

BOB GAIN: CLEVELAND TACKLE

By James D. Whalen
From Biographical Dictionary of American Sport

Robert "Bob" Gain, (b. 21 June 1929, Akron, OH), college and professional player, won the 1950 Outland award as the nation's Outstanding College Interior Football Lineman of the Year. Gain starred at tackle four years (1947-1950) at the University of Kentucky (SEC) and twelve years (1952,1954-1964) with the Cleveland Browns (NFL). At Kentucky he won All-American honors his last two years (consensus in 1950) and co-captained the only Wildcats team to capture the SEC championship. The three-year All-SEC selection was chosen the best SEC lineman by the Atlanta (GA) Touchdown and Birmingham (AL) Quarterback Clubs.

A stalwart defensive tackle on six Browns Eastern Conference and three (1954-1955, 1964) NFL championship teams, Gain started in five Pro Bowl games. He was honored by the Pittsburgh (PA) Dapper Dan Club and was named to the West Virginia and the Cleveland Sports Hall of Fame. In 1980 he became the first Kentucky player to be inducted into the NFF College Football Hall of Fame.

The son of restaurant owner Zeman and Mary (Maletich) Gain, he graduated from Weir High School in Weirton, WV, made the All- State football team at tackle, and played center in basketball. The 6 foot, 3 inch, 230 pound Gain was one of the few two-way players performing for the immortal Paul "Bear" Bryant. The Kentucky Wildcats compiled a composite 33-10-2 record, won two of three post-season games, and ranked eleventh and seventh nationally in AP polls Gain's last two seasons. Kentucky defeated Villanova 24-14 in the 1947 Great Lakes Bowl, was upset 21-13 by fifteenth-ranked Santa Clara in the 1950 Orange Bowl, and achieved its greatest triumph by defeating AP regular-season national champion Oklahoma 13-7 in the 1951 Sugar Bowl.

Gain played with Wildcats stars All-American quarterback Vito "Babe" Parilli, co-captain halfback Wilbur Jamerson, fullback Bill Leskovar, tackle Walt Yowarsky, center Harry Ulinski, and end Charlie McClendon. Gain in 1950 blocked and recovered two punts to set up touchdowns against North Texas and Georgia Tech. He kicked ten extra points against North Dakota to tie a SEC record. Gain graduated with a B.A. in Economics and Sociology from Kentucky in 1952.

The Green Bay Packers (NFL) drafted him in 1951, but Gain, unable to come to contract terms, starred one year with the Ottawa Roughriders (CFL). In 1951 Ottawa won its first CFL championship in several years with the help of Gain's field goals, rouges, and line play.

Gain joined Cleveland (NFL) in a 1952 trade and helped the Browns win the American Conference championship. He served a year in Korea and Japan as first lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force and then rejoined the Browns in 1954.

Cleveland won two consecutive NFL championships by defeating Detroit 56-10 and Los Angeles 38-14 in title games. "Bob Gain became an excellent defensive tackle for us," Cleveland coach Paul Brown stated. "He had such tremendous strength and big hands, he simply tossed aside an opposing lineman. Added to that strength was great quickness and mobility. Bob had a tremendous sense of humor, and few got the last laugh on him."

Gain retired in 1964 after the Browns, under second-year coach Blanton Collier, won another NFL title by upsetting the Baltimore Colts 27-0 in the title game.

Gain married Mary Katherin Bastin in 1952 and has three daughters. Since leaving pro football, he has worked for the Pettibone Corporation, manufacturer of material handling equipment. He resides with his family in Cleveland's suburban Timberlake Village and has served the Heart Fund, Lake County Grand jury, and other civic organizations.

GAIN, BOB

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6-03 256 Kentucky

b: 06/21/29, Akron, OH

1951 CFL; 1952, 1954-64 Cleveland NFL