

CHUCK CONERLY

Charles Albert Conerly, Jr.
Quarterback. 6-1, 185. University of Mississippi.
Clarksdale High School, Mississippi.
Born September 19, 1923, at Clarksdale, Mississippi.
Died February 13, 1996, Memphis, Tennessee (74).

1948-61 New York Giants

Inducted into National Football Foundation Hall of Fame in 1966.

The New York Giants moved the ball to the Cleveland 18 in the first quarter of the 1958 Eastern Division Playoff. Quarterback Chuck Conerly handed to running back Alex Webster who in turn gave the ball to Frank Gifford on a reverse. Eight yards downfield, Gifford appeared stopped. Suddenly, he lateraled to Conerly who was trailing the play. The 35-year-old quarterback, who ran like "a pregnant woodchuck," was only slightly less astonished than the Browns, but he waddled untouched into the end zone. Afterward, when the famed New York defense had preserved the 10-0 victory,

Conerly could smile and insist "the lateral was optional."

It was a sweet moment of glory for the gritty signalcaller, who seldom received his full measure of praise on a team idolized for its defensive stars, but who often came in for more than his share of blame when the Giants lost.

First drafted by Washington in 1945, Chuck opted to return to the University of Mississippi after his wartime stint in the Marines. He set school passing records and was named All-America in 1947. In the meantime, the Giants traded for the right to sign him. New York coach Steve Owen felt the lanky tosser could become another Sammy Baugh.

His first six years in New York were most un-Baugh-like. A singlewing tailback at Mississippi, he struggled to learn the T- formation. Fans were impatient with his progress. They booed his every error, even when he played – as he often did with serious injuries. Even his occasional triumphs were mixed. In his first season he set a league record with 36 pass completions in a single game, but the Giants lost to Pittsburgh.

The low point came in 1953 when the team literally collapsed around him. He spent the season playing catch-up football against stacked defenses. The booing at the Polo Grounds was merciless. After the last game, he announced his retirement.

New coach Jim Lee Howell traveled to Conerly's home in Mississippi to get him to reconsider. The Giants, Howell insisted, could be built into a winner – if they had the right quarterback.

The rest, as they say, is history.

With Conerly at the throttle, the Giants took the NFL championship in 1956 and won Eastern Division crowns in 1958 and 1959. The great defense won the fans' hearts and the offense featured runners Gifford and Webster. But it was Conerly's clever play calling and judicious passing that made it all go.

In 1959 - six years after his "retirement" – he was awarded the Jim Thorpe Trophy as the NFL's Most Valuable Player.

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Year	Team	Gm	Att	Com	Yard	TD	IN	Pct.	AvgG	%TD	%IN	Rate	
1948	NYG	N 12	299	162	2175	22	13	54.2	7.27	7.4	4.3	84.3	
1949	NYG	N 12	305	152	2138	17	20	49.8	7.01	5.6	6.6	64.0	
1950	NYG	N 11	132	56	1000	8	7	42.4	7.58	6.1	*5.3	67.5	
1951	NYG	N 12	189	93	1277	10	22	49.2	6.76	5.3	11.6	49.5	
1952	NYG	N 11	169	82	1090	13	10	48.5	6.45	7.7	5.9	70.5	
1953	NYG	N 12	303	143	1711	13	*25	47.2	5.65	4.3	8.3	44.7	
1954	NYG	N 10	210	103	1439	17	11	49.0	6.85	8.1	5.2	76.8	
1955	NYG	N 12	202	98	1310	13	13	48.5	6.49	6.4	6.4	64.2	
1956	NYG	N 12	174	90	1143	10	7	51.7	6.57	5.7	4.0	74.9	
1957	NYG	N 12	232	128	1712	11	11	55.2	7.38	4.7	4.7	74.9	
1958	NYG	N 10	184	88	1199	10	9	47.8	5.96	5.4	4.9	64.3	
1959	NYG	N 10	194	113	1706	14	4	58.2	*8.79	7.2	*2.1	102.5	
1960	NYG	N 12	134	66	954	8	7	49.3	7.12	6.0	5.2	70.5	
1961	NYG	N 13	106	44	634	7	8	41.5	5.98	6.6	7.5	52.5	
14 Yrs			161	2833	1418	19488	173	167	50.1	6.88	6.1	5.9	68.3

* League high