

Former Buckeyes Gradishar, Marshall Among Hall Of Fame Semifinalists



Of all the country's major colleges, only three have produced more Pro Football Hall of Famers than the 10 Ohio State has churned out. Notre Dame and USC are tied for first with 14 while Michigan holds 11.

This year, the Buckeyes have two semifinalists under consideration for induction that could add to that total.

Wednesday it was announced that former Denver Broncos linebacker Randy Gradishar and former Minnesota Vikings defensive end Jim Marshall are both among 31 names that will be considered by the Hall of Fame's senior committee as potential inductees for the 2024 class.

Gradishar is, unofficially, the second-leading tackler in NFL history, and was the unofficial leader until Ray Lewis surpassed him in 2004. It took Lewis seven extra seasons to do so. Tackle stats only became official in 1994, but the centerpiece of the "Orange Crush" defense is believed to have amassed 2,049 takedowns across 10 seasons. He added 20 interceptions, making for an average of 204.9 tackles and 2.0 interceptions per year.

Gradishar collected seven Pro Bowl appearances and three first-team All-Pro selections in his career, and was named both the AP and UPI NFL Defensive Player of the Year in 1978. He is a member of the Denver Broncos Ring of Fame.

At Ohio State, Gradishar was a two-time first-team All-American and made the Ohio State All-Century team. He finished sixth in Heisman Trophy voting in 1973.

Marshall is a member of the Minnesota Vikings Ring of Honor in his own right. A foundational member of the famed "Purple People Eaters," Marshall started a then NFL-record 270 consecutive games, still the high-water mark for a defensive player. Only former Green Bay Packers and eventual Vikings quarterback Brett Favre has started more in a row since Marshall's streak ended in 1979.

Marshall made two Pro Bowls during his NFL tenure, racking up an unofficial 130.5 sacks, which would be tied for 22nd all time among official and unofficial leaders. However he's most well-known, for better or worse, for his infamous wrong-way run into his own endzone after recovering a fumble, recording a safety for the opposing team when he thought he had scored a touchdown.

During his tenure with the Buckeyes, Marshall received All-American honors and was a member of the 1957 National Championship team. He departed a year early for the Canadian Football League, spending one season with the Saskatchewan Roughriders before heading to the NFL in 1960. He was previously a finalist for the Hall of Fame in 2004 but missed the cut for induction.