



## ***Panama Claims Fifth Place***

Four France turnovers, three missed field goals and a Panama defensive score helped the Panamanians clinch a 14-6 victory and fifth place at the 2007 NFL Global Junior Championship.  
*By Jeff Garza*

The victory was Panama's first in five attempts having been winless and scoreless in their sole GJC appearance in 2000 and also in the first round games of the 2007 event on Wednesday.

The first game of the day kicked off early. Game time was set for 8:30 a.m. and France receiver Jeremy Rabot took the opening kickoff 91 yards for a touchdown. Rabot's heroics and his midweek performances earned him the French MVP award for the tournament. It was the first score of the tournament for France who was shutout by Japan and Canada in the opening round. A missed extra point made the game 6-0.

It looked like France would keep the momentum going on their next possession. A 38-yard reception by Jeremie Bizet combined with a 15-yard penalty for roughing the passer took the ball down to the Panama 14. However, a key defensive stand would cause the French to attempt a field goal, which was blocked by linebacker Luis Pabon.

The defense would come up big again for Panama as corner Cesar Tucker intercepted Paul Duran and returned it 40 yards for a touchdown on the first play of the second quarter. The extra point gave the Panamanians a 7-6 lead.

France went on a 14-play, 44-yard drive that took the ball down to the Panama 26 before a delay of game penalty caused the French to move back five yards and go for it on fourth down. Durand, who was knocked out of the game for two plays earlier in the drive, threw a deep pass over the middle that was intercepted by Hernando Armella, who was later named Panama's MVP.

France would get the ball once more before halftime with great field possession which helped set up a 49-yard field attempt by Maxime Guy that was wide left. Two missed field goals helped preserve the Panama 7-6 lead at the half.

The second half started with the third interception of the day. On the second play of the half, France's Gauthier Mesnil picked off the pass and returned it 13 yards to the Panama 16. Backed up deep in their own territory, Panama once again buckled down and forced Guy to kick and miss his third field goal of the day.

After a Panama punt, France got the ball back and once again could not take care of business. Joseph Johnson sacked Durand and caused him to fumble allowing Tomas Wong to recover at the France 31. The turnover helped set up a 1-yard touchdown run by Kenrick Belgrave giving Panama a 14-6 lead with 07:54 remaining.

Panama's defense did the rest, not allowing the French to get into Panamanian territory the rest of the game. The game ended with QB Peter Diaz taking a knee to give Panama a 14-6 victory.