

MINI-BIO: JIM BENTON

By Bob Carroll

Lanky Jim Benton ranked only behind Don Hutson as a pro pass receiver during most of the 1940s, and when he retired after the 1947 season, his 288 career catches were the second highest total ever achieved in the NFL up to that point. He combined deceptive speed, a long reach, and sure hands to lead the league in each major receiving category at least once.

At the University of Arkansas (1935-37), he caught 83 passes for 1,303 yards, leading the nation in 1937 with 47 receptions. Although he was largely overlooked by All-America selectors in favor of more publicized Eastern ends, Big Jim was one of two first-round draft selections made by the Cleveland Rams in 1938. The Rams were a weak expansion team in only their second NFL season when Benton joined them, but he nevertheless led the league in average yards gained per reception as a rookie and in touchdown receptions as a sophomore.

Benton retired temporarily in 1941 to coach high school football at Fordyce, AR, but returned the following year to pick up where he had left off. When the Rams disbanded in 1943 because of World War II, he played a season for the Chicago Bears. His reception total was the lowest of his career, but he and Bears quarterback Sid Luckman formed a deadly combination in key situations as Chicago won the league championship.

The Rams returned to the NFL in 1944, and the next year -- led by rookie quarterback Bob Waterfield -- won the league championship. Benton, who topped all receivers in yards gained that year, caught a 37-yard touchdown pass in the title game. In 1946, when the team moved to Los Angeles, he led the league in both receptions and yardage.

In 1953, Benton coached Arkansas A & M to the AIC championship.

* * * *

James W. (Big Jim) Benton

OE-DE * 6-03 200

College: Arkansas * Carthage HS, AR

Born: 09/25/16, Carthage, AR

Drafted Round 1 by Cleveland 1938

* College All-Star Game 1938

* All-NFL: 1945, 1946

* Arkansas Sports Hall of Fame 1960

* All-Pro Squad of 1940s (PF HOF)

YEAR	TEAM	LG	Gm	-- PASS RECEIVING --			---
				NO	YDS	AVG	TD

1938	Cle	N	10	21	418	*19.9	5
1939	Cle	N	11	27	388	14.4	*7
1940	Cle	N	9	22	351	16.0	3
1941	Vol. Ret.						
1942	Cle	N	8	23	345	15.0	1
1943	ChiB	N	9	13	235	18.1	3
1944	Cle	N	10	39	505	13.0	6
1945	Cle	N	9	45	*1067	23.7	8
1946	LA	N	11	*63	*981	15.6	6
1947	LA	N	11	35	511	14.6	6

9 yrs			88	288	4801	16.7	45
* - Led league							