

College Football

Beavers' star Nall will enter NFL draft

Departs with 2,216 career rushing yards

Associated Press

CORVALLIS — Oregon State running back Ryan Nall has decided to declare for the NFL draft with a year of eligibility remaining.

Nall rushed for 2,216 yards during his career, ranked eighth on the Beavers' career list. He ran for 24 touchdowns (seventh) and had nine 100-yard rushing games (seventh). He also had 56 catches for 563 yards and four touchdowns.

"When I was recruited four years ago, I was fortunate in knowing that I was going to be in the best hands both academically and athletically," he said in a statement released Tuesday. "My time at Oregon State has been a blessing — both on and off the field — as the memories that I have shared with my teammates, coaches, and Beaver Nation will be with me forever."

A native of Sandy, Oregon, Nall was a standout at Portland's Central Catholic High School and was recruited to Oregon State by then-coach Mike Riley.

Nall, who was on track to graduate after the winter term, ran for 810 yards and eight touchdowns this season. He also caught 27 passes for 240



In this Oct. 14, 2017, file photo, Oregon State running back Ryan Nall (34) breaks away from the Colorado defense for a touchdown during the second half of an NCAA college football game in Corvallis.

yards and two touchdowns.

But the year was disappointing for the Beavers, who finished 1-11 and winless in the Pac-12 conference. Coach Gary Andersen resigned midway through and was replaced in the interim with cornerbacks coach Cory Hall. Former Oregon State quar-

terback Jonathan Smith was named the team's new head coach in late November.

"I have known Ryan since he was a high school standout in this state and it has been impressive watching him develop into an outstanding young man with a tremendous future," Smith said.

Nall is the seventh player from Oregon State to declare for the draft with eligibility remaining, including Steven Jackson (2004), Brandon Browner (2005), Jacquizz Rodgers (2010), Brandin Cooks (2014), Scott Crichton (2014) and Isaac Seumalo (2016).

NFL



Cleveland Browns quarterback DeShone Kizer (7) is upended by Pittsburgh Steelers free safety William Gay (22) at the end of a run during the second half of an NFL football game in Pittsburgh on Sunday.

Rock bottom: Browns drop to new depths after winless season

By TOM WITHERS
Associated Press

BEREA, Ohio — When Hue Jackson was hired less than two years ago, he was greeted in the lobby of the Browns' headquarters by cheering team employees.

They beamed and clapped while shaking hands with their new hero, this offensive mastermind and quarterback guru. Finally, they thought, here was the coach who would restore glory to a franchise that once symbolized greatness.

Jackson was supposed to fix things. They've only grown worse.

A civic treasure during the Jim Brown years, Cleveland's pro football team is now a shameful mess, a historic flop.

The worst of the worst. Rock bottom.

With their 28-24 loss on Sunday to the Pittsburgh Steelers, who rested stars Ben Roethlisberger, Antonio Brown, Le'Veon Bell and other regulars for the playoffs, the Browns wrote their name into the annals of sports sadness by finishing 0-16 and joining the 2008 Detroit Lions as the only teams in history to go winless for an entire 16-game season — 16 up, 16 down.

In a league designed to provide parity and hope, the Browns followed a 1-15 season with one even worse and now have gone more than a calendar year between victories.

The 2017 Browns stumbled their way into the pathetic pantheon of rotten teams along with the 1972-73 Philadelphia 76ers (9-73), 1974-75 Washington Capitals (8-67-5) and 2003 Detroit Tigers (43-119) as some of the sorriest squads to ever hit the hardwood, ice or diamond.

And now that Buffalo is back in the AFC playoffs, Cleveland's postseason drought stretching to 2002 is the league's longest.

"The bottom line is we did not play well enough, we did not coach well enough and we did not get the things done that we set out to do," said Jackson, who kept his job despite going 1-31 — the worst two-year stretch in 98 NFL seasons. "I think to make it more than that, you can't. We had the opportunity every week to go out and play and to go win. We did not do that."

Not enough talent. Too many turnovers. Those were the main reasons behind the Browns' continued fall from grace this season, but the team's issues are older and run even deeper.

Owners Dee and Jimmy Haslam thought they had solved numerous problems — deplorable drafting, front-office dysfunction, fan apathy — when they revamped their football hierarchy following the 2015 season by hiring Jackson, who was considered the top coordinator available.

The Haslams promoted salary-cap expert Sashi Brown to vice president of football operations and brought aboard Paul DePodesta, a baseball executive with an analytics background, as their strategy officer to plot the Browns' course to relevance.

