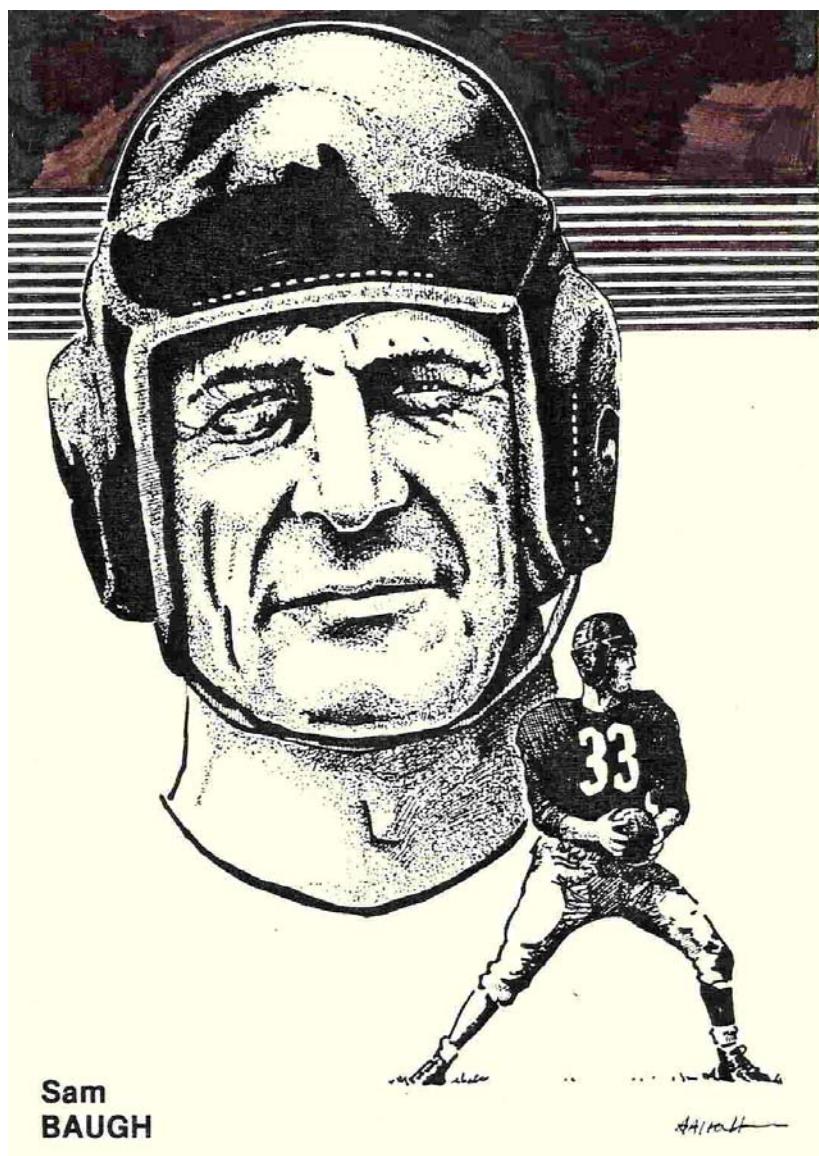


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PFRA COMMITTEES

By Ken Crippen

We are happy to report that another committee has been formed since the last update. Gretchen Atwood is heading up the Football, Culture and Social Movements Committee. A description of the committee can be found below.

The Western New York Committee is underway with their newest project, detailing the Buffalo Bisons/Buffalo Bills of the AAFC. Interviews with surviving players and family members of players are underway and will continue over the next few months.

The Hall of Very Good committee reports the following:

In 2002, Bob Carroll began the Hall of Very Good as a way for PFRA members to honor outstanding players and coaches who are not in the Pro Football Hall of Fame and who are not likely to ever make it. The first class of ten was elected in 2003 and an additional ten have been elected each year since. Along the way, three players elected to the Hall of Very Good were subsequently inducted in Canton.

A committee of PFRA members has been formed to oversee the Hall of Very Good election process. We have come up with rules and a timeline for nominations and the annual election. Members can nominate any player who is not in the Hall of Fame and has been retired for 20 or more seasons and any retired coach, up to a maximum of ten. Once nominations are closed, the HOVG Committee will vote to pare the field down to 20, and the membership will elect a group of from four to seven from that 20.

The most important thing to do right now is to **SEND IN NOMINATIONS**. You may do so by sending them to the committee contact listed below. Nominations will be accepted until December 31, 2007. The 20 finalists will be announced in the first issue of *The Coffin Corner* in 2008 and balloting will take place beginning in February.

The Hall of Very Good is a fun way for us to honor the many football players and coaches who had outstanding careers, but who are not quite among the greatest of all time. We should also take pride that three of the players we elected were later elected by the Pro Football Hall of Fame Selection Committee. So send in your nominations - any player who did not play beyond the 1987 season is eligible.

Class of 2003:

Gino Cappelletti
Carl Eller*
Pat Fischer
Benny Friedman*
Gene Hickerson*
Jerry Kramer
Johnny Robinson
Mac Speedie
Mick Tingelhoff
Al Wistert

Class of 2004:

Gene Brito
John Brodie
Jack Butler
Chris Hanburger
Bob Hayes
Billy Howton
Jim Marshall
Al Nesser
Dave Robinson
Duke Slater

Class of 2005:

Maxie Baughan
Jim Benton
Lavie Dilweg
Pat Harder
Floyd Little
Tommy Nobis
Pete Retzlaff
Tobin Rote
Lou Rymkus
Del Shofner

Class of 2006:

Charlie Conerly
John Hadl
Chuck Howley
Alex Karras
Eugene Lipscomb
Kyle Rote
Dick Stanfel
Otis Taylor
Fuzzy Thurston
Deacon Dan Towler

Class of 2007:

Frankie Albert
Roger Brown
Timmy Brown
Marshall Goldberg
Jim Lee Howell
Glenn Presnell
Dick Schafrath
Jake Scott
Ed Sprinkle
Tank Younger

*Member of the Professional Football Hall of Fame

THE COFFIN CORNER

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PFRA MEMBERSHIP \$25 per year

**Bob Carroll, Editor
Melissa Thomas, Assistant
Ken Crippen, Assistant Editor
Frank Henkel, Website Editor**

Check the label on your CC envelope for the state of your membership. Member thru 2007 (to 29-6) means you are a paid-up member for this year.

Football, Culture and Social Movements Committee:

Committee Goal: To research and publish articles and books exploring the relationship between football and broader social movements that it influences and is influenced by, such as civil rights, the labor movement, environmentalism, etc. To make the topics more manageable we are grouping them by related movement and time period.

The current focus is integration in the 1940s. Information regarding external influencers on a team's decision to integrate is especially appreciated, as is details of how that decision was made. If anyone is interested in exploring related topics please contact the committee and we can coordinate research. A committee blog is also under development.

Contact Information:

Gretchen Atwood
3057 25th St.
San Francisco, CA 94110
(415) 305-2704
gretchenatwood@yahoo.com

Hall of Very Good Committee:

Committee Goal: To solicit and sort through nominees, to prepare all HOVG-related materials for *Coffin Corner* and to prepare write-ups on the nominees.

Contact Information:

Andy Piascik
25 Cartright St.
Bridgeport, CT 06604
andy@nflhistory.net

Membership Committee:

Committee Goal: To find ways to make it easier for PFRA members to contact each other and to know who is working on what research.

Contact Information:

John Fenton
11184 Hendrix St.
Philadelphia, PA 19116
(267) 235-2164
jjfenton@comcast.net

Pre-NFL Pro Football Committee:

Committee Goal: To research all semi-professional and professional games played prior to 1920. This would include line scores, game summaries and rosters.

Contact Information:

Roy Sye
708 W. Braeside Drive
Arlington Heights, IL 60004
(847) 577-1442
syeroy@wowway.com

Team Radio and TV Commentators Committee:

Committee Goal: To document the play-by-play announcers, analysts and field reporters for every single broadcast of NFL and AFL games (regular season and post season) from 1939 to the present.

