

# **Quarterback Al Dorow:**

## **Spartan All-American, Redskin Pro Bowler, Titan All-Star**

By: Jim Sargent

The stellar football career of Albert Richard Dorow, Junior, was remarkable in many ways. Considering that he suffered a heart condition by age seven and was told by doctors he should not play sports, Dorow, who starred at halfback in high school, surprised Michigan State coaches and fans by learning the quarterback position and taking over as starter in the fifth game of the 1949 season. A talented all-around athlete, he earned All-American honors in 1951.

Also, after fulfilling his military obligation, a standard requirement for young men in the 1950s, Al made the Pro Bowl with the National Football League's Washington Redskins for the 1956 season and, as the New York Titans' quarterback, he made the American Football League's first All-Star game in 1962.

One of the AFL's greatest quarterbacks of the early years, Dorow's pro career was cut short by injuries. After damaging his right arm and shoulder with the Buffalo Bills in 1962, the Michigan native spent ten years coaching football—mostly at Michigan State from 1965 to 1970.

Born on November 15, 1929, Al grew up during the Great Depression and attended high school during World War II. Typical of many boys during the 1940s, he played almost every game and sport possible in Imlay City, a small town in the heart of Michigan's thumb area. But at age seven, while riding in a bicycle race, he suffered what the doctor said was a heart attack.

"But you know, that kid wouldn't give up," recalled R.A. Grettenberger, superintendent of Imlay City Schools. "He was determined to get better, and to build himself up and become an athlete. And he did. He had the gumption to go on and develop into one of the greatest stars Imlay City ever had. He played basketball, baseball, he pole-vaulted and also ran the hurdles. And football, of course."

Al developed into an excellent athlete at Imlay City High, earning 16 varsity letters in four sports. As a senior, the triple-threat halfback won Tri-County League All-Conference honors. As a forward in basketball, he made All-Conference twice, leading his team in scoring as a senior. In track he was voted All-Conference four times, and as a senior he won the class C state title in high hurdles. A two-time All-Conference choice in baseball, he pitched five victories in 1947. After choosing Michigan State over Illinois, Al enrolled on a track scholarship that fall.

Talking about his athletic career in a 2003 interview, Dorow recalled, "I had scarlet fever when I was in elementary school, and I ended up with an enlarged heart with a systolic murmur. I still have it today, but it doesn't bother me.

"In high school I played all four sports for four years. In my junior and senior year, track was my big event, but we went undefeated in football both years, and I was a running back. In my junior and senior years I won the state championships in high hurdles, low hurdles, and the pole vault. That got me scholarship offers from Illinois and Michigan State.

"The 1947 state track championships were held at Michigan State College (MSC became a university in 1955), and I got to know the coaches there. So I decided to take the scholarship at Michigan State. When I went down there in my freshman year, they allowed me to work out with the cross-country team to get in shape for the indoor track season.

"The track was around the football field. Forest Evashevski was the backfield coach at State, and his grandmother lived in Imlay City. She used to send articles to Forest about our football team, because we were undefeated those two years.

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"One day Evashevski looked me up and said, 'How come you're not out for football? You got speed and you were a running back. Would you like to give it a go?'

"I said, 'Well, you'll have to talk to the track coach. I'm here on a track scholarship. But I'd love to try it.'

"Evashevski knew the track coach and got his permission, so I went out. That was Biggie Munn's first year as football coach, and there was no limit in those days to how many players you could recruit. They had 155 guys on the freshman team, and most of them were All-Staters or All-Americans. When I lined up at left halfback the next day, I was seventeenth string!

"They ran some kicking drills at the end of the first week. Evashevski told me to line up to run back some kicks. I went out on the field, and I looked around, and I had no teammates!

"Coach Evy said, 'Don't worry about it. We just want to see what you can do.'

"The punter kicked it real high, and I got nailed the first two or three times. On the next kick, it bounced, and it was headed out of bounds. The defensive guys slowed down, so I scooped up the ball and ran it down the sidelines, and I beat Lynn Chandnois to the end zone.

