

Steelers' all-time team selected by fans' vote

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PITTSBURGH — A certain hamburger chain believes, "You deserve a medal." One of the oldest manufacturers of America can claim to have a "real thing" while one particular soft drink company maintains that its product is "the real thing."

But the National Football League team of the 1970s approached each contest with the notion of doing "the real thing."

The Pittsburgh Steelers crawled up the depths of the NFL by perscrubbing coach Chuck Noll to a favorable phrase, and the 100,000-plus people who cast ballots for the contest to name the franchise's all-time team evidently were caught up in that same attitude.

416 career average (second) included 89 sacks in 1953 (first) with a season's average in that campaign of 46.5 (second).

Despite the recent rules changes that have opened up the passing game considerably, Nicksel still ranks among the Steeler leaders in virtually every receiving category. Nicksel still leads the team with 229 career receptions and was displaced by Lynn Swann just last season as the all-time yardage leader (5,130) and grabbed 37 touchdown passes (18) during his career.

The remaining members of the

all-time team have their names inscribed on at least two of the Lombardi Trophies that decorate the team's Three Rivers Stadium office, and their selections virtually are irremovable.

With the exception of Mike Webster, Pittsburgh offensive linemen never have been chosen to play in the Pro Bowl during Noll's regime, but few could argue the abilities of Gerry Mullins, Sam Davis, Jon Kolb and Larry Brown.

Mullins' play in Super Bowl IX (in which Franco Harris broke the championship-game rushing record

with 158 yards) remains a coaching-classic.

Davis simply was one of the best pulling guards in football and consistently neutralized Dallas tackle Randy White in the big games.

Kolb built himself into the one of the strongest men in the NFL, and then he tried to make life miserable for offensive ends throughout the 19-year career that ended with retirement this spring.

And Brown, who caught the game-changing touchdowns, pass as a light end in Super Bowl IX, made himself into a consistent offensive tackle

and a dependable pass blocker.

The other six members of the offensive unit are potential Hall-of-famers — Webster, Terry Bradshaw, Harris, Rocky Bleier, Lynn Swann and John Stallworth — but a case could be made for finding a place for running back John Henry Johnson faced on the Steeler all-time rushing list to Harris in the time rushing list to Harris in the backfield.

The defensive choices are obvious to anyone who hasn't been deluged with an impersonation of an ostrich over the last 10 years — who could argue the case for a group as feared as Internal Revenue Service auditors.

lineman (Stautner) paired with three members of the Steeler dynasty (Greenwood and Dwight White) of the premier front end in football history (Stautner, White and Dwight White) over to line up on one side of the football.

The numbers posted by Blount are impressive, sufficient testimony of their ability. Blount's career play in big games makes him an invaluable asset to any defensive unit, and Donnie Shell's aggressiveness typifies the style that made the Steeler a group as feared as Internal Revenue Service auditors.

And because every one of these 11 has played on at least one Pro Bowl squad, while Greene, Greenwood, Ham and Lambert were named to the NFL team of the 1970s, is additional testimony to their talents.

It almost is worthy to mention some of the Steeler legends that Noll was chosen to coach has Steeler dream team, for a vote cast for any other coach would be inadequate grounds for a saliva test.

If Greene and Bradshaw were the cornerstones of the Steeler dynasty, Noll unquestionably was the architect; it is sadly laughable that the coach who oversaw Super Bowl IV hardware than any of his headset-ringing predecessors consistently is not on the list, who, coach-of-the-year honors are considered.

Even though the team he inherited in 1959 would be the most destitute of Peter Reznick's coaching, and the education Noll displayed in Pasadena for Super Bowl XIV at the conclusion of the 1979 season was unquestionably the best, Don Shula was honored as coach of the decade.

Noll claims such individual recognition means little to him, but any other choice in this instance would have served to invalidate the entire process.

The exercise of choosing an all-time team invariably leads to speculation over how this competition would have served to invalidate the entire process.

