THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL FOUNDATION'S

FOOTBALLETTER

Vol. 67, No. 3 // 2025 Hall of Fame Issue // Fall 2025



FIVE GRIDIRON GREATS JOIN ONE OF SPORTS' MOST EXCLUSIVE CLUBS: JUST 49 FORMER NFF NATIONAL SCHOLAR-ATHLETES EVER INDUCTED INTO THE NFF COLLEGE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME. SEE PAGE 40 FOR THE FULL LIST.



Here's to celebrating success, and building on that in the years ahead

We proudly support the efforts of the National Football Foundation and the financial wellness of our customers.

Fidelity INVESTMENTS®

The Fidelity Investments logo is a registered service mark of FMR LLC.
The third parties mentioned herein and Fidelity Investments are independent entities and are not legally affiliated.
Fidelity Brokerage Services LLC, Member NYSE, SIPC, 900 Salem Street, Smithfield, RI 02917
© 2025 FMR LLC. All rights reserved.
1183788.1.3

CONTENTS & KEY INFORMATION

National Football Foundation

College Football Hall of Fame

TABLE OF CONTENTS

President & CEO's Message 2
2025 NFF College Football Hall of Fame Class 4-5
2025 NFF College Football Hall of Fame Class Bios 6-35
NFF Corporate Partners 13
I Played 33
Hall of Fame On-Campus Salutes,
Presented by Fidelity Investments 36-37
Chick-fil-A College Football Hall of Fame 38-39
The Most Exclusive Club 40
College Football Opens Doors 41
2025 Campbell Trophy® Semifinalists 42-43
Campbell Trophy® Summit 44
National High School Academic Excellence Awards 46-47
NFF Hampshire Honor Society 48
Football Drives Campus Growth 50-51
NFF High School Showcases 53
2024 NFF Team of Distinction 54-55
Football By the Numbers 56-57
FWAA, NFF Partner for 10th Year on Super 16 Poll 58

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The NFF would like to thank all the sports information directors, photographers and athletics departments who contributed content to the publication. Photos are reprinted with permission, and all copyrights are reserved by their rightful owners.

A special thanks to Matt Fortuna, who wrote the profiles for the 2025 NFF College Football Hall of Fame inductees featured in the publication. Fortuna is the founder of The Inside Zone, college football's newest online community, and a past president of the Football Writers Association of America.

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT THE NFF?

Become a Corporate Partner

If your company or organization is interested in joining forces with the National Football Foundation to promote and protect the game, please contact NFF COO Matthew Sign at msign@footballfoundation.com or 972-556-1000.

Charitable Gift

Please click here to make a donation online or contact NFF CFO David Sanders at 972-556-1000 or dsanders@footballfoundation.com to learn how you can include the National Football Foundation in your annual gift planning. The NFF is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, and your contribution may be eligible for tax benefits based on your individual circumstances.

Join as a Member

Please click here to join the NFF today, supporting the game of football while receiving special benefits including a vote on the NFF College Football Hall of Fame ballot.

Advertise

For more information on purchasing an ad in the NFF Annual Awards Dinner program and the NFF Footballetter, published by Learfield, please contact Clerrinda Queen at clerrinda.queen@learfield.com or 336-473-3145.

PRESIDENT & CEO'S MESSAGE

FROM STEVEN J. HATCHELL



Welcome to the latest issue of the *NFF Footballetter*, where we proudly spotlight the 2025 NFF College Football Hall of Fame Class. These outstanding individuals will be formally inducted at the 67th NFF Annual Awards Dinner, presented by Las Vegas, on Dec. 9. We couldn't be more excited to return to Las Vegas for this special occasion, marking our fifth consecutive year in this iconic city, which continues to solidify its place as a hub for sports.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA), along with their President & CEO Steve Hill, for their continued partnership as presenting sponsors since 2021. And we're thrilled to be returning to the majestic Bellagio Resort & Casino for a third time, with a return already planned for 2026.

Beyond honoring the 2025 Hall of Fame inductees at the dinner, we will recognize the recipients of the 2025 NFF National Scholar-Athlete Awards presented by Fidelity Investments, award the 36th William V. Campbell Trophy® to college football's most exemplary scholar-athlete, while honoring several prominent individuals with NFF Major Awards.

We invite you to be a part of this unforgettable celebration. For tickets, special travel rates from Delta Air Lines, and discounted accommodations at the Bellagio, please visit our event page.

This edition of the *Footballetter* also highlights many of the NFF initiatives, including the Chick-fil-A College Football Hall of Fame in Atlanta, the NFF High School Academic Excellence Awards presented by the Rose Bowl Legacy Foundation, the NFF Hampshire Honor Society, the NFF High School Football Showcases and more.

As you explore this issue, I encourage you to reflect on the role football has played in your own life. Whether it's building lasting relationships, fostering teamwork, or teaching valuable life lessons, the game has had a profound impact on us all. We ask that you consider how you might give back to the sport that has given us so much. Whether it's by connecting with your local chapter, becoming a national member, or simply encouraging a friend to join, your support helps sustain the future of football for generations to come.

If you're not yet a member of the NFF, now is the perfect time to join. Your membership directly supports scholarships and programs aimed at preserving the game's legacy. Click here to become a "Protector of the Game" today.

Thank you for your unwavering support as we continue our mission to promote the Future for Football®.

Warm regards,



Steven J. Hatchell
NFF President & CEO



The Bellagio Resort & Casino served as the venue in 2022 and 2024 for the NFF Annual Awards Dinner, and it will again provide the stage this year and again in 2026.

NFF CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- **Oct. 22** — Announcement of the finalists for the William V. Campbell Trophy® and NFF National Scholar-Athlete Awards Presented by Fidelity Investments
- **Nov. 12** — Announcement of the 2025 NFF Faculty Athletics Representative Honorees, Presented by Fidelity Investments
- **Dec. 9** — 67th NFF Annual Awards Dinner Presented by Las Vegas at the Bellagio Resort & Casino
- **Dec. 9** — Announcement of the recipient of the 36th NFF William V. Campbell Trophy® during the 67th NFF Annual Awards Dinner Presented by Las Vegas
- **Jan. TBD** — Announcement of the 2026 NFF College Football Hall of Fame Class
- **Jan. 19** — CFP National Championship at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, FL
- **Jan. 29** — Announcement of the State Winners of the 2025-26 NFF National High School Academic Excellence Awards Presented by the Rose Bowl Legacy Foundation
- **Feb. 5** — Announcement of 2026 Recipient of the NFF Hatchell Cup, presented by Bob's Steak & Chop House







NATIONAL FOOTBALL FOUNDATION
COLLEGE HALL OF FAME

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE

67TH NFF ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER

PRESENTED BY

LAS Vegas

DECEMBER 9, 2025

BELLAGIO HOTEL & CASINO

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS YEAR'S EVENT,
PLEASE EMAIL CARCHER@FOOTBALLFOUNDATION.COM,
OR CLICK HERE TO PURCHASE TICKETS.



2025 NFF COLLEGE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME CLASS

INTRODUCING THE HONOREES

During the 67th NFF Annual Awards Dinner Presented by Las Vegas on Dec. 9, 2025, the 2025 Class will officially take its place in the NFF College Football Hall of Fame alongside the greatest of all time. Of the 5.62 million individuals who have played college football since Princeton first battled Rutgers on Nov. 6, 1869, only 1,111 players and 237 coaches have earned the right to be immortalized in the sport's ultimate shrine. In other words, only two one-hundredths of a percent (.02%) of those who have played the game have earned the distinction.



MONTEE BALL
RB, University of Wisconsin
(2009-12)



GREGG CARR
LB, Auburn University
(1981-84)



BLAKE ELLIOTT
WR, Saint John's University (MN)
(2000-03)



GREG ESLINGER
C, University of Minnesota
(2002-05)



TERRY HANRATTY
QB, University of Notre Dame
(1966-68)



GRAHAM HARRELL
QB, Texas Tech University
(2005-08)



JOHN HENDERSON
DT, University of Tennessee
(1999-2001)



MICHAEL HUFF
DB, University of Texas
(2002-05)



JIM KLEINSASSER
TE, University of North Dakota
(1995-98)



ALEX MACK
C, University of California
(2005-08)



TERRENCE METCALF
OL, University of Mississippi
(1999-2001)



HALOTI NGATA
DT, University of Oregon
(2002, 2004-05)



STEVE SLATON
RB, West Virginia University
(2005-07)



DARRIN SMITH
LB, University of Miami
(2003-06)



MICHAEL STRAHAN
DL, Texas Southern University
(1989-92)

2025 NFF COLLEGE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME CLASS

INTRODUCING THE HONOREES



DENNIS THURMAN
DB, University of Southern California (1974-77)



MICHAEL VICK
QB, Virginia Tech (1999-2000)



RYAN YARBOROUGH
WR, University of Wyoming (1990-93)



COACH LARRY BLAKENEY
178-113-1 (61.1%)
Troy University (1991-2014)



COACH LARRY KORVER
212-77-6 (72.9%)
Northwestern College [IA] (1967-94)



COACH URBAN MEYER
187-32-0 (85.4%)
Bowling Green State University (2001-02)
University of Utah (2003-04)
University of Florida (2005-10)
Ohio State University (2012-18)



COACH NICK SABAN
292-71-1 (80.4%)
University of Toledo (1990)
Michigan State University (1995-99)
LSU (2000-04)
University of Alabama (2007-23)

2025 CLASS BY THE NUMBERS

2
Schools with their first-ever Hall of Fame player
Schools with their first-ever Hall of Fame coach or player inductee
Coaches with the most wins in school history

4
Unanimous First Team All-Americans

5
Members of national championship teams
NFF National Scholar-Athletes

6
First-Round NFL draft picks
Decades represented

7
Consensus First Team All-Americans
Conference Players of the Year
Defensive players

8
Multi-year First Team All-Americans
Winners of college football major awards
Players who still hold school records

9
Played for NFF College Football Hall of Fame coaches

11
Members of conference championship teams
Offensive players

12
National championships won by coaches
Conference coach of the year honors

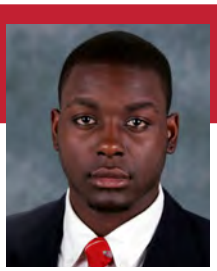
28
Conference championships won by coaches

63
Bowl/Postseason appearances by coaches

156
First Team All-Americans produced by coaches

NFF COLLEGE HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025

INDUCTEE PROFILES



MONTEE BALL

University of Wisconsin • Running Back • 2009-12

Montee Ball can pinpoint the moment that everything changed for him at Wisconsin. It came in 2010, just days after the Badgers had upset No. 1 Ohio State at Camp Randall, turbo-charging their Big Ten title run. Ball did not play a single snap in that game, which ate at his soul. Stuck at third on the depth chart, Ball was seriously considering a move from running back to linebacker to get on the field. Then came the comeback at Kinnick.

"Unfortunately, John Clay and James White both suffered an injury," Ball said. "And then of course (position coach) John Settle turns around and looks at me eyes wide — and my eyes are wide as well — and he's like: 'It's time to put up or shut up.' His exact words."

The sophomore did exactly that, catching a seven-yard pass on fourth-and-4 to keep the Badgers' final drive alive. He rushed for an 8-yard touchdown four plays later, and the rest was, literally, history.

Ball is now a College Football Hall of Famer, the 12th Badgers player to earn the honor. That he is the first Wisconsin running back from his era to make the Hall is not lost on him, considering the recent lineage at the position in Madison. Chalk it all up to a never-say-die attitude and an ability to take advantage of his moment, traits that helped him navigate what appeared to be a daunting task ahead of him with the Badgers. Ball told himself that day in Iowa City that he would never give that No. 1 position back. He never did.

"The reason why that moment sticks out to me is because we sit here and we talk to our youth going into the game of football, we obviously see this transfer portal of people looking on the other side of the fence and believing that the grass is greener," Ball said. "It may be. It may be for some. But I believe statistically speaking, it's not, for the majority.

"I want for kids to see that you have to put the work in. There are no shortcuts to being great. There aren't. You have to put the work in, make the sacrifices and look yourself in the mirror and want to do the work. And so for me, I couldn't turn around and blame anybody else why I wasn't playing, why I wasn't getting any carries. I wasn't putting the work in in practice. And so I flipped that around, and when my opportunity came about, I grabbed it, man. I didn't let go."

Ball and the Badgers finished four yards shy of history that year, with Ball's 996 yards on the season the outlier amid a running back group that had two other 1,000-yard backs. That season, like the next two, ended in the Rose Bowl as Big Ten champs. Ball is the only player in college football history to post 100-yard rushing performances in three straight Rose Bowls.

In 2011, he was a Heisman finalist after tying Barry Sanders' NCAA record for most touchdowns in a season (39). He led the nation that season in rushing yards (1,923) and yards from scrimmage (2,229). In 2012, he won the Doak Walker Award, given to the nation's top running back.

The Wentzville, Missouri, product set the NCAA record for career rushing touchdowns (77) and career total touchdowns (83). Ball's 5,140 career rushing yards are second on the school's all-time list, behind Ron Dayne, who held the FBS record for 17 years.

Ball was in a drive-through line at a Starbucks this past January when Brian Mason, Wisconsin's communications ace during his playing days, texted him "You got in!!!" Ball literally pulled out of the line and into the parking lot of a nearby bank to soak in the news of the Hall nod, FaceTiming family members and doing his best to limit his tears.

"What an honor," Ball said. "I truly mean that. What an honor to be selected and to be part of this fraternity of the greatest football players to ever play the game. And just to be selected so early in my life is a blessing. So, I do not take it for granted. I really don't. I truly hold this with such an honor and a blessing. I'm so grateful and I just want to make sure that everybody understands I'm thankful for this."



MONTEE BALL: UP CLOSE

- A two-time consensus First Team All-America pick (2011, 2012) claimed the Doak Walker Award in 2012 and finished as a finalist in 2011.
- Set the NCAA record for most points in a single season and tied the record for touchdowns (39).
- Finished career with 5,140 rushing yards (averaging 104.9 yards per game), 77 rushing touchdowns, 598 receiving yards and six TD receptions.
- Played for head football coach Bret Bielema.
- Becomes the 12th Badger player to enter the NFF College Football Hall of Fame.





It's time to

TOUCHDOWN IN VEGAS.

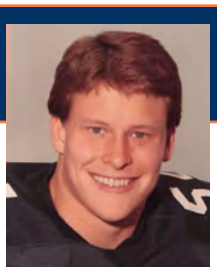
In Las Vegas, when the game ends, the excitement always goes into overtime. This is where football fever meets unforgettable experiences, from pregame meals at world-class restaurants to the biggest names in music taking the stage each night.

VISITLASVEGAS.COM

LAS Vegas®

NFF COLLEGE HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025

INDUCTEE PROFILES



GREGG CARR

Auburn University • Linebacker • 1981-84

"If you're not thinking about quitting, we're not working you hard enough."

Those words resonated with Gregg Carr. They came from Pat Dye, his Hall of Fame coach whose first season leading Auburn coincided with Carr's first season playing for the Tigers. Dye had lofty goals when he arrived on the Plains. But he reminded his players every step of the way that they would have to pay the price to reach those goals. As for what that meant?

"We learned pretty quickly," Carr said. "Paying the price was really just learning the basics of tackling and blocking and working hard and being well-conditioned and being tougher and grittier than everybody else. And during that four-week process of spring football, we lost a lot of talented players who quit the football team."

Call it baptism by fire, or survival of the fittest. Either way, Carr thrived. He led Auburn in tackles twice. His 1983 Tigers team beat Michigan in the Sugar Bowl to finish with a No. 3 final AP ranking, and he earned First Team All-America honors his senior year. And now Carr has taken his rightful place beside his coach in the College Football Hall of Fame.

Carr becomes the ninth former Auburn player to make the Hall, and the 14th overall member of the Tigers program to accomplish the feat. Dye was enshrined in 2005. Carr never missed an opportunity to thank the coach for those lessons before his passing in 2020.

"He kind of apologized for the hard work he put us through," Carr said. "But it's interesting, when I left Auburn, the lessons I learned on that football field made a difference in all my endeavors. It still continues to affect me. It affected my children. Just the lessons learned, which is being focused and goal-oriented and having the proper mindset and being dedicated to what you're doing if you really love what you do.

"And so, I always thanked Coach Dye when I saw him for giving me all the opportunities that he gave me because my life would have been completely different had I not had those experiences. And those experiences are not the experiences your parents can teach you. Your parents couldn't do the things that Coach Dye and his staff did with us, but those are the experiences we needed."

A word about that family that Carr loves to mention: His late father, Bill, and his stepmother, Sandra, were loving parents who preached to Carr and siblings Dennis and Lisa the importance of education. Carr and his wife Julie have paid those messages forward with their five children: Evans, Jordan, Sara, Grace and Ann Harrison, all of whom are successful in their own right.

Football, by the way, makes up merely a fraction of Carr's many success stories. He went to Auburn to become an engineer, he left the school and became a Pittsburgh Steeler, and then he played four pro seasons before diving into the world of medicine. He is still an orthopedic surgeon today in his hometown of Birmingham.

"I came to Auburn not to play football; I came to Auburn to go to school, because I fell in love with that atmosphere," Carr said. "They talk about an Auburn Spirit. There's a feelfeeling you get at this little college in Southeast Alabama that's just a family feel, it's a real feel, it's a real vibe that you feel when you get here. To me, it was a great setting for getting an education and preparing me for the next step of my life."

As far as Carr's on-field success goes, he says he was simply doing his job. His life is a blessing for reasons that have nothing to do with football. Yet none of it is possible without football. He lists off nearly a dozen Auburn defensive linemen — led by coach Wayne Hall — and credits them for allowing linebackers such as himself, Christopher Martin and Jeff Jackson to stuff the stat sheet as often as they did. He calls coordinator Frank Orgel a father figure.

"Coach Dye used to say that football was the only game that really taught a player a lot of things about themselves, because you get every



emotion with football," Carr said. "And football was fun, but football is hard work. If it was easy, everybody would be doing it. And the only fun part of football, I think, is winning. But there's a lot that goes into football — the friendships are fun, but there's a lot of hard work that goes into football. Winning is the tip of the iceberg. But the spring practices, the winter workouts, the stresses involved with game preparation and playing the games, there's a lot of stress and there's a lot of work with football."

GREGG CARR: UP CLOSE

- Named a consensus First Team All-American in 1984 while also claiming SEC Lineman of the Year honors.
- Amassed 453 career tackles, currently ranking him second in school history, and nine sacks.
- Earned an NFF National Scholar-Athlete Award and Academic All-American honors.
- Played for NFF College Football Hall of Fame Coach Pat Dye.
- Becomes the ninth Auburn player inducted into the Hall.

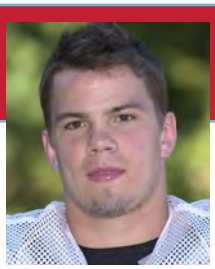
PROTECT THE GAME YOU LOVE



BECOME AN
NFF MEMBER TODAY

NFF COLLEGE HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025

INDUCTEE PROFILES



BLAKE ELLIOTT

Saint John's University (MN) • Wide Receiver • 2000-03

Blake Elliott had been on the College Football Hall of Fame ballot before, but he knew not to get his hopes up. After all, a Division III player had not made the Hall since 2019 — and that was London Fletcher, a 16-year NFL veteran. There was no discriminating against small-school standouts, but those who did make it recently — such as Randy Moss in 2024 — were household names.

Elliott? He was a guy whose driver's license had listed him at 5-foot-6, 155 pounds. He went to nearby Saint John's University in Minnesota. His college career ended more than two decades ago. He was not drafted.

But boy was he good. And the Hall doesn't overlook anyone, regardless of school or platform.

Elliott is the latest small-school phenom to make the College Football Hall of Fame, and the first player from Saint John's. He joins his coach, the legendary John Gagliardi, as the only members of the Johnnies' program to make the Hall.

"To achieve that honor is obviously extremely humbling, and it really is a couple things," Elliott said. "Number one, it's a great opportunity to shine a spotlight on Saint John's and what a special place that was for me, and what a special small school football environment that is. And so hopefully over this year that just allows for Saint John's football to have a little bit of a spotlight that I think it so rightfully deserves.

"I think it's just an opportunity to thank a lot of people that played a big role in that, and share that with them and share that with my kids now. I have four kids, and my 14-year-old son plays football, and my five-year-old son plays football, and to be able to share that with them and my mom and my brother and a lot of the coaches and people that were at Saint John's when I was there are still there, and so to thank them and share that with them is just the best thing."

Hailing from nearby Melrose Area High School, Elliott tore through the Johnnies' record books, setting 29 school records and setting the NCAA record for most consecutive games played with a catch (47), a record that stood until 2008. In 2003, he won the Gagliardi Trophy, given to the nation's top Division III player.

Elliott caught 369 passes in his career for 4,829 yards and 63 touchdowns. He rushed for another 744 yards and eight more touchdowns. And he tallied 3,065 total punt and kick return yards, to go with seven more touchdowns.

Off the field, Elliott has made an impact by becoming the founder of DOMA, a company that provides services for people with disabilities. The inspiration comes from Elliott's younger brother, Adam, who was seriously injured in a car accident before Elliott's senior year at Saint John's.

"On one hand that year was an opportunity to maybe shine some light onto my family and give them something positive to think about when they're going through this really hard time," Elliott said, adding: "(Football) was an opportunity for me to not have to kind of think about that for that two-hour period, or that game, or that practice, or whatever it may be. So I think in that respect, football was that spotlight or that shining light on something that — we were in a pretty dark tunnel for a long time — and it allowed us to have some light and that year some really cool things happened."

Elliott's career culminated in a national championship win over Mount Union (OH) in the 2003 Stagg Bowl, a win that snapped Mount Union's 55-game winning streak.

"It's cliche, but it's so true, especially in small college football: I think that those relationships were absolutely fortified and strengthened by the success that we had playing football," Elliott said. "My freshman year, we lost in the national championship to Mount Union. My sophomore year, we lost in the semifinals to Mount Union. My junior year, we lost in the semifinals to a team out of Texas (Trinity). And then my senior year, we finally get it and beat Mount Union in the national championship game.



"But I only say that because that success I think is what strengthens those relationships. And so many guys that I played football with were in my wedding, business partners. I share Timberwolves season tickets with three other guys that I played football with that have been good friends of mine for 20-something years."

BLAKE ELLIOTT: UP CLOSE

- A two-time First Team All-American, claiming the 2003 Gagliardi Trophy as the best player in Division III.
- Led Saint John's to the national title, claiming the MVP honors in the Stagg Bowl.
- Holds Set the NCAA record for all divisions with a record of 47 consecutive games with a reception and 26 school records, including career receiving yards (4,829), touchdown receptions (63) and all-purpose yards (8,635).
- Played for NFF College Football Hall of Fame Coach John Gagliardi.
- Becomes the first Saint John's player to ever enter the NFF College Football Hall of Fame.

NFF COLLEGE HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025

INDUCTEE PROFILES



GREG ESLINGER

University of Minnesota • Center • 2002-05



Greg Eslinger may be among the youngest members of this year's College Football Hall of Fame class, but his recruitment to the FBS level illustrates just how much the sport has changed in a short period of time.