"Evashevski said to me afterward, 'That's heads up! You stay out for football.'

"I did, and I won my numerals as a freshman."

Next fall, when Dorow was highly rated at left half, he suffered a serious knee injury in practice one week before the opener at the University of Michigan. His football season was over.

On October 28, 1949, the *Lapeer County Press* reported, "Doctors told him it would be doubtful if he could ever play again. But they didn't know Dorow. During the winter he worked out daily with the Michigan State indoor track team to strengthen his knee. By spring it was good enough so that he went out for drills with the football team."

The Imlay City ace made the Spartan squad as a left halfback in 1949. When the season began, the coaches had him running with the third string. But in game four, a 42-13 victory over William and Mary, State lost quarterbacks Gene Glick, Bob Ciolek and George Smith to injuries.

Munn and Evashevski turned to Dorow, who got an unexpected opportunity:

"On Saturday night I was sitting in my dorm room, and I got a call from Coach Evashevski. He said, 'Get dressed and come over to the fieldhouse.' When I got there, the coaches were having a conference. Biggie Munn had written on the chalk board, 'Al Dorow, #1 Quarterback.'

"I said, 'I've never played quarterback, not even in high school.'

"Coach Evashevski said, 'You're fast, and you're the longest passer we've got left.' So the next week they taught me how to play quarterback, and on Saturday we beat Penn State."

Playing before a crowd at 40,000 at Macklin Stadium (renamed Spartan Stadium in 1957), Michigan State whipped visiting Penn State. Without a previous minute of college playing experience, the talented sophomore led the Spartans to a 24-0 victory. With winds of 30 mile-per-hour and more blowing on a cool October afternoon, Dorow, who threw bullets, completed four passes, two for touchdowns of 20 and 28 yards. The former halfback also ran for ten yards.

Dorow, an intense competitor who was now the team's quarterback, kept improving. Michigan State finished the '49 season with a 6-3 record, and the Spartans were 3-2 under Al's leadership. In 1950, his junior year, State came through with an 8-1 record, and the Spartans were ranked eighth in national polls. The season's only blemish came in a 34-7 loss to Maryland.

In Dorow's senior year, MSC produced a perfect 9-0 record and earned a ranking of second in the nation. The 1951 Spartan powerhouse defeated strong teams like Michigan, 25-0, Ohio State, 24-20, Penn State, 32-21, and Notre Dame, 35-0. Al led State's potent ground-oriented offense to nine straight victories. A

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versatile quarterback, he completed 64 of 114 aerials, good for 842 yards and nine touchdowns, and he scored three more TDs on four receptions.

Dorow, a smart quarterback who called his own plays and often came through in the clutch, rallied the Spartans against Ohio State. Facing a fourth-quarter 20-10 deficit, he capped a long drive by throwing a touchdown pass to end Paul Dekker with 9:14 remaining. Behind 24-20 with 2:34 to go, Dorow called the game-winning "transcontinental" pass.

On fourth-and-six at the Buckeye 28-yard line, Dorow handed to fullback Evan Slonac, who faked a line smash and gave the pigskin back to Dorow. Al flipped a pass to sophomore quarterback Tom Yewcic, who began a sweep right. When OSU's defense pulled toward Yewcic, he threw his first MSC pass across the field to the opposite sideline. Dorow caught the ball at the 11-yard line, eluded three defenders, and scored the game-winning touchdown!

Commented Biggie Munn about Dorow's excellence under pressure, "Al was definitely at his best when the chips were down. He was more than great when the team needed that extra lift."

"The years I played quarterback," Al explained in 2003, "State had two sets of backs. We had the big, strong, hard-running 'elephant' backs, like Sonny Grandelius and Vince Pisano at halfback, Dick Panin at fullback, and Don McAuliffe came in 1950. We had the smaller, faster 'pony' backs like Billy Wells and LeRoy Bolden at halfback and Evan Slonac at fullback.

