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**EDWARD THOMAS OF IOWA'S APLINGTON-PARKERSBURG  
HIGH SCHOOL NAMED 2005 NFL HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL  
COACH OF THE YEAR**

***Nominated by Four Current NFL Players***

**New York, NY (January 5, 2006) -- EDWARD THOMAS**, head football coach at Aplington-Parkersburg High School in Parkersburg, IA, is the **2005 NFL HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL COACH OF THE YEAR**, the NFL announced today.

Thomas, head football coach at Aplington-Parkersburg for the past 31 years, was nominated by four of his former players – Detroit Lions defensive end **JARED DEVRIES**, Green Bay Packers defensive tackle **AARON KAMPMAN**, Jacksonville Jaguars guard **BRAD MEESTER**, and Kansas City Chiefs center **CASEY WIEGMANN**. Of the five finalists, Coach Thomas received the most player nominations.

As the **2005 NFL HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL COACH OF THE YEAR**, Thomas and a guest will be invited to attend Super Bowl XL in Detroit in February as the NFL's guest. Thomas will also receive a check for \$5,000 as part of the NFL High School Football Coach of the Year Award. A \$10,000 grant will be awarded to the football program at Aplington-Parkersburg High School.

Current NFL players shared their admiration and respect for their former coach through the nomination applications they completed during the regular season.

"Coach Thomas truly cares about every player on his team," said **MEESTER**. "He makes you work hard and makes you accomplish more than you ever thought was possible, both on and off the field."

"He taught me as much about being a gentleman as he did about football," said **DEVRIES**. "I have the deepest respect for him as a coach and as a man."

"He taught me that good things happen to good people, and to always treat people the way you want to be treated and good things will always come back to you," said **WIEGMANN**.

"Coach Thomas is a tremendous example of what high school football is all about," said **KAMPMAN**.

"My role as a coach is to encourage each young man to become the very best person he can become," said Coach **THOMAS**. "I have always taught my players that if they use the fundamentals and are great effort players, the winning will take care of itself."

In his 34 years of coaching, Thomas has won such honors as the National Federation High School

Football Coach of the Year Award (2004), Northeast Iowa Coach of the Year (five times), and was inducted into the Iowa High School Football Coaches' Association Hall of Fame in 1990.

His overall record at Aplington-Parkersburg High School is 249-58. His team has played in the state playoffs fifteen times, won two state titles, and won fifteen conference or district championships.

The **NFL HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL COACH OF THE YEAR AWARD** was initiated in 1995 by NFL Commissioner **PAUL TAGLIABUE** and the NFL clubs to honor coaches who profoundly affected the athletic and personal development of NFL players. The program is a part of the NFL and NFL Players Association's \$150 million Youth Football Fund.

"We have more than 1,600 players on our 32 teams," said Commissioner **TAGLIABUE**, "and they all have at least one thing in common -- they all received outstanding guidance from high school coaches. These men have dedicated their lives to teaching young players how to become leaders both on and off the field. I congratulate our finalists and all high school coaches for the integral roles they play in developing the game of football and guiding the youngsters who play the game."

A blue-ribbon committee of sports leaders appointed by the NFL selects winners. The panel is comprised of **JON BUTLER**, executive director, Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc.; **TONY DEMATTEO**, former NFL High School Football Coach of the Year winner; **JACK FLEISCHER**, veteran sportswriter; **DICK GALIETTE** of the National High School Athletic Coaches Association; **CHUCK KNOLL**, former Pittsburgh Steelers head coach; **WILLIAM MCGREGOR II**, former NFL High School Football Coach of the Year winner; **GRANT TEAFF**, executive director of the American Football Coaches Association; and **BILL WALSH**, former San Francisco 49ers coach.

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