"The only way things worked out for me at Minnesota was because my old man and I sat down after my junior season, made a highlight tape, a VHS, and then we had an old family friend that was connected to coaches in the North Central area," said Eslinger, who grew up in Bismarck, North Dakota. "So, we made a bunch of copies of this highlight tape on VHS, and we mailed them to basically every major university in the area, like Wisconsin, Minnesota, a plethora of others. And Minnesota got my tape and they sent me the generic camp invite for that summer. So, nothing really too official, or nobody reaching out to me by any means other than this generic camp invite.

"So, I went to the camp in between my junior and senior year, performed really well, and then got offered after the camp. And then it was pretty much a done deal for me. So, I accepted the offer and didn't look back. So yeah, as far as all these blue-chippers that you hear about now, or five-star athletes, I was probably a quarter-star coming out of high school."

The Golden Gophers are certainly grateful for that effort. Eslinger becomes the 20th Minnesota player to make the College Football Hall of Fame, and the first since Bob Stein was inducted into the Hall in 2020.

A symbol of stability anchoring the backbone of the program, Eslinger started 50 games for the Gophers with the team leading the Big Ten in rushing twice during Eslinger's career. He was a two-time captain. Minnesota had a 1,000-yard running back in each of Eslinger's four seasons, with Eslinger sharing Team MVP honors with Laurence Maroney in 2005.

He was a three-time First-Team All-Big Ten honoree and a two-time First-Team All-American. He won both the Outland Trophy (best interior lineman) and Rimington Trophy (best center) in 2005. One of three boys, Eslinger took pride in honoring the memory of his older brother Jared, who passed away from leukemia when he was 13 years old.

"Just seeing his strength and resiliency in the most dire of situations, I was seeing what real strength is about," Eslinger said. "And it was just a huge motivating factor for me, for what I was going through — tough workouts, tough times, wins, losses, and just understanding and appreciating where I'm at versus him showing the strength and resilience that he did. I tried to exude that through all my competitive days, playing for him a lot."

Eslinger was as accomplished off the field as he was on it, having attended the NFF's Annual Awards Dinner in 2005 as a finalist for the William V. Campbell Trophy® (then Draddy Trophy), which honors the top student-athlete in the nation for their combined academic, athletic and leadership abilities. The Big Ten gave Eslinger its prestigious Medal of Honor for his classroom and on-field efforts as well.

The Broncos drafted him in the sixth round of the 2006 NFL Draft, and he spent parts of three NFL seasons with Denver, Cleveland and Houston before becoming an orthopedic sales consultant. He still calls Minnesota home today. And he is hoping that this latest honor gives him a little bit more credibility when coaching his kids.

"They definitely appreciate that, but yeah, I just remember my middle kid, I've always ended up coaching a lot of his teams because it was just the age group that needed a coach," Eslinger said. "And I remember not too many years ago, when I was trying to teach a group of them some blocking techniques, and him going, 'Dad, step aside, that's not how you do it. Here's how you do it.' Then he proceeds to get down in his stance and do it his way.

"I'm like, all right, apparently the accolades don't mean anything when we're talking seventh grade football, huh? So, pretty funny."

GREG ESLINGER: UP CLOSE

- A two-time First Team All-American, including a unanimous selection in 2005.
- Claimed the Outland Trophy and the Rimington Trophy and was a finalist for the William V. Campbell Trophy® during his senior season.
- Anchored an offensive unit that twice led the Big Ten in rushing.
- Played for head coach Glen Mason.
- Becomes the 20th player from Minnesota to enter the NFF College Football Hall of Fame.

NFF COLLEGE HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025

INDUCTEE PROFILES



TERRY HANRATTY

University of Notre Dame • Quarterback • 1966-68

Terry Hanratty had a full-circle moment while riding the train back home in Connecticut last winter. Notre Dame assistant athletic director for alumni engagement Hunter Bivin called him. Bivin had been a teammate of Hanratty's son, Conor, on the Fighting Irish's offensive line. But now he was dialing up his buddy's father to inform him that he was part of the 2025 class of the College Football Hall of Fame.

"He was a year behind Conor, so they became very good friends," Hanratty said of Bivin. "Offensive linemen all stick together."

Doesn't he know it.

Hanratty, a quarterback, is now the 50th former Notre Dame player to make the Hall of Fame, the most of any school. He graduated from the school in 1969. He retired from the NFL in 1976.

Upon making the Hall, he heard from no shortage of characters who helped define that career and the life he's lived since hanging up his cleats.

"That's the biggest factor, because unlike any other sport, football is really a team effort," Hanratty said of the teammates and coaches who helped elevate him. "If you look at baseball, it's pitcher vs. batter, hitting home runs or doubles or singles or whatnot. Same thing with basketball. Guys are either hitting 3-pointers or making 'X' amount of points per game.

"If you're a quarterback in the football world, you need guys around you who are going to make you look good. George Goeddeke was my center in 1966. He called to congratulate me. I said: 'George, to be honest with you, part of this is you.' Football is the ultimate team sport, so you feel very gracious and honored to do this, but you know that, hey, it's not me.

"You look beyond that and you have [Hall of Fame coach] Ara Parseghian, and if he didn't pick me above anyone else or show me the way and what to do and how to do it, you wouldn't be there. So, there are a lot of people to be thankful for. The sad part of it is most aren't around anymore."

Hanratty was a three-year starter with the Irish, winning the national title in 1966 and finishing in the top-10 of the Heisman Trophy voting in each season. He left South Bend, Indiana, as the program's career record-holder in completions (304), passing yards (4,152) and passing touchdowns (27).

The Butler, Pennsylvania, native was drafted by the Pittsburgh Steelers, where he won two Super Bowls. How the Western Pennsylvania native landed at Notre Dame is a story unto itself.

Hanratty was committed to Michigan State, but Irish defensive coordinator and area recruiter John Ray called him one day to see if he wanted to have lunch with Parseghian while the head coach was in Pittsburgh.

"We spent two hours talking," Hanratty said of the lunch. "The funny part is we're ordering lunch and I see this steak for three dollars, and what goes through my mind is if I order a steak, will he think I'm trying to gaugegouge him? I went for the club sandwich with french fries.

"I went home and told my mother I'm going to Notre Dame. She said, 'What do you mean? I thought Michigan State.' I said I just met Ara and he's the coach I want to go with. We talked very little football. It was more about life and family; you needed to hear that at that age. I was 17 years old."

Then came the hard part — a call to Spartans coach and future Hall of Fame inductee Duffy Daugherty that turned out to be fortuitous.

"I get on the phone, I'm sweating. How bad is this going to be?" Hanratty said. "And for 15 minutes he told me how great a guy Ara was, how great a coach and how great a school Notre Dame was, but I'm going to try to beat you. And he was as gracious as you could possibly get."

For the 77-year-old Hanratty, the call from the Hall provides "great closure" — at least when talking to his kids about his career.



"I'm sure they're wondering, Wait a minute, was he as good as he talked about?" the old signal caller said, laughing. "I don't talk about it much. I told people: If you're good, people talk about you, there's no need to talk about yourself."

TERRY HANRATTY: UP CLOSE

- A consensus First Team All-American in 1968, led Notre Dame to a 24-4-2 record, including a share of the national title in 1966.
- Finished third in the Heisman voting in 1968, ninth in 1967, and sixth in 1966.
- Set Notre Dame career records for pass completions (304), passing yards (4,152), and touchdown passes (27).
- Played for NFF College Football Hall of Fame Coach Ara Parseghian.
- Becomes the 50th Fighting Irish player to enter the NFF College Football Hall of Fame.

NFF CORPORATE PARTNERS AND EVENT SPONSORS

BRANDS THAT RECOGNIZE THE VALUE IN COLLEGE FOOTBALL AND THE NFF'S MISSION

Delta Air Lines serves as the official airline of the National Football Foundation, and it offers special airfares to attendees of the NFF Annual Awards Dinner Presented by Las Vegas.

Fidelity Investments®, a leading provider of workplace savings plans in higher education, serves as the presenting sponsor of the NFF National Scholar-Athlete Class, NFF Faculty Salutes and NFF Hall of Fame On-Campus Salutes. Fidelity donates $5,000 to support the academic support services for student-athletes at each school with an NFF National Scholar-Athlete.

The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA), the marketing arm for the city of Las Vegas, is the presenting sponsor of the NFF Annual Awards Dinner Presented by Las Vegas.

Catapult Sports is the official host of the NFF's extensive video library. Learn more at CatapultSports.com/solutions/licensing.

The Hampshire Foundation has been the proud sponsor of the NFF Hampshire Honor Society since 2007.

CAA Executive Search, a retained executive search firm with a focus on recruiting HR and Diversity & Inclusion leaders, and diverse Board Directors, is a proud partner of the NFF.

Jostens is the official, exclusive supplier of NFF rings and awards, including rings for the College Football Hall of Fame inductees, recipient of the Campbell Trophy® and NFF Leadership Hall of Fame inductees.

The historic New York Athletic Club serves as the official home of the William V. Campbell Trophy®.

The Pasadena Tournament of Roses is a proud sponsor of the NFF Annual Awards Dinner Presented by Las Vegas.

Riddell, the leader in football head protection and protective athletic equipment for more than 90 years, is a proud sponsor of the NFF Annual Awards Dinner Presented by Las Vegas and the official helmet of the NFF.

The Rose Bowl Legacy Foundation, whose primary purpose is to preserve, protect and enhance the Rose Bowl Stadium, is a presenting sponsor of the NFF National High School Academic Excellence Awards.

Shriners Children's Hospital, home of the East-West Shrine Bowl, is an official partner of the National Football Foundation.

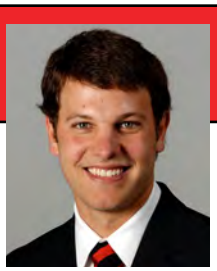
Presenting sponsor of the NFF Hatchell Cup, which recognizes the top high school football team in the nation for excellence in the classroom, on the field and in the community.

Elite Media Network is the premier streaming home of the College Football Game of the Week and is the presenting sponsor of the NFF Annual Award's Dinner Press Conference.

Presenting Sponsor of the FWAA Past Presidents Dinner, Hosted by the National Football Foundation.

NFF COLLEGE HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025

INDUCTEE PROFILES



GRAHAM HARRELL

Texas Tech University • Quarterback • 2005-08

Graham Harrell remembers sitting in his father's office and watching Dana Holgorsen go to work on the whiteboard, drawing up the offense he envisioned Harrell running at Texas Tech. He remembers being stuck in Mike Leach's office for hours on his visit to Lubbock, with the late head coach performing magic tricks and telling war stories that had nothing to do with football.

Somehow, that combo clicked for Harrell. And somehow, that group of Red Raiders ended up revolutionizing football at every level. Add it all up, and Harrell is now a College Football Hall of Famer, joining teammate Michael Crabtree and becoming the seventh Red Raiders to earn the honor.

"That whole part of it is probably the part that's the most special," Harrell said. "The influence that I think those teams and particularly Mike Leach's style of football had on football."

Harrell is Texas Tech's career leader in passing yards (15,793), touchdown passes (134), pass attempts (2,011), completions (1,403), passing yards per game (350.9), 300-yard games (32) and 400-yard games (20). He broke seven NCAA records during his career. He is the only quarterback to lead the Big 12 in passing yards in three different seasons.

He finished fourth in the Heisman Trophy voting in 2008, just ahead of Crabtree, who finished fifth. More importantly, Texas Tech finished that season 11-1, rising as high as No. 2 in the major polls. The highlight, of course, was a memorable primetime win over then-undefeated Texas, with Brent Musburger on the call as Harrell hit Crabtree for the game-winning touchdown with 1 second left. But Harrell had plenty of other big moments with the Red Raiders that shouldn't get overshadowed.

"The game that everyone always remembers is the Texas game," he said. "Probably my favorite game was my sophomore year: We won in a really similar fashion, I threw a fade to Robert Johnson down the right side against Texas A&M and it was at Kyle Field. So doing it on the road, you didn't feel like you beat just the 100 people on the other side; you feel like you beat the 100,000 Aggie fans that were standing there."

Harrell is familiar with the NFF Annual Awards Dinner, as he was a finalist for the William V. Campbell Trophy® in 2008. He played with the Green Bay Packers for three seasons, earning a ring from Super Bowl XLV. He was the offensive coordinator for Abilene Christian this season, after calling plays at Purdue, West Virginia, USC and North Texas. His father was his prep coach, and Harrell always figured he would get into the profession. What he could not have envisioned was just the sheer number of folks from his Air Raid days at Texas Tech who would also join him.

"When you sit back, what's the craziest is how many guys on that year that were on that staff or that played for Mike Leach just during that little 10-year run that he had there at Tech that are all over every level of football it seems like," Harrell said. "You've got Eric Morris, you've got so many guys on the college level, but a lot of my teammates are high school coaches too now. Lyle Leong was one of our receivers, he's the head coach at Levelland, which is right out there by Lubbock.

"There's a bunch of guys that were on our team that are high school head coaches now, so you get on the road and you go see those dudes coaching ball at that level. And you've got Kliff (Kingsbury) and dudes doing it at the NFL level.

"So, at every level of football it seems like somebody that was a part of that program during that little run there is still impacting it, and it's kind of crazy to look at and crazy to think about how many people. And some of it is just a testament to the people that were



there. We were surrounded by and influenced by great coaches, and it made us want to go on and do the same thing, and I don't think that's the case everywhere."

Harrell's college career saw him cross paths with future head coaches such as Holgorsen, Seth Littrell, Eric Morris, Ruffin McNeill and Lincoln Riley. The Air Raid, a wonder at the time, is now commonplace all across the game.

"I think there's some validation to that (era)," Harrell said. "The cool part about it to me, and still being in the profession, I tell everyone: Football's still a people's game. And that's the thing that makes it the most special and makes it the most fun is the people you do it with, whether it's the coaches or the players or your teammates or whoever it is."

GRAHAM HARRELL: UP CLOSE

- A 2008 First Team All-American, won the Johnny Unitas Golden Arm Award and was named Sporting News Co-Player of the Year.
- Set seven NCAA records, including most pass completions in a season (512), passes per game in a season (39.4) and most 400-yard passing games in a career (21, tied).
- Holds Big 12 all-time records for career completions (1,403) and touchdown passes (134) and ranks second in career passing yards (15,793), career attempts (2,011), and career completion percentage (69.8).
- Played for head coach Mike Leach.
- Becomes the seventh Red Raider player to enter the NFF College Football Hall of Fame.

NFF COLLEGE HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025

INDUCTEE PROFILES



JOHN HENDERSON

University of Tennessee • Defensive Tackle • 1999-2001



John Henderson needed a moment after learning that he would be entering the NFF College Football Hall of Fame. He couldn't truly process the magnitude of the accomplishment upon opening a box containing a commemorative football informing him of his induction.

"I was in shock," the Tennessee great said.

He might have been the only one. His college career was that dominant.

Henderson is the 23rd former Volunteers player to make the Hall of Fame, this after a run in Knoxville that saw him win the Outland Trophy, earn SEC Defensive Player of the Year honors and finish as a finalist for the Nagurski Trophy.

"When I really think about it, it always starts at home with Mom and Dad and my high school coaches there and teachers," Henderson said of the honor. "And then you go to college and you think about Coach (Phillip) Fulmer and Coach (Dan) Brooks. You just know that all of those people played a big role in your life in getting you ready for different moments."

Henderson's time with the Vols came amid a run of program legends that included fellow NFF College Football Hall of Famers Al Wilson and Peyton Manning. Both may have been older — and in Manning's case, the two did not play together — but the culture that those icons helped instill carried over to Henderson and future generations.

"Just being around the guys was a really big thing for me," Henderson said. "The workouts together, doing everything together, building that bond and brotherhood."

Even amid those giants of the game, the 6-foot-7, 300-plus-pound Henderson managed to stand out. That star-studded defensive line room in particular left players with no other choice but to do everything they possibly could to keep up.

"Oh my gosh, yes. We were really talented from the end position to defensive tackle," Henderson said. "I learned so much from the Shaun Ellises to the Darwin Walkers and Corey Terrys and the ones that were there before us. Just feeding off them, especially from that '98 national championship team. We were looking at them, seeing how they were working and doing it. B.J. (Bernard Jackson), Omari (Hand), Rashad Moore and I were like, 'We gotta be like that.' We were very dominant. I was proud of them. I was proud to play with those guys."

Numbers don't do Henderson's career justice — they don't do any interior linemen justice, really — but the Nashville native still managed to post 12 sacks and 21 tackles for loss in 2000, a year that saw the Tennessee defense set a school record for fewest rushing yards allowed in a single season (817).

Henderson tallied 162 total tackles, 38.5 tackles for loss, 20.5 sacks, four forced fumbles, five fumble recoveries and seven pass breakups for his college career, leading to the Jaguars selecting him No. 9 overall in the 2002 NFL Draft. The do-it-all tackle spent his first eight NFL seasons in Jacksonville, making two Pro Bowls and earning one All-Pro nod, before closing his career in Oakland with the Raiders for two seasons.

Henderson founded the Luvthekidz Foundation, which helps improve the lives of children with disabilities. The charity is in honor of his daughter, Talia, who passed away after battling cerebral palsy and epilepsy.

"I look at the game now for me and what it's done, it gave me a great platform for life," Henderson said. "It taught me how to deal with marriage and kids. When things happen in the game, a bad play, we don't get mad at each other; we go say, 'My fault, my bad, we've got to do this right.' It made life better for me."

JOHN HENDERSON: UP CLOSE

- Twice named a consensus First Team All-American (2000, 2001), claiming the 2000 Outland Trophy as the nation's best interior lineman.
- Amassed 162 tackles, 38.5 TFL, 20.5 sacks, four forced fumbles, five fumble recoveries, and seven pass breakups during his career.
- Helped the Vols notch a 28-9 record during his time in Knoxville, including final rankings of No. 9 in 1999 and No. 4 in 2001.
- Played for NFF College Football Hall of Fame Coach Phillip Fulmer.
- Becomes the 23rd Vol player inducted into the NFF College Football Hall of Fame.

NFF COLLEGE HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025

INDUCTEE PROFILES



MICHAEL HUFF

University of Texas • Defensive Back • 2002-05

Michael Huff played a starring role in perhaps the best college football game of the 21st century. But let's talk about a different Rose Bowl for a moment.

Before Texas dethroned USC in a national title game for the ages, the Longhorns beat Michigan in the Granddaddy Of Them All. Huff finished second on the team with eight tackles. And the win was especially significant for Huff, the son of Michigan natives whose Wolverines fandom was so deep that their son grew up a huge Charles Woodson fan.

"I grew up watching Michigan, and my mom and dad were at the game, and they were kind of rooting for their son, but in the back of their mind they wanted Michigan to win a little bit," Huff said, laughing. "But it was just special. Just the story, the tradition. Both programs are amazing, and I grew up watching them. So it was definitely a big game. And I'm glad we won."

Huff can laugh about that now. There's no mistaking which color he bleeds. The Irving, Texas, native has now made the NFF College Football Hall of Fame, becoming the 22nd former Longhorns player to enter the Hall.

That memorable 2005 season echoes in Texas history forever; Huff won the Jim Thorpe Award as the nation's best defensive back, and he was named Defensive MVP of that forever Rose Bowl against the Trojans, which doubled as the 2005-06 BCS Championship Game. But the seeds for campaigns like that senior year were planted much earlier.

Huff started in 50 of 51 games for Texas. He earned All-Big 12 honors in both football and in track and field, a sport in which he qualified for the NCAA regional meet in the 100 meters. The do-it-all defender made his presence felt all over the field early and often, as he holds the school single season and career record for pick-sixes, recording two apiece in 2002 and 2003. He had a school-record five total defensive touchdowns for his career. None of this, Huff said, would have been possible without defensive backs coach Duane Akina.

"Just from the moment I got there as a redshirt freshman, the year I was redshirting, wasn't even playing, he would take me to the side and we'd do extra film work and just do extra little things," Huff said. "I don't know what it was, but he saw something in me. Even when I came in, I was a skinny track guy who didn't want to hit anybody. He told me if I ever wanted to play this game at an elite level, then I'm going to have to get the physical side of the game and want to hit, want to tackle and do all those things.

"So, it was just one of those things that he just poured into me and didn't give up on me, didn't quit on me. He saw something in me and he was on me my whole career in Texas, and I owe him everything."

Huff came up with the pivotal tackle on fourth-and-2 against USC to get the ball back, leading to a 41-38 win. He had 12 tackles, one tackle for loss and one fumble recovery that night, as Texas clinched its first national title in 35 years. Widely regarded as one of the greatest games of all time, Huff couldn't truly appreciate all that he and his teammates had accomplished until the aftermath of that contest.

"I can be randomly in another city or randomly in the Bahamas or somewhere, and there will be Texas fans coming up to me and congratulating us on the national championship and telling us how much it meant to them," Huff said. "And just seeing some of our players now, like Michael Taaffe, I think he was 3 or 4 at that time, and his mom and dad took him to the game. And he just remembers watching the game and seeing us play. So just all those little things that show you what it means to the state of Texas, to Austin and really to everybody."

All of that may explain why Huff returned to Austin, Texas, after eight NFL seasons, as he is now the Longhorns' assistant director of player development. That 2005 Texas team is never far from the minds of 'Horns fans everywhere — and those players are never far from each other, either.



"A lot of us still live here," Huff said. "I'm with Derrick Johnson all the time. He's at practice all the time. And then Brian Orakpo, Jamaal Charles, Michael Griffin, there's a bunch of guys that still live in Austin and we all go to lunch once a week, just to get together to talk about the old days."

MICHAEL HUFF: UP CLOSE

- Named a unanimous First Team All-American and claimed the Thorpe Award, given to the nation's best defensive back, in 2005.
- Posted 318 tackles, 26 tackles for loss, seven interceptions, six forced fumbles, and three blocked kicks during his career.
- Helped the Longhorns to a 45-6 overall record, four consecutive bowl appearances, including a national title in 2005 and final AP rankings of No. 6 in 2002, No. 12 in 2003 and No. 5 in 2004.
- Played for NFF College Football Hall of Fame Coach Mack Brown.
- Becomes the 22nd Longhorn player to enter the NFF College Football Hall of Fame.

YOUR TEAM INSPIRES OURS TO KEEP CLIMBING.

Delta is honored to sponsor the National Football Foundation Awards Dinner, and we look forward to connecting players, coaches and fans with the world.



NATIONAL FOOTBALL FOUNDATION
COLLEGE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME

KEEP CLIMBING

DELTA

NFF COLLEGE HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025

INDUCTEE PROFILES



JIM KLEINSASSER

University of North Dakota • Tight End • 1995-98

Jim Kleinsasser had a pretty good sense of what he was getting into at North Dakota. His sister, Sheri, was a standout basketball player for the school, earning Division II Player of the Year honors in 1995. Kleinsasser himself was a Carrington, North Dakota, native, and the idea of staying close to home was appealing enough that even when Notre Dame showed some late interest in recruiting him, he opted for the local UND, not the national one.

"If you can play and you put the work in they'll find you," Kleinsasser said. "You're not going to get overlooked. Put the work in and believe in yourself. I think that's the big thing. When I was in school UND was Division II, and we were probably in the best conference in Division II, the North Central Conference, and I think it probably carries a little more weight just being from that area and just the local support you get at UND."

"It," of course, is his Hall of Fame nod. And, indirectly, that theme of local support has guided his life. North Dakota now plays in the Division I ranks, as part of the Missouri Valley Conference in the Football Championship Subdivision. And the efforts of those like Kleinsasser are a big reason why.