Contact Information:

Tim Brulia
14 Altoona Avenue
Enola, PA 17025
(717) 728-9739
coolbrul@yahoo.com
tbrulia@state.pa.us

Uniforms of Past Teams Committee:

Committee Goal: To document every uniform design and color (helmets, jerseys, pants and socks) for each NFL, AFL and AAFC team from 1933 to the present.

Contact Information:

Tim Brulia
14 Altoona Avenue
Enola, PA 17025
(717) 728-9739
coolbrul@yahoo.com
tbrulia@state.pa.us

All-Pros and Awards Committee:

Committee Goal: To generate a complete listing of All-Pro teams from all sources. For the Awards Committee: generate a complete list of all AP and UPI awards and the voting for each of them.

Contact Information:

John Hogrogian
580 84th Street
Apt. 3-I
Brooklyn, NY 11209
(718) 680-1710
jhogrogi@msn.com

or

John Turney
2615 18th Street
Alamogordo, NM 88310
jturney@totacc.com

Stadiums Committee:

Committee Goal: To document and publish information on all stadiums used by professional football teams. The stadium Committee has started and is concentrating on the stadiums in use since 1946. This would include all AAFC, NFL and AFL teams. For each

stadium, the committee would like to gather the following:

- A) An aerial view
- B) An exterior view (a view taken of the stadium at street level)
- C) An interior view (a view taken from the stands)
- D) An action view (a view of a game being played in the stadium, which shows both players and some portion of the stadium from the field level)

Along with this information, factual data on each stadium will be compiled. This data would include construction dates, dates of use, anecdotal history, etc. The committee would also like to work on stadiums from other eras (pre-1946), but they will start with post-1946 stadiums. The goal of the committee is to compile book to be published.

Contact Information:

Bill Pepperell
3427 Overland Drive
Holiday, FL 34691
(510) 776-5649
billpepperell1@yahoo.com

Andy Hernandez
andyhdz@gmail.com

Empire Football League Committee:

Committee Goal: To research and document the history of the semi-professional Empire Football League.

Contact Information:

Dave Burch
1016 Irving Ave.
Endicott, NY 13760
(607) 748-7140
EmpireFoot@aol.com

Western New York Committee:

Committee Goal: To research and document all amateur, semi-professional and professional teams that played in the Western New York Area. The committee would like to publish an encyclopedia when the research has been completed.

Rochester Jeffersons Subcommittee:

Subcommittee Goal: To publish a book on the complete history of the Rochester Jeffersons. This book will contain scores, rosters, game summaries and biographies of all of the players.

<http://www.RochesterJeffersons.com>

Contact Information:

Ken Crippen
740 Deerfield Road
Warminster, PA 18974
(215) 421-6994
<http://www.wnypfra.org>

Ken_Crippen@billsbackers.com

Central and Northern New York Committee:

Committee Goal: To research and document all amateur, semi-professional and professional teams that played in the Central and Northern New York Area. The committee would like to publish an encyclopedia when the research has been completed.

Contact Information:

Ken Crippen
740 Deerfield Road
Warminster, PA 18974
(215) 421-6994
<http://www.wnypfra.org/CNY/>
Ken_Crippen@billsbackers.com

Ken Crippen is responsible for oversight of the PFRA Committees. If you would like to help out with a committee or if you want to form your own committee, contact him at: Ken_Crippen@billsbackers.com.

An important message from Walter Camp::



"We Yale men never miss a Coffin Corner because we always check the label on our CC envelope to make sure our dues are paid up. I'm a member through Volume 29-No. 6 – this one."

FOOTBALL's BEST PENNANT RACES

By Andy Piascik

On November 10, 1963, the New York Giants defeated the Philadelphia Eagles 42-14 before 62,936 fans at Yankee Stadium. The result of the game was not all that surprising, as the Giants were one of the best teams in football that year and the Eagles one of the worst. What makes the day perhaps more memorable than the game itself was a side bit of drama that began unfolding over the course of the afternoon and reached its culmination after the game's completion.

Throughout the game, many in attendance followed the progress of the match between the Cleveland Browns and Pittsburgh Steelers also being played that day as best they could via the huge scoreboard beyond the right field bleachers. The second place Giants began the day a game behind the 7-1 Browns, and the game with Pittsburgh figured to be a tough one for Cleveland both because the 4-3-1 Steelers were in need of a win to keep their own title hopes alive and because it was being played at Pitt Stadium.

Once the Giants took command of their game by building a 28-7 second quarter lead, New York fans began to let their attention drift to the scoreboard with greater frequency. For much of the day, the scoreboard showed the Browns ahead by a 7-0 score - close, but not what most in attendance wanted to see. When the Steelers finally scored in the third quarter, it was not a tying touchdown but a safety, and the game went to the fourth quarter with Cleveland still ahead, 7-2.

Although the two games had begun at the same time, the game in New York was winding down not long after the fourth quarter started in Pittsburgh. Then, suddenly, a roar filled Yankee Stadium: the Steelers had taken the lead 9-7. Shortly thereafter, the Eagles-Giants game ended and the players and coaches from both teams left the field. Many in the stands, however, stayed put. They drank and talked and watched the scoreboard and did what they could to will time off the clock in a stadium 350 miles away. Some with transistor radios had tried desperately to find a station from either the Browns or Steelers network, but their efforts were in vain. The sun had not yet set and the distance was just too great to cover in daylight.

Finally, the **4** on the scoreboard next to CLE and PIT blinked off and a big **F** flashed on in its place indicating that the 9-7 score was final. Cheering erupted from the thousands of fans who remained, and only then did they head for home or to a nearby bar to celebrate. In a matter of three weeks, the Giants had made up two games in the standings and were now tied for first place.

The 1963 race in the NFL East was one of the best ever, with the Giants, Browns, Steelers, and Cardinals all involved for 13 of the season's 14 weeks. As late as Week 11, New York, Cleveland, and St. Louis were tied for first at 8-3 and Pittsburgh was within a game at 6-3-2. Even after two of the contenders were eliminated in Week 13, the two survivors were left to settle matters in a head-to-head showdown on the final day of the season.

One of the reasons I find this story so fascinating is that it has many of the elements that we normally associate with baseball pennant races, with the post-game wait and celebration at Yankee Stadium one of the most compelling. Such races have always been a part of baseball's heritage, yet scoreboard-watching and surprising victories by an inferior team over a contender are just as much a part of football lore. There are reasons pennant races are generally perceived to be primarily a baseball phenomenon; with closer examination, I don't believe that perception holds up that well.

The rhythms of the baseball and football seasons are very different. In some ways, the fact that baseball is played on an almost daily basis lends itself to the prolonged drama of a pennant race. The standings are constantly changing, and even when three or four teams are involved, they can be completely reshuffled from one day to the next. With more divisions and the addition of wildcard teams, the possible scenarios for who will be in and who will be out can be quite numerous even in the season's final week.

In some ways, though, the fact that football teams play only once a week makes a good race even more dramatic. Each game is far more valuable, and a single win or loss, especially in games with other teams in the hunt, is much more critical to the ultimate outcome. That was even more true in the period before 1970, when the creation of more

divisions and the addition of wildcards diluted things.

On the surface, one element of a pennant race that baseball has that football lacks is the big comeback. When the baseball Giants caught the Dodgers in 1951, for example, they made up 13 1/2 games in a matter of a third of a season. There is no football equivalent of the Miracle of Coogan's Bluff, or so it would seem.

But consider this: When the football Giants made up three games on the Redskins to gain a tie for first place in 1943, the deficit they made up was equal to 30% of the season, as measured in games. The baseball Giants' deficit, on the other hand, was less than 10% of their season. Not only that, the 1943 Giants made up those three games in a matter of *three weeks*, which as a percentage of the season was actually less time than it took the baseball Giants in 1951. Does that make the accomplishment of the football Giants greater? Not necessarily, but it lends credence to the idea that there have been races in football just as scintillating as the best in baseball. They just have a different dynamic. (1)

What playing only once a week also does is create a great sense of anticipation between games. If a team in a race wins a big game, fans celebrate for a few days and then begin to look to the next week's showdown. Similarly, the downer that follows a loss in a big December game begins to lift by the latter part of the week with the realization that there will be another chance at first place come Sunday.