Glancing over the Steeler version, suffice it to say the opposition would be well advised to "have a better idea" about how to compete against the "real thing" or it definitely "would deserve a break" after the game was over.

All-time Steeler banquet slated

PITTSBURGH — The all-time Pittsburgh Steeler team will be honored at a banquet on Saturday, October 8 in the Pittsburgh Convention Center.

National Football League Commissioner Pete Rozelle is expected to attend and Howard Conell will serve as master of ceremonies.

Proceeds from the event will go to the City High School Football League, the Ronald McDonald House and the western Pennsylvania affiliate of the American Diabetes Association.

For ticket information, call 323-1200.

Sports Analysis

What it took to be a member of the all-time Steeler team chosen as part of the franchise's 20th anniversary observations, was to play during Pittsburgh's golden era. That is, at least 10 of the 24 selections were on the roster of all four Super Bowl-winning editions.

And two others, linebacker Roy Green and placekicker Boye Riffe, own two and three Super Bowl rings, respectively.

Not only are players who might be unfamiliar to the latest generation of Steeler fans are tight selection (Elbie Nickell, center Pat Bradley, defensive tackle Ernie Stautner and offensive back Jack Butler).

Stautner, now the defensive coordinator for the Dallas Cowboys, is the lone member of the all-time team to be a member of both the "A" and "B" teams of the franchise's 14 seasons and 173 games for the Steelers before retiring in 1963.

Butler, one of the three free agents selected (along with guard Sam Davis and safety Donnie Shell) '69, owns or shares virtually every Steeler interception record as a result of his nine-year career.

The St. Bonaventure graduate started his career in Pittsburgh with Mel Blount (52), including 10 in 1971 and Blount, and his four touchdowns in a game against Washington is the top single-game performance.

Butler and Tony Cottagnone each returned three interceptions for touchdowns during their careers to lead the club in that category, and his career return yardage total of 872 is more than 200 yards better than his closest competitor.

Bradley played the shortest stint of any of the selections, as an injury to his Achilles tendon ended his career after three seasons.

But the 16th-round draft choice from Nevada (Hend) made the most of his time in a Steeler uniform, as Bradley is either first or second in four of the six categories of player records.

His 223 career kicks places him behind only to Bobby Walden, who had the benefit of seven more seasons, a



PAT BRADY



JACK BUTLER



L.C. GREENWOOD

Pittsburgh Steelers' all-time selections

OFFENSIVE UNIT

- OT Jan Kells, Oklahoma, D3-69
- OT Larry Brown, Kansas, D5-71
- G Gerry Mullins, USC, D4-71
- G Sam Davis, Allen (S.C.), FA-67
- QB Mike Webster, Wisconsin, D5-70
- QB Elbie Nickell, Cincinnati, D15-47
- QB Terry Bradshaw, Louisiana Tech, D1-70
- RB Rocky Bleier, Notre Dame, D16-68
- RB Franco Harris, Penn State, D1-72
- WR Lynn Swann, USC, D1-74
- WR John Stallworth, Alabama A&M, D4-74
- PK Roy Regels, New Mexico St., W-71

DEFENSIVE UNIT

- DE L.C. Greenwood, Arkansas A&M, D10-69
- DE Dwight White, E. Texas St., D4-71
- DT Joe Greene, N. Texas St., D1-69
- DT Ernie Stautner, Boston College, D2-50
- MLB Jack Lambert, Kent State, D2-74
- OLB Andy Russell, Missouri, D16-62
- OLB Jack Ham, Penn State, D2-71
- CB Mel Blount, Southern, D3-70
- CB Jack Butler, St. Bonaventure, FA-51
- S Dennis Shell, S. Carolina St., FA-74
- S Mike Wagner, Western Illinois, D11-71
- P Pat Brady, Nevada (Remo), D15-52



JOE GREENE

ERNIE STAUTNER



ELBIE NICKELL



JACK LAMBERT



DWIGHT WHITE