
Honoring and Preserving the Sports History of Chautauqua County



Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame

15 West Third Street - Jamestown, NY 14701

November 2014

Shane Conlan Exhibit



Shane Conlan, the former All-American linebacker at Penn State, will be inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame on December 9th. To commemorate the milestone event, the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame will honor our 1992 inductee with a display of Conlan's memorabilia at our hall beginning in December.

The exhibit has been created from personal artifacts Shane and his parents, Dan and Kay Conlan, have loaned the CSHOF. Among the items to be shown are the following:

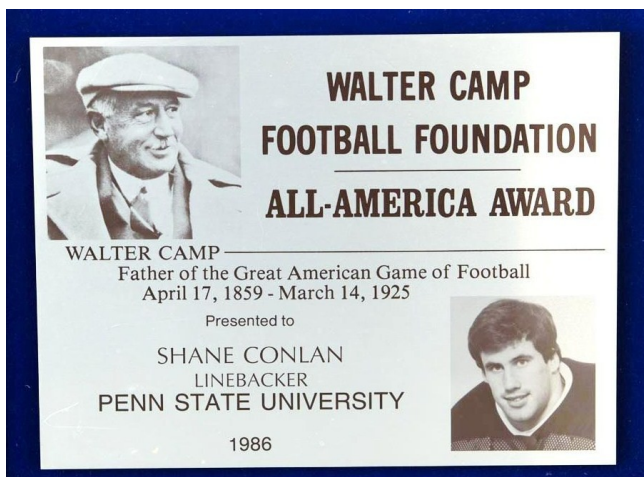
- ▣ Conlan football jerseys from Frewsburg Central, Penn State, Buffalo Bills and Los Angeles Rams
- ▣ Game-used helmets from Penn State and Buffalo
- ▣ A collage of 30 Conlan pro football trading cards
- ▣ 1986 All-American plaque
- ▣ 1987 Fiesta Bowl Defensive Most Valuable Player Award
- ▣ 1987 Downtown Athletic Club Exemplary Player Award



- ▣ 1987 NFL Rookie of the Year Award
- ▣ 1987 Buffalo Bills Rookie of the Year
- ▣ 1988 NFL Mackey Award
- ▣ 1994 Los Angeles Rams Most Valuable Player Award

Excerpted from “Frewsburg’s Conlan Joining College Football Hall Of Fame” - May 23, 2014 – by Scott Kindberg - Post-Journal

A couple of weeks ago, Shane Conlan was traveling from Western New York to Harrisburg, Pa. when his cell phone rang. On the line was a representative of the National Football Foundation, who informed the former Penn State All-American linebacker that he had been elected to its College Football Hall of Fame.



The Frewsburg native had to keep the news quiet until Thursday when he appeared at a press conference in Irving, Texas. Given that public forum, Conlan could finally thank those people who helped him get there.

"It means a lot to me," he told The Post-Journal yesterday afternoon, "but it means more to the people like my parents, my wife and my kids.

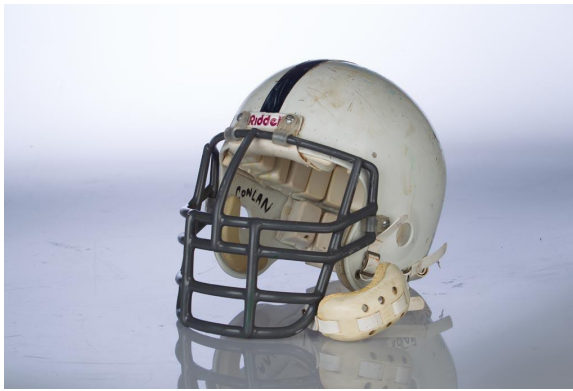
It's great you can share it, because I

never envisioned that I would get this far. All I wanted to do was play college football. That's it."

Conlan was one of 16 men named to the hall's class of 2014, including two who are in the Pro Football Hall of Fame - Derrick Thomas and Willie Roaf. This year's class numbers 14 players and two coaches, bringing the total of inductees to 948 players and 207 coaches enshrined since the hall was founded in 1951.

Closer examination of the numbers detail how extremely difficult it is to gain enshrinement. According to the National Football Foundation, a total of 5.06 million people have played or coached the college game in the past 145 years, which means only two 10-thousandths of one percent (.002) have been deemed worthy of enshrinement.

"I was just humbled to (even) be nominated," said Conlan. "That (group) is a who's-who of college and NFL football. I don't think it can get any better than that." It's been that kind of a football odyssey for the 1982 Frewsburg Central School graduate.



The Buffalo News Player of the Year his senior season, Conlan had all the physical tools to play collegiately, but nobody seemed to notice outside of Chautauqua County. In fact, were it not for Tom Sharp, Conlan's high school football coach, the connection with Penn State would have likely never been made.

"Tom Sharp chased those guys down and made them come watch me," Conlan said.

"He just wouldn't give up, even after a lot of people said, 'No thanks.'"

Tom Bradley, a Nittany Lions assistant coach in those days, finally agreed to take a look at Conlan months after the Bears' football season was over. But after driving through a snowstorm to attend a Frewsburg High basketball game, Bradley came away convinced that the son of Dan and Kay Conlan had the athleticism to play for Joe Paterno.

"I want to thank Tom Bradley again for convincing Coach Paterno to take a shot with me and, obviously, Joe, for giving me a shot. It's a combination of (Sharp, Bradley and Paterno). Once I was in, I kind of took off from there."



One of the greatest linebackers at "Linebacker U," Conlan led Penn State to a perfect 12-0 national championship in 1986, a season in which he was a consensus first-team All-American and a finalist for the Butkus Award. During his career, he led the Nittany Lions to three bowl appearances, including back-to-back national title games, and he earned Defensive Most Valuable Player honors in both the 1986 Orange Bowl and the 1987 Fiesta Bowl.

A member of Penn State's all-time team and a 1992 inductee of the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame, Conlan was selected eighth overall by the Buffalo Bills in the 1987 NFL Draft and was the Defensive

Rookie of the Year that season. The three-time Pro Bowl and All-Pro selection played in

three straight Super Bowls with the Bills and was named to their 50th Anniversary Team. He played three seasons with the Los Angeles Rams before retiring after the 1995 season.

Conlan will be inducted with other members of the Class of 2014 at the National Football Foundation's 57th annual awards dinner Dec. 9 at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City. He will become the 23rd member of the Penn State program inducted, joining 17 other former players and five Nittany Lion coaches. The most recent Penn State player so honored was running back Curt Warner in 2009. Talking about Paterno, also a College Football Hall of Famer who died in 2012, was emotional for Conlan.

"He's not there to share it with us," he said. "That's the part that really got me. I'll probably think back in a few years and realize what it means to me personally, but for now what it means to the (Penn State) program is great.

Now 50, and living in Sewickley, Pa., with his wife Caroline and four children, Conlan currently serves as the vice president of Corporate Partnerships for the Pittsburgh Power Arena Football League team. A community leader, he organizes the Shane Conlan Classic golf tournament, which raises money for the Heritage Valley Health System, the Shane Conlan Scholarship Fund at Frewsburg High and various projects at Penn State.

Conlan's accomplishments will be immortalized in the new \$66.5 million College Football Hall of Fame, currently under construction in Atlanta and scheduled to open in August.

