

TOP THIRTY: KICKERS – 1978/2008

By Kent Schmidt, CSN Columnist

(List: Ranking, Player, Position, School, NFL Draft)

1. Steve Christie, K, William & Mary, None

Christie was named an All-American after his senior season in 1989 with the Tribe. He went on to a 15-year NFL career: Tampa Bay Buccaneers (1990-1991), Buffalo Bills (1992-2000), San Diego Chargers (2001-2003), and New York Giants (2004). He also played in one game a year ago in his native Canada for the CFL's Toronto Argonauts. In his NFL career, he converted 336 of 431 field goals and scored a total of 1,476 points. One NFL record he still owns is the Super Bowl's longest FG with a 54-yarder in Super Bowl XXVIII, the Bills second loss and final of four straight to the Dallas Cowboys. He was named to the NFL All-Pro team once in 1990.



2. Tony Zendejas, K, Nevada, 1st Rnd, Sup-1984

Zendejas was a two time All-American (1981 & 1983) at Nevada and is a Wolfpack 1996 Hall of Fame inductee. He is second behind his brother Marty in the all-time Nevada scoring list with 300 points. He played in the NFL 11 seasons for the Houston Oilers, Los Angeles Rams, Atlanta Falcons, and San Francisco 49ers. Before his NFL career, he played in the USFL for the Los Angeles Express, and was chosen by the Washington Redskins in the first round of the 1984 Supplemental Draft. In 1991 he became the first kicker in NFL history to convert all of his field goal attempts, going 17 for 17. He made 186-of-252 field goal attempts and scored 810 points in his NFL career.

3. Jeff Wilkins, K/P, Youngstown State, None

Wilkins made a YSU record 66 field goals in his career and was also the Penguins punter, averaging 38 yards per punt. He was a member of both the 1991 and 1993 FCS National Championship teams with the Penguins, the first two of four national championships the school won. He was named as an All-American after 1990 & 1992 seasons and was inducted in the YSU Sports Hall of Fame in 2003. He played in the NFL for the Philadelphia Eagles (1994), San Francisco 49ers (1995-1996), and St. Louis Rams (1997-2007). He became the Rams all-time leading scorer and helped them to a Super Bowl XXXIV victory. In his NFL career, he made 317 field goals and was an All-Pro after the 2003 season.



4. Chris Hanson, P, Marshall, None

Hanson was an All-American punter for Marshall in 1996--the year before the Thundering Herd moved to the FBS ranks--and finished his college career with an average of 39.9 yards per punt. He is currently punting for the New England Patriot and spent time with the Green Bay Packers (1999), Miami Dolphins (2000), and Jacksonville Jaguars (2001-2006). Hanson was selected to the Pro Bowl following the 2002 season, during which he led the AFC in gross punting (44.2 avg.) and net punting (37.6 avg.).

5. Lawrence Tynes, K, Troy State, None

Tynes holds Troy school records for career field goals (45), and points (262) and was named as a 2000 All-American. He originally signed in the NFL with the Kansas City Chiefs and played there as a practice team member in 2001 and 2002. The Chiefs allocated him to the NFL Europe's Scottish Claymores in 2002 and signed with the CFL's Ottawa Renegades and played there from 2002 to 2003. He was then resigned by the Chiefs and was there from 2004 to 2006 before being traded to his current team of the New York Giants for the 2007 Super Bowl winning season. Thus far, he has 91 field goal made attempts in the NFL.



6. Brian Mitchell, K, Northern Iowa, None

Mitchell originally played for Marshall in 1987 but transferred to Northern Iowa from 1989-1991 and was an All-American in 1990. He holds many UNI football records and NCAA

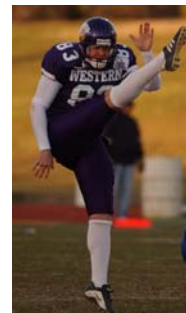
records as well including the most accurate single season kicker in NCAA college football history (26 for 27 in field goals). His longest field goal was 57 yards in 1990. Mitchell played two years of professional football in the Arena Football League, in 1994 for the Cleveland Thunderbolts and in 1995 for the St. Louis Stampede.