My own preference for best races is the time period before the expansion of the playoffs in 1967 and the introduction of the wildcard in 1970. I do not mean that as an argument that football was better before 1967 or 1970 than since, although it certainly can be precisely that. There were plenty of good races from 1967 and 1970 on, but more divisions cheapened first place somewhat and the wildcard introduced an escape hatch of sorts. More divisions also meant fewer teams in each division, which decreased the likelihood of a free-for-all involving lots of teams.

More important to me with regards to pennant races is the winner-take-all ethos that existed prior to 1970. A team either came out first in the end, or it went home just as surely as if it had finished last. There isn't much solace to being one of the best second place teams ever, like the 1962 Lions or 1948 Bears, but what's so great about a system where a team with the thirteenth

best record in its conference can win the Super Bowl?

At the other end of the spectrum are the races from before the 1933 realignment, of which there were plenty. However, the fact that there were so many teams and no divisions sometimes took away from the drama, as contenders often did not play each other down the stretch or even at all during the season. This happened with the Packers and Spartans in 1931. Also, teams often played widely disparate numbers of games, plus one contender might play three games after another contender's season ended.

My other preference is for races involving at least three teams. There have been numerous races in all eras in which two teams fought tooth and nail until the very end of the season, and some of them were certainly among the best ever. But races involving three or more teams are more compelling simply because of the greater number of possible outcomes that existed. Among other things, they provide those of us looking back more opportunities to ask, What if?

Looking just at the 1933-69 era, here is a baker's dozen of the best.

1. 1951 NFL NATIONAL

The Lions, Bears, 49ers, and Rams were all in first place or a tie for first at some point during the season. At 5-1, the Bears led the way at the halfway point, but four of their final six games were against other contenders. When the Rams beat the Bears in Week 10, they took over the top spot - until they lost a week later to Detroit and the Lions moved into first place. San Francisco, meanwhile, was only 4-4 two-thirds of the way in, but fought their way into the race by going 3-0-1 the rest of the way. The one blemish in that run - a tie against the last place and winless Yanks - ended up proving fatal.

All four teams entered the final day with a chance at first place, the only time that ever happened in the 1933-69 era, and one of the possibilities was a four-way tie at 7-4-1. The Bears' hopes ended with a bad loss at home to the 2-9 Cardinals, their second loss of the season to the lowly Cardinals, and the Rams' 42-14 rout of the Packers eliminated the 49ers. With San Francisco owner Tony Morabito forbidding the posting of the Los Angeles-Green Bay score on the Kezar Stadium scoreboard, the 49ers pressed on, oblivious to the fact that they were done. The Lions, meanwhile, had first place in their grasp, but the 49ers

knocked them out with a touchdown in the final three minutes.

FINAL RECORDS: Rams 8-4, Lions 7-4-1, 49ers 7-4-1, and Bears 7-5

2. 1960 NFL WEST

The two-time defending NFL champion Colts looked to be in good shape at 6-2 with a one game lead entering the stretch run. From then on they did not win again, partly because of the loss of injured fullback Alan Ameche. Several of Baltimore's losses were brutal, with a last-second loss to the Lions on a sixty-five yard pass the most noteworthy. Still, the Colts remained alive almost to the very end. Detroit's season unfolded just the reverse of Baltimore's. After starting 0-3, the Lions won seven of their final nine, including five victories over other Western contenders. In the end, it wasn't enough.

The Packers had not been contenders for many years and to some extent, they snuck up on everybody else. Still, it did not look good for the Packers when they lost to the surging Lions on Thanksgiving Day to fall one-and-one-half games back with just three to play. They bounced back with a win over the Bears, and five teams went into the penultimate week of the season with a chance at first place: Baltimore (6-4), Green Bay (6-4), San Francisco (6-4), Chicago (5-4-1), and Detroit (5-5). Four were still alive entering the final weekend, with only the Bears having been eliminated and the Packers clinched on the final Saturday with a win over the Rams.

FINAL RECORDS: Packers 8-4, Lions 7-5, 49ers 7-5, Colts 6-6, Bears 5-6-1

3. 1957 NFL WEST

The 49ers began the season 5-1, and with a two-game lead appeared to be on their way to a first-ever first place finish. They proceeded to lose three in a row and fall a game back of the Colts, then closed with three straight wins. Still, the 7-3 Colts appeared to be in the driver's seat with a one-game lead over San Francisco and Detroit (both 6-4) and only two games remaining.

Like the 49ers, the Lions won their last three while Baltimore closed with road losses in San Francisco and Los Angeles to finish 7-5. The Lions and 49ers each trailed by ten points in the third quarter of their finales, but both rallied to win. Had both lost or had the Colts won their last game against the Rams, there would have been a three-way tie for first and two weeks worth of games to determine the conference crown. In the playoff at

Kezar Stadium, Detroit won 31-27 after trailing 27-7 in the third quarter. (2)

FINAL RECORDS: Lions 8-4, 49ers 8-4, Colts 7-5

4. 1944 NFL EAST

While winning every title in the East from 1933-46, the Giants and Redskins were rarely challenged by a third team. The Eagles had their best season to that point, however, as they began their ascent to the top of the league that would produce three conference titles and two championships by decade's end. The Eagles led with three games to go at 5-0-2, but a loss to the Bears proved fatal even though it was their only defeat of the season.

Still, Philadelphia was alive entering the last day of the season, along with New York and Washington. Entering the final week, New York was 7-1-1, Philadelphia 6-1-2, and Washington 6-2-1. The Giants duplicated their feat of the previous year by defeating the Redskins on consecutive Sundays to close the season, and this time it was enough to claim the crown.

FINAL RECORDS: Giants 8-1-1, Eagles 7-1-2, Redskins 6-3-1

5. 1965 NFL WEST

Looking to defend their conference title, the Colts were in first place at 9-1, having lost only to the 8-2 Packers. The Bears won six of seven after starting 0-3 and were hanging on at 6-4. Baltimore had to rally to tie the Lions on Thanksgiving, but they still stretched their lead to one-and-one-half by week's end when Green Bay lost to the 1-9 Rams. Disaster struck the following week, however, when Johnny Unitas (who would be named first team all-pro despite missing three-and-one-half games) was lost for the season in the second quarter against the Bears. Chicago prevailed 13-0, and the Packers rallied against the Vikings and then hung on by a 24-19 score. With two games left, the standings were Colts 9-2-1, Packers 9-3, Bears 8-4.

Then Baltimore's back-up quarterback Gary Cuozzo was also lost for the season against Green Bay in The Game in the Fog as the Packers won, 42-27, behind five Paul Hornung touchdowns. Suddenly the Packers were in first place, while the Bears remained alive as Gale Sayers scored six times to lead Chicago over the 49ers. With a week to go, the standings looked like this: Packers 10-3, Colts 9-3-1, Bears 9-4. With Tom Matte and newly-acquired Ed Brown

sharing duty at quarterback, the Colts gamely nipped the Rams in a nationally televised Saturday finale, eliminating Chicago. Green Bay's finale at San Francisco was a seesaw classic as the Packers built a 14-3 lead, fell behind early in the fourth quarter by 17-14, rallied for ten points and a 24-17 lead, and then saw the 49ers gain a tie on a touchdown with 1:07 left. The Packers beat the Colts in a playoff the following week after the most controversial call in postseason history, a tying field goal with 1:58 left in regulation by Don Chandler, sent the game into overtime.

FINAL RECORDS: Packers 10-3-1, Colts 10-3-1, Bears 9-5

6. 1959 NFL WEST

As they had a number of times in the previous 11 years, the 49ers got out of the gate quickly with a 6-1 record and a two-game lead. As on all of the other occasions, though, they could not finish the job. After starting 4-3, the defending-champion Colts did not lose again. Included in their five-game, season-closing winning streak were two decisive victories over San Francisco.

