

And Yet Again

Temple's Last Year: 1901

By PFRA Research

Originally Published in *From AAA to '03* (PFRA Books)

William Temple rehired nearly every star from the year before: Poe, Pierce, Fultz, Gammons, et. al. Church went back to lose his temper at Georgetown again, but several good tackles were available. Willis Richardson, the team's quarterback, took over as coach.

Once more the team ripped through the bulk of its schedule without a serious test. Brown University, Penn State, and Lafayette were among the victims, but none had particularly strong teams in '01. The critical part of the H.L.A.C.'s schedule was its last three games: a Thanksgiving Day meeting with Washington & Jefferson, flanked by two games with the Philadelphia Stars. W. & J. had its usual two or three pros. The Stars were a full blown professional outfit. Its lineup included four former U. of Pennsylvania stars, led by burly "Blondy" Wallace, a second-team Walter Camp All-America tackle in 1898.

On the Saturday before Thanksgiving, the H.L.A.C. stopped the Stars convincingly, 18-0. Five days later, they bested W. & J. at Exposition Park, but the margin was down to 12-0.

With only one day to rest before the second meeting with the Philadelphia team, the H.L.A.C. was primed for an upset. Two important linemen were out with injuries: tackle Hawley Pierce, brother of Bemis, and P.D. Overfield, the regular center. Then they lost Dave Fultz in the first half when he was knocked unconscious. Meanwhile, the Philadelphians had added a new player in "Curly" Davidson, a big fullback who'd captained that year's U. of Pennsylvania team. Although the Pittsburgh *Press* described Davidson's line smashes as "unstoppable," the Stars scored only a single touchdown in the first half, and when Ben Roller missed the extra point, the score stood 5-0.

Playing the second half with three regulars absent, the H.L.A.C. nevertheless stopped the Philadelphians in their tracks. Then, midway through the period, the Pittsburghers started a drive of their own, with Gammons picking up key yardage on short spurts. At last

Fullback Fred Crolius drove over from the one to tie the score at 5-5. Guard Arthur Mosse, later Pitt's coach, dropped back to try the extra point from placement. His kick split the uprights; the crowd cheered -- then groaned. The point was disallowed on a penalty. After a long and loud argument, Mosse was given a second try. Again he booted the ball right through the middle. When the H.L.A.C. kept the Philadelphians bottled up until time ran out, Homestead had its second perfect season by the narrowest of margins, 6-5.

If Temple's team had been lucky to escape the year unscathed, they'd been much less fortunate in their attendance. For the second consecutive year, rain fell on nearly every weekend. The weather that had been "never before encountered" in 1900 had become a habit in 1901. The winningest team in pro football was a financial loser again, dropping \$8,000. For Temple, 1901 was his fourth consecutive year without a defeat, counting his last two as football chairman for the D.C. & A.C. He announced he'd had enough and would not back a team in 1902.

After he retired from the steel business, William Temple moved to Florida and became a heavy contributor to Rollins College. Reportedly, he paid to import a ringer for the college baseball team -- Hall of Fame pitcher "Rube" Waddell -- so that Rollins could win a big game with a traditional rival. Waddell was, to put it charitably, eccentric. Although possessed of one of the greatest left arms of any pitcher in history, he tended to drive his managers batty by not showing up for games, or showing up inebriated, or showing up sober and then choosing in the middle of the game to follow fire engines going past the ballpark. Whether his odd behavior was coupled with a low intelligence has been argued by baseball historians, but certainly he could have never passed an entrance exam at Rollins.

Temple also became interested in improving the Florida fruit business and is given credit for developing the Temple Orange.