

## Seniors Play Final Game Today

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Although UCF's official graduation ceremony is several months away, a graduation ceremony will take place today at the Florida Citrus Bowl. Today marks the end of 12 collegiate football careers. The ceremony will take place, not on a stage in an arena, but in the trenches. When all is said and done, the players will leave the field, not with "Pomp and Circumstance," but sweat and determination.

While all of the graduating seniors will leave the field with memories of their days as Golden Knights, some players will also leave knowing that they made their mark on the Golden Knights' record books as well.

One such player is punter/kicker Charlie Pierce. Pierce will end his college career as the Golden Knights' leading scorer. Pierce surpassed Franco Grilla's record of 284 career points in this year's Homecoming game against Illinois State.

"It's a real honor to be the leading scorer," Pierce said. "Franco's a great kicker and it is a pretty big deal to pass somebody as good as him. I think this is the most important accomplishment in my football career."

Going into his final college game today against Bowling Green, Pierce has 294 total points.

Perhaps no other position on the Golden Knights roster is as heavily senior dominated as that of the linebackers. Senior linebackers, John Bryant, Nakia Reddick, and Kendrick Thomas have proved to be quite a force to be reckoned with.

Outside linebacker Bryant has seen his share of injury but has still managed to make his presence felt on the Golden Knights defense.

Despite missing the first two games of the 1995 season due to a thumb injury, Bryant still placed third on the team in tackles with 69, including a high of 11 against Hawaii. This season, Bryant has 69 solo tackles and 42 assists. In addition to the tackles, Bryant has a sack and an interception going into his final game. Bryant missed the 1994 season due to a non-football related injury and recorded 51 tackles in 1993.

Reddick led the Golden Knights with 90 total tackles, 50 solo tackles, and three forced fumbles in 1995 and was rewarded for his efforts after the season by being named Most Valuable Defensive Player. Reddick also led the Golden Knights with 75 tackles in 1993.

Although today marks the end of his college playing career, Reddick is not ready to hang up his helmet and shoulder pads just yet.

“I’ve been playing football since I was 7, so going to the pros has always been a dream of mine,” Reddick said. “But I just want to go out and do my best, and whatever happens, happens. I can’t make someone draft me.”

Middle linebacker, Thomas, joined the Golden Knights in 1994 after transferring from Syracuse University. Thomas made his presence felt almost immediately, recording 29 tackles in 1994. In 1995, Thomas was second on the team with 72 tackles despite missing part of the season due to an injury. Prior to this season, Thomas was named to the 1996 Butkus Award watch list, and was ranked as one of the best linebackers in Florida by *Florida Sports Magazine*.

During his time with the Black and Gold, Alex Galvez helped anchor the Golden Knights offensive line at guard and center. After starting at guard in 1995, Galvez proved his versatility by moving to starting center after Chris Wrenn went down with an injury.

Looking back on his college career, Galvez considers himself fortunate to have been a Golden Knight.

“It worked out for the best. When I was in high school, I always thought that I wanted to go to Boston College,” Galvez said. “It looked like a good school and some of my teammates had gone there, but looking back it was good to go to school here.”

Tarveres Tate, senior defensive tackle also made his mark on the Golden Knights.

After being redshirted in 1992, Tate made his presence felt early on by leading the team with three fumble recoveries. Tate was also a member of a defensive unit which set the school record for the fewest rushing yards allowed per game during his first season in 1993.

Tate’s most memorable moment as a Golden Knight came against McNeese State in 1993. Tate recovered a fumble and returned it 74-yards. However, Tate was tackled before reaching the end zone. A fact some people won’t let him live down.

“I took the ball down 74-yards and I didn’t score. I got tackled at the four-yard-line. Everyone still picks on me all the time about that one,” Tate said. “That was my most memorable moment just running with the ball again after switching over from tight end.”

Chris Wrenn’s contribution to the Golden Knights was versatility. Wrenn, played six different positions for the Golden Knights, in addition to playing on every special teams unit. Offensively, Wrenn has played guard, center, and fullback. Defensively, Wrenn has seen action at end linebacker, and tackle.

“It is not necessarily the path I would have chosen for myself to play so many positions, but, I’m glad to have had the opportunity to play,” Wrenn said. “It might have been nice to concentrate on just one position for four years, but I’ve always been able to fill a position when asked.”

Unfortunately, Wrenn was sidelined late in the season with a shoulder injury. Last season, Wrenn missed time due to a torn ACL. Despite missing parts of two seasons due to injuries, Wrenn still has many fond memories of his days with the Golden Knights.

“It is real hard to pick one memorable moment,” Wrenn said. “When you’ve been around as long as I have, you get the chance to play with a lot of great players. Playing with so many great players has given me a lot of great memories.”

Donald Huzzie provided backfield punch for the Golden Knights at fullback. Going into his final collegiate game Huzzie has 22 yards on six carries and 75-yards on nine receptions. Huzzie led the Golden Knights with an 8.6 yards-per-carry average in 1994. Huzzie finished the 1994 season with 112-yards on 13 carries.

Often overshadowed by the starters, yet equally important, several backup players are also seeing their college careers come to an end.

Kevin Reid has seen a lot of offensive plays in his five years with the Golden Knights. Prior to the season, backup quarterback Reid rushed for two touchdowns and completed the game-winner to Stuart Stipe in the Black and Gold game, leading the Black to a 23-17 victory. This season, Reid has completed two of 10 passes for 34 yards in reserve duty. Reid completed six of 14 passes for 132 yards and one touchdown in 1994 as a backup to Darin Hinshaw.

Often overlooked in the trenches, offensive tackle Kevin Stewart helped tailback Marquette Smith roll up a school-record 1,511 yards in 1995, as well as helping to protect Daunte Culpepper.

Although he has had limited playing time, wide receiver, Stuart Stipe has been a reliable target for quarterbacks during his time with the Golden Knights. Stipe was named the Most Improved Offensive Player in 1995, finishing the season with 262-yards on 16 receptions. This Spring, Stipe scored the game-winning touchdown on a 20-yard pass from Kevin Reid with 22 seconds left in the game leading the Black to a 23-17 victory. So far this season, Stipe is third on the team in receiving yards with 20 receptions for 286 yards.

After sitting out the last three seasons, Jimmy Spitulski returned to the Golden Knights this year for his final collegiate season. He has seen limited action this year due to injury.

Whatever awaits these seniors as they venture out beyond the gates of the Citrus Bowl, one thing is certain, in their own way, each one has made history. The senior class of the 1996 season are the first players to graduate from the Golden Knights Division I-A team. Definitely something to tell the grand kids about.