"Biggie would start the big backs, and they'd play until we began to see signs the defense was wearing down. Then the coaches played the smaller backs, and they all had great speed. We'd run sweeps left and right and then trap up the middle, and of course we'd also pass. But Michigan State could really keep on running the ball at you in those years."

Following his senior season, when Michigan State joined Big Ten Conference but was not yet bowl-eligible, the 6'0" 180-pounder played in the East-West Shrine Game and the Senior Bowl. In San Francisco, Dorow led the East squad to 15-14 upset over the West. He scored once on a touchdown pass from Princeton's Dick Kazmaier, and he completed several passes, including a 43-yard bomb to Kazmaier.

On January 5, 1952, Dorow played in the Senior Bowl at Ladd Memorial Stadium in Mobile, Alabama, where 20,236 fans saw him lead the North to a 20-6 victory. Proving his versatility, Al played quarterback and halfback and on safety on defense. The speedy senior threw and caught passes, intercepted passes (two), punted (six times for a 37.5 yard average), blocked, and tackled.

With the North leading, 6-0, Dorow intercepted an aerial from Vanderbilt's Billy Wade and sprinted 88 yards for a touchdown. In the fourth quarter, after the South scored to cut the lead to 13-6, Al passed to Southern California's Frank Gifford for the final three yards in a 65-yard scoring drive. When the play-for-pay contest ended, Dorow was voted the game's MVP.

"I flew to Mobile for the Senior Bowl," Al said in 2003, "and coach Paul Brown said he wanted me to play some offense and some defense. I told him I had never played defense in college. They started me at quarterback. I also played strong safety. Frank Gifford of Southern California played the other safety, and we had Dick Alban of Northwestern and Bobby Dillard of Texas as the cornerbacks.

"I intercepted one of Wade's passes and ran it all the way back for a score. I intercepted three passes in the game. They voted me the game MVP, and we earned \$500 for our winner's share. It was a nice paycheck at the time."

Dorow also played in the College All-Star game at Chicago's Soldier field on August 15, 1952. He and Billy Wade called signals for the All-Stars, but the NFL champion Los Angeles Rams—thanks to Bob Waterfield's fourth-quarter field goal—won the hard-fought contest, 10-7.

The Redskins chose Dorow as the number three pick, but first he had to complete his military obligation. An Advanced ROTC Air Force student at MSC, he enlisted in the Air Force. On Monday after the All-Star game, he reported to Bolling Air Force Base near Washington, D.C.

The USAF assigned Dorow to the 21<sup>st</sup> Crash Rescue Boat Squadron:

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"My job was to see that the boat used by generals on the Potomac was inspected each morning. I showed up at seven o'clock, and a sergeant actually did the inspecting. Once that was over, I went back to my apartment and slept. Basically, I played football in the Air Force. In 1952 we won all our games and beat San Diego Naval Training Center, 35-14, for the national service title. In 1953 we won all our games again, and I made the All-Service Team again."

Dorow's military hitch ended in 1954, and that summer he reported to the Redskins' training camp. For the only time in his life, Al walked into a wide-open quarterbacking situation. Third-year quarterback Eddie LeBaron and defensive end Gene Brito jumped to the Canadian Football League, so Al got a real shot to compete for the starting quarterback's job.

Coming off a 6-5-1 record and a third-place finish in the NFL's Eastern Conference, Washington slipped to fifth place at 3-9 under new coach Joe Kuharich. Dorow played more as the season progressed.

Strong, rugged, and fast at 6'0" and 190 pounds, he completed 70 of 138 passes for 997 yards and eight touchdowns. Jack Scarbath, a 6'2" signal-caller in his second season out of Maryland, connected on 44 of 109 passes for 798 yards and seven scores.