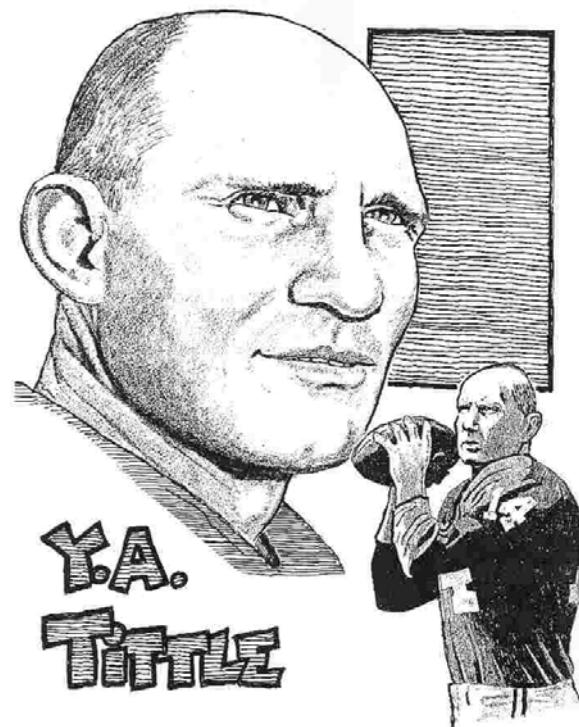
The Bears started 1-4 but fought their way into the race by winning all of their remaining games. The four losses proved one too many, as they were never able to draw even with the Colts. Still, it was close. At 7-4 and a game back, the Bears and 49ers went to the final weekend in need of help from the Rams, and they almost got it. Los Angeles led the Colts 26-24 in the fourth quarter of a nationally televised Saturday finale, but Baltimore rallied for three touchdowns to clinch. With Vince Lombardi in his first year at the helm, Green Bay was also in the race until Week 10 after a 1-10-1 season in 1958.

FINAL RECORDS: Colts 9-3, Bears 8-4, 49ers 7-5, Packers 7-5

7. 1963 NFL EAST

As mentioned, this was a four-team race for most of the year. Cleveland shot out to a two-game lead with a 6-0 start but then struggled through the middle of the season with three losses in five games. The Giants, looking for their sixth conference title in eight years, started 3-2 but lost only once in their final nine games. The Steelers, meanwhile, were in search of their first conference crown ever and the Cardinals were trying to get back on top for the first time since 1948. Here is how matters stood through twelve games: Browns 9-3, Giants 9-3, Cardinals 8-4, Steelers 6-3-3. St. Louis suffered what proved to be a fatal blow in a Week Twelve loss to

Cleveland, and the following week the Browns were knocked out by an old nemesis, the Lions.



Both Cleveland and St. Louis were eliminated despite being only one game back with one to play because New York and Pittsburgh played each other to close the season and there was no way for the Browns and Cardinals to tie or pass both. Had the 1972 rule change in which ties are counted as half a win and half a loss been in effect, however, both would have been alive and the Steelers would have been out. Through Week Thirteen, the standings were: Giants 10-3, Steelers 7-3-3, Browns 9-4, Cardinals 9-4. New York bested Pittsburgh in the finale and took the title.

FINAL RECORDS: Giants 11-3, Browns 10-4, Cardinals 9-5, Steelers 7-4-3

8. 1963 AFL EAST

The AFL never had a race in which three or more teams went to the final week with a chance at first place, which is not surprising given that its divisions consisted of four teams for most of its history and never more than five. This race came close, though, as the Patriots, Bills, Oilers and Jets (despite treading water throughout) all remained alive until their final two games. All four were in first place at some point, but no one was ever more than two games over .500. The largest lead was held by the Jets at one-and-one-half games after Week five, yet they were the team that would finish in last place. New York built that

lead on the basis of a 3-1 start but went 2-7-1 the rest of the way. The Bills took the opposite route as they started 0-3-1 but fought back to win 7 of 10 to finish tied for first with Boston.

The Oilers were in search of a fourth straight Eastern crown and seemed to be in good shape with a one game lead at 5-3. They only won once more, though, and were eliminated with a game to go, as were the Jets. After doing the win-lose, lose-win shuffle for eleven games, the Patriots seemed to take command with back-to back wins over Buffalo and Houston to go a game up at 7-5-1 with one to play. They closed the regular season by getting blown out by the 3-7-2 Chiefs, however, and that opened the door for the Bills. Buffalo trailed the Jets 10-3 in the third quarter of their finale, but rallied to gain a tie for first with a 19-10 win in the final sporting event ever held in the Polo Grounds. Boston then went into Buffalo and beat the Bills 26-8 in a playoff game.

FINAL RECORDS: Patriots 7-6-1, Bills 7-6-1, Oilers 6-8, Jets 5-8-1

9. 1968 AFL WEST

The Chargers won five of the first six AFL West titles, but were surpassed by the Chiefs and Raiders beginning in 1966. All three were strong in 1968 and one reflection of that is how thoroughly they dominated the league's lesser teams: Oakland, Kansas City and San Diego combined to go 26-0 against the Oilers, Patriots, Bills, Broncos, Dolphins and Bengals. The only games any of them lost were to each other and to the eventual world champion Jets. The Chargers were hurt by the fact that they were the only one of the three that had to play the Jets twice, losing both times. Not only that, but both the Raiders and Chiefs got to play their sole game against New York at home.

The Heidi Game is one of the most famous in football history, but what is often overlooked is the fact that the Raiders come-from-behind victory against the Jets proved to be absolutely essential to their ultimately claiming first place. The Raiders went into the game 7-2. Had they lost, they would have dropped a game-and-a-half behind the 9-2 Chiefs, who did not lose again the rest of the regular season. With two weeks to play, the 9-3 Chargers controlled their own fate despite trailing both Oakland and Kansas City because their final two games were at home against those very teams. They were eliminated in a blowout loss to the Chiefs, but almost knocked the Raiders out on

the final day before succumbing, 34-27. Oakland then destroyed Kansas City in a playoff.



Daryle Lamonica

FINAL RECORDS: Raiders 12-2, Chiefs 12-2, Chargers 9-5

10. 1952 NFL AMERICAN

At the three-quarter pole, the Giants, Eagles, and Browns were tied for first at 6-3. The schedule seemed to favor Philadelphia, as their remaining games were with the Cardinals, Texans and Redskins; three teams with a combined record of 5-22. New York and Cleveland also had two weak teams left on their schedules, but also had a game against each other in the Polo Grounds to close the season.

The Giants were knocked off by both the Steelers and Redskins, however, and were eliminated before they even got to the Browns. By virtue of a loss to the Cardinals, Philadelphia went to the final week in need of help from New York, as the Browns won two in a row to take a one game lead. They got it when the Giants won a thriller over Cleveland, but the Eagles were upended at home by Washington and the Browns prevailed.

FINAL RECORDS: Browns 8-4, Eagles 7-5, Giants 7-5

11. 1966 NFL EAST

The Cowboys were a contending team for the first time in their history, the Cardinals were looking for

their first title since moving to St. Louis and first overall in eighteen years, and the Browns were seeking a third consecutive trip to the NFL Championship Game. Through eleven weeks, the three teams were separated by just a half game. The Cowboys took control of the race by defeating both of the other contenders in successive games, including a win over the Browns in the first ever Thanksgiving Day game in Dallas, to move to 9-2-1, with the Cards 8-3-1 and Cleveland 7-4.

The Eagles won 7 of their last 9 games, but the 2-3 hole they had fallen in was too deep to make the race a four-way affair. Philadelphia did eliminate the Browns in the second-to-last week, and Dallas clinched when Cleveland knocked off St. Louis in a Saturday game on the last weekend. The Cardinals season turned dramatically after quarterback Charley Johnson was injured and lost for the season; St. Louis was 7-1-1 with Johnson and 1-4 without him.

FINAL RECORDS: Cowboys 10-3-1, Browns 9-5, Eagles 9-5, Cardinals 8-5-1

12. 1935 NFL WEST

All four teams were in contention for most of the season and each took a turn atop the standings. In search of a third straight trip to the NFL Championship Game, the Bears started 3-1 but could do no better than 3-3-2 the rest of the way. The Cardinals took over on the basis of a 14-13 Week 7 win over the Giants, but slipped out of first the very next week by losing 7-6 at home to the Lions. That put the Packers in the driver's seat, and Green Bay held the top spot for four weeks until losing to the Lions, 20-10 on Thanksgiving as all four contenders were in action on the holiday.