Kleinsasser becomes just the second Fighting Hawks player to make the NFF College Football Hall of Fame. He joins Jim LeClair (HOF Class of '99), who played linebacker for North Dakota in 1970 and '71.

"Each and every one of my teammates I had through my four years there, that's number one," Kleinsasser said of whom he attributes his induction. "I loved every second in college. Just an amazing group of guys. And the coaching staff, I had a tremendous coaching staff. I've got to thank (head coach) Roger Thomas and (offensive coordinator) Rob Bollinger for recruiting me and really selling UND on me."

A three-sport star at Carrington High School who won a state basketball title and set records in the shot put and discus throw, Kleinsasser starred at tight end at North Dakota, earning at least one All-America recognition from a different outlet in three different seasons. He was First Team All-North Central Conference in three straight seasons as well.

He caught 88 passes for 1,309 yards and 10 touchdowns during his career. He added 91 rushing yards and another touchdown on just eight career carries. He helped North Dakota make the NCAA Division II Playoffs in both his freshman year (1995) and senior year ('98), the former appearance coming during a conference championship season. The Fighting Hawks went 32-10 during Kleinsasser's career, a mark that includes a 28-8 conference record.

As fate would have it, the closest NFL team to Kleinsasser ended up being the one that drafted him: Minnesota, where he spent the entirety of his 13-year pro career. Drafted No. 44 overall, Kleinsasser became the highest-drafted player in North Dakota history, and he went on to become one of the league's most durable players as a blocker on a dominant running team.

He still calls the Twin Cities area home today, living in Minnetrista. And he was even brought back by North Dakota this past spring to deliver the school's commencement address. Through it all, he carried a very simple motto.

"The biggest thing is I always went into every game, and I just never wanted to let my teammates down," Kleinsasser said. "I think the biggest thing, the biggest pride a player could take is how his teammates feel about him, and I wanted my teammates to know that I could be counted on. I think anyone in the business world would tell you that. The biggest marker for themselves in their evaluation is how do my teammates look at me, and how do they feel about me? I think that's probably the number one thing. Never wanted to let them down. I always wanted them to know they could always count on me above anything else.



"I look at all the other teammates I had and that was probably the biggest marker of respect you could have for someone: 'Hey, this guy gets his job done. I don't have to worry about him.' That's always what I strived for, always what I was searching for."

JIM KLEINSASSER: UP CLOSE

- Twice named First Team All-American (1997, 1998) while also earning Honorable Mention accolades in 1996.
- Caught 88 passes for 1,309 yards, averaging 14.8 yards per catch during his career, and 10 receiving touchdowns.
- Helped North Dakota to a 32-10 record during his four years, including final AP rankings of No. 7 in 1995, No. 19 in 1996 and No. 7 in 1998.
- Played for head coach Roger Thomas.
- Becomes the second Fighting Hawk player to enter the NFF College Football Hall of Fame.

NFF COLLEGE HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025

INDUCTEE PROFILES



ALEX MACK

University of California • Center • 2005-08

Alex Mack was enjoying an extended Christmas break across the pond when his phone started blowing up. Mack, the former Cal All-American and All-Pro NFL center, was with his wife, Rachael, and her side of the family in their hometown of Dublin.

"And I was like, What is this about? I'm confused," Mack said, laughing. "And then I saw the news and I was pretty stoked. We had a good dinner then."

The grub (and likely libations) always go down smooth in Ireland — especially when you receive news that you are becoming a College Football Hall of Famer.

Mack becomes the 17th former Golden Bears player to make the Hall, and the first since quarterback Steve Bartkowski (Class of 2012) was inducted more than a decade ago.

"I just think how lucky I was to have the coaches I did throughout my career," Mack said of his football journey. "I am someone who is thankful for Cal taking a chance on me and offering me a scholarship. They were really the only school that kind of wanted to have me. So, I showed up to Cal thinking maybe football wasn't for me — I wasn't big enough, I wasn't good enough, but I got into Cal and (thought) I'll get a great education out of this. And if I'm terrible, then football is not for me, and I'll just get a great education. But just thankful for them taking that shot on me.

"And then really all the coaches I had from high school on up just to teach me how to work hard, the college coaches for giving me the scheme and the system and the technique and the training, and just how lucky I was to be able to become a better player with their help."

Mack dominated during his time in Berkeley, California, helping Cal win four bowl games and tying the school record for wins in a season (10) in 2006. The following season, in 2007, the Bears reached as high as No. 2 in the nation en route a share of the Pac-10 title, the program's first since 1975.

The Los Angeles native was a team captain in 2008, and he earned the conference's Football Scholar-Athlete of the Year award. Mack is no stranger to the NFF's Annual Awards Dinner, as he won the Draddy Trophy — now known as the William V. Campbell Trophy® — which is awarded by the NFF to the nation's best player for their performance on the field, in the classroom and as a leader in the community.

"I was so honored by that one because it was the combination of what it means to be a student-athlete, to take school really seriously and football and be really successful at both," Mack said. "And to get that recognition was really special. The people I was competing against were all really, really good. (Yale's Casey Gerald) had a speech as the designated person to talk on behalf of everybody, and he crushed it. And I was like, This guy is really smart. I have no chance of winning this thing. And to be able to win that award and have that trophy and get that recognition, it was really special."

That honor, along with his back-to-back Morris Trophy selections as the Pac-10's best offensive lineman, stuck with him the most during his college career.

"It was the trophy that the opponent would vote on who you think is the best. All the offensive linemen would vote on who's the best defensive lineman, and all the defensive (linemen) would vote on who's the best offensive (lineman)," Mack said. "And so, for your peers to pick you out to win that one is amazing. I won that back-to-back years, so that was good to have my opponents feel like I was the best player they went against."

Mack's pro career featured more of the same after Cleveland drafted him 21st overall in 2009. He spent 13 seasons with the Browns, Falcons and 49ers, earning seven Pro Bowl nods and three second-team All-Pro honors. Not bad for a player who had doubts about his own football future upon stepping on campus.



"I just remember just when I went to Cal, I think it was the summer after my junior year of high school, and I did their camp there and they'd liked me enough seeing me practice that they offered me a scholarship while at the camp," Mack said. "And I just remember the walk from the football facilities back to the dorm room and seeing the Bay Area and Cal in front of me on this beautiful summer day, and just like what a cool place this is.

"Always having that memory of walking along the Berkeley Hills there and seeing the campus in front, Campanile (Cal's iconic bell tower), the Golden Gate Bridge and Alcatraz all in the same kind of view and being like, This is cool, and what an awesome place it would be to play here. And then I did, and that was amazing."

ALEX MACK: UP CLOSE

- Named a First Team All-American in 2007 and a Second Team All-American in 2008.
- Helped propel the Golden Bears to four consecutive bowl victories, a 2006 Pac-10 co-championship and final rankings of No. 25 in 2005 and No. 14 in 2006.
- Graduated magna cum laude and won the 2008 NFF William V. Campbell Trophy® as the best football scholar-athlete in the nation.
- Played for Head Coach Jeff Tedford.
- Becomes the 17th Golden Bears player to enter the NFF College Football Hall of Fame.

NFF COLLEGE HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025

INDUCTEE PROFILES



TERRENCE METCALF

University of Mississippi • Offensive Lineman • 1997, 1999-2001

Terrence Metcalf always kept Hugh Nall's advice close to heart.

"No matter who people are, you always treat people right," Metcalf said of his offensive line coach at Ole Miss. "And that was his code. He didn't care if you were poor, rich, Black, White, Chinese. His whole thing is treat people right. If he ever felt like you were being disrespectful in any kind of way, you were going to hear about that. And so, I love that. Football led me to men who could show me a different way. And so, for that, I'm grateful for the game."

Those words guided Metcalf as he began his college football career with the Rebels. They guided him when he was drafted by the Chicago Bears. And they have absolutely guided him as a parent. Metcalf is the latest Ole Miss player to make the NFF College Football Hall of Fame, becoming the 10th former Rebels player to make the Hall, and the first since Patrick Willis in 2019.

When Willis was inducted six years ago, he went out of his way to thank Langston Rogers, the sports information director during Willis' playing days in Oxford, Miss. Metcalf couldn't resist mentioning Rogers as an influence as well, one of several he had in a college career that kept him close to home.

"You could be missing that parental guidance if your dad is not in your life, and my (middle school) coach went above and beyond to show me his commitment to me as a player. His name is Aaron Holden," Metcalf said of his influences. "He was my O-line and D-line coach in high school, and he just went above and beyond, making sure that I was focused and doing things the right way, not only on the football field, but in the classroom.

"And then my mom played the main role in my life. She was a single mother with five kids, and we had no issues. She was able to feed us, house us, and clothe us. There are just so many people. Langston Rogers, when I came to Ole Miss, basically told me: 'If you do the things the right way in the classroom, on the football field, I'm going to do my job to make sure that everybody knows who Terrence Metcalf is.' And, man, to this day, when I see him, I always thank him for his consistent commitment in my life. People always talk about giving people their coins while they're alive, and Langston was very instrumental in so many of our lives at that time playing at Ole Miss during the decade we were playing."

The 6-foot-4, 315-pound Metcalf blocked for future NFL stars at quarterback (Eli Manning) and running back (Deuce McAllister). He served as a team captain. Metcalf earned a number of individual awards, including Co-Offensive Player of the Year honors from the Rebel Club of Jackson in 1997 and SEC Most Valuable Lineman honors in 2001 from the Birmingham Monday Morning Quarterback Club, an NFF Chapter since 2019.

"We had a really good group of young players and guys that were in there," Metcalf said. "My fondest memories would be just us being in the summertime — nobody's on campus but the football team — and just us developing a mindset of, 'Hey, we're here at Ole Miss, we want to change the program.' And so guys like Deuce McAllister, guys like Derrick Burgess, Romaro Miller, Ken Lucas — Eli hadn't come in yet (until 1999) — we knew we were going to be able to change the program if we had enough time with the coaching staff that we had, but they decided to leave and go to Auburn."

Chicago drafted Metcalf in the third round in 2002, leading to a seven-year career with the Bears. The Clarksdale, Mississippi, native has kept busy post-retirement, coaching at Oxford High School, Pearl River Community College and now as the head coach at Coahoma Community College in his hometown. His son, DK, continued his legacy at Ole Miss before becoming an All-Pro NFL receiver.

"I can guarantee you this: Without football, coming from where I am, either you're going to choose one or the other," Metcalf said. "And



I submerged myself in football and weight training and my academics to avoid anything possibly turning toward street life. And so, football gave me everything that I ever desired, from developing my mind, developing my discipline and strength and camaraderie, to how to work well with others.

"I can teach these things to my son, and I took the exact same approach with my son that Hugh Nall and Aaron Holden took with me about work and outworking the next person. And I did the exact same thing with each one of my children — my son, my daughters, my younger daughter, my two younger sons — and I continue to just preach that same message, because it holds true."

TERRENCE METCALF: UP CLOSE

- Named a consensus First Team All-American in 2001 and Second Team in 1999.
- A two-time First Team All-SEC selection (2000, 2001), anchored an offensive line that allowed the fewest sacks in the SEC in both 2000 (7 sacks) and 2001 (10 sacks).
- Helped lead Ole Miss to three bowl appearances (1997 Motor City, 1999 Independence, 2000 Music City Bowl) and two final national rankings (No. 22 in 1997 and No. 22 in 1999).
- Played for head coaches Tommy Tuberville and David Cutcliffe.
- Becomes the 10th Ole Miss player to enter the NFF College Football Hall of Fame.

ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE IN THE

2025 NFF ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER PROGRAM



Connect with decision makers in the collegiate athletics community and show support of the NFF and its efforts to promote and protect the game of football.

EVENT DATE: DECEMBER 9, 2025

CONTACT CLERRINDA QUEEN FOR MORE INFORMATION

336-473-3145 | Clerrinda.Queen@Learfield.com

NFF COLLEGE HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025

INDUCTEE PROFILES



HALOTI NGATA

University of Oregon • Defensive Tackle • 2002, 2004-05

He spent 36 years in the profession, including 14 years leading the Oregon Ducks, but Mike Bellotti doesn't need much time to decide who's the best player he has ever coached.

"People ask me, 'Who's the best football player you ever coached?'" Bellotti said. "And I say Haloti Ngata, because he wasn't just a defensive tackle. He could have played any position in the front-seven on defense and any position in the front-seven on offense, including fullback or tight end. I mean, he had good hands, he could move. He blocked a bunch of kicks. He was just an outstanding player from the get-go.

"And we were, one, fortunate enough to get him, and two, fortunate to watch him develop and become one of the most dominant players at both levels."

That dominance has reached a new level of validation, as Ngata is now a member of the College Football Hall of Fame. Ngata becomes the seventh former Oregon player to make the Hall while also joining Bellotti, a 2014 inductee as a coach.

A Salt Lake City native, Ngata dominated in Eugene as a defensive tackle. Originally a BYU commit, Ngata flipped to Oregon after he and his family were persuaded by Bellotti, who had plenty of experience recruiting Mormon players. As flexible as Ngata was, Bellotti knew his stud recruit would be at home in the middle of the Ducks' defensive line.

"One, he was going to play early, and so there was still a learning curve involved," Bellotti said. "Two, we wanted him to be the disruptor. He could line up in a three-technique or a one-technique, and he could scare the center, worry the guards. So primarily, we did move him around sometimes, but usually he was going to draw a double-team from people. So, it didn't matter where we put him. They sort of said, 'Hey, let's go that way. Let's tilt the line toward him,' and all that. But he sort of took that as a challenge."

Though he would grow to be a 6-foot-4, 340-pound menace as a pro, that edge didn't always come naturally to Ngata. Oregon's staff was up for the challenge.

"One of the things that we had to do with Haloti, he was such a nice young man that we had to get him mad before games, because he was too nice," Bellotti said, laughing. "And one of the coaches would tell him that somebody said something about his family or something like that. I'm not sure what it was, but it was to get him riled up because he was just a really nice kid, and he wouldn't dominate like he could.

"If he was just a little bit mad, he could just go in there and knock people around."

Family meant everything to Ngata. His father died in a car accident during Ngata's freshman year of college. His mother died of kidney disease months before he was drafted. His parents stayed with him through everything that he did, including a 13-year NFL career that featured two first-team All-Pro nods, five Pro Bowl honors and a Super Bowl win with the Baltimore Ravens, who drafted him 12th overall.

"I always thank the Lord for the amazing parents He blessed me with, and just always try to represent my parents to the best of my abilities and live them through me," Ngata said at his retirement news conference, tearing up. "Everything that you guys love about me is from my parents — the hard work, humility, just the community service — all comes from them. So, just know that the things you like about me are from my parents."

Ngata's impact was felt early at Oregon, where he earned freshman All-America honors en route to a college career that spanned 35 games and included 151 tackles, 24.5 tackles for loss, 10 sacks, three forced fumbles and seven blocked kicks.

He was never above playing special teams, even if that ended up costing him his 2003 season due to an ACL tear he suffered on punt coverage in that year's opener. Bellotti forever



rued calling a safe punt on that play, but he was impressed by how seriously Ngata attacked rehab, coming back stronger than ever in 2004. By Ngata's final year of college in 2005, he no longer needed the coaching staff to light a fire under him.

"By his last year with us, he recognized what he was capable of, and he knew the level of play that was expected from him," Bellotti said. "So yeah, he learned. It took a couple years, though, to get him to use his skillset and his size and his speed that he had to really take over a game."

HALOTI NGATA: UP CLOSE

- Named a consensus First Team All-American in 2005 and the first player in Oregon history to earn Pac-10 Defensive Player of the Year honors.
- Led the conference's interior linemen in tackles (61) his final year, claiming the 2005 Morris Trophy as the league's top interior lineman.
- Amassed 151 career tackles, 24.5 tackles for loss, 10 sacks, three forced fumbles, and seven blocked kicks.
- Played for NFF College Football Hall of Fame Coach Mike Bellotti.
- Becomes the seventh Oregon player to enter the College Football Hall of Fame.

NFF COLLEGE HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025

INDUCTEE PROFILES



STEVE SLATON

West Virginia University • Running Back •2005-07

Steve Slaton may have been an electric running back who helped usher in a new wave of modern football, but it wasn't until he heard his name called at the NFL Draft after a legendary career with the Mountaineers in Morgantown that he truly realized just how far his skills could take him.

"If you love something enough and you do it enough, you always think you have a chance," Slaton said. "Being drafted is when it cemented me to having a feeling that this would be something that changed my life — not just my life, but my family's life.

"Keep shooting for the moon, shooting for the stars. And to that point, to be finally on an NFL team was (when) this path of 12 years of grinding, not going on spring break, not doing these things, giving up those things (that) an average person wants to have all the time, it satisfies you."

Now, further validation has arrived for Slaton in the form of a NFF College Football Hall of Fame nod. Slaton becomes the seventh former West Virginia player to make the Hall, putting an eternal face on a period that revolutionized college football.

"Just the class I'm going in with — Urban Meyer, Nick Saban, Michael Strahan, Michael Vick — it's just a great class," Slaton said. "These are people I looked up to. To be in this, and to be mentioned with some of these greats, it really puts life in perspective, that your hard work does matter."

Slaton eclipsed the 1,000-yard rushing plateau in each of his three seasons in Morgantown, announcing his arrival to college football with a bang in 2005. He scored six touchdowns in one game, against Louisville. He earned Sugar Bowl MVP honors in a win over Georgia.

"Being part of that (helped) start a winning culture," Slaton said of upsetting the Bulldogs.

Slaton finished fourth in the Heisman Trophy voting the following season, when he set a school single-season rushing record with 1,744 yards. He left college as West Virginia's career leader in total touchdowns (55), rushing touchdowns (50) and points by a non-kicker (330).

Teaming with head coach Rich Rodriguez and quarterback Pat White, Slaton helped lead the Mountaineers to the most prolific stretch in program history. Slaton and White became just the third pair of teammates to each surpass 1,000 rushing yards in back-to-back seasons.

West Virginia posted the best three-year stretch in program history, going 33-5, which doubled as the best record in the nation across that span. The Mountaineers finished in the top-10 each year of Slaton's career, captured two Big East titles, and won the Sugar Bowl (2005-06), Gator Bowl (2006-07) and Fiesta Bowl (2007-08).

"It's so big in the grand scheme of things," Slaton said of that era. "I make the jokes before about me being a Philadelphia kid not knowing that West Virginia was its own state, thinking it was part of Virginia. That was my initial thought. But once you get there, once you've studied your facts of the real history of running backs we had, just the great players we had at that university, I know there are people that paved the way for me that deserve this recognition as well to be part of a steppingstone for that university. But for me to have it, I'm just happy that era can still live on."

The Levittown, Pennsylvania, native exited college with 4,775 all-purpose yards. He was picked by the Texans in the third round of the 2008 NFL Draft and went on to a five-year NFL career. Houston is home for Slaton, who has pursued a culinary career.

"There are so many people," Slaton said of his football influences. "I would say my recruiting coach, Bill Kirelawich. I have to give him a lot of respect for getting down to West Virginia and just staying on me.

"I feel like we joke about it, but I came in an era where there was no name, image and likeness money, no NIL deals that you're going to get. And I stayed with a team in West Virginia where we're blue collar. We're workers. We know how to be a good team. We had to outwork everybody else, and that was our main objective. I give Bill Kirelawich, I give Coach Rod, all my teammates (credit). We battled. The games were easy. Practice was hard."



STEVE SLATON: UP CLOSE

- Named a unanimous First Team All-American in 2006, finishing fourth in Heisman Trophy voting.
- Rushed for 3,923 yards during his career, adding another 805 receiving and totaling 4,775 all-purpose yards while setting the WVU single-season rushing record in 2006 with 1,744 yards.
- Helped WVU go 33-5 and win three consecutive bowls (2006 Sugar, 2007 Gator and the 2008 Fiesta upset of Oklahoma), notching final national rankings of No. 5 in 2005, No. 10 in 2006 and No. 6 in 2007.
- Played for head coach Rich Rodriguez.
- Becomes the seventh Mountaineer player to enter the NFF College Football Hall of Fame.

NFF COLLEGE HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025

INDUCTEE PROFILES



DARRIN SMITH

University of Miami (FL) · Linebacker · 1989-92

Darrin Smith took his mother to a doctor's appointment. The two of them left the office with a double-dose of good news. His mother was fine, first and foremost.

While there, though, Smith received an unexpected call from John Routh, the executive director of the Miami Sports Hall of Fame who also used to perform as Sebastian the Ibis. Turns out Smith was about to gain more notoriety than the Hurricanes' famed mascot. Routh informed Smith that he was getting into the NFF College Football Hall of Fame, making him the 10th former Miami player to make the Hall.

Smith joins former Miami teammates such as Gino Torretta (2009) and Russell Maryland (2011), along with his college coach, Dennis Erickson (2019), and the man who recruited him, Jimmy Johnson (2012). Johnson was among the many congratulatory callers in the aftermath of the news. Given that Smith went on to play for him in the NFL, it only made sense.

"When Jimmy left [Miami] I was like, Oh man, I hate this, because this is the guy that brought me in," Smith said. "But I didn't know how later on in my life he would be so impactful, because he would be the same guy that drafted me to Dallas."

Hailing from Miami Norland High, Smith burst onto the scene from the get-go, helping the Hurricanes win national titles in his freshman (1989) and junior (1991) seasons. He starred with fellow linebackers Micheal Barrow and Jessie Armstead to form the famed "Bermuda Triangle" in the middle of the Miami defense, tallying 401 career tackles, 10 sacks, 15 tackles for loss and 24 pass breakups.

"Sometimes it's hard for me to really appreciate (my accomplishments)," Smith said. "When I think about all those guys I played with: The Russell Marylands, the Cortez Kennedys, those defensive linemen who were so great, who were probably the biggest part of us having great success at UM, especially the linebackers. We had some great defensive linemen in front of us that really allowed us to go and play and be successful."

The Hurricanes went 44-4 during Smith's career. They never finished lower than No. 3 in the major polls. Smith fell in love with Miami when he was 13, as one of his two older brothers took him to his first college football game: the Orange Bowl against Nebraska to close out the 1983 season. As he learned more and more about The U over the years, he'd hear names such as Alonzo Highsmith, Melvin Bratton and Brett Perriman — all of whom were locals. Randy Shannon was just a few years ahead of Smith at Miami Norland, too.

The youngest of five siblings, Smith lost his dad when he was just 3 years old. He credits his mother and his youth coaches for filling the void in his life and allowing him to blossom into the man and football player he became.

"She raised all five of us on her own, and it was those coaches that kind of stepped into my life in a father figure role," Smith said. "So, I was looking to these coaches to not only be a football coach, but for guidance as far as what a man is."

That meant stressing academics as much as athletics. Smith can't help but say that he was "truly, truly blessed" to experience everything that he has, as he played 12 NFL seasons for four teams, winning back-to-back Super Bowls with the Cowboys. But he is just as proud of the work that he has done in his post-playing career, paying forward the lessons that his mentors had taught him.

He is now a chaplain and youth football coach who is heavily involved with several charitable endeavors, including founding "Project 59" to assist children academically.

