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PAUL TAGLIABUE ANNOUNCES HIS RETIREMENT AS NFL COMMISSIONER

Commissioner **PAUL TAGLIABUE** is retiring at the end of July from the position that he has held since late 1989, the NFL announced today.

Tagliabue, 65, called Pittsburgh Steelers owner **DAN ROONEY** early this morning and told him of his decision. Rooney, the chairman of the ownership committee that negotiated Tagliabue's last contract extension in 2004, notified all clubs by email at noon (ET).

"I believe that now is a positive time to make the transition to a new commissioner," Tagliabue said. "We have a collective bargaining extension in place, long-term television contracts, and have undertaken many other strong elements in league and club operations. I am honored to have been commissioner since late 1989 and to have been heavily involved with the league, its owners, clubs, coaches, players, fans and media since 1969."

NFL owners will begin formal discussions of transition planning and the search for a new commissioner at the NFL Annual Meeting, which begins March 26 in Orlando, Florida.

As part of his contract with the league, Tagliabue will be available to serve in a senior executive/advisory role through May 31, 2008 once a new commissioner is selected.

Under Tagliabue's leadership, the NFL has grown from 28 to 32 teams, revised its divisional alignment and scheduling formula, operated under successive long-term labor agreements with the NFL Players Association, and maintained its preeminent position in sports television.

During this time, the NFL also has expanded league and team commitments to community service, refocused the NFL's efforts in developing public-private partnerships for new stadiums, and expanded its international appeal and presence.

In addition, the NFL under Tagliabue has been the new media leader in sports, creating the first leaguewide Internet network for fans and first satellite television subscription service, and launching the NFL Network on cable and satellite television.

Before succeeding the late **PETE ROZELLE** as the league's CEO on October 26, 1989, Tagliabue represented the NFL as an attorney in many important areas as a partner at Covington & Burling, a Washington, D.C., law firm, the NFL's principal outside counsel. **(Complete Tagliabue bio on NFLmedia.com.)**

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