When the dust settled at the end of the afternoon, the standings looked like this: Lions 6-3-2, Cardinals 5-3-2, Packers 7-4, Bears 5-4. All were still alive and all but Green Bay played again three days later. The Lions finished their season with a win over the Dodgers, eliminating both the Packers and Bears and then waited a week to see what the Cardinals would do in their finale. Closing the season with a second consecutive game against the Bears, the Cardinals lost to their rivals from the North Side and the Lions finished first. Under current rules the Lions and Packers would have tied for first, but under the rules at the time, Detroit's winning percentage was .700 and Green Bay's .667.

FINAL RECORDS: Lions 7-3-2, Packers 8-4, Cardinals 6-4-2, Bears 6-4-2

13. 1948 AAFC EAST

This race was a lot like the 1963 AFL East in that the Bills, Colts and Yankees contended even though none of them got much above .500 the entire season. The Yankees began as the favorites on the basis of having won the East the two previous years, but they were never over .500 after a 1-0 start and fell all the way to 2-6 before closing with four wins in their last six. Invigorated by newcomers Y.A. Tittle and Dick Barwegan, Baltimore built a two-game lead at the halfway mark after going 2-11-1 the year before. The Colts then lost three in a row including a 35-17 loss to surging Buffalo.

That win put the Bills in first place, but a home loss on a late touchdown to the Dons a week later created a logjam, with the three contenders tied at 5-6. The Bills then won two games over Thanksgiving weekend, the second a showdown at Yankee Stadium that eliminated the Yankees. The Dons continued their role as spoilers as they won another game late, this time against Baltimore by 17-14 to set up a grand finale between the 7-6 Bills and 6-7 Colts. Baltimore won 28-17 at home, but lost in a playoff the following week (also at home) after leading 17-7 in the fourth quarter. The game was marred by a near-riot by Baltimore fans over what they considered a missed call by an official late in the game.

FINAL RECORDS: Bills 7-7, Colts 7-7, Yankees 6-8

NOTES

1. The three-game deficit the 1943 Giants made up is the largest any team has overcome to finish first or tied for first. The largest deficit ever made up by a team that actually won the conference is the 2 1/2 games the Browns made up in 1954 on the Eagles.

2. On the same day the Lions played the 49ers in their playoff, the Steelers and Cardinals played their scheduled finale. It was the only time in pro football history that a postseason game and a regular season game involving teams from the same league were played on the same day.

Andy Piascik is the author of
THE BEST SHOW IN FOOTBALL:
The 1946-1955 Cleveland Browns, Pro Football's Greatest Dynasty

Bob Gain

By Roger Gordon



Yards gained was one thing of which Bob Gain allowed few.

A defensive lineman for the Cleveland Browns in 1952 and from 1954-64, Gain was part of a defensive line that included the likes of Hall of Famers Bill Willis and Len Ford. The Browns ranked at or near the top of the NFL in rushing yards allowed for most of Gain's career. The defensive line's prowess at the time helped the Browns to NFL Championship Games five times, including victories in 1954, '55 and '64.

"We had a great group of guys," says Gain, who played mostly at left tackle. "They knew how to win, and they knew how to go after people. You know, everybody thought we were a finesse team. That was a lot of baloney. We could play with any of 'em. We were as tough as they were."

A product of the University of Kentucky where he played under tough-nosed Bear Bryant, Gain was a first-round draft pick of the Green Bay Packers in 1951. He opted for the "greener" pastures of the Canadian Football League, signing with the Ottawa Rough Riders and helping them to their first Grey Cup title in a quarter of a century. The Browns acquired Gain's NFL rights in a trade with the Packers. With Gain in the fold, the Browns won the American Conference for the third straight year but lost to the Detroit Lions in the NFL title game.

After spending 1953 and most of 1954 on active duty in the Air Force, Gain re-joined the Browns in time for the final two games of the '54 regular season and a title-game rematch with the Lions. Not only did the Browns exact revenge on Detroit in the form of a 56-10 rout, they repeated the next year by hammering the Los Angeles Rams in the title game – Otto Graham's final contest – on the West Coast. Gain will never forget the Rams' cockiness heading into the game.

"They were bragging, saying we were all fat cats, that we'd won it the year before," he recalls. "They were poppin' off about it, saying,

'We'll take Cleveland without any trouble.' Well, we went out there and went into a double wing and we just ruined 'em."

Gain attributes the team's first-ever losing season in 1956 to Graham's retirement, pure and simple.

(George) Ratterman was a backup quarterback," he says. "(Babe) Parilli, he got hurt, then there was (Tommy) O'Connell. We basically didn't have a real quarterback that could throw the football like Graham did."

The loss of Graham, according to Gain, was something from which the Browns simply could not recover for years, and caused some fine teams to fall short of the Promised Land. Even the presence of the great Jim Brown, he feels, failed to make a difference.

"We didn't have a quarterback," he says. "We had no offense. I mean, Milt Plum was a decent quarterback, but he wasn't Otto Graham. I mean, when we lost Otto, we lost a pretty big asset to the team."

The arrival of Frank Ryan in 1962, according to Gain, got the offense back on track and was the key to the team's fourth NFL title, a 27-0 upset of the Baltimore Colts two years later. Unfortunately, Gain's career came to a crashing halt early in the '64 campaign when he broke his right leg.

"It was heartbreaking having to sit out most of that championship year," he says. "But things happen."

Even so, Gain enjoyed a fine career. He was a Pro Bowler five times, from 1957-59 and in 1961-62. Furthermore, it likely was no accident that the Browns (minus Gain for most of the year) ranked dead last in the league in rushing yards allowed in their championship season of 1964. Gain has nothing but fond memories of his days with the Browns, especially the fans.

"I remember when they honored me down there in 1964, it was a really warm affair. Every section we went by in a golf cart – I had my leg in a cast – everybody stood up and applauded. It was very emotional ... very, very emotional."

After his playing days, Gain took to the banquet circuit for awhile, giving speeches and signing autographs before taking some time off. He then went to work as a railroad and steel mill equipment salesman until his retirement in 1990.

Gain, 78, resides in Timberlake Village, outside of Cleveland, with his wife Kitty. The couple celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary on June 16 smack on the 50-yard line of Cleveland Browns Stadium.

"We would have had it on the 55-yard line, but there isn't one in the NFL," he laughs. "And Ottawa doesn't have a team anymore." Gain stays busy these days by spending time with his three daughters, seven grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren. He is also back on the banquet circuit.

"If I'd have known I was going to live this long, I'd have been a lot nicer to my body," he says. "I wouldn't have been at the bottom of all of those damn pileups I'd have been on top ... or at least standing and looking."

PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL AND FOOTBALL: A Close Relationship

By Brian McKenna, with assistance of Mark L. Ford

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The National Football League and baseball have enjoyed a close relationship from the beginning. To capitalize on the popularity of baseball, pro football teams have, at times, adopted major league names: Boston Braves, Brooklyn Dodgers, Cincinnati Reds, New York Giants, New York Yankees and Pittsburgh Pirates. The Jets picked their name to rhyme with the Mets when they moved into Shea Stadium. Similarly, the Chicago Bears chose their moniker to draw a link with the local Cubs. Boston owner George Preston Marshall rented Braves Field so he took on their name. It wasn't until he moved the club to Fenway Park that he changed the nickname to Redskins. A closer relationship unfolds with a study of the men who played both games.

The Hall of Famers

In 1919 George Halas, a former football star at the University of Illinois, played five games in right field for the New York Yankees. The following year Babe Ruth would occupy that slot and Halas would be among the original contingent to form the American Professional Football Association, which in 1922 would be re-named the National Football League. By '22, Halas had assumed ownership of the Decatur Staleys, moved them to Chicago and changed their moniker to the Bears. He would play, manage and administer for the team until his death in 1983, the only man associated with the NFL throughout its first fifty years.