"To be a part of that that team, to be around those great players, it was incredible to win two national championships with that team," Smith said. "But my main goal when I went to college was not just to win, because I really in my mind didn't think I was good enough to even be on



that team. So, I worked really hard to graduate. I ended up getting two, my undergrad and my master's degree, before I got drafted because I was like, Man, I just want to get everything out of this school before I get out of here and go into the real world. I wasn't even sure about the NFL."

DARRIN SMITH: UP CLOSE

- Named a two-time First Team All-American (1991, 1992), leading the Canes to two national titles with an overall 44-4 record during his four years and never finishing ranked lower than No. 3 nationally.
- Recorded 401 career tackles, including 10 sacks, 15 tackles for loss, and 24 pass breakups during his four years in Coral Gables.
- Graduated in 3.5 years, claiming an NFF National Scholar-Athlete Award.
- Played for NFF College Football Hall of Fame Coach Dennis Erickson.
- Becomes the 10th Miami player to enter the NFF College Football Hall of Fame.

CATAPULT

CAPTURE ANALYZE PLAN SHARE

EVERY ASPECT OF PERFORMANCE



PERFORMANCE WEARABLES

Elite wearable solutions that track athlete performance, manage injury risk, expedite return-to-play, and more.

VIDEO ANALYSIS

Understand every aspect of team performance through video and data. The trusted analysis platform for College & Professional teams.

SCOUTING & RECRUITMENT

Streamline your scouting & recruitment process with intuitive tools to evaluate players & personnel data.

LEARN MORE AT CATAPULTSPORTS.COM

NFF COLLEGE HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025

INDUCTEE PROFILES



MICHAEL STRAHAN

Texas Southern University • Defensive Lineman • 1989-92

He may be more famous than he's ever been, going from "Good Morning America" to "Fox NFL Sunday," traveling from New York to Los Angeles and airing on your TV screen wherever you may be. But for Michael Strahan, none of this is possible without the work he put in at Texas Southern.

"That was the hardest I ever worked in my life," Strahan said. "When you're out there with football pads on in 100-degree heat and 100 percent humidity, and you're running sprints and you're hitting dummies and you're doing one-on-one drills and seven-on-seven drills and team drills, it tests you as a human being. It tests you mentally as much as it does physically. And when I came to the pros and everything else I do in life, literally, I need to tell myself, It's not that bad. I've already been through hell.

"So, it shaped me in so many ways. To be resilient, to be strong, to not give up, and to have another level or another gear when things got tough. Or when you got tired, I knew I always had more; I just had to find that when I was at TSU. And it still goes to this day: If I'm doing something, if I'm working and I'm like, Ah, I'm tired. I'm really not tired. I know there's always more there because I've proven it, and TSU made me prove that I had more than I'd given myself credit for."

Strahan's football origin story was seeded at the HBCU in Houston. And now Texas Southern can boast that it has its first NFF College Football Hall of Famer — an honor all the more incredible when you consider that Strahan had played just one year of high school football.

Opposing offensive linemen would have never known it. Strahan was double-teamed so much in college that his coaches referred to the strategy as the "Strahan Rules." With a school-record 41.5 sacks for his career, who could blame them? Strahan's 19 sacks as a senior in 1992 were a single-season school record, and they doubled as a sign of what was to come: His 22.5 sacks in 2001 remain an NFL record.

"There are several things when it comes to my career, I've thought about the benefits and the other things that may not have been the benefits, but to go to TSU was perfect for me because I was in a community where I was an individual and I wasn't swallowed up by the big program," Strahan said.

"Because I was late to football, I didn't know how to play the game, and they took the time to foster my interest and foster my talent. That helped me. … I was never worn out. I was never tired of football.

"There are sometimes I look back and think maybe I could have been better had I come to the game a little bit earlier. But when I look at physically how I feel now and physically the years that I went injury-free in the NFL without missing games playing at the position I played, I think I also saved physically a lot of the wear and tear on my body."

Texas Southern was the only school to offer Strahan a scholarship, but his father, Gene, told him that he was going. Strahan had moved back to Houston from Germany, where he had spent his formative years with his dad stationed there as an Army major.

Strahan earned Division I-AA Defensive Player of the Year and Black College Defensive Player of the Year honors in 1992, and the Giants drafted him 40th overall a few months later in 1993. He played all 15 pro seasons with New York, culminating in a monumental Super Bowl XLII win over the undefeated Patriots. Texas Southern and the Giants have both retired his number, and now he is a member of both the College and Pro Football Halls of Fame.

Strahan remains involved with his alma mater, regularly talking to coach Cris Dishman and supporting the program with new helmets and shoulder pads, along with designing custom suits for players and coaches.



"This game has been so great to me, but I always do look and wonder why me? Because there are a lot of guys who are more talented than me who've had success, but just haven't had the post-career," Strahan said. "And I realize how blessed I am. I do not take it for granted, because there's so many guys out there with so much talent off the field as well as on the field, that I hope at some point guys will get a chance to really shine and show what they can do when the game is over, like I've been able to do."

MICHAEL STRAHAN: UP CLOSE

- Named a First Team All-American in 1992 while claiming 1992 Division I-AA Defensive Player of the Year and Black College Defensive Player of the Year honors.
- Earned SWAC Player of the Year honors twice (1991, 1992), amassing 41.5 career sacks, which remains a Texas Southern record.
- Recorded a school-record 19 sacks while amassing 32 tackles for losses for 142 yards his senior season.
- Played for head coach Wally Highsmith.
- Becomes the first person player or coach ever from Texas Southern to enter the NFF College Football Hall of Fame.

NFF COLLEGE HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025

INDUCTEE PROFILES



DENNIS THURMAN

University of Southern California • Defensive Back • 1974-77

In some ways, Dennis Thurman's college journey makes total sense. He was a Southern California kid who had wanted to stay close to home, with USC and UCLA both vying for his services. In other ways, well, we'll just let him explain it from here.

"Bob Toledo and Norv Turner were my position coaches, and I laugh because they were my position coaches, but neither one of them had ever coached a defensive back," Thurman said. "But those were my position coaches, because they were part of John Robinson's staff, and they were known for their offense. But hey, we made it work."

That they did. Thurman is the latest USC great to make the NFF College Football Hall of Fame, becoming the 35th former Trojans player to earn the distinction. His NFF Hall of Fame teammates include Ricky Bell, Brad Budde, Anthony Davis, Ronnie Lott, Marvin Powell, Charles White, and Richard Wood.

A jack of all trades who was a freshman on USC's 1974 national championship team, Thurman became a two-time All-American and earned the Trojans' team MVP honors in 1977. He had eight interceptions in 1976, leading the then-Pac-8 Conference, and he recorded 13 picks for his college career, returning two for touchdowns. Thurman finished his college career with 169 total tackles, 11 pass deflections and four fumble recoveries.

The fact that his national title came at the Rose Bowl was all the more special for the Santa Monica native.

"I watched USC football and UCLA football when I was growing up, but it always seemed like USC was playing somebody in the Rose Bowl on January 1," Thurman said. "From watching those games, I wanted to be a part of that, because that scene, that scenario on New Year's Day, and especially when the sun began to set behind the (San Gabriel) Mountains, and having an opportunity to do that my freshman year, after having watched it.

"I was literally in the stands the year before my freshman year, when Ohio State beat USC, 42-21. And I hadn't made my decision yet, but I was leaning toward USC, and I had gone to that game with my pastor, Clarence Davis, and he told me about midway through the third quarter, 'You'll be down there this time next year.' And I just looked at him, and that's what he told me. And so, a year later, when I was there the next year, I thought about that during that game that he had told me that, and how it had come true. And we ended up beating Ohio State, 18-17, and won a part of the national championship. So that was pretty big for me."

In addition to the aforementioned names, Thurman was fortunate enough to have played for a legendary high school coach in Tebb Kusserow, before getting coached at USC by notable names such as eventual NFL head coach Wayne Fontes and former USC captain Willie Brown, both of whom were on staffs led by Robinson, an NFF College Football Hall of Famer himself (2009).

Robinson's influence was so strong that he offered a gateway into Thurman's current profession: coaching.

"Obviously the late John Robinson took over when (John) McKay went to Tampa. He and I built a great relationship, and he gave me a coaching job in 1993 when he went back to USC for his second stint there," said Thurman, who is now Hawaii's defensive coordinator. "So the people that basically helped me throughout my career are at USC. And some that weren't, my high school football coach, just those people are the ones that I thought about. You know how instrumental they were. They played a part in me choosing USC and were there to support me throughout."

The Cowboys drafted Thurman in the 11th round, leading to an eight-year pro career before the coaching bug bit.

"After my seventh year in the NFL, Coach (Tom) Landry called me into his office and asked



me if I had thought about coaching," Thurman said. "And I told him, not really. It had been mentioned by John Robinson prior to my draft year in '78, but that was the only time I really thought about it. And he said, 'If you're thinking about it, I'd like to give you an opportunity to do it with our rookies with Gene Stallings (NFF HOF Class of 2011), because you prepare like a coach. You always know what to study. You know what we're doing, and you know what the other team is doing. And I just think that the way you prepare for games, that you'd be a really good coach.'"

DENNIS THURMAN: UP CLOSE

- Two-time First Team All-American (unanimous in 1977 and consensus in 1976).
- Recorded 13 career interceptions and amassed 169 career tackles, 11 deflections, and four fumble recoveries.
- Helped USC post a 37-10-1 record during his four years, including a national title in 1974 and final rankings of No. 19 in 1975, No. 2 in 1976 and No. 12 in 1977.
- Played for NFF College Football Hall of Fame coaches John McKay and John Robinson.
- Becomes the 35th Trojan player to enter the College Football Hall of Fame.

NFF COLLEGE HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025

INDUCTEE PROFILES



MICHAEL VICK

Virginia Tech • Quarterback • 1999-2000

All these years later, and Michael Vick still gets emotional thinking about it. He was a young quarterback overwhelmed by his college playbook. He was, he admits, struggling a lot. Then one day Rickey Bustle, Virginia Tech's offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach, told Vick to meet him at the 50-yard line of Lane Stadium. Just the two of them. Was Vick in trouble? Hardly.

"He made me get on one knee, he made me look him in the eye, and he made me promise that I wouldn't quit, that I wouldn't give up," Vick said. "And I just kept going until I learned. My college football life was amazing."

That conversation set the course for what ended up being an NFF College Football Hall of Fame career. Vick becomes the sixth Virginia Tech player to make the Hall, and he joins his coach, Frank Beamer (Class of 2018), along with teammate Corey Moore (2023), as part of a trio that represents a defining era for Hokies football.

That experience in Blacksburg played no small role in leading Vick to where he is now: As head coach of Norfolk State.

"It was a lot. It was a major factor in terms of my decision-making," Vick said of getting into coaching. "I just knew if I could try to be half the coach that Coach Beamer was in terms of just captivating our minds and making us believe that we could go win and playing hard and doing things the right way; it's not an easy thing to do, but it can be done. I feel like I had great college coaches."

After a redshirt year in 1998, Vick burst on to the national scene the following season, leading the Hokies to an 11-0 regular-season record as he led the nation in pass efficiency (180.4) and finished third in the Heisman Trophy voting. That pass efficiency mark was a single-season school record, as was Vick's yards per completion (20.4) and yards per attempt (12.0).

Virginia Tech made it all the way to the national title game, before falling to Florida State. A 38-14 win over Boston College in the regular-season finale set up that trip to the Sugar Bowl, and it doubled as Vick's favorite on-field moment in college. — even if it technically carried him off the field.

"My favorite on-the-field memory was being carried off the field by the student body after the Boston College game," Vick said. "I never would've thought in a million years after my struggles when I got there — I wouldn't even call it a struggle, it was just having to learn what to do. I just learned what to do. And so, to sum it all up with a national championship opportunity, to go to that game, beating Boston College and being carried off the field, that was very special."

Vick's 2000 season featured more of the same, leading to him becoming the NFL's No. 1 draft pick by the Atlanta Falcons. He exited Blacksburg with 3,074 passing yards and 20 passing touchdowns, to go with 1,202 rushing yards and 16 rushing touchdowns.

The Hokies went 22-2 with Vick as the starter, with the second of those two losses coming in a game against Miami (FL) that Vick had to leave early because of an ankle injury. They closed out Vick's career with a Gator Bowl win over Clemson, with the quarterback winning game MVP honors. Virginia Tech finished No. 6 in the AP poll, after a No. 2 finish the previous season. Along the way, the southpaw changed the dynamic of the quarterback position.

"I take a lot of pride in it, because I put in the work, I worked hard," Vick said of his influence on the modern quarterback position. "I had some really good coaches who poured into me and believed in me, and I always had the support of my family as well. So, all those things combined to make me a more complete player on and off the field."

Despite growing up less than five hours away from campus in Newport News, Vick hardly had Virginia Tech on his radar in the early stages of his recruitment. He liked the idea of playing



at Clemson or Georgia Tech, until Hokies recruiting coordinator Jim Cavanaugh initiated his recruitment.

Once Vick met Beamer, he was sold.

Now, Vick takes pride in being on the other side of the same type of conversations he once had with Bustle and his own college coaches back in his playing days. As it turns out, "Coach Vick" has a nice ring to it.

"It's the cool part about my job: I get to keep encouraging them when they feel like they can't do it," Vick said. "And when I know they've got the potential to do it, that's what it comes down to, the trust. And once you tell them, and they see it happening, you gain more trust. So that's what it's all about for me, is gaining the trust of the players."

MICHAEL VICK: UP CLOSE

- Named a First Team All-American in 1999 as a redshirt freshman, finishing third in the Heisman Trophy voting.
- Finished his career with 177 completions for 3,074 yards and 20 touchdowns, adding 1,202 rush yards and 16 touchdowns on the ground.
- Helped guide the Hokies to a 22-2 overall record during his two years in Blacksburg, including an appearance in the 1999 title game and a No. 6 final AP ranking in 2000.
- Played for NFF College Football Hall of Fame Coach Frank Beamer.
- Becomes the sixth player from Virginia Tech to enter the NFF College Football Hall of Fame.

Riddell®



NATIONAL FOOTBALL FOUNDATION

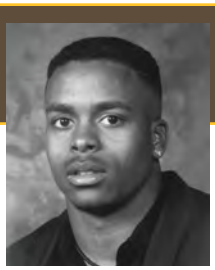
COLLEGE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME

Riddell is proud to be the helmet of choice across all levels of football.

@RIDDELLSPORTS RIDDELL.COM

NFF COLLEGE HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025

INDUCTEE PROFILES



RYAN YARBOROUGH

University of Wyoming • Wide Receiver • 1990-93

Ryan Yarborough's football life is akin to one big game of six degrees of separation. His father, Darwin, played wide receiver at Morgan State. He was roommates with future Super Bowl champion Mark Washington and legendary sportswriter William C. Rhoden. Yarborough's uncle, Bill, was an all-state quarterback in Chicago who was ahead of his time directing the run-and-shoot offense, before being moved to defensive back at Wisconsin.

"Those were my pioneers," Yarborough said of his dad and uncle. "Those were people that made the path for me."

Yarborough took advantage of that path, and the wide receiver has become just the third Wyoming player to make the College Football Hall of Fame, an honor that simply can't be measured by its uniqueness, as less than 0.02 percent of players in the history of college football have made the Hall.

"It's way less than 1 percent, because my son and I did the actual math, because I was always into statistics and things of that nature," Yarborough said. "But I didn't let them define me, because when it comes down to it, you can overcome any odds when it's all said and done, so I never was into the numbers (against me).

"But as far as just being in the same category with guys I grew up watching, like my favorites, like Tony Dorsett when I was growing up, inducted into the Hall of Fame with guys like Deion Sanders, you know what I mean? It's a gratifying feeling, to say the least."

Growing up as the oldest of seven kids on the South Side of Chicago, Yarborough had been looking to get as far away from the Windy City as possible. Wyoming had developed a pipeline of Second City players under head coach and athletic director Paul Roach, who had actually served as Bill Yarborough's position coach back at Wisconsin. Joe Tiller succeeded Roach at Wyoming after Yarborough's freshman season.

Yarborough was impossible for defenses to contain, leading the nation in receiving yards in 1992 and '93, accumulating 1,351 in '92 and 1,512 yards in '93. He set an NCAA record at the time for career receiving yards (4,357) and he still holds the NCAA record for yards per reception — minimum of 200 catches — at 19.0 yards per catch. His 42 career touchdown receptions still rank eighth all-time, and his average of 137.5 receiving yards per game in 1993 still ranks him among the top 30 in history. He had seven 200-yard receiving games and made a touchdown catch in 27 straight games. He posted three 1,000-yard seasons and had 229 career receptions.

The Cowboys made the Copper Bowl twice during Yarborough's career. They won a share of the Western Athletic Conference title in Yarborough's senior season of 1993, knocking off a Marshall Faulk-led San Diego State team on the road in the title-clinching game. That game, along with a game-winning touchdown catch to beat the Aztecs in a 52-51 thriller in 1990, rank as Yarborough's top college memories. San Diego State's quarterback was Dan McGwire, the younger brother of record-setting MLB slugger Mark McGwire.

"I just wanted to be better than my dad and my uncle and go to the next level," Yarborough said of his inspirations. He made it there when the Jets drafted him in the second round in 1994. He played six seasons with four NFL franchises before retiring to the Houston area. The history of his family, and the history he made at Wyoming, is not lost on him.

"Just being able to go there and accomplish the things I did, it's a blessing, first and foremost," Yarborough said. "And I'm forever grateful for not only being the third Wyoming Hall of Famer, but the first Black, Brown skin Hall of Famer at Wyoming, because there were a lot of obstacles I had to overcome. I wanted to get far away from home, but I didn't necessarily know where I was going. When I got there, I had to be reminded that I wasn't back in the Chicagoland area. So just being able to overcome some things, that perseverance that the kids don't necessarily have today, being able to move around so frequently, helped me grow as a man."



RYAN YARBOROUGH: UP CLOSE

- Twice named a First Team All-American, leading the nation in receiving yards in both 1992 and 1993.
- Set NCAA marks at the time for the most career receiving yards (4,357—still ranks ninth), 200-plus yard receiving games (7), most 1,000-yard receiving seasons in a career (3), and the most games catching a touchdown pass in a career (27).
- Still holds the NCAA record for yards per reception (minimum of 200 catches), averaging 19.0 yards for his 229 career receptions.
- Played for head coaches Paul Roach and Joe Tiller.
- Becomes the third player from Wyoming to enter the NFF College Football Hall of Fame.

NFF COLLEGE HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025

INDUCTEE PROFILES



LARRY BLAKENEY

Head Coach • Troy University (1991-2014)

Before Troy became one of the most consistent Group of Five programs in America, the Trojans were mired in a rut at the Division II level. Back then, the school was known as Troy State. Back then, the program played in the Gulf South Conference, not the Sun Belt Conference. That all changed once Larry Blakeney stepped in.

A former football and baseball player at Auburn, Blakeney, then an assistant at his alma mater, was hired to his first head-coaching job in 1991. It would be his only head-coaching job. Turns out the man would go on to literally rewrite the program's history in his own image.

The school went on to name the playing surface at Veterans Memorial Stadium after Blakeney. During his 24-year tenure, Blakeney became the winningest coach in Troy and Sun Belt history. And now he is the first College Football Hall of Famer in the history of both the school and the conference.

"I'm excited about it for all of my family and friends, and the recognition is always good, and I'll try to deal with it properly," Blakeney said with a laugh.

Where do you even begin with Blakeney's accomplishments? He led the Trojans to seven FCS playoff appearances. Then he led them to five bowl appearances, winning two. Troy won three Southland Conference titles, before winning five straight Sun Belt titles from 2006-10. Blakeney was named conference coach of the year two times apiece in each of the two aforementioned leagues. He coached undefeated teams in 1993 and '95.

"Troy was a godsend for me," Blakeney said. "It was a head-coaching job in college football, and I was excited about it. Janice, my wife, was excited about it, and my girls were getting close to college age. So, it was a good place for us all to go. It was a good town and good people at the top, (chancellor) Dr. Jack Hawkins and the administration."

A Birmingham, Alabama, native, Blakeney was thrust into coaching not long after graduating college, as he received word that Southern Academy in Greensboro, Alabama, was in need of a head coach just two weeks before the start of its season. He answered the bell, found immediate success and, not long after taking the job, told his mother: "Mom, I found my place."

Head jobs at Walker High (AL) and Vestavia Hills High (AL) followed, before Doug Barfield brought Blakeney aboard as an assistant at Auburn in 1977. Blakeney was the only assistant coach retained by Pat Dye when the future Hall of Fame coach (Class of 2005) took over the Tigers in 1981. Blakeney did a little bit of everything on the Plains, from coaching the offensive line to coaching tight ends and receivers, to calling the plays during one of the most important stretches in the program's history. Auburn won at least a share of four SEC titles during his tenure, finishing ranked in the Top 25 nine times with a final ranking highwater mark of No. 3 in 1983.

Troy made Blakeney a head coach and, by extension, a literal college football legend. But his prep roots guided the coach's philosophy every bit as much. Players from those days, such as Curt Mitchell from that first job at Southern Academy, still call Blakeney to this day.

"The players always came first, then everyone else," Blakeney has said over and over again. "The players win the games and coaches lose the games," went another one of his favorite sayings.

The ultimate players' coach received the ultimate honor in 2011, when "Larry Blakeney Field" at Veterans Memorial Stadium became official.

"We'd been there a while and won some games and gone to a bowl or two and did some pretty good things program-wise, so they decided to name the field," Blakeney said. "I was awestruck. I didn't know what they were thinking. It was good for everybody as it turned out."



As crazy as the coaching profession is, Blakeney never had to leave the state during his 45-year career across all levels of football — fitting for a native son of Alabama whose relationships knew no bounds.

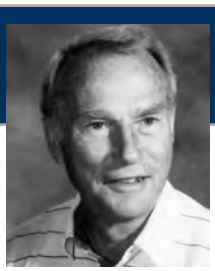
"It was a good thing to be stable like that, not only for me as a coach, but my family and my players and my school," Blakeney said. "So anyhow, Troy was home, and it turned out to be a good one, so it was a good match."

LARRY BLAKENEY: UP CLOSE

- Overall head coaching record of 178-113-1 (61.1%).
- Remains the all-time winningest coach in both Troy and Sun Belt Conference history.
- One of only two coaches in history to guide a program from Division II ultimately to the Football Bowl Subdivision.
- Led Troy to five bowl games and prior to Troy's transition to the FBS guided the Trojans to seven FCS playoff appearances in eight seasons.
- Guided Troy to eight conference championships, including three in the Southland Conference and a Sun Belt-record five consecutive titles from 2006 to 2010.

NFF COLLEGE HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025

INDUCTEE PROFILES



LARRY KORVER

Head Coach • Northwestern College [IA] (1967-94)

Larry Korver can recite the records as if they occurred yesterday, so sudden was the turnaround job he pulled off at Northwestern College.

"We were 0-7-1 the first year," Korver said. "The second year we were 7-2 with the same players. We made great strides in a short period of time."

No kidding, although Korver ended up staying for a long time at the tiny Christian college in Orange City, Iowa. Korver is now an NFF College Football Hall of Famer, becoming the first player or coach from Northwestern to receive the honor.

For a guy who began his playing career at Northwestern, the opportunity to lead the program to unprecedented heights was the honor of a lifetime. Now that honor has been validated many times over, as Korver could not believe that he was making the Hall upon receiving a commemorative football in the mail back in January.

