

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

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Local star Woodson named to College Football Hall of Fame

Fremont Ross legend to be inducted with Class of 2018 in New York on Dec. 4

Staff report

ATLANTA - The National Football Foundation (NFF) and College Hall of Fame on Monday announced the 2018 College Football Hall of Fame Class, led by Fremont Ross and University of Michigan standout Charles Woodson.

A total of 10 First Team All-America players and three standout coaches were selected from the national ballot of 75 players and six coaches from the Football Bowl Subdivision and the 98 players and 31 coaches from the divisional ranks.

Woodson, the All-America defensive back at Michigan from 1995-97, was surprised on camera a day earlier while working as an NFL analyst on “Sunday NFL Countdown” when Sam Ponder, host of the ESPN program, handed him a commemorative football provided by the NFF to mark the occasion.

The rest of the 2018 College Football Hall of Fame Class were announced Monday morning during “SportsCenter” on ESPN at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta, site of Monday night’s College Football Playoff National Championship.

Woodson, the only primarily defensive player to ever win the Heisman Trophy, guided Michigan to a national championship during one of the best careers in college football history. He becomes the 31st Wolverine player to be inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame.

A two-time First Team All-American, Woodson earned unanimous honors after his remarkable 1997 season at Michigan — the same year he claimed the Heisman, Walter Camp Award, Bronko Nagurski Trophy, Chuck Bednarik Award and Jim Thorpe Award.

His versatility was on full display that season as he finished second nationally with eight interceptions while also scoring as a rusher, receiver and punt returner. The two-time Big Ten Defensive Player of the Year led the Wolverines to the 1997 conference title after a win against archrival Ohio State in which he scored on a 78-yard punt return, intercepted a pass in the end zone and caught a 37-yard pass for Michigan’s only offensive touchdown. Woodson and the Wolverines would wrap up their perfect 12-0 national championship season with a win over Washington State in the Rose Bowl, in which he recorded an interception and tied for a then-Rose Bowl record with four passes broken up.

The three-time First Team All-Big Ten selection led the team in interceptions all three seasons. Named the 1997 team MVP while playing for College Football

Hall of Fame coach Lloyd Carr, Woodson set the Michigan record with 30 career pass break-ups, which now ranks fifth all-time. The 1995 Big Ten Freshman of the Year also ranks second all-time in school history in career interceptions (18), third in single-season interceptions (8 in 1997) and still sits in the top 10 in multiple punt return categories.

Woodson was named to both the University of Michigan Hall of Honor and the Rose Bowl Hall of Fame in 2017.

Taken fourth overall in the 1998 NFL Draft, Woodson played professionally 18 years for the Oakland Raiders (1998-2005, 2013-15) and the Green Bay Packers (2006-12). The nine-time Pro Bowler helped the Packers win Super Bowl XLV following the 2010 season, and he guided the Raiders to an AFC championship in 2002. Woodson twice led the NFL in interceptions, and his multiple honors include the 1998 Defensive Rookie of the Year and 2009 Defensive Player of the Year. Woodson's induction comes three years after Rob Lytle, who also starred at Ross and Michigan was inducted into the College Hall of Fame. Lytle suffered a heart attack and died in 2010 at age 56.

The other players named to this year's Hall of Fame Class, who will be inducted in New York on Dec. 4, are Trevor Cobb, RB, Rice (1989-92); Kerry Collins, QB, Penn State (1991-94); Dave Dickenson, QB, Montana (1992-95); Dana Howard, LB, Illinois (1991-94); Calvin Johnson, WR, Georgia Tech (2004-06); Paul Palmer, RB, Temple (1983-86); Ed Reed, DB, Miami (Fla.) (1998-2001); Matt Stinchcomb, OT, Georgia (1995-98), and Aaron Taylor, C/ OG, Nebraska (1994-97).

The three coaches named to the 2018 class are Frank Beamer, Murray State (1981-86) and Virginia Tech (1987-2015); Mack Brown, Appalachian State (1983), Tulane (1985-87), North Carolina (1988-97), and Texas (1998-2013); and Mel Tjeerdsma, Austin College (Texas) (1984-93) and Northwest Missouri State (1994-2010).



The Ohio State bench looks on as Michigan's Charles Woodson returns a 78-yard punt return for a touchdown in 1997. On Sunday it was announced that Woodson will be entering the College Football Hall of Fame. DUANE BURLESON, ASSOCIATED PRESS



Charles Woodson, right, poses with former Fremont standout Rob Lytle. SUBMITTED