

1948 AAFC CHAMPIONSHIP: PERFECT ENDING

The Cleveland Browns completed a perfect, all-winning season with a 49-7 thrashing of the Buffalo Bills before a disappointing, but hardly disappointed, crowd of 22,981 at Municipal Stadium. The Browns thus became the first professional football team in a major league to win every game of the regular season and then continue victorious through the championship game. In both 1934 and 1942, the Chicago Bears completed undefeated, untied NFL seasons only to lose in the championship game.

The rout of the Bills, who only broke even during their regular season and needed a playoff win over Baltimore to advance to the finale, was fully expected. That anticipation no doubt held down the crowd. Buffalo's porous defense was expected to be easily solved by the Browns, but the few Bills' rooters in the stands hoped that the invaders' high-powered offense might give the Clevelanders some trouble. Instead, Cleveland held the Bills to under 170 yards from scrimmage while taking advantage of numerous Buffalo mistakes.

The first half was played on comparatively even terms, but Cleveland scored once in each quarter. First, Edgar Jones went three yards to a touchdown with only ten seconds left in the opening quarter. Early in the second quarter, Browns end George Young returned Rex Bumgardner's fumble 18 yards for Cleveland's second touchdown.

The second half was all Browns. Barely two minutes into the session, Otto Graham passed nine yards to Edgar Jones to make the score 21-0. Marion Motley, Cleveland's 238-pound fullback took over from there and scored three touchdowns on runs of 29, 31, and five yards. Motley rushed for 133 yards on the day, more than twice the rushing yardage Buffalo could garner.

Bills' quarterback George Ratterman, who threw three interceptions, was replaced by Jim Still who tossed a pair of turnovers. With only four seconds left in the third quarter, Still finally put a consolation touchdown on the scoreboard on a ten-yard pass to Alton Baldwin. A roughing-the-kicker penalty kept the Buffalo drive alive, and a 25-yard pass to Bumgardner followed by a 15- yard effort to Bill O'Connor set up the score.

After that brief flurry of Bills activity, the game returned to a Browns' party for the final quarter.

Motley's last two touchdown brought the score to 42-7. Then Cleveland linebacker Lou Saban iced the cake with a 39-yard return of a Still pass. Lou Groza kicked his seventh extra point of the game to complete the deluge.

Municipal Stadium, Cleveland, Dec.19, 1948 Att. 22,981

CLEVELAND BROWNS 49		BUFFALO BILLS 7	
Mac Speedie	LE		Alton Baldwin
Lou Groza	LT		Graham Armstrong
Ed Ulinski	LG		Harold Lahar
Frank Gatski	C		Arthur Statuto
Bob Gaudio	RG		Rocco Pirro
Lou Rymkus	RT		John Kerns
Dante Lavelli	RE		William O'Connor
Otto Graham	QB		George Ratterman
Edgar Jones	LH		Chet Mutryn
Dub Jones	RH		Rex Bumgardner
Marion Motley	FB		Lou Tomasetti

Cleveland Browns ...	7	7	14	21	-	49
Buffalo Bills	0	0	7	0	-	7

Cle: E.Jones, 3-yard run. XP: Groza (14:50)

Cle: Young, 18-yard fumble return. XP: Groza (3:25)

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Cle: E.Jones, 9-yard pass from Graham. XP: Groza (2:02)
 Cle: Motley, 29-yard run. XP: Groza (10:35)
 Buf: Baldwin, 10-yard pass from Still. XP: Armstrong (14:50)
 Cle: Motley, 31-yard run. XP: Groza (0:44)
 Cle: Motley, 5-yard run. XP: Groza (9:44)
 Cle: Saban, 39-yard pass interception. XP: Groza (11:49)

Substitutions:

CLEVELAND - Ends: George Young, John Yonakor, Horace Gillom, Frank Kosikowski; Tackles: Chet Adams, Forrest Grigg, Ben Pucci, Len Simonetti; Guards: Weldon Humble, Bill Willis, Alex Agase, Lin Houston; Centers: Lou Saban, Mel Maceau; Backs: Cliff Lewis, Tommy Colella, Tommy James, Tony Adamle, George Terlep, Billy Boedeker, Dean Sensenbagger, Bob Cowan. Ara Parseghian, Ollie Cline.

