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NFL & NFLPA AGREE TO IMPROVED PLAYER BENEFITS, INCLUDING MAJOR PENSION INCREASES FOR RETIRED PLAYERS

The NFL and the NFL Players Association again have agreed to a series of improvements in NFL player benefits for retired and current players, including significant pension increases and other new benefits for retired players, the NFL and the NFLPA announced today.

The improvements are a part of the recently extended NFL Collective Bargaining Agreement and will cost approximately \$120 million per year, bringing the annual cost of NFL player benefits to \$700 million per year. This is the fourth time since 1993 that benefit improvements have been made for both current and retired players.

Retired players now receive nearly \$60 million per year from the Bert Bell/Pete Rozelle Retirement Plan. In addition, there are three other funds that provide more than \$1 million a year in financial assistance to retired NFL players in need. They are the NFLPA's Players Assistance Trust, the NFL and NFL Alumni Association's Dire Need Fund, and the Pro Football Hall of Fame's Enshrinee Assistance Fund.

"We are proud to have the most extensive benefits package in professional sports," said **HAROLD HENDERSON**, NFL executive vice president of labor relations/chairman of the NFL Management Council. "These improvements are consistent with our commitment in every negotiation to address post-career issues and improve the benefits of retired players. No other industry reaches back like this to take care of former employees."

"The current players have great respect for the heritage of the NFL and the former players that have contributed to the league's success," said **GENE UPSHAW**, executive director of the NFLPA. "As they have done on previous occasions, the current players strongly supported the idea of using a portion of their negotiated benefits money to fund improvements for the retired players."

Details of the benefit plan improvements that were announced today:

- **PENSIONS**: Pensions of retired players will be increased by 25 percent for the amounts earned before 1982 and by 10 percent for the amounts earned in 1982 and later. The minimum increase for retired players will be \$50 per month.
- **WIDOW & SURVIVING CHILDREN BENEFIT**: Benefits will be tripled for the survivors of a player who dies before his retirement benefits begin.
- **NUMBER 88 PLAN**: Beginning next year, players retired under the pension plan will be eligible for payment of certain medical and custodial expenses, whether provided at home or in an institution, that are a result of dementia, including Alzheimer's, regardless of the age when care becomes necessary. The benefit will pay the cost of providing up to \$88,000 per year for institutional care or up to \$50,000 per year for in-home nursing care. There also is agreement to fund research on dementia. The benefit is named in honor of Pro Football Hall of Famer **JOHN MACKKEY**.
- **TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PLAN**: For players with at least five credited seasons who retire after the 2006 season, the plan will provide up to \$15,000 per year for tuition expenses for the first three years after the player leaves football. Previously, this benefit was available to active players only.

- **HEALTH REIMBURSEMENT ACCOUNT:** A new Health Reimbursement Account will be created for current players for use when their NFL health insurance expires (currently four or five years after retirement). The accounts will begin for players who have three credited seasons at \$75,000 and increase by \$25,000 per year for up to 12 seasons. For example, a 12-year veteran will leave the NFL with a \$300,000 health reimbursement account. The accounts can be used to fund post-career medical insurance, including the COBRA premium, and to pay other medical expenses, both for the player and his dependents.

Other CBA benefits for players include a 401K savings plan, annuity program, insurance, severance pay and disability benefits.

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