Instead, they've descended to new depths.

For all that Brown and DePodesta provided in terms of smarts and mana-

gerial savvy, their lack of experience and football intellect was dooming. Their initial decision not to re-sign some veteran free agents in favor of younger players came back to haunt the Browns, who haven't filled major holes.

More troubling, the Browns' brass passed on selecting quarterbacks Carson Wentz or Deshaun Watson in the past two drafts, blowing the chance to finally find the long-term QB the franchise has coveted for two decades. Cleveland did acquire extra picks — it has the No. 1 and No. 4 picks and three in the second round this year — through a series of trades, but the misses on Wentz and Watson were unforgivable sins.

Jimmy Haslam waited until the Browns were 0-12 in December before firing Brown and replacing him with John Dorsey, Kansas City's former general manager, who straightened out the Chiefs.

Dorsey will be armed with up to \$100 million in salary cap space to overhaul the Browns, who have recorded 15 double-digit loss seasons since 1999 and are 4-44 over the past three years and 20-76 since Haslam agreed to buy them in 2012.

The perception of the team — inside and outside Cleveland — is so poor that Jackson knows he must deliver a sales pitch of a brighter future to prospective draft picks, free agents and even the city's loyal-as-a-dog fans.

"Being 0-16, the stigma that comes with that is that we're going to have to do some recruiting everywhere," Jackson said. "Not just players, we have to re-recruit our fans. I think we have to re-recruit everybody who is associated with the Cleveland Browns. We have to go out and do a better job with the players and get them to understand really what is here and what we are trying to accomplish and what we are trying to do. Right now is not a good time, but me talking about it or trying to explain it away is not going to change it."

"The only thing that's going to change it is results. In order to do that, is there some convincing we are going to have to do? Absolutely. We are in a war for talent on every level right now."

Jackson is not absolved of blame for the Browns' fiasco. He made questionable moves with rookie QB DeShone Kizer, who led the league in turnovers. Yes, Jackson was handed the league's youngest roster, but he couldn't find his way to a single win and somehow survived.

It's no wonder so many fans are outraged. They feel betrayed, ignored but mostly beaten.

And the idea that Jackson is coming back at 1-31 — he's the first Cleveland coach to get a third year since Romeo Crennel in 2008 — has driven some Browns backers to their breaking point.

As he and his teammates cleared out their lockers Monday, CB Jason McCourty perfectly summarized two crazy years in Cleveland.

"You can't keep doing the same thing and think you're going to get different results," he said. "That's the definition of insanity."

Seahawks Wrapup

Carroll still believes Seattle can be title contenders

By TIM BOOTH
Associated Press

RENTON, Wash. — Pete Carroll insisted again that he's not going anywhere. He's intent on remaining the leader of the Seattle Seahawks even if it means many of the faces he spoke to this week while closing out the 2017 season are gone by the time Carroll finally gets to coach his team again.

"I'm pumped up about it. I'm excited about that challenge," Carroll said Tuesday. "I'm upset that we have to face it this early. I'd like another six weeks here, that would be nice. But that's not what this one is. We got to go after it. Nothing's going to change other than maybe our resolve."

For just the second time in his eight years in Seattle, Carroll spent Tuesday explaining why the Seahawks were not in the postseason. It's the first playoff miss for Seattle since the 2011 season and with the rapid rise of division foe Los Angeles indicated — at least for one year — a significant change in the hierarchy of the NFC West.

Injuries played a major role in Seattle's slide to 9-7. So, too, did inconsistency on offense, continued problems with penalties and salary cap constraints that limited adjustments the Seahawks could make during the season.

It's likely to be a busy offseason as Seattle attempts to manage its tight cap



Seattle Seahawks NFL football head coach Pete Carroll talks to reporters Tuesday during his end-of-season press conference in Renton, Wash.

situation while making key decisions about how to move forward and if it still is a championship contender needing slight tweaks or a major overhaul.

"I think there is a championship team sitting in this meeting room right here," Carroll said.

REDISCOVER THE RUN: Perhaps nothing irritated Carroll more, or had a great impact on the efficiency of the offense, than Seattle's inability to run. It's been a staple of Carroll's program from the day he arrived in Seattle.

