

Gaiters, national rushing leader for NMSU, dies at 85

[By Rick Wright / Journal Staff Writer](#)

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Bob Gaiters, who led the nation in rushing for the unbeaten, untied New Mexico State Aggies in 1960, died on Jan. 5. He was 85.

Gaiters and Pervis Atkins, his running mate in the NMSU backfield behind quarterback Charley Johnson, both came to Las Cruces from Santa Ana College to play for Aggies coach Warren Woodson. The Aggies went 19-3 in their two seasons (1959-60) at NMSU with two bowl victories.

After Atkins led the nation in rushing in 1959 with 971 yards, Gaiters rushed for 1,338 yards during the Aggies' 11-0 season in 1960. He also led the nation in rushing touchdowns with 23.

New Mexico State halfbacks led the nation in rushing four years in a row, with James "Preacher" Pilot doing so in 1961 (1,278 yards) and 1962 (1,247).

Gaiters was blessed with sprinter's speed, but at 6-foot-1 and 210 pounds could run over tacklers as well.

In the 1959 Sun bowl, a 28-8 Aggies victory over North Texas State, Gaiters had a 44-yard touchdown run and finished with 123 yards on 20 carries.

The following year, he rushed for 65 yards on 13 carries with a touchdown as the Aggies capped their unbeaten, untied season with a 20-13 Sun Bowl victory over Utah State.

After college, Gaiters played two seasons in the NFL with the New York Giants and the San Francisco 49ers, then played one season with the American Football League's Denver Broncos and one season with the Hamilton Tiger-Cats of the Canadian Football League.

He finished his NFL career with 673 yards on 168 carries, a 4.0 average, with six touchdowns. He caught 17 passes for 175 yards and two TDs

Gaiters was born in Zanesville, Ohio, where he led Zanesville High School to an 8-1 season as a senior.

Zanesville legend, NFL player passes away

January 6, 2024

[Dylan Kerns](#)



ZANESVILLE, OH- Sad news broke on Saturday morning, we recently learned that former Zanesville football legend Bob Gaiters has passed away.

Gaiters was a star at Zanesville. His accolades include being a 3-year letterman in football and 2-year letterman in basketball. He played his sophomore and junior years as an offensive lineman. He later moved to fullback his senior year and rushed for nearly 1,000 yards and 11 touchdowns. Gaiters led the team to an 8-1 record and a Central Ohio League championship.

His success continued in college at New Mexico State University. In 1960 he led the Aggies to an 11-0 undefeated season. In that same year he led the country in rushing with 1,338 rushing yards on 197 carries.

Gaiters was the 17th overall selection in the 1961 NFL draft by the New York Giants. He played 31 games across three seasons in the NFL racking up 6 total touchdowns.

In 1976 he was inducted into the New Mexico State Athletics Hall of Fame. He also became a member of the Zanesville High School Hall of Fame in 2009.