

RB Warner inducted into Hall of Fame

By Wayne Staats
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Curt Warner has come a long way from the hills of West Virginia.

The former Penn State All-American running back joined elite company when he was inducted into the National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame on Tuesday at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City.

"I'm just privileged and proud to be a part of the Penn State family," Warner said during the press conference.

"I too reflect back and think that, you know, a kid from the hills of West Virginia, the coal mining hills of West Virginia, would have an opportunity to be part of such a great class."

Some other people joining Warner's Hall-of-Fame class are Notre Dame Heisman winner Tim Brown, West Virginia quarterback Major Harris and former Syracuse coach Dick MacPherson.

Warner became the 17th Penn State player and 22nd member of the Nittany Lion program to get the honor. The running back, who now lives in Washington state, helped lead Penn State to its first national championship with a victory

against Georgia in the Sugar Bowl after the 1982 regular season.

When it came to his single-game performances, Warner broke the century mark 18 times, with the Lions winning all those contests. He even totaled 341 yards all-purpose yards at Syracuse back in 1981.

"Any time he had the ball inside the 20-yard-line — guaranteed he was going to score," MacPherson said at the press conference. "Third-and-1 he's down in the Carrier Dome on our 1. Here's Mr. Sweetheart over here. My linebacker sticks him like he's never been stuck before. Back on third-down-and-1, got one more down. He said, 'Nice tackle, kid. Don't go away, I'll be right back.' That's what he said."

Penn State historian Lou Prato saw the program's all-time leading rusher Monday night and said he admired how Warner was willing to sacrifice his numbers for the team. Without Warner, Prato said Penn State would not have won the national title.

"I think the best thing about Curt Warner is the fact, even the year he made All-American, that's the year Penn State passed more than they ran," Prato said.

Indeed, Warner earned All-American honors twice despite the presence of another Penn State great in quarterback

Todd Blackledge, whom Warner gave a shout-out to at the press conference for his attendance.

The former Lion led the team in rushing three consecutive seasons and totaled 3,398 rushing yards. As for his NFL career, Warner ran for 6,844 yards and 56 touchdowns.

Today, Warner is a running backs coach for Camas High School and also owns an automobile dealership.

Athletic Director Tim Curley was once the Lions' football recruiting coordinator and helped recruit players on the national championship team. Not surprisingly, he quickly found out just how good Warner would turn out to be.

Curley recalls how coach Joe Paterno went down to watch Warner play a basketball game for Pineville High School in West Virginia.

"He scored 30-something points that night," Curley said. "The night we were there, he put on a show — just tremendous athleticism and a great all-around athlete, not just a football athlete. He put on a great show for coach Paterno. We knew we had something special once he committed to us."



Tailback Curt Warner runs with the ball. Warner was inducted into the National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame Tuesday.

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Final weeks make for another great regular season

By Matt Brown

Oh good, Dec. 5 finally arrived. Thankfully, the game of the century

would save this lousy college football season.

No. 1 vs. No. 2, Tim Tebow and Mark Ingram, Urban Meyer and Nick Saban. No chance this would fail to meet expectations, right?

Turns out it didn't matter.

Penn State's season seemed to serve as a microcosm for much of the entire college football world — a bland 12 weeks with few memorable moments and a slate of boring games.

Naturally, as soon as the Nittany Lions' season ended, things took off in the final two weeks of the regular season as

rivals clashed and championships were decided in an end to the season that was nothing short of epic.

From a Thanksgiving shootout between Texas and Texas A&M through last Saturday night's down-to-the-wire ACC and Big 12 title games, we learned to expect the unexpected and never change the channel. Or, actually, we learned to flip between channels every two seconds so we didn't miss a thing.

Thursday, Oregon's Jeremiah Masoli and LaMichael James outduelled Oregon State's James and Jacquizz Rodgers in the biggest Civil War game ever at Autzen Stadium.

Saturday, just a few minutes after a botched hold on an extra point and a game-winning drive kept Cincinnati's undefeated season alive, 350-pound tackle Devan Cunningham caught a deflected pass to give Fresno State a 53-52

win at Illinois on a two-point conversion. While all that was going on, Houston quarterback Case Keenum completed an unheard-of 56 of 75 passes as the Cougars still managed to lose the Conference USA title at East Carolina.

Hours later, Colt McCoy and Mack Brown got away with one of the biggest blunders in college football history as the referees put one second back on the clock and Texas kicked a game-winning field goal to beat Nebraska. As that happened in Dallas, Clemson's C.J. Spiller was busy tearing off big play after big play, rushing for 233 yards and four touchdowns in a back-and-forth loss to Georgia Tech for the ACC Championship in Tampa.

A lot to wrap your head around, isn't it?

The lesson is, by the time a season ends, college football rarely disappoints.

Sure, powers like Oklahoma,

State occurring a few weeks before everyone else.

Ironically, the only one of those six games that disappointed was the biggest of them all, as Alabama trampled Florida, 32-13.

I'm not about to bring in the whole "we don't need a playoff because the regular season is already a playoff" argument. It would be foolish.

But, even in a season that has been labeled a disappointment, college football once again came through with must-see TV over the final few weeks and a series of classic games.

No regular season in sports is better, and once again, college football proved it — even if Penn State did nothing to help make it memorable.

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