned to action after suffering a serious injury and missing the final four games of last season. After a strenuous rehabilitation and recovery period, Peterson returned to lead the NFL in rushing with 2,097 yards in 2012. He fell just nine yards shy of breaking Eric Dickerson's all-time single-season rushing record. The Vikings' star led the league in yards per game (131.1) and scored 12 touchdowns. The five-time Pro Bowl selection helped Minnesota to a 10-6 record and a spot in the playoffs.

Houston Texans defensive end J.J. Watt is the AFC Defensive Player of the Year. Watt recorded an NFL-best 20.5 sacks for 139 yards lost in 2012. He also broke up 16 passes – five

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of which ended up as interceptions – and forced four fumbles. Houston finished the year 12-4 and won the AFC South division. Watt is a first-time 101 Award winner and Pro Bowl selection and has started every game for the Texans after being drafted with the 11th overall pick two years ago. San Francisco linebacker and former Raytown High School and University of Missouri standout Aldon Smith has been selected the NFC Defensive Player of the Year. Smith was second in the league to Watt with 19.5 sacks for 145 yards lost. He recorded one interception and forced three fumbles, leading the 49ers to an 11-4-1 record and the NFC West Division title. Smith is a first-time 101 Award winner and Pro Bowl selection and was drafted with the seventh overall pick two years ago.

After an unforgettable year in Indianapolis fueled by a heartwarming story of two coaches combining to lead the team through emotional challenges, Colts head coach Chuck Pagano and offensive coordinator Bruce Arians are co-winners of the AFC Coach of the Year award. In their first year with the Colts, Pagano and Arians teamed to lead Indianapolis – a team that had won just two games a season ago – to an 11-5 record and a spot in the AFC wild card game. Pagano began the season as the head coach but had to leave the team October 1 to be treated for leukemia. In his absence, Arians guided the Colts to a 9-3 record as interim head coach. Pagano returned for the final regular-season game and the playoff game. Seattle head coach Pete Carroll has been named the NFC Coach of the Year after leading Seattle to a spectacular season in his third year as the Seahawks coach. Carroll's team finished the 2012 regular season with an 11-5 record and then beat the Washington Redskins in a wild card playoff game before a last-second, season-ending loss in the NFC Divisional playoffs. The 11 wins were the third-most in Seahawks history, and the playoff win at Washington was the team's first road playoff victory in nearly 30 years.

A national media committee, comprised of 101 sportswriters and broadcasters who cover the NFL, selected the winners in each award category in a nationwide vote at the conclusion of the regular season.

In addition to these award winners, the Committee of 101 also selects the Lamar Hunt Award for Professional Football, which was created in 2007 to honor the life and legacy of the founder of the Kansas City Chiefs and given in recognition of visionary leadership that has helped the NFL become the preeminent pro sports league in America. This year's Lamar Hunt Award for Professional Football award winner will be announced in February.

The awards show hosts for the evening will be NFL Network sportscaster Paul Burmeister and CBS football analyst Rich Gannon, a former NFL Most Valuable Player and two-time 101 Award winner.

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Event proceeds will be directed to the Truman Medical Center Charitable Foundation. The Chiefs and TMC are working together to provide wellness education and promote healthier living for the people of Kansas City. Both TMC and the Chiefs play a vital role in the Kansas City community and this partnership capitalizes on two well-established brands for the common goal of improving the health status of the community in general, and of the citizens in the urban core particularly. {jcomments on}