NFL and ASPCA Team Up for Dogs

The NFL and the ASPCA will educate athletes about the importance of the proper treatment of dogs and other animals.

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As the popularity of the National Football League continues to grow, so does its influence on Americans, young and old. Recognizing that off-the-field behavior can lead to more headlines than a last-minute comeback, the league offers educational presentations on a range of subjects before the start of each season to players and team personnel.

Hot on the heels of the ongoing investigation involving superstar Atlanta Falcons quarterback Michael Vick and allegations of dogfighting, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has recently joined the NFL to help spread its message. Part of this year's presentations will draw on the ASPCA's expertise to enhance awareness on the proper treatment of animals.

"This initiative is a natural extension of our existing education and advisory outreach," said Ed Sayres, ASPCA president and CEO. "We applaud the NFL for taking the responsibility to educate its players and teams on the importance of caring properly for animals and helping raise awareness for everyone about this issue."

The NFL's education and training programs for players are designed to help ensure that the NFL and its teams are respected in their communities.

"Our mission in player development is to assist our players in being productive citizens on and off the football field," said NFL vice president of player development Mike Haynes.

The ASPCA will continue to explore other opportunities with the NFL to advise the league and raise awareness on the importance of the humane treatment of animals, which could include working locally with NFL teams in their markets.

The 2007 NFL season opener will kickoff on Thursday, Sept. 6, 2007, with – fittingly – the defending Superbowl champion Indianapolis Colts against the New Orleans Saints.