

Ex-CU Buffs Joe Garten, Bill McCartney on Hall ballot

Eric Bieniemy's name left off after being on ballot last two years

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Former Colorado football coach Bill McCartney is on the ballot for the College Football Hall of Fame for the third straight year and is joined for the second year by former center Joe Garten.

The National Football Foundation released the ballot Tuesday for Football Bowl Subdivision nominees. It includes 76 players and eight coaches.

One name noticeably absent from the list was Colorado's all-time leading rusher and current offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy, who had been on the ballot the past two years.

Bieniemy did not advance beyond the district screening committee stage this year, but he could return to the ballot in future years.

Ballots were mailed this week to living Hall of Famers and more than 12,000 NFF members whose votes will play a part in selecting this year's class.

The NFF Honors Court makes the final selections later this spring after deliberations and consideration given to the voting done by members.

The Honors Court is chaired by former Atlantic Coast Conference commissioner and NCAA president Gene Corrigan. It includes 14 representatives from around the nation, making sure all regions of the country are represented. Other members of the Honors Court include athletic directors, Hall of Famers and media.

No program is allowed to have two representatives inducted in one class and no program has players or coaches inducted in consecutive years.

Garten and Bieniemy are the only former Buffs who have been nominated by the school to this point because of those restrictions.

The program has no shortage of future nominees, including players such as Darian Hagan, Deon Figures, Chris Hudson, Michael Westbrook, Barry Helton, Mitch Berger, Chris Naeole, Matt Russell, Daniel Graham and others.

The 2012 class will be announced May 15 and will be inducted Dec. 4 at the annual NFF Awards Dinner in New York.

CU has had five former players inducted, with linebacker Alfred Williams most recently earning the honor in the 2010 class.

Williams joined Byron "Whizzer" White (1952), Joe Romig (1984), Dick Anderson (1993) and Bobby Anderson (2006) in the hall.

To qualify for enshrinement, a player must have been named a first-team All-American by one of the national organizations used by the NCAA to determine consensus All-Americans at the time the player played.

Players also must have completed their college careers at least 10 years ago and cannot be currently playing in the National Football League.

Players also must have played within the last 50 years. A veterans committee considers players from earlier eras.

Coaches must have coached for at least 10 years and 100 games with a minimum winning percentage of 60 percent. They also must be retired for at least three years to be eligible.

McCartney is CU's all-time winningest coach, going 93-55-5 between 1982 and 1994. His 1989 and 1990 teams played in the national title game, winning it in 1990.

Garten was a key member of both of those teams at center, blocking for players such as Bieniemy and Hagan.

Garten was a two-time first-team All-American in 1989 and 1990. He was a unanimous All-American in 1989 as a junior, making him one of the first three unanimous All-Americans in school history. He was the runner-up for the 1990 Outland Trophy Award.

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