"It's something that I never realized; I never understood it," Korver said of his amazement at making the Hall. "I still don't understand it. I am so appreciative of the support that I've gotten from other coaches and athletic directors, and I just am thankful for being a true man of God."

Korver played at Northwestern when it was a junior college, before landing at South Dakota State. He became a First Team All-Conference player in football, starring at running back and defensive back for the Jackrabbits. He won Team MVP honors on both the gridiron and the hardwood.

Northwestern went 212-77-6 under Korver during his 28-year tenure, making the postseason 11 times and winning the NAIA title twice, 1973 and 1983. The 1983 coaching staff included future NFF College Football Hall of Fame Coach Mel Tjeerdsma. In addition to the national titles, the Red Raiders were national runners-up three different times and reached the semifinals three other times.

"It gave me a lot of confidence, knowing that they put their faith and trust in me," Korver said of leading his alma mater. "So I had to just work a little harder. Even though we had to line the fields and mow the grass and wash the uniforms, we still had great experiences."

Korver won NAIA Coach of the Year honors during his first title season, and he earned the honor again in 1985. He coached 32 NAIA All-Americans during his tenure, and he coached at Northwestern when it was an NAIA Division II school.

"In that stride of moving forward, we played Yankton College (SD), which had Lyle Alzado playing for them, plus three other pro prospects, and we beat them three out of four times, so this was a great experience," Korver said.

"And in 1973 I had an opportunity to play South Dakota State, and we beat them. So, it was a great experience. And then we went undefeated that year and won a national championship, our first one against Glenville State (WV), 10-3.

"And then in 1974 we had an opportunity to go to Japan. A Division I school had gone over there the year before and played two games; we went over there and played two games, and we played the Osaka All-Stars and the Tokyo All-Stars, and we won both of those games."

Korver decided in high school that he wanted to eventually be a coach, and he coached high school ball for 10 years in Minnesota and Iowa. He returned to Northwestern in 1967 and retired in 1994, as he wanted to leave the program in a good place and had the opportunity to work with his brother locally. He became an NAIA Hall of Famer in 1990, amid a run that he never took for granted.

"It meant a tremendous amount for me," Korver said of staying at Northwestern for so long. "And even though I had opportunities to move on to other colleges, I chose to stay here since they showed the confidence in me, and so this is the way we decided to go."



The school's all-time winningest coach, Korver's teams won at least eight games in 13 different seasons and suffered only three losing campaigns during his tenure. In recognition of his contributions, Northwestern renamed its football field in his honor.

When he retired in 1994, his 212 career victories ranked him second among all active NAIA coaches, and his 72.9 winning percentage was fifth-best. Korver guided Northwestern College to a Nebraska-Iowa Athletic Conference title in his final season in 1994.

LARRY KORVER: UP CLOSE

- Overall head coaching record of 212-77-6 (72.9%).
- Made 11 national playoff appearances, capturing the NAIA national title in 1973 and 1983 while also finishing as national runner-up three times.
- Twice named NAIA National Coach of the Year, ranked second among all active NAIA coaches at the time of his retirement with 212 victories.
- Won at least eight games in 13 different seasons and suffered only three losing campaigns during his tenure.
- Becomes the first-ever player or coach in the history of the Red Raiders program to enter the NFF College Football Hall of Fame.



WHAT STARTS ON THE FOOTBALL FIELD
LIVES FAR BEYOND IT

SHARE YOUR STORY

Jalen Milroe
Recipient of the 2024 William V. Campbell Trophy®

NATIONAL FOOTBALL FOUNDATION
COLLEGE HALL OF FAME

I PLAYED

IPLAYED.ORG

NFF COLLEGE HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025

INDUCTEE PROFILES



URBAN MEYER

Head Coach • Bowling Green State University (2001-02), University of Utah (2003-04), University of Florida (2005-10), Ohio State University (2012-18)

Urban Meyer wasn't even a teenager yet, but the intensity of the moment spoke to him. His father, Bud, was a Cincinnati graduate who would take him to Nippert Stadium for Bearcats games. One game, Urban looked down and saw a Wichita State assistant with a whiteboard, passionately getting his message across to his players. That coach was Bill Parcells. And Urban Meyer found his calling.

"I just stopped, and I looked at my father and said, I want to do that someday," Meyer said. "From that point forward I knew that I wanted to be a coach."

Meyer did that and much more, turning around four different programs and winning national titles at two of them en route to a College Football Hall of Fame career.

"My father would say: 'I don't care about your ACT score, how fast you are, how tall you are, how strong you are, but I got a simple question for you. It's a simple question with a complicated answer: Are you the hardest-working guy on your team?'" Meyer said. "And then when I became a coach, he'd say the same thing: 'Are you the hardest-working coach out there?' And I wasn't as honest as I could be with him, because I'd always say yes, but in my heart, I probably knew I wasn't.

"And then when it became where I really believed I was, it was one of those cathartic moments where you could say, Yeah, Dad, I am. I am the hardest-working guy out there. Because I really believed if I wasn't, that was a problem. So, it was Earle Bruce, my father, Lou Holtz and Sonny Lubick — those were the guys that really shaped me as a young coach."

Sporting a 187-32 career record across 17 seasons as a head coach, Meyer's .853 career winning percentage trails just fellow Hall of Famers Knute Rockne and Frank Leahy at the FBS level.

In 2001, Meyer took over a Bowling Green program that had gone 2-9 the previous year. He went 17-6 in two seasons, including a 3-0 mark against BCS opponents in his first year. He then went to Utah and took the Utes to even further heights, going 22-2 in two seasons and becoming the original BCS Buster, leading the program to the Fiesta Bowl and a perfect 2004 season.

"I fell in love with the community," Meyer said of BGSU. "And the average attendance went from very small to very large. And yeah, we were good. We started winning. But that town is a magnet. I mean, the people there, it's Midwest USA. It's the most friendly people. Obviously, there's not a ton of resources. But what they don't have in resources they have in people, as far as quality people. And I loved every second of that."

Meyer's Utah experience was similar.

"That was probably my greatest experience in coaching," he said. "We had low expectations and incredible talent."

At Florida, Meyer went 65-15 across six seasons, winning national titles in the 2006 and '08 seasons. He returned to the sidelines at Ohio State in 2012, immediately lifting the Buckeyes to a 12-0 season. Meyer went 83-9 in seven seasons in Columbus, winning the first College Football Playoff national championship in the 2014 season. The Buckeyes won three Big Ten titles, went 7-0 against rival Michigan and posted an NCAA-record 30-game conference winning streak under Meyer.

He has no shortage of great memories, but that first national title at Florida forever holds a special place in his heart.

"I'm always the half-empty guy during the game, and we're winning pretty good and everyone's celebrating, I'm kind of ripping them to say, It's not over yet," Meyer said. "And then Percy Harvin gets that (last) first down, and I remember I looked at the clock, two minutes left or something — it's over.



"It's like someone cut your heels off, and every ounce of pressure just released through your body. Like, it's over. We just won the national title, and so I'll never forget that one."

Now an analyst on FoxFOX, Meyer has had the pleasure of seeing two of his quarterbacks get inducted into the Hall of Fame recently in Tim Tebow (Florida, 2023) and Alex Smith (Utah, 2024).

He received the news about his own induction shortly before Ohio State won the national title in January, marking a full-circle moment for a coach who remains deeply connected to the program.

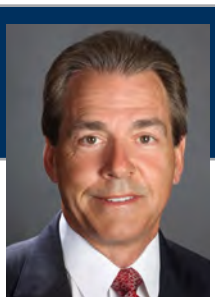
"You always want to make sure you leave a program in better shape than when you took over, the legacy piece," Meyer said. "When I met coach (Ryan) Day and hired him, I knew at age 55 I wanted to go live a life and move on, and I was trying to find that right successor. Everyone was envious of the way Coach (Bob) Stoops did it, where he handed it off to Lincoln Riley and no one loses a job, and you just keep going. And that's exactly what happened when I found Ryan."

URBAN MEYER: UP CLOSE

- Overall head coaching record of 187-32-0 (85.4%).
- Won three national titles and seven conference championships, setting a major college record with 165 wins in his first 15 seasons.
- Ranks third all-time in FBS college football history with a 85.4 winning percentage and his 12-3 bowl record (78.5% win rate) ranks second-highest in FBS history.
- Coached 44 First Team All-Americans, 77 First Team All-Conference players, four NFF National Scholar-Athletes and two College Football Hall of Fame inductees.
- Named the Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year in 2004 and conference Coach of the Year three times (MWC in 2003, 2004 and MAC in 2001).

NFF COLLEGE HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2025

INDUCTEE PROFILES



NICK SABAN

Head Coach • University of Toledo (1990), Michigan State University (1995-99), LSU (2000-04), University of Alabama (2007-23)

Nick Saban planned on following in his family's footsteps. He had worked at his father's service station while growing up, and he planned on going to General Motors school after college, in order to eventually open up his own car dealership. He had it all mapped out, until Don James asked him to stay at Kent State following his playing days to become a graduate assistant.

"I said to him, Well, I don't want to be a coach and I don't want to go to graduate school, so why would I do that?" Saban said. "Miss Terry had another year of school, we were married, and I couldn't really leave. He talked me into the fact that it's good in this profession to have a master's degree, so why don't you go ahead and get your master's degree. Do this, your wife graduates, and you can go do whatever you want.

"I did that and loved the coaching part of it, loved the competition, loved the relationship with the players. So, I became a part-time coach the next year after I got my master's degree, got hired as a full-time coach the next year, and one thing led to another, and next thing I know, 10 years down the road I'm in this profession."

Funny how influential coaches can be. James, whether he knew it or not, ended up launching arguably the greatest college coaching career of all time. Saban is now immortalized as a College Football Hall of Famer, alongside James, who was inducted in 1997.

"I never had a vision that I would ever go be a head coach," Saban said. "I just enjoyed coaching the position and recruiting and all the things that go with it, and always thought that I'll get a real job one of these days. But one thing led to another and opportunities kept coming and I enjoyed it so much, I never really wanted to ever not do it.

"So, I'm very fortunate to fall into a profession that we just absolutely loved being a part of, and the relationships that we were able to build through the years. And the goal was always to impact the players that you were associated with to have a better chance to be more successful in life, which was very positive self-gratification. So that's kind of how it all happened, and pretty much by accident, I guess."

Saban won 11 SEC titles and an FBS-record seven national titles. He became the first coach in the AP poll era to win national titles at two different schools, LSU and Alabama. Saban went 292-71-1 for his career, including a 206-29 mark during his astonishing 17-year run with the Crimson Tide. He coached 52 first-round draft picks during his career. He coached four Heisman Trophy winners with Alabama.

"As we go through life, there's always new horizons," Saban said. "So you're an assistant, you become a coordinator. You go from a coordinator to being a head coach. You're a head coach, have a reasonable amount of success, and then in 2003 win a national championship. I guess each one of those horizons that you meet sort of maybe is a goal that you never knew that you could accomplish, and you do, and when you do, that creates a really good feeling of accomplishment.

"And obviously the ultimate one probably, from a college standpoint, is winning the first championship in 2003 at LSU. But each one of those horizons were like significant."

Toledo gave Saban his first head coaching job in 1990, with the Rockets going 9-2 under Saban. He went 34-24-1 in five seasons with Michigan State before heading to LSU, where he breathed new life into a program that was coming off back-to-back losing seasons, winning it all in his fourth season in Baton Rouge.

Saban spent 50 total years in coaching. More than two dozen of his assistants became college or NFL head coaches. His Alabama teams made the four-team College Football Playoff eight



times in its 10 years of existence. His Crimson Tide players earned more than $2 billion in NFL salaries.

"My goal as a coach was always to help players who came in the program to have a better chance to be more successful in life," Saban said. "So, it was about personal development, providing leadership that would help them enhance their full potential as people, but also the importance of being a good student, getting an education, developing a career off the field. And then also how can we help these guys be the best they can be as players so that maybe they could develop a career as a football player."

NICK SABAN: UP CLOSE

- Overall head coaching record of 292-71-1 (80.4%).
- Won an unprecedented seven national titles (six at Alabama and one at LSU), the most in FBS history, and retired as the NCAA's active leader in wins, ranking sixth all-time among FBS coaches.
- Holds the distinction as the first coach in history to win national championships at two different FBS schools and is the only head coach in the BCS and CFP eras with multiple undefeated national championship seasons.
- Won 11 SEC titles (nine at Alabama and two at LSU) and a share of the MAC title in 1990.
- Claimed more than 20 Coach of the Year honors during his career, including the Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year twice (2003 and 2008) and SEC Coach of the Year five times (2003, 2008, 2009, 2016, 2020).

HALL OF FAME ON-CAMPUS SALUTES

PRESENTED BY FIDELITY INVESTMENTS

The National Football Foundation announced the schedule for the 2025 NFF Hall of Fame On- Campus Salutes, presented by Fidelity Investments, in August.

The NFF Hall of Fame On-Campus Salutes, which began with the inaugural College Football Hall of Fame Class in 1951, have become a hallowed tradition, and to this day, the singular events remain the first of numerous activities in each electee's Hall of Fame experience.

During the NFF Hall of Fame On-Campus Salutes, each member of the 2025 College Football Hall of Fame Class will return to his respective school to accept a Hall of Fame plaque that will stay on permanent display at the institution. The events take place on the field during a home game, and many Hall of Famers cite the experience as the ultimate capstone to their careers, providing them one more chance to take the field and be recognized in front of their home crowd.

"The NFF Hall of Fame On-Campus Salute tradition allows us the opportunity to celebrate each inductee back where their journey began—among the fans and communities that helped shape their legendary careers," said NFF President & CEO Steve Hatchell. "We look forward to celebrating the amazing careers of the 2025 NFF Hall of Fame Class with the tens of thousands of fans who will witness an on-campus salute this year, creating a truly memorable experience for each inductee."

"Fidelity Investments is privileged to be part of the NFF Hall of Fame On-Campus Salutes program for another year to celebrate a new cohort of NFF College Football Hall of Fame athletes," said Sangeeta Moorjani, head of Tax-Exempt and Retirement Solutions at Fidelity Investments. "These athletes deserve this recognition for their achievements, and the prestige they bring to their schools and the college football community overall."

Fidelity Investments has served as the national presenting sponsor of the NFF Hall of Fame On-Campus Salutes since 2010. The salutes are one component of a multi-year initiative between the two organizations to celebrate a joint commitment to higher education.



Coach **URBAN MEYER** was honored during Bowling Green's home game on Aug. 28. L-R: NFF Board Member **BOB VECCHIONE**, Fidelity Investments VP **MATTHEW GAROFALO**, Meyer, his wife **SHELLEY**, Bowling Green President **RODNEY K. ROGERS** and Athletics Director **DEREK VAN DER MERWE**.



Coach **URBAN MEYER** was honored during Utah's home game on Sept. 20. L-R: Fidelity Investments VP **BETH BEANE**; NFF Chief Operating Officer **MATTHEW SIGN**; Meyer and his wife, **SHELLEY**; former Utah Athletics Director **CHRIS HILL**; and current Athletics Director **MARK HARLAN**.



BLAKE ELLIOTT was honored during Saint John's University (MN)'s home game on Sept. 13. L-R: Elliott's children, wife **NOELLE**; mother **MARIT**; NFF Campbell Trophy Summit Founder and former Saint John's linebacker **MARK FLYNN**; NFF Director of Communications **PHILIP MARWILL**; Fidelity Investments Financial Consultant **MARK JORDAN**; and Saint John's President **BRIAN J. BRUESS**.

HALL OF FAME ON-CAMPUS SALUTES

PRESENTED BY FIDELITY INVESTMENTS

NFF HALL OF FAME ON-CAMPUS SALUTES SCHEDULE, PRESENTED BY FIDELITY INVESTMENTS

Aug. 28: Coach Urban Meyer, Bowling Green (vs. Lafayette)
Aug. 30: Coach Larry Korver, Northwestern [IA] (vs. Waldorf [IA])
Aug. 30: Terrence Metcalf, Ole Miss (vs. Georgia State)
Sept. 6: Darrin Smith, Miami [FL] (vs. Bethune-Cookman)
Sept. 13: Blake Elliott, Saint John's [MN] (vs. Minnesota-Morris)
Sept. 13: John Henderson, Tennessee (vs. Georgia)
Sept. 20: Coach Urban Meyer, Utah (vs. Texas Tech)
Oct. 4: Alex Mack, California (vs. Duke)
Oct. 4: Coach Larry Blakeney, Troy (vs. South Alabama)
Oct. 4: Coach Nick Saban, Alabama (vs. Vanderbilt)
Oct. 11: Montee Ball, Wisconsin (vs. Iowa)
Oct. 17: Greg Eslinger, Minnesota (vs. Nebraska)
Oct. 18: Terry Hanratty, Notre Dame (vs. USC)
Oct. 25: Graham Harrell, Texas Tech (vs. Oklahoma State)
Oct. 25: Ryan Yarborough, Wyoming (vs. Colorado State)
Nov. 8: Jim Kleinsasser, North Dakota (vs. North Dakota State)
Nov. 8: Steve Slaton, West Virginia (vs. Colorado)
Nov. 14: Haloti Ngata, Oregon (vs. Minnesota)
Nov. 22: Michael Huff, Texas (vs. Arkansas)
Nov. 22: Coach Urban Meyer, Florida (vs. Tennessee)
Nov. 29: Gregg Carr, Auburn (vs. Alabama)



Coach **LARRY KORVER** was honored during Northwestern College (IA)'s home game on Aug. 30. L-R: Fidelity Investments Financial Consultant **ERIC ZEHNDER**, NFF Director of Communications **PHILIP MARWILL**, Korver, Northwestern VP for Athletics **TONY HOOPS** and Northwestern President **GREG CHRISTY**.



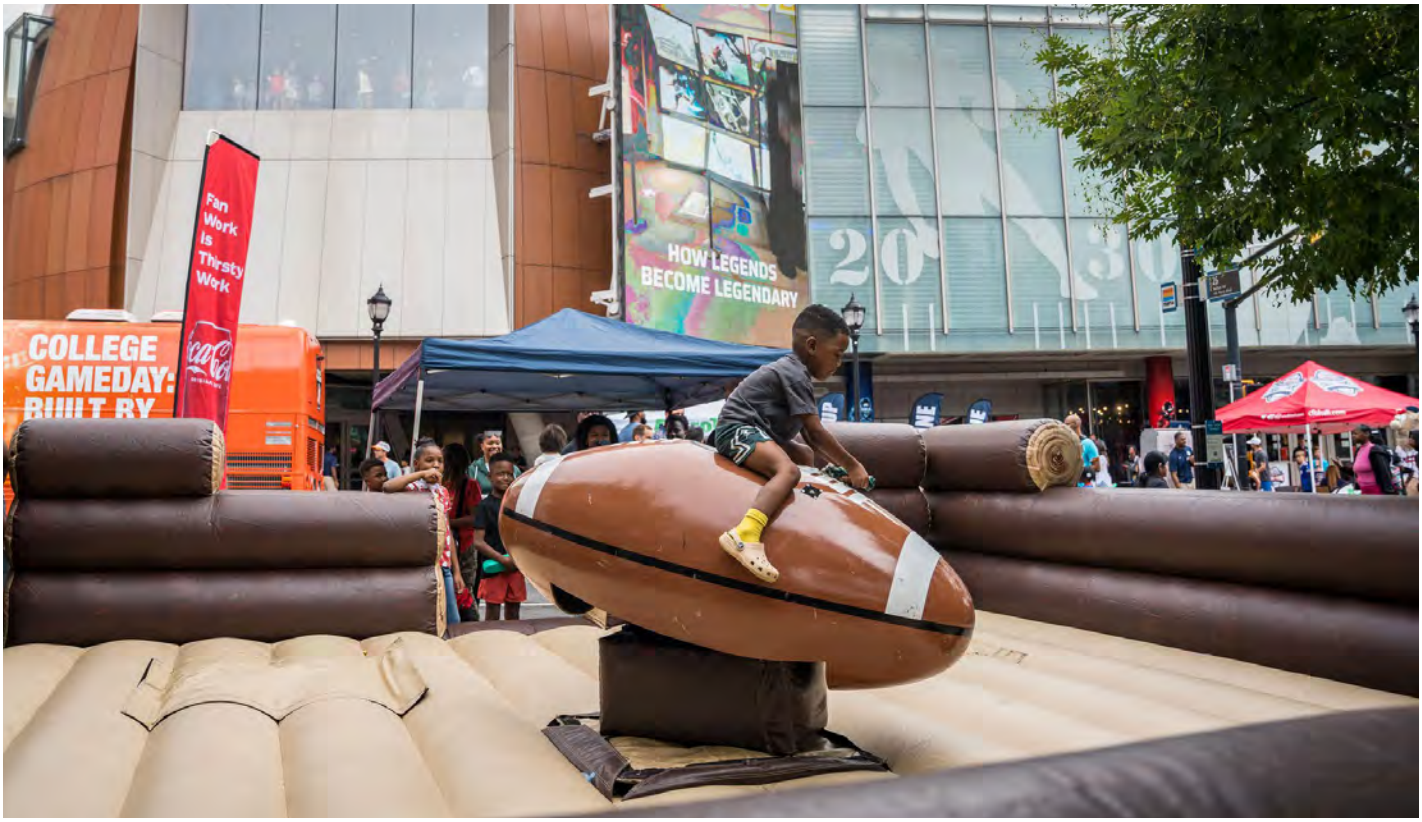
DARRIN SMITH was honored during Miami (FL)'s home game on Sept. 6. L-R: Fidelity Product Area Leader **AMANDA MORROW-JENSEN**; NFF Director of Special Projects **HILLARY JEFFRIES**; Smith's mother, **NAOMI**; daughter, **DARYN**; Smith; wife, **KIMBERLY**; son, **DARIUS**; and Miami VP and Director of Athletics **DAN RADAKOVICH**. Kneeling is **SEBASTIAN THE IBIS**.



TERRENCE METCALF was honored during Ole Miss' home game on Aug. 30. Holding the plaque and surrounded by his family, including his wife, **TONYA** (on the right), Metcalf is joined on the immediate left by NFF Vice Chairwoman **KATHLEEN MURPHY**, NFF COO **MATTHEW SIGN**, Fidelity Investments SVP **JOE CICCARIELLO**, NFF Ole Miss Chapter President **RICHARD NOBLE** and Ole Miss Vice Chancellor for Intercollegiate Athletics **KEITH CARTER** (back row).

CHICK-FIL-A COLLEGE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME

ENTERING SECOND DECADE OF CELEBRATING THE GAME IN ATLANTA



A fan enjoys a ride in front of the Chick-fil-A College Football Hall of Fame during the "Football Fest & Free Day," presented by the Peach Bowl, which kicked off the 2025 season on Aug. 25.

The kickoff of the 2025 college football season marked the 11th anniversary of the Chick-fil-A College Football Hall of Fame in Atlanta. The attraction, located in the heart of the sports and entertainment district, and steps from Centennial Olympic Park, Mercedes-Benz Stadium and State Farm Arena, continues to inspire and entertain by celebrating the game's traditions and its greatest players and coaches.

"Downtown Atlanta has proven to be an ideal setting for the Hall. From the artifacts to the interactives to the hallowed third floor, the NFF College Football Hall of Fame is a magnet for football fans who want to experience all that is great about the game," said Archie Manning, chairman of the National Football Foundation, which founded the Hall in 1951 and partnered with Atlanta Hall Management to fund, construct, and open the Hall in 2014.

