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## Inside Pitch: Bush Ahead Of NFL Rookies In Endorsement Game

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### **Bush Leads All NFL Rookies In Endorsement Deals**

announcements to come “in the next couple weeks.” Ornstein said of Bush’s deals so far, “I don’t think there’s any other rookie that’s even close to that neighborhood.” Bush has shown a commitment to helping the Gulf Region rebuild after Hurricane Katrina and is also working on a national deal with a home builder. Ornstein said of potential sponsors, “It’s not always the money. ... Everything we do with Reggie’s sponsors, there is a tie-in to New Orleans, or else we won’t do it.” On average, 5-7% of Bush’s endorsement dollars will go toward Katrina relief, with Bush deciding how the money is allocated. Van Wagner Sports Group Senior VP/Sports Marketing Kip Koslow: “Because of everything that’s happened with New Orleans, any good story, any positive thing that can come out of New Orleans is a major plus for Reggie Bush. People are going to have their eye on that team this year.”

**LEINART:** With a portfolio including Nike, Qwest Communications and Yahoo, Cardinals QB Matt Leinart is building an impressive endorsement portfolio of his own. CAA, which reps the No. 10 pick in all negotiations, is currently in talks for deals in the financial services, beverage and automotive categories. Koslow said he feels that over the course of his career, Leinart could catch, if not surpass, Bush in terms of endorsements. Koslow: “He has the best potential of anybody. ... He’s a good-looking guy, he was in a high-profile market, as long as he gets his shot on the field, he’s a marketer’s dream.” IMG Consulting Senior VP David Abrutyn said, “When mainstream marketers look for a personality to align their brands with, Matt Leinart would make the short list.” Pickett Advertising Exec Creative Dir Bob Dorfman said Leinart’s impending fatherhood could land him deals with Huggies, Gerber and family car manufacturers.

Not only does Saints RB Reggie Bush have one of the quickest first steps among NFL rookies, he has also gotten off to the fastest start building his endorsement roster. The No. 2-overall pick has already landed deals with blue-chip companies like adidas, PepsiCo and Subway, and Bush’s marketing rep, Mike Ornstein, is currently in talks with companies in the wireless, consumer electronics and fragrance categories, with

**YOUNG:** While Bush and Leinart went with established vets for representation off the field, Titans QB Vince Young took a different approach, opting to go with family friend Major Adams of Next Level Sports & Entertainment. Young, the No. 3 pick, entered the draft off a stellar Rose Bowl performance that boosted his marketability, but questions about whether he is prepared for the NFL could have impacted his value to teams and marketers. He currently has deals with Reebok, Dell and NetSpend, and is slated to star in a reality series on BET called "The Next Level," debuting next month. Strategic President Peter Stern



### **Vince Young Boasts Signature Reebok Shoe**

said, "Vince is sort of a performance guy. He's a proven winner. I could see him having a big career repping performance products, like apparel or watches for durability. ... He has some appeal, but to really break out he's going to have to [prove himself] again." Dorfman added Young is "good looking, reasonably comfortable on camera, and has a body that could work for fashion or grooming products."