

FOOTBALL ON THE WEB

The Pro Football Hall of Fame

<http://www.canton-ohio.com:80/hof/>

Probably you only venture out onto the Web when you have to do that serious research on disgusting pornographic photos for *Puritanical Times Magazine*. But, if you decide to relax from the grind, you may enjoy surfing some of the many football sites.

One of our favorites is the Pro Football Hall of Fame's Home Page. We usually visit it once a week just to see what's new.

And speaking of "[What's New](#)," that's the first thing you can click on to find out what's the latest at the Hall. For example, right now you'll find that the 1998 Senior Candidate for induction has been announced. In case you missed it, Tommy McDonald is this year's veteran candidate and the announcement gives enough info on Tommy's career that you'll be able to see why he was nominated.

Additionally, you'll find details on the symposium "Pro Football and American Life" to be held October 15-18. Remember? That symposium is why we're holding our annual meeting in Canton on October 18, in case you forgot.

A section called "[About the Hall of Fame](#)" gives facts, history, information on how to visit, and a mini-tour. You can find out about that "Hundred-Yard Universe" thing for example. That's the film and sound program that puts you right in the locker room and then in the game.

Teachers will be interested in "[Educational Programs](#)," a section that tells how classes can visit the Hall and downloadable classroom activity sheets. I know if I was a kid, I'd be more interested in the quarterbacking of Montana than the geography of Montana.

The Hall's famous "[Top 20](#)" players all-time in major statistical categories is one of the most popular exhibits. During the season, it's updated every week so you can track your favorite runner, passer, receiver, or scorer as he goes for the record.

You may want to look over "[Enshrinement Ceremonies & Hall of Fame Game](#)" for highlights on both. Or you may be more interested in planning your purchases from the "[Museum Store](#)." Hey, that Jets jacket looks good on you!

For the Researcher

And as a Jets fan, you'll want to check out the section called "[Team Histories](#)" where you'll find short, but authoritative histories of all the current teams. ("Golly, it says here the Jets once won a Super Bowl!") You may even want to download a couple.

Of course, when you say "Hall of Fame," most people think immediately about the enshrinees. They're up to 189 enshrinees now. You can click on each one and see a brief biography along with a copy of the drawing that is displayed behind the man's bust at the Hall. Now you can learn about Shorty Ray at last!

Perhaps the most interesting section for many of us is "Football Decade by Decade." Here you'll find two or three fascinating tidbits about each decade since the 1920s. For example, there's a nice little account of the Oorang Indians, that all-Indian team that was named after a dog kennel!

Here's one of the stories from a later decade:

**Pro Football Hall of Fame: Decade by Decade 1950's
A Dynamic Duo - Leo Nomellini and Joe Perry**

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Joe "The Jet" Perry and Leo "The Lion" Nomellini were the first alumni of the San Francisco 49ers to be elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Perry played pro football for 16 seasons and Nomellini for 14. They duo were teammates for 12 of those years.

Perry, a fullback, first joined the 49ers in 1948, when that club was member of the All-America Football Conference. He stayed in San Francisco until 1961, when he was traded to the Baltimore Colts. Two years later, he was back by the Golden Gate for a final campaign in 1963.

Nomellini, on the other hand, was a tackle who excelled on either offense or defense. He was the 49ers first draft choice in their first NFL season in 1950. He never played with another team. During his long tenure wearing the Scarlet and Gold, Nomellini did not miss a game. Counting pre-season, regular-season and post-season games, including 10 Pro Bowl appearances, Leo played in 266 pro contests.

Beside the obvious fact that they were both great football players, Perry and Nomellini had at least one other thing in common - that is they almost didn't play football at all.

Perry actually embraced high school football on the sly for his mother had always vetoed the sport because of what she felt were the dangers involved. Eventually, his mother, seeing how badly Joe wanted to play, relented and soon became a staunch fan.

Joe attended Compton Junior College in California, where in his first season he scored 22 touchdowns. The next year he was in the U.S. Navy with the Alameda Naval Training Station team. There he was spotted by John Woudenberg, a 49ers tackle, who promptly reported his find to owner Tony Morabito and head coach Buck Shaw.

The 49ers did make Perry an offer and right from the start he was a regular and a star. He earned his famous nickname, "The Jet," when 49ers quarterback Frankie Albert marveled, "When that guy comes by to take a handoff, his slipstream darn near knocks you over. He's strictly jet-propelled."

In 16 years, Perry rushed for 9,723 yards, second only to Jim Brown at the time of his retirement. He became the first-ever to rush for 1,000 yards two straight seasons in 1953 and 1954. He also caught 260 passes for another 2,021 yards and scored 513 points in his story-book career.

In Nomellini's case, recognition as an all-time pro football great is a far cry from the impoverished days Leo knew as a youth. Born in Lucca, Italy, in 1924, Leo came to Chicago's tough west side as an infant. He attended Chicago's Crane Tech but had to pass up sports so that he could work a full shift in a foundry to help support his family.

Leo eventually enlisted in the Marines and it was then that he got his first taste of football as a member of the Cherry Point, N.C. Leatherneck team. When his Marine days were over, the University of Minnesota offered him a football scholarship. He went on to become a two-time All-America pick at tackle.

With the 49ers Nomellini became one of the few players ever to be named all-pro on both offense and defense. He won offensive tackle honors in 1951 and 1952 and defensive tackle laurels in 1957 and 1959.

In action, Nomellini was one of the best pass rushers in the NFL and it wasn't often that the enemy penetrated his area on the ground. Yet on offense, he was a fine pass blocker and adept at opening holes in the opposition line. In 1955, when injuries created a severe crisis on the 49er squad, Nomellini played on both sides of the line, accumulating nearly 60 minutes in every game.

For the 49ers, Joe Perry and Leo Nomellini were the perfect pair. The Lion justifiably earned the tag of "indestructible" while The Jet was considered virtually "unstoppable."

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Like they used to say in that commercial, "Try it; you'll like it!"