Without LeBaron, Brito, and defensive back Don Doll, who was traded to the Rams, the Redskins started the season with five straight losses. Dorow became the top signal-caller with his performance at Griffith Stadium in game six, a 24-21 win over the Baltimore Colts. He and rookie Billy Wells, also from Michigan State, paced the Redskins. Al connected on eight of 13 passes for 129 yards and one touchdown—a 49-yard bomb to Wells. Rookie fullback Dale Atkeson scored twice on short runs. Vic Janowicz, an All-American halfback at Ohio State, kicked a 15-yard field goal in the fourth quarter that gave Washington the final margin.

A week later the Otto Graham-led Cleveland Browns crushed Washington, 62-3, but the Redskins rebounded in week eight to beat the Steelers, 17-14. The club's final success came with a 37-20 victory over the last-place Chicago Cardinals in the season finale. End Hugh Taylor ended his fine eight-year career by leading the Redskins with 37 catches for 659 yards and eight scores, while Wells paced the team in rushing with 516 yards on 100 carries and three TDs.

But in 1955 LeBaron returned, regained his position, and Washington produced an 8-6 season, ranking second in the East. LeBaron completed 79 of 178 passes for 1,270 yards and nine touchdowns. Also, Ralph Guglielmi, the top draft choice out of Notre Dame, played in nine games and clicked on 20 of 62 passes for two scores. Dorow, who resurrected the team in 1954, fought for playing time in 1955. He got into eight games but completed only two of 12 passes.

The Redskins' ground attack was led by Vic Janowicz, Bert Zagers, a first-year back from Michigan State, and Leo Elter, a third-year pro from Villanova, each of whom gained close to 400 yards. Johnny Carson led Washington's receivers with 23 catches for 443 yards and three touchdowns, while Zagers (14), Elter (13), and Janowicz (11) reached double digits in catches.

Just like at MSC 1949, Dorow got another chance in 1956, thanks in part to a knee injury suffered by LeBaron. Washington fashioned a 6-6 record, and the former Michigan State ace led the club in passing, completing 55 of 112 aerials for 730 yards and eight touchdowns. LeBaron recovered to help the Redskins, completing 47 of 98 passes for 554 yards and three scores. Carson again led the club in receptions, grabbing 39 for 504 yards and three touchdowns. Steve Meilinger, 6'2" 220-pound end from Kentucky, caught 24 passes for 395 yards and five TDs.

Dorow's strong season earned him Pro Bowl honors. He was joined by five teammates: Dick Stanfel, an All-Pro guard, two-time Pro Bowler Gene Brito, linebackers LaVern Torgeson and Chuck Drazenovich, and Leo Elter, who enjoyed his career-best performance in 1956.

But due to a personal disagreement, the Redskins traded Dorow to the Philadelphia Eagles.

Al recalled, "I signed with the Redskins for \$9,000 in 1954. They raised me to \$10,000 in 1956. After I made the Pro Bowl following the '56 season, I asked for a \$2,000 raise. George Preston Marshall, the owner, said, 'That's unheard of.' Marshall later offered me a \$500 raise, and finally \$1,000. But I held out in the spring of 1957.

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"Also, the players elected me to be their representative. I was supposed to go to a meeting of the players' organization in Chicago. Marshall threatened to trade me if I went to the meeting, but I did anyway. After the 1957 preseason ended, Marshall traded me to the Eagles. They already had their lineup set, and Bobby Thomason was the quarterback.

"I never got much of a chance with Philadelphia. I pretty much sat on the bench."

In 1957 the Eagles, coached by Hugh Devore, finished fifth in the Eastern Conference with a 4-8 record, one game ahead of the weak Cardinals (3-9). Thomason and future star Sonny Jurgensen, a fourth-round draft choice from Duke, handled most of the quarterbacking. Playing a reserve role in six games, Dorow completed 17 of 36 passes for 212 yards and one touchdown, and he carried the ball for 52 yards and two more scores in 17 carries.