7. Marty Zendejas , K, Nevada, None

This Zendejas one upped his brother in being named to three All-American teams (1984, 1985, 1986). He is still the all-time scoring leader at Nevada with 367 points. He became the Big Sky career leading scorer with 385 points, breaking that mark during his junior year. He made 80 percent of his career field goals (72 of 90) and did not have a field goal blocked in four seasons at Nevada. He still holds the Nevada career records for kick scoring, field goals and points after touchdown (169 of 171). Zendejas played briefly in the Arena Football League.

8. Mike Scifres, P, Western Illinois, 5th Rnd-2003

Scifres was an All-American punter for Western Illinois in 2001 and 2002. He was the only FCS punter to be named finalist to Ray Guy Award list in 2000 after being second in nation with 48.0-yard gross average as senior. He was drafted in the NFL by the San Diego Chargers and is still playing with the Chargers. He has twice been an alternate for the Pro Bowl after the 2005 and 2006 seasons. He currently has a 43.8 yard per punt average in his six year NFL career thus far.



9. Paul Ernster, K/P, Northern Arizona, 7th Rnd-2005

Ernster was a 2004 All-American for Northern Arizona. He was also named a first team All-Big Sky that year and both a punter and place kicker. He led the nation with a 47.8 yard per punt average. He finished his career with the Lumberjacks converting 40-of-67 field goal attempts. He was drafted in the NFL by the Denver Broncos and played there from 2005 through parts of 2007. He punted part of 2007 with the Cleveland Browns and now is with the Detroit Lions. He has a 42.7 yard per punt average in the NFL thus far.

10. Teddy Garcia, K, Louisiana-Monroe, 4th Rnd-1988

Garcia is the all-time leading scorer both a career (246) and in a season (94 in 1987). He played with the then Indians from 1984 to 1987 and was an All-American his senior season of 1987. He is also a member of the ULM Hall of Fame and was an integral part of the 1987 national championship team. He was drafted into the NFL by the New England Patriots and played there one season before two more one season stints with the Minnesota Vikings and Houston Oilers.

11. Paul McFadden, K, Youngstown State, 12th Rnd-1984

McFadden became widely known for his barefooted kicking style at YSU and was a second team All-OVC second team in his juniorr season of 1982. He was drafted by the Philadelphia Eagles and played there from 1984 to 1987 and spend single seasons with the NY Giants in 1988 and Atlanta Falcons in 1989. He was a two-time All-Pro selection (1984 & 1985)and a was a Rookie-of-the-Year selection in 1984. He made 120 field goals in his six year NFL career. After football, McFadden returned to Youngstown, where he served as director of athletic development from 1993 to 2000.

12. Billy Cundiff, K, Drake, None

Cundiff finished his four-year career at Drake with 15 school records and seven Pioneer League kicking marks, including points (284), field goals (49 of 79) and PATs (137 of 151). He made eight field goals of 50 yards or longer, including a 62-yard kick in 2000, the second-longest field goal in FCS history. He was named first-team All-Pioneer League all four years and as an All-American in his senior season of 2001. He played four NFL seasons with the Dallas Cowboys and spent 2006 with the New Orleans Saints and 2007 with the Atlanta Falcons. He signed a deal with the Kansas City Chiefs in this past off-season. In his NFL career, he has made 60 field goals.



13. Dan Frantz, P/K, Portland State, None

While at Portland State, Frantz made 30 of 47 field goal attempts during three seasons as a starting kicker and punted 198 times during four seasons as the starting punter. He holds records for most field goals in a season (14), punts in a season (69) and a career (198), points kicking in a game (19, 4 FG, 5 XP) and a season (14 FG, 47 XP in 2000). Frantz was named first team All-Big Sky Conference and an All-American in 2000. Professionally, Frantz has played in the Arena Football League. He won a title with the Chicago Rush in 2005 and has played for the San Jose Sabercats and Orlando Predators as well in his AFL career.