BUFFALO - Ends: Vince Mazza, George Kisiday, Ed Balatti, Paul Gibson; Tackles: John Kissell, Jack Carpenter, Jerry Whalen; Guards: Edward King, John Wyhonic, Vince Scott; Centers: Ed Hirsch, Felto Prewitt, Jack Baldwin; Backs: Jim Still, Don Schneider, Alex Wizbicki, Achille Maggioli, Vic Kulbitski, Charles Schuette.

Referee: Samuel H. Giangreco; Umpire: George F. Holstrom; Field Judge: Hol Slutz; Linesman: William H. Ohrenberger; Sideline Judge: Titus B. Lobach; Alternate: George Vergara.

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

CLEVELAND	NO	YDS	Avg	BUFFALO	NO	YDS	Avg
RUSHING							
Motley	14	133	9.5	Bumgardner	11	34	3.1
E.Jones	8	29	3.6	Tomasetti	11	20	1.8
D.Jones	5	22	4.4	Mutryn	8	8	1.0
Cline	1	20	20.0	Kulbitski	2	1	0.5
Parseghian	4	14	3.5	Still	1	0	0.0
Sensenbagger	2	2	1.0		33	63	1.9
Colella	1	1	1.0				
Graham	1	0	0.0				
Adamle	2	-1	-0.5				
Terlep	2	-5	-2.5				
	40	215	5.4				

RECEIVING							
E.Jones	3	39	13.0	O'Connor	3	41	13.7
Speedie	2	22	11.0	Mutryn	2	5	2.5
Lavelli	2	16	8.0	Bumgardner	1	25	25.0
D.Jones	2	13	6.5	Kulbitski	1	14	14.0
Gillom	1	15	15.0	A.Baldwin	1	10	10.0
Motley	1	13	13.0	Gibson	1	7	7.0
	11	118	10.7	Snyder	1	4	4.0
				Tomasetti	1	-2	-2.0
					11	104	9.5

PUNTING							
Colella	2	31.0		Still	6	42.5	
Gillom	1	36.0					
	3	32.7					

PUNT RETURNS							
Lewis	2	10	5.0	None			
Colella	1	18	18.0				
Terlep	1	13	13.0				
	4	41	10.3				

KICKOFF RETURNS							
D.Jones	1	46	46.0	Schneider	2	33	16.5
Motley	1	20	20.0	Mutryn	1	18	18.0
	2	66	33.0		3	51	17.0

INTERCEPTION RETURNS							
James	2	36	18.0	Maggioli	1	2	2.0

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Saban	1	39	39.0
Adamle	1	4	4.0
Colella	1	1	1.0
	5	80	16.0

PASSING

CLEVELAND	COM			YDS	YDS/		IN
	ATT	COM	PCT		ATT	COM	
Graham	24	11	45.6	118	4.9	10.7	1
E.Jones	2	0	0.0	0	-	-	0
	26	11	42.3	118	4.5	10.7	1
BUFFALO							
Still	18	6	33.3	80	4.4	13.3	2
Ratterman	18	5	27.8	24	1.3	4.8	3
	36	11	30.6	104	2.9	9.5	5

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Attendance (paid)	22,981
Gross Receipts	\$112,269.38
Taxes and other game expenses	43,302.06
Net Receipts	68,967.32
Players' pool (70% of net)	48,277.12
Playoff finalists' share (80% of pool)	38,621.70
Winners' share (60% of finalists' share)	23,173.02
Losers' share (40% of finalists' share)	15,448.69
Winners' (Browns) individual share	594.18
Losers' (Bills) individual share	386.22
San Fran.'s 2nd place share (10% of pool)	4,827.71
Baltimore's 2nd place share (10% of pool)	4,827.71
Conference office (5% of net)	3,448.36
Cle & Buf club shares(12 1/2% each of net)	8,620.92