Reimagining the idea of a traditional museum through immersive technology, the 95,000-square-foot, one-of-a-kind Hall of Fame pays worthy tribute to the game's greatest heroes while inspiring and entertaining fans with unique and compelling exhibits and events. Fans kick off every visit by lighting their school's helmet on the three-story wall representing the 778 colleges and universities with football programs.

The venue recently set a new industry milestone, launching its new GAME ON! AI Experience. This deeply engaging, personalized storytelling experience inserts fans, using artificial intelligence, into the rich history of college football. While museums and entertainment destinations have experimented with artificial intelligence since 2017, GAME ON! uses generative AI for the first time to make guests the hero of the college football story.

Guests step up to a photographic face scan kiosk, prompting a series of questions about their favorite team, biggest rivals and their dream position they'd take on the field. The technology leverages this information to tailor their experience, spanning 14 fan-specific AI experiences throughout the Hall. Guests see their likeness, preferences and personality through curated images and video with customized captions.

"I'm humbled and honored to be asked to serve as the chairman of the board of the College Football Hall of Fame," J Batt said when he was appointed as the chairman of Atlanta Hall Management, which oversees the operation of the facility. "Having the Chick-fil-A College Football Hall of Fame here in Atlanta – the Capital of College Football – is a great point of pride for the entire community."

Under the leadership of the Atlanta Hall Management Board, President & CEO Kimberly Beaudin, corporate partners, and generous donors the Hall of Fame continues to prosper. Expansions and updates of the experience allow fans to explore captivating interactive exhibits that showcase the heart, pageantry and traditions of college football. The museum and fan experience continue to be a prime destination for hosting events in Atlanta ranging from corporate and private to high profile ancillary events like the College Football Playoff and Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl.

From the first class inducted in 1951 to today, being immortalized in the NFF College Football Hall of Fame represents the highest level of achievement for players and coaches. The Hall in Atlanta is integral to the National Football Foundation's mission as the experience celebrates the history of the game in a way that inspires young individuals to pursue excellence throughout their lives.

CHICK-FIL-A COLLEGE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME

ENTERING SECOND DECADE OF CELEBRATING THE GAME IN ATLANTA



Fans fill the Quad, which welcomes visitors with the dramatic helmet wall that features the helmets of all 778 football-playing colleges and universities in the country.



Visitors interact with vivid videos and striking photographs of the legendary players immortalized on the Hall's third floor.



An aspiring player manifests her future.



Fumbles on the balcony overlooking Peach Bowl Field, a 45-yard indoor gridiron.

CHICK-FIL-A COLLEGE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME QUICK FACTS

- When the 2025 Class is officially inducted in Las Vegas on December 9, only 1,111 players and 237 coaches will have been inducted into the NFF College Football Hall of Fame from the nearly 5.62 million who have played or coached the game during the past 155 years. In other words, less than two one-hundredths of a percent (.02%) of the individuals who have played/coached the game have earned this distinction.
- 326 colleges and universities are represented with at least one College Football Hall of Famer.
- The Hall hosts more than 250 annual events.
- The Hall's archives contain more than one million artifacts, dating back to the 1870s, with more than 1,500 items currently on display, plus another 65,000 pieces of digital content within the Hall's interactive exhibits.
- The hall measures 94,256 square feet, including 50,000 square feet of exhibit space and a 45-yard indoor football field.

MOST EXCLUSIVE CLUB

NFF SCHOLAR-ATHLETES AND HALL OF FAMERS

Induction into the National Football Foundation's College Football Hall of Fame stands as the pinnacle of athletic achievement on the collegiate gridiron. Of the 5.62 million individuals who have played the game, only 1,111 college players have been immortalized with the honor, or two one-hundredths of a percent (.02%) of those who have played the game during the past 157 years. The NFF National Scholar-Athlete Awards hold out an elite few who set the standard for combined excellence in all aspects of life. Only 938 individuals have achieved this honor. From these two pools of individuals, only 49 have earned both distinctions, creating arguably one of the most unique groups in all sports. And of those 49, only Peyton Manning (Tennessee), Alex Mack (Cal), Matt Stinchcomb (Georgia), Tim Tebow (Florida) and Danny Wuerffel (Florida) have also claimed the William V. Campbell Trophy®.

"It's an honor that I will always cherish," said 1985 National Scholar-Athlete Tim Green, who earned induction into the Hall of Fame in 2001 as a unanimous All-America linebacker from Syracuse. "Our head football coach at the time, Dick MacPherson, told me [being a scholar-athlete] would supersede any other accomplishment I might attain … When I went back as a Hall of Fame inductee, I was very aware of the fact that I had been there as a student-athlete and, in fact, talked to several of the student-athletes of the importance of the honor for them and that it would be forever part of their lives."



TREV ALBERTS
Nebraska



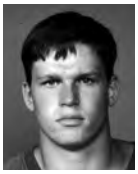
TERRY BAKER
Oregon State



HARRIS BARTON
North Carolina



GARY BEBAN
UCLA



TONY BOSELLI
Southern California



DERRICK BROOKS
Florida State



GREGG CARR
Auburn



DAVE CASPER
Notre Dame



DAVE DICKINSON
Montana



ED DYAS
Auburn



DAVE ELMENDORF
Texas A&M



GREG ESLINGER
Minnesota



DOUG FLUTIE
Boston College



THOM GATEWOOD
Notre Dame



RANDY GRADISHAR
Ohio State



TIM GREEN
Syracuse



JASON HANSON
Washington State



GRAHAM HARRELL
Texas Tech



TERRY HOAGE
Georgia



COSMO IACAVAZZI
Princeton



DICK JAURON
Yale



BOB JOHNSON
Tennessee



REX KERN
Ohio State



ALEX KROLL
Rutgers



GORDIE LOCKBAUM
Holy Cross



JIM LYNCH
Notre Dame



ALEX MACK*
California



PEYTON MANNING*
Tennessee



PAT McINALLY
Harvard



JOHNNY MUSSO
Alabama



GREG MYERS
Colorado State



DARRIN NELSON
Stanford



MERLIN OLSEN
Utah State



PAUL POSLUSZNY
Penn State



DAVE RIMINGTON
Nebraska



JOE ROMIG
Colorado



JOHN SCIARRA
UCLA



LEE ROY SELMON
Oklahoma



DARRIN SMITH
Miami (FL)



BOB STEIN
Minnesota

MATT STINCHCOMB*
Georgia

TIM TEBOW*
Florida

JOE THOMAS
Wisconsin

DON TRULL
Baylor

WESLEY WALLS
Mississippi

GRANT WISTROM
Nebraska

DANNY WOODHEAD
Chadron State (NE)

DANNY WUERFFEL*
Florida

STEVE YOUNG
Brigham Young

** William V. Campbell Trophy® recipient*

COLLEGE FOOTBALL OPENS DOORS

RECORD-BREAKING 3,695 GRADUATES SUIT UP FOR COLLEGE FOOTBALL THIS SEASON



More than 3,600 student-athletes will be playing college football this fall having already earned their undergraduate degrees, including, top row from the left: **DONTAY CORLEONE** (Cincinnati), **JUSTICE HAYNES** (Michigan), **HAYNES KING** (Georgia Tech), **DEONATE LAWSON** (Alabama). Bottom row from the left: **GARRETT NUSSMEIER** (LSU), **ISAIAH NWOKOBIA** (SMU), **EMMANUEL PREGNON** (Oregon) and **DREW PYNE** (Bowling Green). (*Photos courtesy of respective athletics departments.*)

Before the season, the NFF released a list of 3,695 student-athletes who have already earned their undergraduate degrees and are playing college football this fall while pursuing additional diplomas. Click here to see the full list.

"This is proof that education remains at the heart of college football and that the game continues to shape leaders beyond the field, something we should celebrate just as much as the competition itself," said NFF President & CEO Steve Hatchell.

The NFF compiled this list with the help of sports information directors from all divisions of the NCAA and NAIA who identified the players on their 2025 fall rosters who have already earned their undergraduate degrees. 304 schools submitted their information for inclusion.

Notable players include Jalon Daniels (Kansas), Kyron Drones (Virginia Tech), Mark Gronowski (Iowa and a 2024 Campbell Trophy® Finalist from South Dakota State), Jamal Haynes (Georgia Tech), Fernando Mendoza (Indiana), Chandler Morris (Virginia), Behren Morton (Texas Tech), Miller Moss (Louisville), Jaydn Ott (Oklahoma), Kaidon Salter (Colorado), Terion Stewart (Virginia Tech).

The numbers include 2,255 players from 133 schools in the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS), 1,083 players from 86 schools in the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS), 247 players from 40 schools in Division II, 72 players from 34 schools in Division III and 38 players from 11 NAIA schools. (Note: Graduates of the service academies immediately become commissioned officers, and there is no mechanism to extend their collegiate athletic eligibility.)

Northwestern and Virginia lead all schools nationwide (as well as the FBS) with 34 players each having already earned their degrees. Tennessee Tech is fielding 32 players with degrees, the most among FCS schools. Augustana (SD), Colorado School of Mines and Valdosta State (GA) each boast 12, topping Division II. Johns Hopkins (MD) and Saint John's (MN) both claim five graduates, sitting atop Division III. Southeastern (FL) has 10 graduates on its roster, the most of any NAIA school.

BY THE NUMBERS

- **3,695** players take the field with diplomas in hand
- **304** schools report graduates competing on the field this season
- FBS schools average **16** graduates each, with 2,**245** total FBS athletes
- Every FBS team boasts a graduate, except the service academies
- Every division of college football boasts graduates
- Northwestern and Virginia lead the nation with **34** graduates each
- Tennessee Tech sets FCS high mark with **32**-degree holders
- **121** FBS schools report a double-digit number of graduates on their rosters
- The list includes **81** players who have been nominated for the Campbell Trophy® either in 2024 or 2025.

GRADUATES PLAYING COLLEGE FOOTBALL SINCE 2017

The table below showcases the number of graduates playing college football each season since 2017. *(Note: The NFF did not tally the number of graduates during the 2020 season.)*

YEAR	GRADUATES	SCHOOLS
2025	3,695	304
2024	3,568	247
2023	2,949	235
2022	3,113	261
2021	3,285	279
2019	1,452	251
2018	1,199	235
2017	971	213

2025 CAMPBELL TROPHY® SEMIFINALISTS

180 OF THE BEST SCHOLAR-ATHLETES IN THE COUNTRY

The 180 semifinalists for the 2025 William V. Campbell Trophy® represent the best all-around football scholar-athlete for their respective institutions. Each of them can take great pride in knowing they were nominated for an award won by 35 of the greatest all-around scholar-athletes to ever grace the college gridiron.

The NFF will announce 12-16 finalists on Oct. 22, and each of them will receive a $18,000 postgraduate scholarship as a member of the 2025 NFF National Scholar-Athlete Class Presented by Fidelity Investments. One of the finalists will be named the winner of the 36th Campbell Trophy® during the 67th NFF Annual Awards Dinner Presented by Las Vegas on Dec. 9 at the Bellagio Resort & Casino and have his postgraduate scholarship increased to $25,000.

FOOTBALL BOWL SUBDIVISION (FBS)

Air Force – Bruin Fleischmann
Alabama – LT Overton
Appalachian State – Ethan Johnson
Arizona State – Ben Coleman
Arkansas – Fernando Carmona
Arkansas State – Corey Rucker
Army West Point – Andon Thomas
Auburn – Brandon Frazier
Baylor – Sawyer Robertson
Boise State – Marco Notarainni
Buffalo – Red Murdock
BYU – Tanner Wall
Central Michigan – Michael Heldman
Clemson – Cade Klubnik
Colorado State – Rocky Beers
Delaware – Jacob Thaw
Duke – Bruno Fina
Eastern Michigan – Jefferson Adam
Florida – Jake Slaughter
Florida State – Luke Petitbon
Fresno State – Camryn Bracha
Georgia – Oscar Delp
Georgia Tech – Joe Fusile
Hawai'i – Landon Sims
Houston – Jacob Garza
Illinois – Josh Gesky
Indiana – Roman Hemby
Iowa – Aaron Graves
Iowa State – Caleb Bacon
Kansas – Jalon Daniels
Kansas State – Sam Hecht
Kentucky – Josh Kattus
Liberty – Joseph Carter
LSU – Harold Perkins
Michigan – Greg Tarr
Michigan State – Sam Edwards
Middle Tennessee State – Nick Vattiato
Mississippi State – Blake Shapen
Navy – Blake Horvath
Nebraska – Malcolm Hartzog Jr.
North Carolina – Will Hardy
North Carolina State – Anthony Carter Jr.
North Texas – Simeon Evans
Northwestern – Aidan Hubbard
Notre Dame – Aamil Wagner
Ohio – Parker Navarro
Ohio State – Lorenzo Styles Jr.
Oklahoma – Owen Heinecke
Oklahoma State – Logan Ward
Old Dominion – Zach Barlev
Oregon – Bryce Boettcher
Oregon State – Dylan Black
Penn State – Nick Dawkins
Purdue – Jack McCallister
Rice – Micah Barnett
Rutgers – Dariel Djabome
San José State – Taniela Latu
South Alabama – Dalton Hughes
South Carolina – Luke Doty
Southern California – Hank Pepper
Southern Methodist – Matt Hibner
Stanford – Sam Roush
Syracuse – Derek McDonald
Temple – Allan Haye
Texas – Trey Moore
Texas State – Titus Lyons
Texas Tech – Jacob Rodriguez
Toledo – Tucker Gleason
Troy – Scott Taylor Renfroe
Tulane – Bryce Bohanon
UNLV – Ose Egbase
Utah – Jaren Kump
Utah State – Broc Lane
UTSA – Luke Lapeze
Vanderbilt – Eli Stowers
Virginia – Will Bettridge
Wake Forest – Nick Andersen
Washington – Jonah Coleman
West Virginia – Oliver Straw
Wisconsin – Ricardo Hallman



Alabama QB **JALEN MILROE** won the 35th William V. Campbell Trophy® in 2024 at the 66th National Football Foundation Annual Awards Dinner Presented by Las Vegas.

2025 WILLIAM V. CAMPBELL TROPHY® SEMIFINALISTS NOTES

- **36**th year of the William V. Campbell Trophy®
- **67**th year of the NFF National Scholar-Athlete Awards Presented by Fidelity Investments
- **180** Semifinalists
- **3.60** Average GPA
- **93** Nominees who have already earned their bachelor's degrees (including one player with three bachelor's degrees)
- **5** Nominees who have earned a master's degree (including one player with two master's degrees)
- **5** Nominees with a perfect 4.0 GPA
- **56** Nominees with a 3.8 GPA or better
- **74** Nominees with a 3.7 GPA or better
- **14** Academic All-America selections
- **113** Captains
- **20** All-Americans
- **96** All-Conference picks

2025 CAMPBELL TROPHY® SEMIFINALISTS

180 OF THE BEST SCHOLAR-ATHLETES IN THE COUNTRY

FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP SUBDIVISION (FCS)

Austin Peay State – Chandler Kirton
Brown – John Starman
Bucknell – John Ohnegian
California, Davis – Eli Simonson
Campbell – Logan Livermon
Charleston Southern – Nick Bartalo
Colgate – Treyvhon Saunders
Columbia – Mark Chapman
Cornell – James Reinbold
Dartmouth – Delby Lemieux
Dayton – Ryan Iiams
Eastern Illinois – Brett Galletti
Eastern Kentucky – Jaheim Ward
Eastern Washington – Nolan Ulm
Fordham – James Conway
Georgetown – Jimmy Kibble
Harvard – Ryan Osborne
Holy Cross – Cam Nolan
Illinois State – Wenkers Wright
Jackson State – JaCobian Morgan
Lafayette – Phillip Peiffer
Lamar – Robert Coleman
Lehigh – Brycen Edwards
Marist – Chris Leonardo
Montana – Dillon Botner
Montana State – Kenneth Eiden
New Hampshire – Chase Wilson
North Dakota State – Logan Kopp
Northern Colorado – Zach Nowatzke
Pennsylvania – Liam O'Brien
Princeton – Justice Musser
Richmond – Scott Hummel
Southeastern Louisiana – Holden Kareokowsky
Stephen F. Austin State – Ky Thomas
Stony Brook – Clayton Taylor
Tennessee Tech – Tremel Jones
The Citadel – Mike Bartilucci
Towson – Bryce LaFollette
Valparaiso – De'Andre Wilborn
Villanova – Shane Hartzell
Western Carolina – Micah Nelson
Western Illinois – Christian Pierce
William & Mary – Trey McDonald
Yale – Mason Shipp
Youngstown State – Brendon Kilpatrick

DIVISION II

Albany State (GA) – Isaiah Knowles
Ashland (OH) – Ethan Enders
Bentley (MA) – Mike Boutros
Black Hills State (SD) – Sebastian O'Farrell
Colorado Mesa – Kash Bradley
Colorado State Pueblo – Andrew Cook
Harding (AR) – Ty Dugger
Hillsdale (MI) – Hunter Sperling
Minnesota State Moorhead – Jack Strand
Northern State (SD) – Wyatt Block
Northwest Missouri State – Shane Fredrickson
PennWest, California – Rafiqe Hilliard
Slippery Rock (PA) – Michael Henwood
Wayne State (MI) – Quincy Salter
Wingate (NC) – GW Clemmer

DIVISION III

Allegheny (PA) – Fletcher Hammond
Berry (GA) – Christian Lewis
Carnegie Mellon (PA) – Justin Caputo
Case Western Reserve (OH) – Osi Chukwuocha
Central (IA) – Gavin Smith
DePauw (IN) – Robby Ballentine
Gallaudet (DC) – Carter Johnson
Hampden-Sydney (VA) – Robert Clarke
Hardin-Simmons (TX) – Harrison Foster
John Carroll (OH) – Nick Semptimphelter
Johns Hopkins (MD) – Isaac Urquidi
Lake Forest (IL) – Thomas DeChesaro
Lycoming (PA) – Braedon Hart
Lyon (AR) – William Litton
Mary Hardin-Baylor (TX) – Ethan Rayfield
Middlebury (VT) – Mike Ahonen
Millsaps (MS) – Luke Bridges
Moravian (PA) – Jared Jenkins
New England (ME) – Jon Terry
Rhodes (TN) – Evan Reeder
Saint John's (MN) – Zach Frank
Shenandoah (VA) – Matt Conroy
Springfield (MA) – Tyler Pohlman
St. Olaf (MN) – Noah Barrett
Texas Lutheran – Weston Guzman
Trinity (TX) – Caleb Bayer
Washington & Jefferson (PA) – Joey Lacey
Waynesburg (PA) – Tommy Burke
Wesleyan (CT) – Dylan Connors
Westminster (PA) – Dylan Sleva
Wisconsin-Oshkosh – Clayton Schwalbe
Wisconsin-Stout – Adam Moen
Wooster (OH) – Tate Journell

NAIA

Dakota State (SD) – Cole Paulson
Evangel (MO) – Zach Myers
Grand View (IA) – Jackson Waring
Indiana Wesleyan – Deven Arevalo
Morningside (IA) – Lennx Brown
Northwestern (IA) – Trystin Voss
Texas Wesleyan – Ashton Mitchell-Johnson



The Campbell Trophy® was on display at Big Ten Media this past July in Vegas.

2025 CAMPBELL TROPHY® SEMIFINALISTS BY DIVISION AND POSITION

- **80** Nominees from the NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS)
- **45** Nominees from the NCAA Football Championship Subdivision (FCS)
- **15** Nominees from NCAA Division II
- **33** Nominees from NCAA Division III
- **7** Nominees from the NAIA
- **90** Offensive Players
- **76** Defensive Players
- **14** Special Teams Players

NFF CAMPBELL TROPHY® SUMMIT

MORE THAN 300 ATTENDEES GATHERED FOR THE SEVENTH ANNUAL TRIBUTE TO BILL CAMPBELL



CAMPBELL TROPHY SUMMIT

Proudly Sponsored by INTUIT

The Seventh Annual William V. Campbell Trophy® Summit took place July 24-26 at Stanford University in California, serving as vehicle for perpetuating the ethos that helped Bill Campbell, the trophy's namesake, become one of the most influential business leaders of his generation. The event, which attracted more than 300 attendees, is proudly sponsored by Intuit, the global financial technology platform.

Since 2017, the event has connected former Campbell Trophy® nominees with some of the nation's top CEOs and Silicon Valley entrepreneurs who have imparted valuable life lessons to the attendees at all stages of their careers.

Headline speakers at the 2025 event included Pat Gelsinger (Former CEO, Intel Corporation), Randy Komisar (Former Partner, Kleiner Perkins), Ronnie Lott (NFF Board Member and NFF College Football Hall of Fame inductee), Andrew Luck (General Manager, Stanford Football and College Football Hall of Fame inductee), Denis McDonough (Former White House Chief of Staff to U.S. President Barack Obama and U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs), Brad D. Smith (President, Marshall University and former Intuit Chairman & CEO) and Steve Young (NFF College Football Hall of Fame inductee and NFF National Scholar-Athlete).

"Since our founding in 1947, the NFF has been at the forefront of showcasing football's unique power to develop leaders," said NFF President & CEO Steve Hatchell. "No one understood or embodied that ideal more than Bill Campbell, and the Campbell Trophy® Summit stands as a singular and powerful platform to carry forward his legacy. I want to especially recognize Mark Flynn and Brad Smith, whose leadership has been the driving force behind the Summit, ensuring Bill's influence continues to grow exponentially."

Organized as a tribute to the late Bill Campbell, the former CEO and Chairman of Intuit, the event serves as a vehicle for the many leaders impacted by Campbell to pass on his insights about success, leadership and personal growth. Smith, who currently heads Marshall University and was mentored by Bill Campbell during his tenure at Intuit, kicked off the three-day event with a tribute to the event's namesake and the attendees who gathered to carry on his legacy.

"What makes this event distinctive and special is you can't buy a ticket again," said Smith. "You have to earn your seat. And every one of you who've been nominated for the William V. Campbell trophy have done just that, and it is my privilege to be here with you this morning. It's my privilege because you are the best of the best elite student athletes and purpose driven leaders."



College Football Hall of Famer & NFF National Scholar-Athlete **STEVE YOUNG** (BYU) speaks with award-winning broadcaster **TED ROBINSON**.



NFF Campbell Trophy Founder **MARK FLYNN**.



Younger participants enjoyed a non-tackle ultimate football game.



More than 300 attendees filled Hauck Auditorium at Stanford.



Brad D. Smith, President, Marshall University and former Intuit Chairman & CEO.



Andrew Luck, General Manager, Stanford Football and NFF College Football Hall of Fame inductee.



PROUD HOME OF THE WILLIAM V. CAMPBELL TROPHY®

NFF NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARDS

HEMET HIGH SCHOOL (CA) NAMED WINNER OF THE 2024-25 NFF HATCHELL CUP AS THE NATION'S TOP TEAM

The NFF recognized 65 teams this past February as state winners of the 2024-25 NFF National High School Academic Excellence Awards, presented by the Rose Bowl Legacy Foundation. The awards recognize the top academic football teams from each level of play within each state.

From the 65 teams, Hemet High School (CA) was selected as the winner of the NFF Hatchell Cup, presented by Bob's Steak & Chop House, as the top team in the nation for excellence in the classroom, on the field and in the community. As part of the honor of being named the Hatchell Cup winner, Hemet received a $10,000 donation from Bob's to support the football program.