In 1958 the Eagles hired a new head coach, Buck Shaw, an assistant with the San Francisco Forty-Niners. The Eagles also traded two players and a first-round pick to get star quarterback Norm Van Brocklin from Los Angeles. Given control over the offense, Van Brocklin, who led the Rams to the NFL championship in 1951, would take the Eagles to the NFL title in 1960.

A fiery competitor on the field, Dorow, who could be volatile, recalled, "When Buck Shaw came and brought Norm Van Brocklin along, I played a few times in the exhibition season, and that was it. I rebelled against it, and spoke out, and the Eagles released me."

On August 20, 1958, Philadelphia released Dorow on waivers. Shortly thereafter he got an offer from the Canadian Football League:

"Saskatchewan called me, because Frank Tripucka, their quarterback, was hurt. So I went up there and played two games. I like the CFL. The game is wide open. You've got 12 players and three downs on a wider field, and you can throw the ball and run a lot. But after those two games, Tripucka came back, and I was on the bench.

"The British Columbia Lions called me on a Tuesday, and I played that Saturday. I had time to get there, play in two scrimmages, and we beat Saskatchewan with Tripucka. I spent the rest of the 1958 season with British Columbia.

"In 1959 the BC Lions got a new coach, Wayne Robinson, and he wanted to call the plays from the bench. I couldn't do that. I had always called my own plays. Well, we won our first two exhibitions. We played the Hamilton Tigercats and I threw 69 passes, completed 43, and we won.

"But the coach still wanted to call the plays. He brought in a quarterback from Iowa named Randy Duncan. They wanted me as backup, but they cut my salary in half and I had to watch the game from the stands. I watched two games and said, 'The hell with it.'

"Then Toronto called, and they needed a quarterback. I couldn't live with half a salary, so I left. I called the plays, we won a lot of games, and I finished the 1959 season with Toronto.

"After the season, I was contacted by Harry Wismer about the this new league, the American Football League. I really wanted to go back to Canada, because I liked the wide-open game up there. But they offered me quite a bit more money. Sammy Baugh was the coach, and he had quarterbacked the Redskins in 1952, before I came to Washington. So I knew Baugh pretty well, and that's how I got with the Titans."

Dorow liked the Titans and the AFL:

"With the Titans we had some great receivers, like Don Maynard and Art Powell. We had Dick Christy and Bill Mathis and Dewey Bohling and a lot of backs who could catch the ball, and we had a lot of fun.

"Originally, when they set up the AFL, they built the offensive team first to score a lot of points. The NFL was kind of stagnant in those days. They had a lot of low-scoring games, like 14-7, 7-0, 21-14. The AFL wanted to build up an offensive powerhouse with each franchise, and bring in a lot of rookies on defense. The defense would be good in later years, but to get the new league off the ground, they needed to score points.

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"Fans love to see points scored. In one game in the 1960 season we beat the Dallas Texans, 37-35. I remember the last game of the season when we played Jack Kemp and the Los Angeles Chargers, and they beat us, 50-43."

When Baugh and the coaches built the Titans in 1960, the club held tryouts at the Polo Grounds, a big training camp at Durham, New Hampshire, and six-game exhibition road trip.

Former All-Southwest Conference halfback Dewey Bohling said in 2003, "In 1960 the Titans were the AFL's 'swing team.' We played six exhibitions on the road. We traveled to Boston, Oakland, Los Angeles, Abilene, Texas, Mobile, Alabama, and Buffalo. We picked people up in our training camp, and then we went on the road together. We stayed at motels and ate our meals together. We built up a lot of togetherness on that trip. We'd always have 15 or 20 players who went out to a restaurant or a nightclub together. Usually I roomed with Al.

"Before that, the coaches must have run 350 guys through training camp in New Hampshire. They held four practices a day, two for the nucleus of players who made the team, and two for those guys who were just trying out. In 1960 there were hundreds of good college players who wanted to take a crack at pro football, and the Titans gave them a chance."