14. Björn Nittmo, K, Appalachian State, None

After being a 1988 All-American with Appalachian State, Nittmo became the first Swedish-born player in the NFL, when he played for the New York Giants in 1989. He also tried to cut the roster of the Kansas City Chiefs the following year, but didn't make the team. Other teams of his career include the Montreal Machine of the World League of American Football. He has also played for the Cleveland Thunderbolts and the Tampa Bay Storm of the Arena Football League, as well as the Shreveport Pirates of the Canadian Football League.

15. Greg Davis, K, The Citadel, 9th Rnd-1987

After his place kicking career with The Citadel, Davis was drafted by the NFL's Atlanta Falcons in 1987. He played with the Falcons actually in two stints--1987-1989 and back into 1990 Atlanta Falcons. Part of 1989 was spent with the New England Patriots. The Arizona Cardinals, Minnesota Vikings, San Diego Chargers, and Oakland Raiders are the other teams that Davis has played for in his 12 year NFL career. He made 224 field goals in his NFL career.

16. Rob Bironas, K, Georgia Southern, None

Bironas transferred from Auburn to Georgia Southern, where his brother was on the soccer team, for his final year of eligibility. While with the Eagles, Bironas won the 2000 FCS National Championship. He spent his early professional career in the Arena Football League (New York Dragons in 2005) and the AFL2 (Carolina Cobras-2004 & Charleston Swamp Foxes-2003). In 2005, he signed with the NFL's Tennessee Titans and has spent his entire NFL career thus far there. Last year, he was named to his first Pro-Bowl and currently has made 80-of-96 field goal attempts in the NFL.

17. Harold Alexander, P, Appalachian State, 3rd Rnd-1993

Alexander was a two time All-American punter with the Mountaineers in 1991 & 1992 and a four time Southern Conference punter (1989 to 1992). He had his best collegiate season his junior season--averaging 46.7 yards per punt. He was drafted by the Atlanta Falcons and played two seasons in the NFL with them. He totaled 143 NFL punts for a career average of 41.6 yards per punt.



18. Jon Scifres, P/K, SW Missouri St, None

In 2004--his junior season, Scifres set an FCS record for consecutive field goals with 15 for the Bears. The streak stretched to 18 before he finally missed last season in a game against Southern Illinois. He was named an All-American after that season. When his career as a Bear was over, Scifres had made 39 of 55 field goal attempts. He was named to the All-Gateway team in 2004 and 2005. He did not play professionally.

19. Sandro Vitiello, K, Massachusetts, 10th Rnd-1980

Vitiello kicked for the Minutemen in the first ever FCS national title game of 1978 and made three field goals in the game against Florida A&M but was not enough as UMass lost to the Rattlers 35-28. He was a member of the 1979 All-Yankee Conference team and was selected in the 1980 NFL draft by the Cincinnati Bengals. In his NFL career, he attempted just two field goals and an extra point. He missed the two field goal attempts but made the extra point. Vitiello also played for the Washington Federals of the USFL in 1983--making 10-of-17 field goals in his lone USFL season.

20. Case deBruijn, P/K, Idaho State, 8th Rnd-1982

deBruijn was a key member of the Bengals 1981 national championship team. He is the ISU leading punter in terms of number with 256 career punts. He also was a Bengals place kicker and holds the scoring record with 93 points in 1981. He was a three-time All-BSC member and was an All-American after his senior season of 1981. deBruijn was drafted in the NFL by the Kansas City Chiefs. He played in one NFL season with the Chiefs in 1982 and averaged 34.8 yards per punt.