"Success in athletics and academics isn't a matter of choosing one over the other—it's about the discipline, dedication, and determination to excel in both," said NFF Chairman Archie Manning. "We are proud to recognize these football teams as the top academic performers in their respective states. The administrators, communities, and families should all be incredibly proud of the accomplishments of these players and coaches. By inspiring teams to compete in the classroom with the same competitive spirit that it takes to win on the field, we are helping to prepare high school football players for lifelong success."

The NFF announced the creation of the awards in February 2021. The awards represent the first nationwide recognition honoring individual high school football teams for excellence in the classroom. Eligibility requirements for the awards include: a minimum cumulative team GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale; superior academic application and performance; and a successful football season. A total of 243 teams have been celebrated since the program's inception after the 2021-22 season.

Led by Hemet Head Coach Jeff Galloway, the 2024 Bulldog team amassed an impressive 3.55 GPA in the classroom. Of the 53 players on the roster, the team placed 27 on the school's Honor Roll, with 17 players enrolled in Advanced Placement and honors classes. Four-year starting quarterback Draven Lopez not only topped the team with a 4.57 GPA but the entire school as Hemet's valedictorian.

On the field, the Bulldogs finished 10-2, reaching the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) Southern Section Division 8 Playoff Quarterfinals. In the first round of the 2024 playoffs, Hemet avenged their only regular season loss, defeating league-rival Rancho Christian (CA). Over the past four seasons, they compiled a 31-15 record, two Sunbelt League championships, and three playoff appearances. Lopez joined fellow captain Tyler Trout in being named to the All-CIF Southern Section Division 8 team, with a total of ten players earning All-League honors.



The NFF traveled to California to formally present the Hatchell Cup trophy to Hemet High School during a special school assembly. Pictured with the team, from left: Coach **JASON THORNBURG**, Head Coach **JEFF GALLOWAY** and NFF COO **MATTHEW SIGN**.



As part of being named the winner of the Hatchell Cup, Hemet's accomplishments were celebrated in Dallas at Bob's Steak & Chop House, which serves as the presenting sponsor of the award. From left: Principal **DR. JEFF FRANKS**, **BOB SAMBOL**, NFF President & CEO **STEVE HATCHELL**, Hemet Head Coach **JEFF GALLOWAY**.

Active in the community, the team helped stage a "Super Kids Bowl" for elementary special education students from across the district and a SPED Prom for students with special needs. They served as members of the Associated Student Body and Plus Forum/Student Leadership. The players also engaged in a wide range of other activities, including the jazz band, marching band, mock trial, ROTC, sports medicine, theater, and tutoring.

The individual state high school coaches associations select their respective state's winners from a pool of nominees submitted by each school's head coach. A selection committee, created by the NFF, is responsible for choosing the recipient of the NFF Hatchell Cup trophy, which was named in 2022 for longtime NFF President & CEO Steve Hatchell.

For more information on the NFF National High School Academic Excellence Awards or to learn how your state high school coaches association can participate next season, please contact the NFF at HSnominations@footballfoundation.com.



As part of their support of the awards, the Rose Bowl Legacy Foundation donated a brick outside the stadium to honor Hemet High School as the 2024-25 winner of the Hatchell Cup.

NFF NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARDS

2024-25 STATE WINNERS

ARIZONA
3A - Payson High School
6A – Phoenix Brophy College Prep

CALIFORNIA
4A - Hemet High School

ILLINOIS
8-Man - Martinsville High School
1A - Lena-Winslow High School
2A - Farmington Central High School
3A - St. Joseph Ogden High School
4A - Mt. Zion High School
8A - Minooka Community High School

INDIANA
1A - Greenwood Christian Academy
2A - Indianapolis Lutheran High School
3A - Evansville Reitz Memorial High School
4A - Indianapolis Bishop Chathard High School
5A – Warsaw Community High School
6A - Indianapolis Cathedral High School

LOUISIANA
1A – Rosedale North Iberville High School
2A – Monroe Ouachita Christian School
3A – Avondale Patrick Taylor Science and Technology Academy
4A - Lutcher High School
5A - Mandeville High School

MICHIGAN
1 - Hudsonville High School
2 – Temperance Bedford High School
3 - DeWitt High School
4 - Chelsea High School
5 - Pontiac Notre Dame Preparatory School
6 - Ovid-Elsie High School
8 - Saginaw Michigan Lutheran Seminary High School
8-man 1 - Gobles High School
8-man 2 - Felch North Dickinson High School

MINNESOTA
1A - Parkers Prairie High School
2A - Randolph High School
3A – Roseville Concordia Academy
4A - St. Anthony Village High School
5A – Waconia High School
6A – Wayzata High School
9-Man - Stephen-Argyle Central High School

NEBRASKA
D1 8-Man - Hemingford High School
D2 8-Man - Mullen High School
D6 6-Man - Arthur County High School
A - Kearney High School
B – Omaha Gretna East High School
C1 - Hastings Adams Central High School
C2 - Hartington Cedar Catholic High School

OREGON
1A - Adrian High School
2A - St. Paul High School
3A – Adair Village Santiam Christian High School
4A – Turner Cascade High School
5A – Bend Summit High School
6A - West Salem High School

PENNSYLVANIA
A – Newton Square Delaware County Christian High School
3A - Harbor Creek High School
5A – Clarks Summit Abington Heights High School
6A - State College High School

TEXAS
Private – Houston St. John's School
1A - Sanderson High School
2A - Spearman High School
3A - Idalou High School
4A - Sanger High School
5A - Lubbock Cooper High School
6A - Tomball Memorial High School

UTAH
8-Man - Randolph Rich High School
4A - Provo High School

WISCONSIN
8-man - Owen Withee High School
1 – Suamico Bay Port High School
3 – Green Bay Notre Dame Academy
5 - Stratford High School



The NFF Hatchell Cup is named in honor of NFF President & CEO **STEVE HATCHELL**. Since taking over the helm of the NFF in 2005, Hatchell has overseen numerous programs expanding the NFF's reach and impact as it continues to promote the scholar-athlete ideal.

Bob's
Steak & Chop House

QUOTES

Southern CA Football Coaches Association President James Vondra
"The SCFCA is proud to partner with the NFF to emphasize the importance of balancing athletic pursuits with academic responsibilities to ensure that student-athletes become well-rounded individuals who can succeed both on and off the field. As coaches, we must remember that the true measure of a successful athlete is not only their performance on the field but also their dedication to their studies and their commitment to achieving academic success. Recognizing academic excellence in athletes is crucial for their overall development and well-being."

Louisiana High School Coaches Association Director Eric Held
"For the fourth year, the LHSCA is excited to partner with the National Football Foundation and their effort to recognize excellence on the playing field and in the classroom. The NFF Academic Excellence Award celebrates the achievements of our football program's academic and community successes. The NFF mirrors the same values that school educators and coaches instill in our student-athletes. Thanks again to the NFF for giving so many football programs around our nation the opportunity to compete for the Hatchell Cup and help us remember the importance of education-based athletics."

NFF HAMPSHIRE HONOR SOCIETY

SOCIETY SETS RECORD FOR MEMBERSHIP IN 19TH YEAR

The NFF Hampshire Honor Society recognized an elite group of 2,536 players from 341 schools in 2025, marking the largest class in the program's 19-year history.



JON F. HANSON
NFF Chairman Emeritus

"In today's era of NIL and the transfer portal, we firmly believe that education remains the key to long-term success," said NFF President & CEO Steve Hatchell. "These results reaffirm that academics are still top of mind for today's student-athletes. We salute the schools, coaches, and administrators who continue to champion education as a core part of the student-athlete experience. We'll keep doing everything we can to promote those academic ideals and ensure education stays central to the holistic development of every student athlete.

Designed to highlight football's unique ability to develop tomorrow's brightest leaders, the NFF Hampshire Honor Society honors the college football players from all divisions of play who each maintain a 3.2 GPA or better during their collegiate careers. Looking to build on his legacy in promoting the scholar-athlete ideal, NFF Chairman Emeritus Jon F. Hason endowed in perpetuity the NFF Hampshire Honor Society through his real estate company, the Hampshire Companies, and its charitable arm, the Hampshire Foundation.

Division III's Saint John's (MN) led all programs among all divisions with 26 members, setting an all-time record for the most honorees from one school in a single year. Kansas topped the FBS programs with 22 honorees; Harvard topped FCS with 22 members; Colorado School of Mines set the high-water mark in Division II with 13 honorees; Morningside (IA) and Saint Xavier (IL) tied for the most from the NAIA with nine members each; and Cornell topped all Collegiate Sprint Football League teams with 10 honorees.

Ohio State, North Dakota State, Ferris State (MI), and North Central (IL) ensured that last season's national champions were well-represented with a combined 37 members.

As NFF Chairman from 1994-2006, Hanson transformed the organization with new procedures for governance and management. His many initiatives included spearheading an endowment campaign for the NFF's prestigious National Scholar-Athlete Awards and opening the College Football Hall of Fame to include players and coaches from divisional ranks. In 2005, the NFF honored him with its Gold Medal, the organization's highest honor.

2025 QUALIFICATIONS

- **Be a senior player** graduating in the spring/summer who completed his final year of playing eligibility in 2024; or
- **Be a graduated player or grad transfer** who has already earned a bachelor's degree and competed in the 2024 season (even if the player has remaining eligibility and may return to play next season).

And must have:

- Attained a minimum undergraduate cumulative GPA of 3.2 (4.0 scale); and
- Been starters or contributors throughout the 2024 season.

VIEW FULL 2025 MEMBERSHIP

2025 NFF HAMPSHIRE HONOR SOCIETY

An elite group of 2,536 players from 341 schools qualified for membership in the Society's 19th year, including:



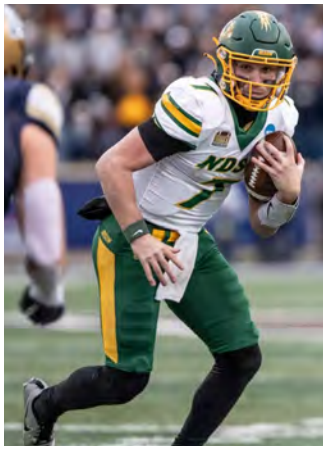
BARRETT CARTER
Clemson



RJ HARVEY
Central Florida



AHMED HASSANEIN
Boise State



CAM MILLER
North Dakota State



ELI STOWERS
Vanderbilt



TYLER WARREN
Penn State



LEGACY FOUNDATION

Proud Supporter of the NFF National High School Academic Excellence Awards

FOOTBALL DRIVES CAMPUS GROWTH

778 COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES SET TO FIELD TEAMS THIS FALL

College football continues to expand, with 778 colleges and universities nationwide now offering football programs. This impressive total includes institutions across all NCAA divisions, the NAIA, and independent schools with four new programs launching this fall and nine more on the way.

"The growth we're seeing reflects more than just love for the game — it's proof of football's unique ability to inspire young people to pursue higher education," said NFF Chairman Archie Manning. "When a campus adds football, it creates new opportunities for students, strengthens community bonds, and energizes school spirit in a way few things can match."

The expansion of college football is not a recent phenomenon but a continuation of a long-standing trend. Since 1978, when the NCAA began tracking attendance figures, the number of schools playing NCAA football has increased by 189, growing from 484 to 673 institutions by 2025. Including NAIA and independent schools, and accounting for upcoming programs, the total now stands at 778 colleges and universities offering football.

"Football continues to be one of the most powerful tools a college can have to bring people together," said NFF President & CEO Steve Hatchell. "Whether it's sparking enrollment growth, connecting alumni, or uniting an entire region, the sport has an unmatched ability to enhance campus life and leave a lasting impact."









Maine Maritime, Rio Grande (OH), Roanoke (VA) and UTRGV have all launched new programs this season.

FOUR PROGRAMS LAUNCHING IN 2025

MAINE MARITIME ACADEMY
Castine, Maine
NCAA Division III,
Commonwealth Coast Conference

UNIVERSITY OF RIO GRANDE
Rio Grande, Ohio
NAIA, Appalachian Athletic Conference

ROANOKE COLLEGE
Salem, Virginia
NCAA Division III,
Old Dominion Athletic Conference

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRAND VALLEY
Rio Grande Valley, Texas
NCAA Division I FCS,
Southland Conference

NINE PROGRAMS LAUNCHING IN FUTURE SEASONS

AZUSA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY*
Azusa, California
NCAA Division III,
Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference

CHICAGO STATE UNIVERSITY
Chicago, Illinois
NCAA Football Championship Subdivision,
Northeast Conference

LACKAWANNA COLLEGE
Scranton, Pennsylvania
NCAA Division II,
Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference

MOUNT MERCY UNIVERSITY
Cedar Rapids, Iowa
NAIA, Heart of America Athletic Conference

SAINT MARY-OF-THE-WOODS COLLEGE
St. Mary's, Indiana
NAIA, Mid-States Football Association

SCHREINER UNIVERSITY
Kerrville, Texas
NCAA Division III,
Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference

SHAWNEE STATE UNIVERSITY
Portsmouth, Ohio
NCAA Division II,
Mountain East Conference

WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Beckley, West Virginia
NAIA, Conference TBD

WHITTIER COLLEGE*
Whittier, California
NCAA Division III,
Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference

FOOTBALL DRIVES CAMPUS GROWTH

778 COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES SET TO FIELD TEAMS THIS FALL

This surge in football programs is a clear reflection of the sport's enduring popularity and its capacity to drive significant benefits for colleges. In the last decade alone (2015-2025), 52 football programs have been added by NCAA, NAIA, or independent institutions, illustrating the continued demand for the sport at all levels.

IMPACT ON ENROLLMENT AND CAMPUS LIFE

Football's appeal goes beyond the excitement on the field. It plays a critical role in enhancing student life, boosting enrollment, and fostering community engagement. These new programs are poised to energize their respective campuses, offering students new opportunities for engagement and building stronger connections with alumni and local communities.

UTRGV, which was created in 2013 by the Texas Legislature, with the aim of expanding educational opportunities in South Texas by merging UT Brownsville and UT Pan American, has seen numerous positive developments since announcing that it would field a football team in 2021. With 34,000-plus students expected to enroll this fall, coupled with strong community support, UTRGV has successfully landed a spot at the Football Championship Subdivision level in the Southland Conference.

Chasse Conque, the senior vice president and director of athletics at UTRGV, explained the key moment in the process came when the student government association voted to add football, which provided the university an opportunity to look at the expansion of the entire athletics department, including swimming, diving, marching bands and the Vaqueros spirit programs.

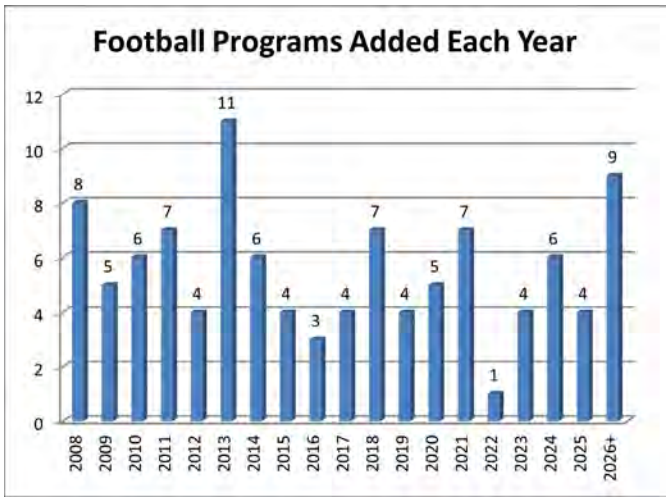
"The growth of our enrollment since our students voted to add division one college football has been remarkable," said Conque. "It's been an aggressive plan built around football but also celebrating the traditions of the other sports that have competed here at the institution for many years."

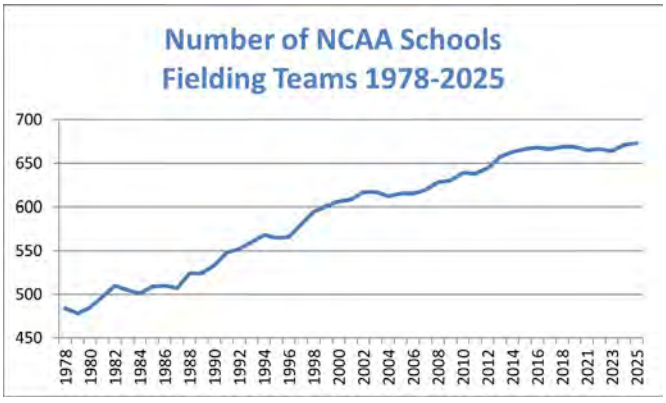
EXPANDING OPTIONS TO PLAY COLLEGE FOOTBALL

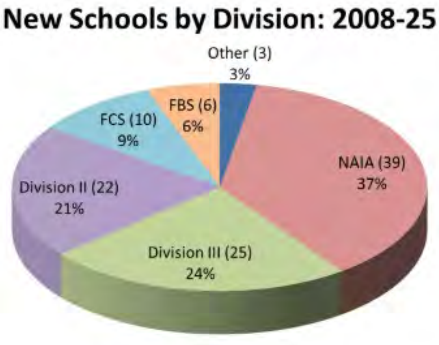
There are also 123 junior college football programs, 16 collegiate sprint football teams and 105 colleges and universities on tap to offer women's flag football programs as either a club or varsity sport.

Sprint football is a full-contact sport for players weighing 178 pounds or less with the same rules as regular college football. Since 1934, intercollegiate student-athletes on the East Coast have benefited from the opportunity to play in the Collegiate Sprint Football League (CSFL), which has nine members. The Midwest Sprint Football League (MSFL), which boasts seven teams, launched in 2022, expanding the sport to the middle of the country and bringing the total of sprint football teams to 16 nationwide.

Flag football also continues to build on the momentum of being added by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to the LA28 Olympic sports program. Played by an estimated 20 million people in more than 100 countries across six continents, flag football has become the most inclusive and accessible format of football. The game is currently played by people of all ages and genders, with women and girls driving some of the sport's fastest growth.







Four Programs Launching in 2025

67TH NFF ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER

PRESENTED BY LAS VEGAS

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2025 | BELLAGIO RESORT & CASINO

The premier event where the college football community connects, the NFF Annual Awards Dinner celebrates the induction of the NFF College Football Hall of Fame Class, the recognition of the NFF National Scholar-Athlete Class presented by Fidelity Investments, and the announcement of the NFF William V. Campbell Trophy® recipient.

NFF COLLEGE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME

Inducts the greatest players and coaches in the history of college football.

NFF WILLIAM V. CAMPBELL TROPHY® AND NATIONAL SCHOLAR-ATHLETE PROGRAM

Bestows the William V. Campbell Trophy® to college football's top scholar-athlete and honors the NFF National Scholar-Athlete Class presented by Fidelity Investments. Awards postgraduate scholarships and recognizes faculty athletics representatives.

NFF FUTURE FOR FOOTBALL®

Celebrates the positive impact the game has made on millions of players, coaches, administrators, volunteers and fans nationwide.

NFF I PLAYED

A campaign to foster camaraderie among former players by encouraging them to share their personal stories and experiences on NFF platforms.

NFF CHAPTER NETWORK

Distributes $1 million in scholarships annually, holding local events to promote amateur football through 120 chapters in 47 states.

NFF NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARDS AND HATCHELL CUP

Recognizes the nation's top high school football programs via the National High School Academic Excellence Awards, presented by Rose Bowl Legacy Foundation, and the Hatchell Cup, presented by Bob's Steak & Chop House, which is awarded to the best team in the nation.

@NFFNetwork | @NFFNetwork | /NFFNetwork | NFF OnDemand

WWW.FOOTBALLFOUNDATION.ORG









NFF HIGH SCHOOL SHOWCASES OPEN COLLEGE DOORS

FREE EVENTS REACHED MORE THAN 1,200 HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL PLAYERS IN 2025

Organizers in Arizona, Houston, Southern California and South Florida all staged NFF High School Showcases in February 2025, giving more than 1,200 aspiring college football student-athletes a shot at earning their degrees and playing at the next level. They all plan to host events again in 2026.

The NFF High School Showcases, which are absolutely free to both participants and college recruiters, provide academically eligible high school seniors who did not sign an NCAA Division I letter of intent an opportunity to go through a series of drills in front of divisional college coaches from the NCAA Division II, Division III and NAIA levels.

The events in February collectively attracted representatives from more than 100 colleges covering 30 states, coupling them with more than 1,200 aspiring college players who subsequently landed millions of dollars in academic and participation scholarships.

These Showcases have become life-changing events for so many young men and their families," said NFF Chairman Archie Manning. "They give deserving student-athletes who might have been overlooked a real chance to earn a college education and keep playing the game they love. It's remarkable to see how a simple, free event can open so many doors and make such a lasting difference."

Participants, who all have to meet minimum academic standards, compete in a series of athletic drills designed to let divisional college coaches assess each player's potential, including a 40-yard dash along with agility and strength tests. The events allow the college recruiters an opportunity to evaluate a large number of qualified student-athletes in a short period while minimizing their travel costs.

2026 SHOWCASES

The 18th Annual Houston Texans Senior Showcase powered by Gatorade will take place on Jan. 31, 2026, at the Texans Methodist Training Center next door to NRG Stadium in Houston, Texas. The 2025 edition attracted more than 467 seniors, pairing them with recruiters from 37 colleges. The event in Houston was founded by Phil Camp, the former head football coach at Milby High School in Houston; Coby Rhoden, an academic coordinator at Houston Aldine High School; and Chris Vaughan, a board member of the NFF Touchdown Club of Houston Chapter. Backed by the Houston Texans, the event also receives significant support from Lonestar Sports and Entertainment General Manager, David Fletcher who also serves on the board of the NFF Touchdown Club of Houston. The event has generated more than $160 million in scholastic aid during its history.

The 13th Annual Terry Donahue Memorial California Showcase will take place Feb. 21, 2026, at the Orange County Great Park in Irvine, California. The event was launched in 2013 by College Football Hall of Fame Coach Terry Donahue, who passed away in July 2021, and the event was renamed in his honor. More than $42 million in scholarships have been awarded to 1,300 participants since the event's inception, and more than 400 high school seniors will look to follow in their footsteps connecting with recruiters from more than 60 colleges at this year's event.

The 10th Annual Orange Bowl Florida High School Football Showcase, Presented by Baptist Health, will take place at St. Thomas University in Miami Gardens, Florida, in February. The 2025 South Florida event was led by Orange Bowl Committee, President & Chairman Henri W. Crockett, CEO Eric Poms and Showcase subcommittee chair David Armstrong. More than $9 million has been awarded to more than 400 participants over the event's nine-year history with another 350 seniors anticipated to take part in 2026.

The Fourth Annual Arizona Senior Showcase will be held Feb. 14, 2026, at Ottawa University in Surprise, Arizona. The NFF Southern Arizona Chapter (NFFSAC) has taken the lead in organizing the event with the support of former college coaches Tim Kish (who is the NFFSAC president), Mike Hankwitz and Mick McCall. Organizers estimate the event has garnered $10 million in scholastic aid since its inception, and they anticipate more than 200 student-athletes and recruiters from 20 colleges in 2026.