This year the Seahawks had one rushing touchdown by a running back. Quarterback Russell Wilson was the leading rusher with 586 yards, 346 more than any other player. Seattle had hopes for promising rookie Chris Carson, but he was sidelined by an ankle injury

early in the season and never made it back. The lack of a running game affected Wilson as a passer as well, as defenses didn't have to commit an extra safety to stopping the run, leading to smaller throwing windows and some tentative decisions by Wilson.

INJURY CONCERNS: Carroll wouldn't get into specifics, but there is a chance Cliff Avril and Kam Chancellor have played their final games. Avril and Chancellor suffered neck injuries during the season. Carroll said on the radio Tuesday that both would have a "hard time" playing football again. A couple of hours later, he softened his stance, saying each have quality-of-life decisions to address with their football future.

"Both those guys are marvelous people and competitors and all that. We'd

love to see them through the rest of their career. I don't know what's going to happen there," Carroll said.

LEGION OF WHOM: If Chancellor does not return, it could be the start of a major makeover for Seattle's secondary. Richard Sherman is coming off a torn Achilles tendon and was openly shopped by Seattle last offseason. Earl Thomas is entering the last year of his contract and his actions toward the end of the season indicated a desire to be elsewhere for the 2018 season.

OFF THE FIELD: Seattle was among the most active teams in the league with a significant number of players participating in national anthem protests. The protests, on top of the incident Michael Bennett had with police in Las Vegas in August, created a number of unexpected issues.

Carroll said he believed that only once this season — Seattle's loss at Tennessee — did discussions of off-field issues affect the team's performance. Seattle had long discussions following comments by President Donald Trump about NFL players and opted to remain in the locker room as a team during the anthem before that game.

"That was an extraordinarily heated time," Carroll said. "I think that was a different amount of emotional output that occurred before the game and it looked like it the way we played."

BRIEFLY

Timbers acquire central defender Julio Cascante

PORTLAND (AP) — The Portland Timbers have acquired central defender Julio Cascante from Costa Rica's first-division Deportivo Saprissa.

The Timbers used targeted allocation money for the transfer, which is pending approval of his visa and other documentation.

Cascante, who is from Puerto Limon, Costa Rica, has played in 107 matches with 93 starts since his professional debut in his native country in 2011.

"We have monitored his progress for over a year, and have targeted him to help strengthen our backline," Timbers general manager Gavin Wilkinson said in a statement. "Julio brings an intense focus and awareness to the game and possesses a number of characteristics we believe will help propel him to the next level in his

career."

Cascante's career started with Orion FC before three seasons with C.F. Universidad de Costa Rica. He joined Saprissa in advance of the 2016 season, making 51 league appearances.

He also started in three CONCACAF Champions League matches, including a pair against the Timbers.

Utah hires former OSU coach Gary Andersen

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Utah hired former Oregon State coach Gary Andersen on Tuesday as an associate head coach and defensive assistant.

Andersen was the defensive coordinator at Utah under coach Kyle Whittingham from 2005-08 before leaving to take lead jobs at Utah State, Wisconsin and Oregon State. He surprisingly stepped down in early October after a 1-5 start during his third season with

the Beavers. Oregon State went 7-23 under Andersen overall.

"Gary brings a wealth of high-level coaching experience to the program, including serving as the head coach at two Power Five schools," Whittingham said in a statement. "During his previous time on our staff, he developed some of the best defensive linemen in Utah history. In addition, he is an excellent recruiter and motivator and understands what it takes to win at this level."

This will be the third stint at Utah for the Salt Lake City native who played center for the Utes from 1985-86. Andersen was the defensive line coach from 1997-2002 before taking the head coaching position at Southern Utah in 2003. He returned as defensive line coach under Urban Meyer in 2004 before being promoted to defensive coordinator in 2005.

The Utes bring him on now as the 10th assistant under a new NCAA rule.

Pasco native Urlacher among 15 Hall of Fame finalists

(AP) — Star linebackers Ray Lewis and Brian Urlacher are among four first-time eligible former players selected among the 15 modern-era finalists for the Pro Football Hall of Fame's Class of 2018.

Receiver Randy Moss and guard Steve Hutchinson also made the cut to the finals in their first year of eligibility.

They join Tony Boselli, Isaac Bruce, Brian Dawkins, Alan Faneca, Joe Jacoby, Edgerrin James, Ty Law, John Lynch, Kevin Mawae, Terrell Owens and Everson Walls for consideration.

The seniors committee has nominated guard Jerry Kramer and linebacker Robert Brazile. The contributor's nominee is Bobby Beathard, a former general manager and administrator for five franchises.