

timesunion.comprint story 
back 

Buffalo's Gill named MAC coach of year as Nebraska opening looms

By JOHN WAWROW, Associated Press

Last updated: 4:53 p.m., Tuesday, November 27, 2007

BUFFALO, N.Y. -- Turner Gill is certainly getting his fair share of attention for the job he's done reviving the University at Buffalo football program.

Already a candidate to take over at Nebraska, Gill was named the Mid-American Conference coach of the year Tuesday. The honor comes after the second-year coach helped the Bulls to a 5-7 finish and 5-3 conference record.

The five wins were the most in one season since Buffalo rejoined the Division I-A ranks in 1999, and most since the Bulls went 8-3 in 1996 as a Division I-AA independent program. The five wins were also three short of the eight conference victories the Bulls registered in their previous eight seasons combined.

"I'm humbled by this honor," Gill said in a statement released by the school. "However, this speaks more about the coach staff as a unit than it does about me personally."

Gill is on a recruiting trip and has not been available for comment since the Bulls closed their season with a 30-23 overtime win at Kent State on Saturday. Gill has also been mum because he's been named a candidate to succeed Bill Callahan, who was fired by Nebraska on Saturday.

It's not clear whether Gill, who played and coached at Nebraska, has interviewed for the job after Buffalo granted the Cornhuskers permission on Sunday to talk to the former star quarterback and 1983 Heisman Trophy finalist.

"I'm happy for Turner and his family about getting the opportunity to talk to Nebraska," Buffalo athletic director Warde Manuel said. "He's worked extremely hard and deserves this opportunity."

As a Cornhuskers assistant, Gill was a noted recruiter and also credited for helping develop Tommie Frazier, Jamaal Lord and Eric Crouch, the 2001 Heisman Trophy winner.

At Buffalo, Gill has made a significant mark as a first-time head coach and after taking over as the team's offensive coordinator this season.

The Bulls scored 291 points this season, their most as a Division I-A program and 28 points shy of a school record. Junior quarterback Drew Willy completed a school record 258 passes, while running back James Starks had 1,103 yards rushing, third-most in school history and most in 11 years.

Buffalo also had eight players named to the all-conference team, which was released Tuesday. They are: Starks, S Davonte Shannon, DE Trevor Scott, C Jamey Richard, LB Kareem Byrom, LB Larry Hutchinson, RG Jeff Niedermier and WR Naaman Roosevelt.

The Bulls had seven players named to the all-MAC team in their previous eight seasons.

"This is a great day for the University at Buffalo football program to see this kind of recognition," Gill said. "To see this kind of representation speaks to the efforts that our players and coaches put forth this season to earn the respect of our conference foes and to make our program one to be reckoned with now and in the future."

Copyright 2007 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

All Times Union materials copyright 1996-2007, Capital Newspapers Division of The Hearst Corporation, Albany, N.Y.

[HOME](#) | [CONTACT US](#) | [SUBSCRIBE TO NEWSPAPER](#) | [HOW TO ADVERTISE](#) | [PRIVACY RIGHTS](#) | [COPYRIGHT](#) | [CLASSROOM ENRICHMEN](#)

HEARST *newspapers*