Playing at the old Polo Grounds in 1960, the Titans started strong. They beat the Buffalo Bills in the opener, 27-3. In game two New York lost to the Boston Patriots on the last play of the game, 28-24, when a punt was blocked and the Patriots scored. The following week the Titans beat the Denver Broncos the same way, 28-24, scoring with a blocked punt on the game's final play. The Titans were 3-1 after beating Dallas in game four, but after that the defense only held one team under 21 points.

New York produced a 7-7 record and a second place finish in the four-team Eastern Conference, and Dorow—now a scrambling quarterback—led AFL passers with 26 TD passes, a franchise record topped only by the Jets' Vinny Testaverde with 29 in 1998.

Voted the club's MVP, Dorow's career boomed as he completed 201 out of 396 aerials for 2,748 yards. His main targets were former Giant flanker Don Maynard, who made 72 receptions for 1,265 yards and six touchdowns, and Art Powell, who played one season as a reserve for the Eagles before making 69 catches for 1,167 yards and a league-high 14 TDs for the Titans.

An aggressive, smart, veteran quarterback who could run hard, Dorow led his club as well as AFL quarterbacks in rushing with 453 yards in 90 carries, a 5.0 yard average per carry. Dewey Bohling ranked second among Titan rushers with 431 yards, a 3.5 yard average.

In 1961 the Titans again finished with a 7-7 mark, but the club ranked third behind the George Blanda-led Houston Oilers (10-3-1) and the Patriots (9-4-1). Despite suffering from bursitis in his shoulder and having to take shots for pain, Dorow led the AFL in passes attempted, 438, and passes completed, 197, and he connected for 19 touchdowns. Again Powell and Maynard kept the Titans' offense moving, as Powell made 71 receptions for 881 yards and five touchdowns. Maynard, slowed by injuries, caught 43 passes for 629 yards and eight scores. Tight end Thurlow Cooper made a career-best 15 catches for 208 yards, scoring four TDs.

"You could never overthrow Don Maynard," Dorow recollected. "And in the years I played with him, I never saw anyone catch him from behind. He had that kind of blazing speed. He was skinny as a rail but hard as cement. He'd go deep or come across the middle—it didn't matter to him. If you could throw it far enough to Maynard, we got something.

"Powell in many ways was a better receiver. He was about 6'3" and 210. I've never seen anybody since who had such good moves. Art had good speed, but not great, like Maynard. Art always wanted to be the top dog, so I tried to split the passes between them. On any given play, Art or Don would be open. Art was just a fantastic receiver. Sometimes I would have to recock my arm, because I would be watching Art's amazing moves, and then I'd throw him the ball.

"So we had Maynard and Powell, and we threw to backs coming out of the backfield. We had good receivers, like Bill Mathis, Dick Christy out of North Carolina State, Dewey Bohling from Hardin-Simmons, and Bill Shockley out of a small college in Pennsylvania, and we had Thurlow Cooper from Maine at tight end. Sammy Baugh liked to throw the ball, and we did!"

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Next to Dorow (453 yards in 90 runs) in 1960, Dewey Bohling led the Titans, gaining 431 yards on 123 rushes and scoring two touchdowns. Bohling ranked third in receiving with 30 catches for 268 yards and four TDs. Fullback Bill Mathis finished next to Bohling in rushing with 307 yards on 92 carries, and he scored twice. As a receiver, Mathis ranked fourth with 18 passes for 103 yards, but he didn't score.

Dorow, who averaged five yards per carry, was always a threat near the end zone. He scored seven times, including the first touchdown in franchise history. Tackled on the goal line after a two-yard bootleg against Buffalo, Al fell into the end zone for the club's first TD.

Bohling recently recalled, "Al Dorow was a good leader. In 1961 his shoulder got hurt, but he played injured. Most of those weeks he couldn't throw in practice, but he played on the weekends. He wasn't lacking for courage."

