

Former Ohio State Linebacker Randy Gradishar Selected To Pro Football Hall Of Fame Class of 2024



Former Ohio State linebacker Randy Gradishar will receive his long-awaited bust in Canton, Ohio, as he was elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame at the NFL Honors awards ceremony held Thursday night.

The former Denver Bronco Gradishar will receive football immortality after being chosen as one of three senior finalists for this year's class, a group that also included former Chicago Bears defensive tackle Steve McMichael and New York Titans/Oakland Raiders wide receiver Art Powell. He had previously been tabbed as a finalist on three different occasions, becoming a modern-era finalist in 2003 and 2008 and a seniors candidate for the Centennial Slate in 2020.

"Without question, Randy is one of the most impactful figures in Broncos history and one of the greatest linebackers of all time," Denver Broncos CEO Greg Penner wrote in a statement. "The iconic 'Orange Crush' will now finally have its first Hall of Famer, and there could not be a better representative of our first Super Bowl team and this organization than Randy.

"He has waited 40 years for this moment, and we are excited to celebrate Randy this summer as he takes his well-deserved place in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Gradishar, 71, had a decorated 10-year career with the Broncos. One of the stalwarts of Denver's patented "Orange Crush" defense, Gradishar earned seven Pro Bowl selections and two first-team All-Pro nods while becoming the franchise's all-time leader in tackles with 2,409 — a number that also ranks second all-time in NFL history. He also registered 20 career interceptions, 19.5 career sacks, 13 fumble recoveries and four defensive touchdowns, and was named the NFL's Defensive Player of the Year in 1978.

Prior to his time dominating in the NFL, Gradishar also made a name for himself in college football, where he was a three-year starter and two-time first-team All-American at Ohio State while playing under longtime head coach Woody Hayes. Playing from 1971-1973, he earned 320 total tackles — a school record at the time — and was All-Big Ten in three seasons.

Gradishar's best year at Ohio State came in 1973, where he finished sixth in Heisman Trophy voting

after leading a Buckeyes defense that earned four shutouts and relinquished just 64 points all season.

Gradishar's efforts with the Scarlet and Gray allowed him to be inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 1998. With his election this winter, he will now become just the fourth Buckeye to be inducted in both the Pro and College Football Halls of Fame, joining Orlando Pace, Jim Parker and Bill Willis.

Gradishar will be the 11th Buckeye to be inducted into football's most prestigious fraternity, joining the four previously mentioned names along with Chris Carter, Sid Gillman, Lou Groza, Dante Lavelli, Dick LaBeau, Ed Sabol and Paul Warfield. Ohio State is now also tied with Michigan for the third-most Pro Football Hall of Famers all-time, with Notre Dame and USC each having 14.

Gradishar will earn his long-awaited formal induction into the Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio, on Aug. 3