Halas is one of eight football Hall of Famers with close ties to Major League Baseball. The others include Red Badgro, Paddy Driscoll, Cal Hubbard, Greasy Neale, Ernie Nevers, Ace Parker and Jim Thorpe. Badgro sandwiched a NFL career around two seasons as a part-time outfielder for the St. Louis Browns from 1929-30. Driscoll's thirteen games with the Chicago Cubs in 1917 ended his amateur career as a star halfback and kicker at Northwestern University. Three years later, Driscoll became a charter member of the NFL as quarterback and halfback for the Staleys and Chicago Cardinals.

Cal Hubbard was a star end, tackle and linebacker for Centenary College in Louisiana and Geneva College in Pennsylvania, earning All-American recognition in 1926. The following year he turned pro, signed with the New York Giants and helped them win the NFL Championship. Halas, for one, claimed that Hubbard was the best lineman he ever saw, certainly

the most feared of his era.

During the off-season, Hubbard began umpiring in the minors and was promoted to the American League in 1936. While hunting birds after the 1951 baseball season, Hubbard was struck in the eye with a shotgun pellet. The injury forced his retirement; though, he stayed as a supervisor until 1970. Hubbard is the only man concurrently enshrined in the Baseball, College Football and Pro Football Halls of Fame.

Greasy Neale starred in baseball, football and basketball at West Virginia's Wesleyan College. He joined the Cincinnati Reds in 1916 and later starred in the infamous 1919 World Series, hitting .357. Football was his calling, though. While still playing baseball, Neale played football professionally and coached at Washington and Jefferson, a small Pennsylvania college that attained substantial national recognition and a Rose Bowl berth under Neale's guidance. The long-time college coach joined the NFL with the Eagles in 1941 and won the NFL Championship in 1948 and '49.

Ernie Nevers is best known in baseball for giving up two home runs to Babe Ruth during the famed 1927 season. A 6-12 record and 4.64 ERA did not distinguish Nevers on the ball field. The gridiron was another matter. He was recognized by Pop Warner as the finest football player he ever coached, much to the dismay of Jim Thorpe fans.

Nevers' reputation was made in a hard-fought contest against Knute Rockne's Four Horseman of Notre Dame in the 1925 Rose Bowl, though his Stanford team lost 27-10. Missing most of the season with two broken ankles, Nevers taped up to compete in all sixty minutes of the game.

After turning pro, Nevers became a storied fullback with the Duluth Eskimos and Chicago Cardinals in the NFL from 1926-31. On Thanksgiving Day 1929 Nevers executed perhaps the finest individual performance in NFL history. He scored all the points for the Cardinals in a 40-6 rout over the Chicago Bears. Nevers rushed for six touchdowns and kicked four extra points. To date, no one has surpassed his point total; it is the NFL's oldest surviving significant record.

Ace Parker hit a home run in his first at bat in the bigs for the Philadelphia Athletics in 1937. Playing baseball and football full-time, the infielder decided to concentrate on football in '39; though, he did sneak away during the spring and summer to swing a bat in

the minors through 1952.

Jim Thorpe is generally regarded as the finest male athlete of the 20th century. He initially gained fame as a two-time All-American halfback at the Carlisle Indian School. At the 1912 Summer Olympics in Stockholm, he won the pentathlon and decathlon, a feat no other iron man has duplicated. Unfortunately, the Amateur Athletic Union stripped his medals and amateur status in early 1913 after it was discovered that Thorpe had played Class-D baseball from 1909-10.

John McGraw stepped in and signed the Olympian to a three-year contract with the New York Giants in February 1913. Retiring with a .252 batting average over six seasons, Thorpe's baseball highlight may have come with the winning hit against Hippo Vaughn in the tenth inning of the famous double no-hit game on May 2, 1917.

Thorpe helped re-organize the Canton Bulldogs in 1915, beginning his professional football career. In the years prior to the development of the NFL, Thorpe enjoyed his most productive seasons on the gridiron. He could do everything well: run, pass, kick, catch and tackle. Thorpe is credited by many with reviving the pro game and almost single-handedly improving its financial future.

Thorpe later served as figurehead president of the American Professional Football Association. The fledgling league used his popularity to gain credibility. During the 1920s, Thorpe donned the uniform of eight different teams.

NFL Players and Officials

In all 67 men have donned the uniform of both MLB and the NFL, plus another that played strictly in the AFL. Of those, Brian Jordan has played significantly more baseball games than the rest and, conversely, Deion Sanders has done the same between the goal posts. Vic Janowicz became the first Heisman Trophy winner to play in the majors in 1953, after signing a bonus contract with the Pittsburgh. After 83 games and a .214 batting average, Janowicz left the Pirates in '54 to join the Washington Redskins. His football career was over two years later after a near-fatal auto accident during training camp.

Hugo Bezdek is the only man to manage in MLB and coach in the NFL. Bezdek, who never played baseball but did work as a scout on the West Coast and as Pittsburgh's business manager, was hired by Barney Dreyfuss to manage the Pirates from 1917-19.

Tom Brown, who appeared with the 1963 Senators, was the first major leaguer to play in the Super Bowl. The defensive back helped the Packers take the first two. Across the line that first championship game was running back Mike Garrett with Kansas City. Garrett, the 1965 Heisman Trophy winner, became a huge feather in the American Football League's cap when he signed with the Chiefs for five years and \$450,000. When his contract expired, Garrett left football to join the Pittsburgh

Pirates organization but quit after being traded to the Padres, never reaching the bigs.

Charlie Dressen, Bo Jackson and Deion Sanders are among the bigger names to play in both pro leagues. Manager Dressen won 1,008 games in sixteen seasons with five different major league clubs, including two pennants with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1952-53. He also played quarterback for two NFL teams from 1920-23.

Bo Jackson was one of the premier athletes of the 20th century. In 1985 he won the Heisman Trophy as a running back for Auburn University, rushing for 1,786 yards and 17 touchdowns. He was named MVP in both the 1983 Sugar Bowl and 1984 Liberty Bowl. The Tampa Bay Buccaneers made him the #1 pick in the NFL draft in 1986 but Jackson opted to sign a \$7 million deal with the Kansas City Royals instead. Then, Bo announced his intention to play football as well and signed with the Los Angeles Raiders.

As a testament to his skills, Jackson was the first man to play in both the All-Star and Pro Bowl Games. On a routine tackle during a 1991 playoff game, Jackson suffered a career-ending injury that required hip replacement surgery. He was able to return to baseball in 1993, becoming the first professional athlete to compete with an artificial hip.

Sanders was drafted by the Kansas City Royals out of high school. He chose Florida State University instead. There, he starred in baseball, football and track and field, qualifying for the 1988 Olympic trials as a sprinter. As one of the top defensive backs in the country, Sanders was named All-American twice.

In 1988 Sanders was selected by the Yankees in the amateur draft. The Atlanta Falcons drafted him the following year. He played both sports for eight years then retired from baseball. In September 1989 Sanders became the first athlete to hit a home run and score a touchdown for major league teams in the same week. Sanders earned two Super Bowl rings in the 1990s, becoming the first man to play in both the Super Bowl and the World Series. Sanders is recognized as one of the all-time great cornerbacks.

Others of note include Carroll Hardy, the only man to pinch hit for Ted Williams. It happened in 1960 after Williams fouled a ball off his foot. Hinkey Haines played 28 games in the outfield for the Yankees' first world championship team in 1923 and two games in the World Series. A running back out of Penn State, Haines led the league in touchdowns for the champion New York Giants in 1927.

Minor league legend Ox Eckhardt played fullback for the Giants during the 1928 season. He left the gridiron for the promise of a baseball career. Though he only had two brief stays in the majors, Eckhardt batted .367 in fourteen seasons in the minors. From 1925-40, he collected nearly 2,800 hits and five batting titles.

Reserve catcher Charlie Berry played eleven seasons in the American League from 1925-38. He also played in the NFL for two seasons with the

Pottsville Maroons from 1925-26. Berry later umpired in the American League for 21 years and refereed in the NFL for 24 seasons. He was the head linesman during the famous 1958 championship game. Syracuse University fullback Ron Luciano made the Detroit Lions roster from 1959-60, but never made it off the injured reserve list.

