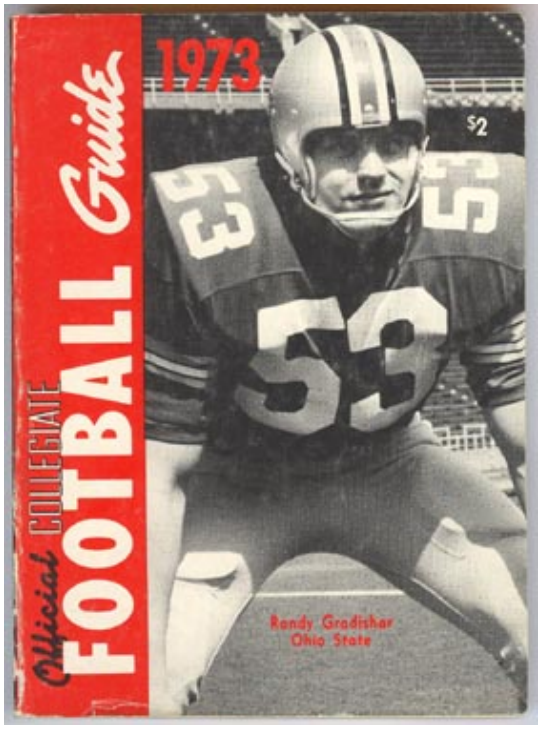
Furls' countdown of the ten greatest Buckeye football players ever rambles on, and linebacker Randy Gradishar comes in at #8. Gradishar earned praise from Woody Hayes as the "best linebacker I ever coached" and earning praise from Woody was no small feat. Gradishar also led the 1973 Buckeye defense, widely regarded as amongst the best defense in the history of Ohio State football and one of the greatest in college football history.



#10 - Rex Kern

#9 - Jim Stillwagon

At number eight we have our second and final linebacker of the list. While some may argue that A.J. Hawk should grace this list, I just think that there is not enough time between his final play in scarlet and grey and the present to have any real perspective into his brilliance on the field. I reserve the right to add A.J. Hawk in future editions of this list.

Woody Hayes said of Randy Gradishar, "…the best linebacker I ever coached at Ohio State." That is all you have to say. Woody Hayes was not a man who was particularly flattering to a lot of people, he did not sugar coat things, as a matter of fact he was known to say exactly what was on his mind.

Gradishar started 3 years at Ohio State, was a two time All-American at Ohio State in 72 and 73 (unanimously), academic All-American 73, and was instrumental in two Buckeyes Big Ten Championships.

The defense that Gradishar led onto the field in 73 is widely regarded among the best in college football history. That year the Buckeyes allowed a paltry 64 points and recorded an astonishing four shutouts. Most impressively, Gradishar finished sixth overall in the 1973 Heisman Trophy voting a great feat for any player, but particularly impressive for a defensive player.

Characterizing Gradishar's play at Ohio State is very difficult. He is not a guy who hit like Jack Tatum, nor was he a "sack specialist." He was a linebacker who went out everyday with his hard-hat and lunch pail and got the job done. He had no weakness on the field and was a young man of exemplary character.

Upon completing his college career, Gradishar went on to become a Denver Bronco and together with Tom Jackson (of ESPN fame) led the famed Orange Crush defense. In ten years as a Bronco, Gradishar was selected to seven Pro-Bowls, and he continues to exhibit the moral character that characterized his days in scarlet and grey every bit as much as his hard nosed defense in the Denver area to this day.