A hard-nosed guy who loved to compete, Dorow he played over the sore shoulder. But he did throw more interceptions in 1961 (30) than in 1960 (26).

Bohling said, "I remember one time when Dorow got knocked out of bounds in front of the Buffalo bench, and Buffalo's 300-pound coach Buster Ramsey took a swing at him. It didn't matter that players from the Bills surrounded him. Al got up and took on Ramsey in a fist fight!"

"Al was a clever, cagey, experienced quarterback," said Titan defensive back Fred Julian in 2003. "He didn't have a cannon for an arm, but he could always get the ball to our receivers."

In 1961 Bill Mathis paced the league with 202 rushes. The former Clemson star gained 846 yards and scored four times. Mel West, acquired from Boston after four games, ranked second in rushing, gaining 322 yards in 72 attempts and scoring three times. The aggressive Dorow picked up 317 yards in 54 carries, and he scored four TDs.

Mathis commented recently, "I remember what a talented athlete and such a great guy Al Dorow was. He wanted to run the ball more than me."

"We played at the Polo Grounds," Dorow said. "The place was run down. They fixed up the locker rooms and put it a little paint in the stands, but they never did get the playing field in good shape. We drew as well as anyone in the league, but nobody was filling the stands. People didn't expect the AFL to make it."

One of Dorow's many vintage performances in 1960 came in game thirteen at Candlestick Park on December 11, when the Titans beat the Oakland Raiders, 31-28. Al threw for 375 yards and three touchdowns, and he carried for 43 yards and another TD. Responsible for 418 of New York's 471 yards on offense, he earned AFL Player of the Week honors for the third time.

On the game's second play Dorow hit Art Powell with a 73-yard bomb for a touchdown. Late in the fourth quarter, Al connected with Dewey Bohling for a 20-yard game-winning TD, wiping out a 28-24 Oakland lead. While Tom Flores kept Oakland in the game with three touchdown passes, Dorow had become one of the league's dominant players.

"My old buddy Al Dorow was a great guy," Thurlow Cooper said recently. "He was a vicious competitor, just unbelievable. I remember one game where he took a late hit from the defensive end. He went back to the huddle and said, 'Coop, let him through.' I did, on the next play, and Dorow drilled him between the eyes with the football. All he wanted to do was win!"

"Al would run all over the field looking for a receiver. I would throw two or three blocks for him, and he'd still be looking for Maynard or Powell, and sooner or later they'd be open."

Dorow, friendly and outgoing off the gridiron, had signed a year-around contract with Harry Wismer for three years. During the offseason, he would speak several times a month at banquets and civic events, promoting the Titans and the AFL. Looking back on his two years with the Titans, Al regards his offseason promotional work as his greatest contribution to the league.

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Dewey Bohling remembered, "Al just knew so many people, and he was a good mixer and mingler. He had the right personality to talk to people and get along with everyone. That's why he was Wismer's spokesman in the offseason."

Dorow explained, "Harry Wismer borrowed money to keep up with the expenses of the team. At the end of the second year, he owed me money. I didn't get paid for the last three or four games. I was bucking Wismer for my money, and we argued about it. Wismer let Sammy Baugh go, and he brought in Bulldog Turner. Bulldog was a great guy, but not a great head coach.

"In training camp in 1962 I was still owed from the previous season, and Wismer couldn't get the money. I went to the AFL commissioner, Joe Foss, and he said, 'Harry says he's going to get the money.' When Harry found out that I saw Joe, he traded me to Buffalo.

"Buffalo had a good club too, and Lou Saban was the coach. They had a good team with good receivers. But in preseason practice they had drills to throw the ball long. I was proven. I didn't need to be throwing 100 or more 70-75 yard passes in practice. I just threw my arm out."

In game four against Dallas, Dorow suffered torn ligaments in his passing arm and shoulder:

"I tried to play against the Oilers in the next game, but I couldn't do it. They gave me all kinds of shots, cortisone and everything else. But my arm never came around.