21. Chad Stanley, P, Stephen F. Austin, None

Stanley was a 1998 All-American for the Lumberjacks when he led nation with 46.6 punting average as a senior. He also earned Third-Team All-America honors as junior. He was signed in the NFL by the San Francisco 49ers in 1999. He remained there for two years before moving to the Arizona Cardinals for a year and then to the expansion team Houston Texans in 2002. He remained with them until this past off-season when he signed with the Indianapolis Colts. He holds an NFL record for punts in a season with 114 in 2002.



22. Travis Brawner, P/K, SW Missouri St, None

Brawner was a year time All-American after the 1997, 1998, and 1999 seasons for the Bears. He played for SMS for those year years after transferring from Arkansas. He is second on the school's career-record list for points scored by a kicker, tallying 225 points with 38-of-57 field goal attempts. He also punted 170 times for a 39.7-yard average for the Bears. He was signed by the NFL's Green Bay Packers in 2000 but was released before the season.

23. Pete Garces, K, Idaho State, None

Garces was a 1998 & 1999 All-American and owns the Bengals longest field goal in their and FCS history with a 60 yarder versus Cal State Northridge in 1998. He made 27 field goals in his ISU career and scored a total of 136 points in his two year career in Pocatello. Garces spent time with several teams in the National Indoor Football League and was named as an all-star kicker in 2004 for the Utah Warriors.

24. Eddie Johnson, P, Idaho State, 6th Rnd-2003

Johnson owns several ISU records for punting including punting average for a career (46.3 ypp in 2001-02) and season (46.3 ypp in 2001). He was named as an All-American after both his junior and senior seasons in 2001 and 2002. He is third on the Bengal list for longest punt in history with an 80 yarder in 2002. Johnson was drafted in 2003 by the NFL's Minnesota Vikings and spent just that one season there. In his NFL career, he averaged 39.1 yards per punt on 56 punts.

25. Pumpy Tudors, P, Tennessee-Chattanooga, 11th Rnd-1992

Tudors was a three-time All-American while at Chattanooga (1989, 1990, 1991). He averaged 43.3 yards per kick with the Moccasins during his career. He was drafted by the Philadelphia Eagles in the NFL but never made an NFL team in his career.



26. David Simonhoff, P, SE Missouri State, None

Simonhoff was a two time first team All-American in 2004 and 2006. In his senior season of 2006, he averaged 44.8 yards per punt and in 2004, he set an OVC punting record with 46 yards per punt. He had a tryout in the NFL before last season but did not make a club.

27. Brad Costello, P, Boston U., None

Costello led the Atlantic 10 in punting in both 1996 and 1997 while at Boston University--both years he was named as an All-American with a 44.3 yard per punt average. He spent two NFL seasons (1998-1999) with Cincinnati Bengals where he punted 32 times for 1,239 yards (38.7 avg.). He played with the NFL Europe's Scottish Claymores in 2000. In his NFL career, he averaged 38.7 yards per punt.

28. Mike Dragosavich, P, North Dakota State, None

The Bison punter was a 2006 and 2007 All-American--his junior and senior seasons. He led the FCS in average yards per punt. He had a great performance at the Senior Bowl averaging 58 yards per punt in three punts, including a record breaking 69-yarder. Dragosavich signed a contract with the NFL's New England Patriots after going undrafted in the 2008 NFL Draft but was released in June and remains a free agent.



29. Chris Snyder, K, Montana, None

Snyder was the Grizzlies' all-time scoring leader for a season with 124 in 2003 and had 394 points in his career. He also tops the Grizzly kicking list with a record long of 57 yards on a field goal attempt. His top season of 2003 resulted in him being named as a 2003 All-American. He signed a deal with the NFL's Detroit Lions in 2004 but would spend just one season there.

30. Derrick Frost , P/K, Northern Iowa, None

During his UNI career, Frost punted 104 times for a 42.19 yards per punt average. He originally signed into the NFL by the Philadelphia Eagles as an undrafted free agent in 2003 but was released and then signed by the Cleveland Browns that same year. He spent two seasons in Cleveland and then signed with the Washington Redskins in 2005. Thus far, he has a 41.1 yard per punt in the NFL.