Jay Schroeder, who played for Coach Donahue at UCLA and then in the NFL, including time with the Raiders, has been involved with events in Arizona, Houston and Los Angeles. He has been working to enlist the support of the Raiders to stage a Showcase in Las Vegas. In the past, NFF Showcases have also taken place in Atlanta, Detroit, Charlotte (NC).



The Third Arizona Senior Showcase at Ottawa University in Surprise drew more than 200 participants.



More than 350 aspiring college student-athletes took part in the 2025 Orange Bowl Florida High School Football Showcase.

2025 NFF TEAM OF DISTINCTION

RECOGNIZING THE BEST AND BRIGHTEST FROM THE NFF CHAPTER NETWORK

From a pool of 3,500 scholar-athletes identified by a nationwide Chapter Network, the NFF named 82 members to the 2025 NFF Team of Distinction. As part of its mission to promote the scholar-athlete ideal, the initiative allows the NFF to honor the top high school scholar-athletes from around the country as the best and the brightest at the local level while highlighting the work of the NFF Chapter Network.

The members of the team all played their final high school football season during the 2023-24 school year. Criteria to make the team include (but are not limited to) academic achievement, athletic accolades and community involvement. Each chapter is limited to one honoree, distinguishing them as the top scholar-athlete from all the high schools covered by the chapter.

"Each year, the NFF Team of Distinction represents the very best of what high school football has to offer — young men who lead with character, perform with excellence, and give back to their communities," said NFF Chairman Archie Manning. "These 82 honorees exemplify the scholar-athlete ideal that is at the heart of our mission, and we are proud to celebrate their achievements. We are equally grateful to our NFF Chapter Network leaders, whose tireless efforts ensure that the values of football continue to thrive at the grassroots level."



BRAVIN POWELL-BROWN, a First Team All-State QB and a two-year team captain from Gardner-Edgerton HS in Kansas, notched a 4.18 GPA, earning National Honor Society honors. He was nominated by the NFF Bill Snyder Family/Sunflower (KS) Chapter, accepting his award from Hall of Fame Coach **BILL SNYDER**, the chapter namesake.

EAST REGION HONOREES

Xavier Ali – QB, Walt Whitman High School in Huntington Station, NY. Submitted by the NFF Suffolk County Chapter.

Rich Belin – QB, Cardinal Hayes High School in New York, NY. Submitted by the NFF New York City Chapter.

Michael Berkery – RB/DB, Garden City High School in Oceanside, NY. Submitted by the NFF Nassau County (NY) Chapter.

Terrance Hanratty – RB/LB, Bernards High School in Bernardsville, NJ. Submitted by the NFF Denny RFBL/Central NJ Chapter.

Jayden Lee – WR/DB, Montclair High School in Montclair, NJ. Submitted by the NFF Essex-Hudson County (NJ) Chapter.

Matthew McSherry – OL/DL, Bronxville High School in Bronxville, NY. Submitted by the NFF Westchester (NY) Chapter.

Isaac Ramsey – QB/DB, Oakland Mills High School in Columbia, MD. Submitted by the NFF Greater Baltimore Chapter.

Daniel Russo – QB/RB/LB, Delsea Regional High School in Franklinville, NJ. Submitted by the NFF South Jersey Chapter.

Wyatt Spackman – TE/LB, Bald Eagle Area High School in Wingate, PA. Submitted by the NFF Central Pennsylvania Chapter.

Samuel Spolski – RB/LB, Nativity BVM High School in Pottsville, PA. Submitted by the NFF Schuylkill County-Pottsville (PA) Chapter.

Andrew Stickley – OL/DL, Kinnelon High School in Kinnelon, NJ. Submitted by the NFF Greater Morris County (NJ) Chapter.

Vincenzo Stigliano – WR/CB, Pompton Lakes High School in Pompton Lakes, NJ. Submitted by the NFF Passaic County (NJ) Chapter.

Liam Thorpe – WR/S, The Hun School in Princeton, NJ. Submitted by the NFF Delaware Valley (NJ) Chapter.

Josh Williams – OL, Haverford High School in Havertown, PA. Submitted by the NFF Philadelphia Chapter.

Eli Zimmerman – RB/S, Northwestern Lehigh High School in New Tripoli, PA. Submitted by the NFF Lehigh Valley (PA) Chapter.

MIDWEST REGION HONOREES

Will Aitchison – RB/WR/S, Regina Catholic High School in Iowa City, IA. Submitted by the NFF Iowa Chapter.

Alex Amburgy – QB, Waynesville High School in Waynesville, OH. Submitted by the NFF Greater Cincinnati Chapter.

Jude Ballinger – TE/LB, Marquette University High School in Wauwatosa, WI. Submitted by the NFF Wisconsin Chapter.

Madden Beriault – DB, Warren Central High School in Indianapolis, IN. Submitted by the NFF Central Indiana Chapter.

Leo Dellinger – WR/S, Twin Lakes High School in Monticello, IN. Submitted by the NFF Joe Tiller/NW Indiana Chapter.

John Kruse – C, St. Louis University High School in St. Louis, MO. Submitted by the NFF Tom Lombardo/St. Louis Chapter.

Chase Loftin – TE, Millard South High School in Omaha, NE. Submitted by the NFF Nebraska Chapter.

Conner Loveless – WR/TE, Pike Central High School in Petersburg, IN. Submitted by the NFF Southern Indiana Chapter.

Jake Marzich – OL/DL, Olentangy Berlin High School in Delaware, OH. Submitted by the NFF Columbus, OH Chapter.

Bravin Powell-Brown – QB, Gardner-Edgerton High School in Gardner, KS. Submitted by the NFF Bill Snyder Family/Sunflower (KS) Chapter.

Blake Schlitz – TE/LB, Pine Island High School in Pine Island, MN. Submitted by the NFF Minnesota Chapter.

2025 NFF TEAM OF DISTINCTION NOTES

82 Honorees
40 States Represented
4.15 Average GPA
74 Team Captains
44 All-State Selections
10 Valedictorians
54 National Honor Society Members
1 National Merit Finalists and Honorees

Anthony Schmok – RB/DE, James Whitcomb Riley High School in South Bend, IN. Submitted by the NFF Moose Krause (IN) Chapter.

Joe Seney – RB/LB, Perrysburg High School in Perrysburg, OH. Submitted by the NFF Wistert-Toledo Chapter.

Olav Taylor – OL/LB, Century High School in Bismark, ND. Submitted by the NFF Roughrider State (ND) Chapter.

NORTHEAST REGION HONOREES

Brogan Donnelly – WR/DB, Inter-Lakes Middle/High School in Meredith, NH. Submitted by the NFF Joe Yukica/New Hampshire Chapter.

Mason Frey – RB/LB, Fairfield College Preparatory in Fairfield, CT. Submitted by the NFF Casey-O'Brien/New Haven (CT) Chapter.

Darien Jenkins – QB/S, Windham High School in Willimantic, CT. Submitted by the NFF Southeastern Connecticut Chapter.

Sean Kennedy – OL/DL, Champlain Valley Union High School in Hinesburg, VT. Submitted by the NFF Vermont Chapter.

Henry Mahoney – OL/DL, Thornton Academy in Saco, ME. Submitted by the NFF Howie Vandersea/State of Maine Chapter.

2025 NFF TEAM OF DISTINCTION

RECOGNIZING THE BEST AND BRIGHTEST FROM THE NFF CHAPTER NETWORK

Max Marek – DE, Greenwich High School in Greenwich, CT. Submitted by the NFF DeSantis-McDougall/Fairfield County (CT) Chapter.
Benjamin Newman – QB, East Rochester High School in East Rochester, NY. Submitted by the NFF Rochester Chapter.
John Nicoll – QB/LB, Lincoln High School in Lincoln, RI. Submitted by the NFF Emo DiNitto/Rhode Island Chapter.
Sampson Onuoha – OL/DL/TE, Belmont Hill School in Belmont, MA. Submitted by the NFF Jack Grinold/Eastern Mass Chapter.
Camden Righi – QB, Wethersfield High School in Wethersfield, CT. Submitted by the NFF Doc Boisoneau/Northern CT Chapter.
Jack Smith – C/DL, West Boylston High School in West Boylston, MA. Submitted by the NFF Joe Mewhiney/Central Mass Chapter.

SOUTH REGION HONOREES

Jaden Avery – RB, Apex Friendship High School in Apex, NC. Submitted by the NFFCHOF Bill Dooley (NC) Chapter.
Mitchell Baum – OL/DL, New Home High School in New Home, TX. Submitted by the NFF Texas Tech Chapter.
Desmond Beasley – DB, Salmen High School in Slidell, LA. Submitted by the NFF Allstate Sugar Bowl (LA) Chapter.
Jackson Christian – OL, Port Neches-Groves High School in Port Neches, TX. Submitted by the NFF Golden Triangle (TX) Chapter.
Brady Clark – DT, Naples High School in Naples, FL. Submitted by the NFF Collier County (FL) Chapter.
Russell Cole – DB, Tuscaloosa Academy in Tuscaloosa, AL. Submitted by the NFF University of Alabama Chapter.



ELIAS FRANKS, who earned First Team All-Region honors as a two-way lineman at Montgomery Bell Academy, boasted a 5.2 GPA, earning membership in the National Honor Society. He was honored by the NFF Middle Tennessee Chapter, accepting his citation from Hall of Famer **STEVE HUTCHINSON** (Michigan) and former NFL and Middle Tennessee QB **KELLY HOLCOMB**.

Elias Franks – OL/DL, Montgomery Bell Academy in Nashville, TN. Submitted by the NFF Middle Tennessee Chapter.
Dean Gee Jr. – DE/LB, Jule F. Sumner High School in Riverview, FL. Submitted by the NFF Tampa Chapter.
Sam Greer – LB, C.E, Byrd High School in Shreveport, LA. Submitted by the NFF SM McNaughton (LA) Chapter.
Crawford Grow – TE/DL, Athens Academy in Athens, GA. Submitted by the NFF University of Georgia Chapter.
Brady Hughes – QB, Memphis University School in Memphis, TN. Submitted by the NFF Memphis Chapter.
Jaxson Jewell – QB, Deerfield Beach High School in Deerfield, FL. Submitted by the NFF Brian Piccolo/Ft. Lauderdale Chapter.
James Johnson – OL/DL, Homestead Senior High School in Homestead, FL. Submitted by the NFF Miami Touchdown Club Chapter.
Xavier Johnson-Hairston – LB, North Forsyth High School in Winston-Salem, NC. Submitted by the NFF Corrigan-Faircloth (NC) Chapter.
Noel Lewis – RB/LB, Little Rock Catholic High School in Little Rock, AR. Submitted by the NFF Arkansas Chapter.
Adonis McCrary – WR/TE, Frederick Douglass High School in Atlanta, GA. Submitted by the NFF Touchdown Club of Atlanta Chapter.
Baylor Necessary – RB/LB, Science Hill High School in Johnson City, TN. Submitted by the NFF Mountain Empire (TN) Chapter.
Randy Reed – WR/S, William Blount High School in Maryville, TN. Submitted by the NFF East Tennessee Chapter.
Aiden Grant Roche' – TE/DE, Adams County Christian School in Natchez, MS. Submitted by the NFF Miss-Lou Chapter.
Joshua Tang – LB, Grand Oaks High School in Spring, TX. Submitted by the NFF TD Club of Houston Chapter.
Preston Tarpley – QB, Gunter High School in Gunter, TX. Submitted by the NFF Gridiron Club of Dallas Chapter.
Barrett Travis – RB/LB, Heritage Hall High School in Oklahoma City, OK. Submitted by the NFF Oklahoma Chapter.
Bennett Wilkin – OL, Austin Westlake High School in Austin, TX. Submitted by the NFF Greater Austin Chapter.

WEST REGION HONOREES

Brock Buak III – RB/S, Union Mine High School in El Dorado, CA. Submitted by the NFF Sacramento Valley Chapter.
Kevin Burke – LB, Leilehua High School in Wahiawa, HI. Submitted by the NFF Hawaii Chapter.
Sam Connelly – OL/DL, Marin Catholic High School in Kentfield, CA. Submitted by the NFF Northern California Chapter.
Reese Dahlke – RB/S, Gallatin High School in Bozeman, MT. Submitted by the NFF Montana Chapter.



ISAAC RAMSEY accepts his award from Greater Baltimore Chapter President **MATT MAY**. Ramsey amassed a 4.56 GPA, claiming a spot in the National Honor Society. He was a two-year captain and the Howard County Offensive Player of the Year. A two-way player, he starred as a QB/DB.

Soren Gaston – OT/DT, Jesuit High School in Portland, OR. Submitted by the NFF Oregon Chapter.
Emerson Geilman – QB, Bountiful High School in Bountiful, UT. Submitted by the NFF Utah Chapter.
Mitchell Gibbens – K/P, Charter Oak High School in Covina, CA. Submitted by the NFF Pasadena/San Gabriel Valley Chapter.
Henry Hurd – TE/WR/LB, Aspen High School in Aspen, CO. Submitted by the NFF Colorado Chapter.
Nik Husarik – DB, Emerald Ridge High School in Puyallup, WA. Submitted by the NFF Tacoma/Pierce County (WA) Chapter.
Alex Kiernan – WR/DB, Trabuco Hills High School in Mission Viejo, CA. Submitted by the NFF Orange County (CA) Chapter.
Anderson Kopp – C, Brophy College Prep in Phoenix, AZ. Submitted by the NFF Valley of the Sun (AZ) Chapter.
David Lindler – OL, Yreka High School in Yreka, CA. Submitted by the NFF SYF Nor-Cal Chapter.
Draven Lopez – QB, Hemet High School in Hemet, CA. Submitted by the NFF Riverside County Chapter.
Isaiah Reed – LB, Rocky Mountain High School in Meridian, ID. Submitted by the NFF Southern Idaho Chapter.
Ryan Stadtherr – RB/LB, Scripps Ranch High School in San Diego, CA. Submitted by the NFF Walter Zable/San Diego Chapter.
Scott Taylor – LB, Loyola High School in Los Angeles, CA. Submitted by the NFF Los Angeles Chapter.
Christian Thatcher – LB, Arbor View High School in Las Vegas, NV. Submitted by the NFF Bill Ireland/Las Vegas Chapter.
Jayden Thoreson – QB, Mica Mountain High School in Tucson, AZ. Submitted by the NFF Southern Arizona Chapter.
Boaz Yoo – QB, East Valley High School in North Hollywood, CA. Submitted by the NFF Coastal Valley (CA) Chapter.

FOOTBALL BY THE NUMBERS

NFF HIGHLIGHTS THE KEY STATS IN THE GAME

Each year, the National Football Foundation (NFF) & College Hall of Fame collects the impactful numbers on the state of football, including key stats from high school, collegiate and NFL levels.

"As thrilling and exciting as the action is on the football field, the NFF takes great pride in promoting the educational opportunities created by our sport," said NFF President & CEO Steve Hatchell. "These numbers help us quantify some of those opportunities, and we hope the stats will inspire the next generation to take full advantage of the opportunities created by our sport. As it's often said, college is not about just the four years in school but its impact on your career for the next forty."

NATIONAL FOOTBALL FOUNDATION (EST. 1947)

120 chapters in 47 states representing more than 6,000 high schools and 600,000(+) players (est. 1957)

67th NFF Annual Awards Dinner Presented by Las Vegas at the Bellagio Hotel and Casino on December 9, 2025

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL (EST. 1869)

15,969* high schools in the U.S. that sponsor football

1.06* million high school football players in the U.S.

7.8% of high school football players will play in college

2,736 high schools in the U.S. sponsor girls flag football

(as of 2023-2024 Season, National Federation of State High School Associations)

**Note: These numbers do not include private and/or parochial high schools that do not report to the state high school association*



University of Texas Rio Grande Valley is playing its inaugural season in the Southland Conference in 2025, becoming one of 778 colleges with football programs.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL (EST. 1869)

778 colleges and universities playing football at all levels (FBS, FCS, Division II, Division III, NAIA and more)

81,000(+) college football players in NCAA and NAIA

124 colleges and universities added football programs since 2008

39 colleges and universities added football programs since 2020

141 colleges and universities offering women's flag football as a varsity sport

120 junior colleges offering football

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY GRADUATION RATES

83% graduation success rate of Football Bowl Subdivision football student-athletes. FCS rate is 79%. *(NCAA)*

67% graduation rate of general student body at Division I institutions (NCAA)

3,695 student-athletes on 2025 college football rosters had already earned their undergraduate degrees *(NCAA)*



Women's flag football continues to expand rapidly, with 141 colleges and universities now sponsoring varsity programs.

FOOTBALL BY THE NUMBERS

NFF HIGHLIGHTS THE KEY STATS IN THE GAME

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE (EST. 1920)

32 NFL teams

2,240 Players on NFL Rosters (active and practice) in 2024 *(NFL)*

497 rookies made NFL opening week rosters in 2024 *(NFL)*

257 college football players were drafted in 2024 *(NFL)*

519 college football players signed as undrafted free agents or received training camp invitations in 2024 *(NFL)*

3.3 years is an average NFL player's career *(Statista)*

0.61% of college football players made NFL opening week rosters in 2024

NFF COLLEGE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME (EST. 1951)

35 William V. Campbell Trophy® recipients recognized as college football's top scholar-athlete (est. 1990)

938 college football players from 275 schools honored as NFF National Scholar-Athletes all-time (est. 1959)

20,929 college football players all-time named to the NFF Hampshire Honor Society (est. 2007)

15 years of honoring faculty athletic representatives through NFF Faculty Salutes Presented by Fidelity Investments

81 high school football scholar-athletes recognized by NFF Team of Distinction

37 state high school coaches associations partnered on the NFF National High School Academic Excellence Awards

4 recipients of the NFF Hatchell Cup, presented to the nation's top all-around high school football program

NFF COLLEGE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME (EST. 1951)

5.62 million college football players all-time (est. 1869)

1,111 players and **237** coaches inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame all-time

>.02% **less than two one-hundredths of a percent** of all-time players have earned induction into the College Football Hall of Fame

22 coaches and players from **28** schools representing six different decades to be inducted into College Football Hall of Fame Class on December 9, 2025



JACKSON WOODARD, a 2024 NFF Campbell Trophy® Finalist from UNLV, earned his degree, joining the 83% of FBS players who statistically graduate compared with 67% of the general male student body at Division I schools.



More than one million students will play tackle football at 15,969 high schools nationwide this year. *(Credit: Russell Wilburn and Dave Campbell's Texas Football)*

FWAA, NFF PARTNER FOR 11TH YEAR ON SUPER 16 POLL

WEEKLY RANKING OF FBS TEAMS BY SPORTS WRITERS AND COLLEGE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAMERS

The Football Writers Association of America (FWAA) and the National Football Foundation (NFF) & College Hall of Fame are partnering for the 11th year to conduct the FWAA-NFF Super 16 Poll, the organizations' weekly poll ranking the top 16 teams in the NCAA Division I Football Bowl Subdivision.

The results are being released by 12:30 p.m. ET each Sunday of the 2025 regular season. The last poll will be released Sunday, Dec. 7, the day after the conference championship games. There is no final poll after the bowl games, but the NFF will award its historic MacArthur Bowl National Championship Trophy to the winner of the College Football Playoff National Championship.

"We are proud to continue our partnership with the FWAA on the Super 16 Poll," said NFF President & CEO Steve Hatchell. "We believe that our voters offer an extremely credible set of opinions, and we hope that the combined respect of both our organizations will continue to provide a compelling reference point for fans to follow during the season."

The voters in the poll consist of FWAA writers and College Football Hall of Famers. The poll aims to draw on the vast knowledge of the nation's top journalists with extensive experience covering college football in combination with some of the greatest legends to have ever played or coached the game.

"We are extremely excited to continue the Super 16 Poll and partner with the National Football Foundation," said FWAA Executive Director Steve Richardson. "We have had a great experience with the poll, and we look forward to extending it for another year. Our poll includes some of the most knowledgeable and objective college football minds in the country, and we believe it has developed into a compelling instrument for ranking the best teams in the country."

The decision to conduct the poll was made by the boards of both organizations at the conclusion of the 2013 season and the end of the Bowl Championship Series, building on a relationship that stretches back to the 1940s when both groups were founded. The 2025 poll includes 56 voters (44 from the FWAA and 12 Hall of Famers), with their individual rankings again made public each week during the season.



The NFF sent the MacArthur Bowl, its national championship trophy, to Ohio State, formally recognizing the Buckeyes and head coach **RYAN DAY** as 2024 national champions after their 34-23 win over Notre Dame in the CFP National Championship on Jan. 20, 2025, in Atlanta.

2025 FWAA-NFF SUPER 16 POLL VOTERS

Robert Allen	Pokes Report
Zach Barnett	FootballScoop.com
Tony Barnhart	Mr. College Football-AJC
Bill Bender	Sporting News
Michael Bishop	2023 Hall of Famer – Kansas State
Alex Blackburn	Mike Farrell Sports
Mark Blaudschun	FWAA.com Columnist
Chip Brown	Horns247.com
Keith Byars	2020 Hall of Famer – Ohio State
Matt Byrne	Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
Brett Ciancia	Pick Six Previews
Dave Congrove	CollegeFootballPoll.com
Bryan Fischer	Sports Illustrated
Pete Fiutak	CollegeFootballNews.com
Matt Fortuna	The Inside Zone
Toby Gerhart	2024 Hall of Famer – Stanford
Mike Griffith	AJC/DawgNation
David Hale	ESPN
Scott Hamilton	The Post and Courier
Dan Hampton	2024 Hall of Famer – Arkansas
Mitch Harper	KSLSports.com
Dan Harralson	Vols Wire/USA Today Network
Mike Hass	2022 Hall of Famer – Oregon State
Steve Helwagen	Bucknuts Media Network
Ron Higgins	Shreveport-Bossier Journal
Johnnie Johnson	2007 Hall of Famer – Texas
Barrett Jones	2012 Campbell Trophy® – Alabama
Carter Karels	GigEm247.com
Cody Kellner	Cody Kellner Points Index
TJ Krilowicz	Texas Student Writer
Antonio Langham	2024 Hall of Famer – Alabama
Christina Long	Whole Hog Sports
Mark May	2005 Hall of Famer – Pittsburgh
Kevin McGuire	Nittany Lions Wire/USA Today Network
Don McPherson	2008 Hall of Famer – Syracuse
Mark Messner	2023 Hall of Famer – Michigan
Max Olson	ESPN
Bill Royce	2016 Hall of Famer – Ashland (OH)
Mike'l Severe	Big Red Wrap-Up
Dan Sileo	The National Football Show
Ayokunle Spencer	Sports Radio America
A.P. Steadham	AP aS wE C it
Phil Steele	Phil Steele Publications
Patrick Stevens	Baltimore/D.C. Freelancer
Kevin J. Stone	New England Football Journal
Andy Talley	2020 Hall of Fame Coach
David Teel	Daily Press/Virginian-Pilot
Cole Thompson	SportsTalk790 - iHeart Media
Mel Tjeerdsma	2018 Hall of Fame Coach
John Wagner	The Blade, Toledo (Ret.)
Chris Williams	CycloneFanatic.com
David Williams	2005 Hall of Famer – Illinois
Collin Wilson	Action Network
Scott Woerner	2016 Hall of Famer – Georgia
RJ Young	FOX Sports
Chris Zorich	2007 Hall of Famer – Notre Dame

THE FUTURE



IS HERE

FUTURE FOR FOOTBALL