"It became a 'frozen shoulder.' The Bills' owner, Ralph Wilson, got me into Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit. They put me under, tore all the ligaments and cartilage loose, and put me on a rehab program. But it never worked. I still can't pick up a ball and throw it."

Dorow's pro football career was over. He played in Buffalo's first four games, completing 30 of 75 passes for 333 yards. His 4.4 yards per completion average fell well below his usual standard, but he did connect for two touchdowns. He picked up 57 yards on 15 rushes, but he didn't score. Instead, he spent most of the season trying to rehab his arm.

Dorow turned to coaching in 1963, serving as backfield coach for two seasons at Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, Michigan. MSU's Duffy Daugherty called Al after Hillsdale's 1964 season and invited him to serve as backfield coach. Al agreed. Working with quarterbacks Steve Juday and Jimmy Raye, Dorow helped the Spartans produce undefeated seasons and Big Ten titles in 1965 and 1966 and the national championship in 1965. He left after the 1970 season and served as head coach for two years with the CFL's Hamilton Tigercats.

Discouraged with changes in the game and in players' attitudes, Dorow left coaching and worked in sales for Champion Motor Homes out of Dryden, Michigan. He retired in 1989, after spending the last seven years as Champion's national sales manager.

Today Al is active with the NFL Alumni in Arizona, the Tucson Chapter. He golfs in charity tournaments, even though his shoulder limits his back swing. But he loves the camaraderie.

A great all-around athlete who kept overcoming adversity to become an All-American at quarterback—a new position for him, the Lmlay City native starred on every team for which he played. A highly competitive signal-caller, a fine passer, a good runner, and a solid teammate, he produced a Pro Bowl season with Washington in 1956, earned All-Star honors with the Titans in 1961, and enjoyed a successful coaching career at Michigan State.

Not only did Dorow lead the American Football League in touchdown passes in 1960 and pace the circuit with passes attempted and completed in 1961, but he also proved to be one of the AFL's best quarterbacks in the league's critical first two seasons.

Speaking of the New York Jets' victory over the Baltimore Colts in Super Bowl III in his book *Crash of the Titans* (2000), Bill Ryczek commended the pioneer Titans of the early 1960s. Ryczek also wrote, "Yet without Al Dorow, there would have been no Joe Namath of the Jets."

"I bounced around a lot, but I really enjoyed every minute of my football career," the old Michigan State hero reflected in 2003. "I regret that I couldn't play longer, but the arm injury stopped me in the height of my

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career. It was unbelievable to be able to play at that level. I think about football and those good memories all the time."

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## AL DOROW

Dorow, Albert Richard Jr.

Michigan State

B: 11 / 15 / 1929, Imlay City, MI

## QB

6-0, 193

HS: Imlay City [MI]

### PASSING

YEAR Tm	G	Att	Com	Pct	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	RATE
1954 Was	11	138	70	50.7	997	7.22	8	17	54.2
1955 Was	8	12	2	16.7	37	3.08	0	1	5.2
1956 Was	12	112	55	49.1	730	6.52	8	8	64.2
1957 Phi	6	36	17	47.2	212	5.89	1	4	35.6
1958-59									CFL
1960 NYT	14	396	201	50.8	2748	6.94	26	26	67.8
1961 NYT	14	438	197	45.0	2651	6.05	19	30	50.7
1962 Buf	4	75	30	40.0	333	4.44	2	7	23.9
7 yrs	69	1207	572	47.4	7708	6.39	64	93	53.9

### RUSHING

	Att	Yds	Avg	TD
1954 Was	34	117	3.4	3
1955 Was	8	49	6.1	0
1956 Was	30	105	3.5	0
1957 Phi	17	52	3.1	2
1958-59				CFL
1960 NYT	90	453	5.0	7
1961 NYT	54	317	5.9	4
1962 Buf	15	57	3.8	0
7 Yrs	248	1150	4.6	16