Dusty Boggess umpired in the National League from 1944-62. He also refereed over 500 games in the NFL and scouted for the Steelers. Fellow umpire Frank Umont was a tackle for the New York Giants from 1943-45. Longtime umpire, farm director and general manager Billy Evans joined the Cleveland Rams as general manager in 1941. Umpire Jim McKean played at quarterback and kicker in the Canadian Football League.

Catcher Mike Wilson appeared in five games for the Pittsburgh Pirates in 1921. He also donned football gear professionally prior to the existence of the NFL. Later, Wilson became an assistant to NFL Commissioner Bert Bell and supervisor of officials. Red Kellett played nine games in the infield for the Red Sox in 1934. In 1953 he was hired as general manager by the Baltimore Colts. From there until his retirement in late 1966, Kellett build one of the powerhouses of the NFL.

Negro Leagues

Jackie Robinson's UCLA teammate Kenny Washington and Woody Strode beat Robinson to the bigs when they joined the Los Angeles Rams in 1946. The NFL had not fielded an African-American player since 1933. Three Negro leaguers, Bobby Marshall, Sol Butler and Joe Lillard, played during the early years of the NFL.

Bobby Marshall played first base and managed in the Negro leagues from 1909-11. At forty years old in 1920 the former University of Minnesota star joined Rhode Island in the NFL. The end reappeared in the league for three games with Duluth in 1925.

Pitcher Sol Butler appeared in a few games for the Kansas City Monarchs in 1925, posting a 1-0 record. The back out of Dubuque played twenty-three games in the NFL from 1923-26, rushing for a pair of touchdowns.

Pitcher-outfielder Joe Lillard toiled on the diamond from 1932-37 with the Chicago American Giants, among others. During the off-season in 1932 and '33, Lillard donned the uniform of the Chicago Cardinals as a halfback, punt returner and kicker. As roster sizes shrunk during the Great Depression, Lillard and Pittsburgh Pirates tackle Ray Kemp would be the last African-Americans in the NFL until after World War II.

Jackie Robinson played professional football in the Pacific Coast Football League in 1941 and '44 with the Los Angeles Bulldogs. The PCFL was a place African-Americans found work waiting for the NFL to integrate. Robinson's teammate with the Bulldogs, Ziggy Marcell, also played in the Negro leagues.

Early Professional Football

Professional football initially developed from a rivalry among Pittsburgh area clubs in the 1890s. However, the first major hotbed was in Ohio at the end of the decade. The four-way antagonism between Latrobe, Canton, Massillon and Greensburg later spurred the development of the modern game.

Ed Abbaticchio played fullback for Latrobe from 1895-1900. He is reputed to be the first to boot a spiral punt. Since baseball bred a much more hospitable lifestyle, Abby played 28 games at third base for the Phillies from 1897-98 and was later picked up by the Boston Braves in 1903. Ballplayer and future president of the Players' Fraternity, Dave Fultz, also played professional football in Pittsburgh at the turn of the century.

Dave Berry, one of football's foremost coaches and promoters, formed the Latrobe, Pennsylvania team in 1895. Suffering financial hardship, Berry encouraged Phillies owner John Rogers to form a football team in 1902 to create a rivalry. This was during the NL's war against the upstart AL, a battle which was especially acrimonious in Philadelphia due to the loss of Napoleon Lajoie, Bill Bernard, Chick Fraser and Elmer Flick to the cross-town Athletics.

A's owner Ben Shibe wouldn't be outdone. He recruited his manager, Connie Mack, and famed University of Pennsylvania tackle Blondy Wallace to build a better team. A couple more clubs signed up and the first professional football league was established, called the National Football League. The league folded after only one season when the Athletics pulled out after losing \$4,000. However, it did make an impact. During the season, the aptly named Philadelphia Athletics won the first professional football night game, under a crude lighting system aligned along the sidelines. Christy Mathewson, a former halfback at Bucknell, played punter for the Pittsburgh All-Stars and it is unclear whether guard Rube Waddell saw action; though, he did suit up for the A's. Fred Crolius, on loan from the Pirates, was a teammate of Mathewson.

Pennsylvania clubs may have established the first professional football league in 1902 but the true development of the pro game grew out of an Ohio rivalry between Massillon and Canton which began in earnest the following year. Charlie Moran, formally a college standout, took over the reigns of the Massillon Tigers as player-coach in 1905. In 1927 he also led the Frankford Yellow Jackets in the NFL. Moran umpired in the National League for 23 years between 1917-39 after brief stints as both ends of the battery for the St. Louis Cardinals in 1903 and '08. Fellow umpire Cy Riger lined up at right tackle for the pioneering Tigers in 1903.

Charlie Follis, a catcher for three seasons with the Cuban Giants, joined the Shelby football club of the Ohio League where he played beside and later against Branch Rickey. On September 15, 1904 with Shelby the halfback became the first African-American to officially sign a professional football contract.

Here, an interesting chain developed which linked integration in both professional football and baseball. Follis, the first African-American professional football player, was a teammate of Rickey who hired the first acknowledged African-American professional baseball player in organized baseball in the 20th century, Jackie Robinson. Robinson, in turn, was an UCLA teammate of Kenny Washington who, along with Woody Strode, re-integrated the NFL in 1946.

American Football League, 1926

In 1925 George Halas signed running back Red Grange to a Bears' contract and began barnstorming. Their trip throughout the country helped popularize the sport. Grange's agent, C.C. Pyle, saw an opportunity to showcase his star and formed the short-lived American Football League. Major leaguers Garland Buckeye, Johnny Mohardt and Al Pierotti played in the AFL.

All-American Football Conference, 1946-49

The administration of the Brooklyn Dodgers of the AAFC was run, at various times, by baseball men William Cox, former Phillies owner, Branch Rickey and Freddie Fitzsimmons. Rickey added Pepper Martin to the roster after seeing him fooling around kicking a football. The 44-year-old Martin was successful during the preseason but developed an injury and never played during the season despite the team's hopes.

Hall of Famer Ace Parker played in the AAFC, as did Pete Layden and fullback Jim Castiglia. From 1948-49, tailback Herman Wademeyer played for the Los Angeles Dons and Baltimore Colts. He then played baseball for the PCL San Francisco Seals' farm club in Salt Lake City in 1950. Wademeyer went on the serve in the Hawaiian state congress and found a recurring role on the television show *Hawaii Five-O*.

American Football League, 1960-69

Tom Yewcic played quarterback, halfback and punter for the Boston Patriots from 1961-66. Prior to that, he played a game at catcher for the Detroit Tigers in June 1957. AFL founder Lamar Hunt was a backer of Bill Shea's aborted Continental League.

The Minor Leagues

Yankees power-hitting prospect Ken Strong suffered a career-ending wrist injury in 1931. He originally broke the bone against the center field fence making a catch, but it was misdiagnosed as a sprain. After the season, a doctor performed surgery on his right wrist but removed the wrong bone. Strong had lost the flexibility needed to play baseball. In 1930 he went deep four times on June 8th in an Eastern League game and set the season mark with forty-one round trips while also batting .373 and knocking in 130 runners.

The 200-pounder had starred at New York University during their successful 1926-28 campaigns. Strong returned to football and became a Hall of Fame halfback and kicker for the Staten Island Stapletons

and New York Giants.

A list of other NFL Hall of Famers to play in the minor leagues includes Sammy Baugh, John Elway, Joe Guyon, Don Hutson, Bobby Layne, Art Rooney and Charlie Trippi. Canadian Football League Hall of Famer Lionel Conacher also played in the minors.

Among the recent NFL men to have played in the minors you'll recognize Cedric Benson, Bubby Brister, Isaac Byrd, Quincy Carter, Elway, Kay-Jay Harris, Doug Johnson, John Lynch, Mewelde Moore, Vernand Morency, Jay Schroeder, Akili Smith, Chris Weinke and Ricky Williams.

