

The Hall of Very Good 2004

Happily, the election of some great players to the Pro Football Hall of Fame has only been postponed for a year or two, but some excellent players will never find their busts in Canton. PFRA makes no judgment on whether those passed over were actually Hall of Fame-caliber players or not. What we do insist upon is that there are many, many players who deserve recognition as far better than the average.

As a way to honor these players, we hereby create The Hall of Very Good. The Class of 2004 was selected by the votes of the PFRA membership. Players chosen can not be enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame, and they must be passed over so many times that any ultimate enshrinement appears doubtful. Should any member of the Hall of Very Good be subsequently elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame, he will immediately and joyfully be stricken from the HoVG.

We are pleased to announce that one of last year's inductees into the Hall of Very Good has been stricken from the roll. Carl Eller, the great Vikings defensive end, was elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame this year. The Hall of Very Good exists to remind us of outstanding players who deserve or nearly deserve enshrinement in Canton but who are unlikely to be named.

This year's H of VG choices are being announced later than usual because two strong candidates were among the "Final 15" nominees for Canton.

GENE BRITO - Five-time Pro Bowl defensive end. Played in 84 consecutive games with Washington from 1951 thru 1958, with 1954 spent in Canada. Traded to Rams where he continued to star for two more seasons.

JOHN BRODIE - A talented passer for 17 seasons with a San Francisco teams that usually lacked the defense to match his offense. Gained 31,548 yards passing. Took 49ers to playoffs 3 times.

JACK BUTLER - Steelers coaches always said he could have been an all-pro receiver but was too valuable to move from defense. Intercepted 52 passes in 1951-59 career. Four Pro Bowls.

CHRIS HANBURGER - Made up for lack of size with quickness and determination to play 14 outstanding seasons at linebacker for the Redskins. Nine Pro Bowls. Named to Hall of Fame Team of the 1960s.

BOB HAYES - "World's Fastest Human" who became great long-distance receiver with Cowboys (1965-75). Caught 371 passes with 71 touchdown receptions over 11-seasons, ten with Dallas. Averaged 20-yards per catch.

BILL HOWTON - Two-time All-NFL, broke several of Don Hutson's team records with Packers before finishing with Cleveland and Dallas (1952-63). Caught 503 passes for 8,459 yards and 61 TDs.

JIM MARSHALL - Rugged defensive end; part of famed "Purple People-Eater" Vikings defense that reached four Super Bowls. Holds the NFL record with 282 consecutive games.

AL NESSER - An outstanding guard and end for two decades beginning in 1910. One of 6 legendary football-playing brothers with Columbus; starred with Akron's 1920 and the Giants' 1927 champs.

DAVE ROBINSON - Often overlooked among Packers' stars (1963-72), consistently graded as top team linebacker. Big enough to stop the run; fast enough to defend against passing. Three Pro Bowls.

DUKE SLATER - Iowa All-America who became the leading black player of the 1920s; chosen all-pro several times in 10-year career (1922-31) despite playing for weak teams Rock Island and Chicago Cardinals teams.