

Conlan Named No. 2 Nittany Lion Of All Time

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Scott Kindberg, Sports Editor

skindberg@post-journal.com



Shane Conlan, pictured at right in this picture with teammate Trey Bauer, was named the No. 2 Nittany Lion of all time by Penn State University Athletics on Thursday. P-J file photo

Entries on Shane Conlan's football resume include, in no particular order: All-American linebacker and national champion, Penn State University; College Football Hall of Fame inductee; NFL first-round

draft pick, Buffalo Bills; NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year; and NFL Super Bowl and Pro Bowl participant.

Now, the Frewsburg native can add another entry to that list of accomplishments - one of the 10 best players to ever play for the Nittany Lions.

For even though his decorated collegiate career ended 30 years ago, he has always been held in the highest regard by Penn State fans. And now, courtesy of a website called "Land of 10," Conlan's overall brilliance puts him in the football program's rarified air.

As part of the Land of 10's "Big Ten at 100" celebration, the website, which calls itself the "source of the informed fan of each Big Ten team," is counting down the top 100 players in Penn State football history.

Where is Conlan, who is also a Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame inductee, on that list?

Number two.

Only Heisman Trophy winner John Cappelletti, who played for Penn State from 1970-73, is ahead of the 1982 Frewsburg Central School graduate.

The rest of the top 10 includes: LaVar Arrington, linebacker (1997-99), No. 3; Mike Reid, defensive line (1967-69), No. 4; Richie Lucas, quarterback (1957-59), No. 5; Dennis Onkotz, linebacker (1967-69), No. 6; Paul Posluszny, linebacker (2003-06), No. 7; Jack Ham, linebacker (1967-69), No. 8; Lenny Moore, running back/defensive back (1953-55), No. 9; and Glenn Ressler, offensive/defensive line (1962-64), No. 10.

Writes Land of 10 Penn State writer Corey Masisak:

"This is Linebacker U. And it was called that before other schools decided they wanted to be called DBU or RBU or whatever other moniker they want to claim.

"Picking the No. 1 linebacker for this list is almost as important as deciding who should be first overall. There are several strong candidates. It's hard not to go with Shane Conlan, who was the leader of the 1986 championship team and a two-time All-America selection.

"Conlan's interception against Heisman Trophy winner Vinny Testaverde, his second of the game, set up the game-winning touchdown in the 1987 Fiesta Bowl. It's one of the most iconic plays in program history."

Not bad for a kid who wasn't even offered a scholarship until months after his high school football season had ended and only thanks to the don't-take-no-for-an-answer efforts of his coach, Tom Sharp.

Penn State got the best of that deal.