Baseball and football share a common link at the executive level, as well. Joe Carr, Bob Howsam and Edward Bennett Williams are among the many that have helped shape both industries. Future professional athletes tend to excel at many sports before they focus on their career path. Many baseball men shined on the gridiron in college and found a spot in the College Football Hall of Fame or local galleries, such as, Charlie Caldwell, Chuck Essegian, Bob Harvey, Jackie Jensen, Dutch Meyer, Homer Norton and Jack Thornton, to name a few. For these reasons the two sports will always share a bond. There are sure to be many more in the future.

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profootballreference.com
thebaseballcube.com

Special thanks to Mark Ford, a member of the Professional Football Researchers Association, for finding many of my errors and sparking the thought process.

BB Major Leaguers Who Played Major League Football

	<u>MLB (# Games)</u>	<u>MLF (#Games)</u>	
Cliff Aberson	1947-49	63	1946 10
Red Badgro	1929-30	143	1927-36 94
Norm Bass	1961-63	66	1964 1
Gene Bedford	1925	2	1925-26 3
Charlie Berry	1925-35	709	1925-26 20
Howard Berry	1921-22	15	1921 4
Larry Bettencourt	1928-32	168	1933 2
Lyle Bigbee	1920-21	43	1922 3
Josh Booty	1996-98	13	2002 1
Tom Brown	1963	61	1964-69 71
Garland Buckeye	1918-28	108	1920-26 50
Bruce Caldwell	1928-32	25	1928 10
Ralph Capron	1912-13	3	1920 1
Jim Castiglia	1942	16	1941-48 42
Chuck Corgan	1925-27	33	1924-27 30
Shorty DesJardien	1916	1	1920-22 9
D.J. Dozier	1992	25	1987-91 43
Chuck Dressen	1925-33	646	1920-23 12
Paddy Driscoll	1917	13	1920-29 118
Ox Eckhardt	1932-36	24	1928 11
Steve Filipowicz	1944-48	57	1945-46 21
Paul Florence	1926	76	1920 9
Walter French	1923-29	398	1922-25 10
Wally Gilbert	1928-32	591	1923-26 17
Norm Glockson	1914	7	1922 1
Frank Grube	1931-41	394	1928 11
Bruno Haas	1915	12	1921-22 11
Hinky Haines	1923	28	1925-31 53
George Halas	1919	12	1920-28 105
Carroll Hardy	1958-67	433	1955 10
Drew Henson	2002-03	8	2004- 7
Chad Hutchinson	2001	3	2002- 15
Bo Jackson	1986-94	694	1987-90 38

Vic Janowicz	1953-54	83	1954-55	22
Rex Johnston	1964	14	1960	12
Brian Jordan	1992-	1408+	1989-91	36
Matt Kinzer	1989-90	9	1987	1
Bert Kuczynski	1943	6	1943-46	5
Pete Layden	1948	41	1948-50	31
Jim Levey	1930-33	440	1934-36	13
Dean Look	1961	3	1962	1
Waddy MacPhee	1922	2	1926	10
Howie Maple	1932	44	1930	8
Walt Masters	1931-39	8	1936-44	12
Bill McWilliams	1931	2	1934	5
Johnny Mohardt	1922	5	1922-26	56
Ernie Nevers	1926-28	44	1926-31	54
Ossie Orwoll	1928-29	94	1926	3
Ace Parker	1937-38	94	1937-46	68
Jack Perrin	1921	4	1926	6
Al Pierotti	1920-21	8	1920-29	52
Pid Purdy	1926-29	181	1926-27	17
Dick Reichle	1922-23	128	1923	6
Deion Sanders	1989-97	609	1989-	188
John Scalzi	1931	2	1931	7
John Singleton	1922	22	1929	5
Red Smith	1927	1	1927-31	37
Evar Swanson	1929-34	518	1924-27	27
Jim Thorpe	1913-19	289	1920-28	52
Andy Tomasic	1949	2	1942-46	15
Luke Urban	1927-28	50	1921-23	32
Joe Vance	1935-38	15	1931	11
Ernie Vick	1922-26	57	1925-28	27
Tom Whelan	1920	1	1920-21	20
Hoge Workman	1924	11	1924-32	19
Ab Wright	1935-44	138	1930	4
Tom Yewcic	1957	1	1961-66	77
Russ Young	1931	16	1925	4

Drafted Players, by MLB

Bill Bradley	Detroit Tigers	1965
Mike Garrett	Pittsburgh Pirates	1965
Mike Garrett	Los Angeles Dodgers	1966
Ken Stabler	New York Yankees	1966
Ken Stabler	New York Mets	1967
Archie Manning	Atlanta Braves	1967
Dan Pastorini	New York Mets	1967
Ken Stabler	Houston Astros	1968
Noel Jenke	Boston Red Sox	1969
Johnny Rogers	Los Angeles Dodgers	1969
Ray Guy	Cincinnati Reds	1969
Archie Manning	Chicago White Sox	1970
Anthony Davis	Baltimore Orioles	1971
Steve Bartkowski	Kansas City Royals	1971
C. Holloway (CFL)	Montreal Expos	1971
Archie Manning	Kansas City Royals	1971
Archie Manning	Chicago White Sox	1971
Ray Guy	Houston Astros	1971
Joe Theismann	Minnesota Twins	1971
Ray Guy	Atlanta Braves	1972
Dave Logan	Cincinnati Reds	1972
Danny White	Cleveland Indians	1973

Ray Guy	Cincinnati Reds	1973	Ace Parker	Brooklyn Dodgers	1937	b
Danny White	Cleveland Indians	1974	Babe Barna	Philadelphia Eagles	1937	e
Danny White	Houston Astros	1974	Sam Chapman	Washington Redskins	1938	b
Anthony Davis	Baltimore Orioles	1974	Allie Reynolds	New York Giants	1939	rb
Steve Bartkowski	Baltimore Orioles	1974	Eric Tipton	Washington Redskins	1939	b
Danny White	Cleveland Indians	1975	Ferrell Anderson	Brooklyn Dodgers	1939	g
Anthony Davis	Minnesota Twins	1975	Snuffy Stirnweiss	Chicago Cardinals	1940	b
C. Holloway (CFL)	Atlanta Braves	1975	Jim Castiglia	Pittsburgh Steelers	1941	b
C. Holloway (CFL)	Atlanta Braves	1976	Andy Tomasic	Pittsburgh Steelers	1942	b
Jay Schroeder	Toronto Blue Jays	1979	Steve Filipowicz	New York Giants	1943	b
Dan Marino	Kansas City Royals	1979	Bert Kuczynski	Detroit Lions	1943	e
John Elway	Kansas City Royals	1979	Don Lund	Chicago Bears	1945	b
Turner Gill	Chicago White Sox	1980	Alvin Dark	Philadelphia Eagles	1945	b
Bubby Brister	Detroit Tigers	1981	Walt Dropo	Chicago Bears	1946	e
John Elway	New York Yankees	1981	Joe Tepsic	Pittsburgh Steelers	1946	b
Jack Del Rio	Toronto Blue Jays	1981	Walt Dropo	NY Yankees (AAFC)	1947	e
Turner Gill	New York Yankees	1983	Lloyd Merriman	Chicago Bears	1947	b
Rodney Peete	Toronto Blue Jays	1984	Lloyd Merriman	LA Dons (AAFC)	1947	b
Deion Sanders	Kansas City Royals	1985	Jerry McCarthy	Chicago Bears	1947	e
Brian Jordan	Cleveland Indians	1985	Jerry McCarthy	CHI Rockets (AAFC)	1948	e
Greg McMurtry	Boston Red Sox	1986	Bill Renna	Los Angeles Rams	1949	c
Brian Jordan	St. Louis Cardinals	1988	Red Wilson	Cleveland Browns	1950	c
Rodney Peete	Oakland A's	1988	Jay Van Noy	Los Angeles Rams	1950	b
Deion Sanders	New York Yankees	1988	Ed White	Washington Redskins	1950	e
Rodney Peete	Oakland A's	1989	Al Lary	New York Yankees	1951	e
Greg McMurtry	Detroit Tigers	1990	Vic Janowicz	Washington Redskins	1952	b
Rodney Peete	Detroit Tigers	1990	Harry Agganis	Cleveland Browns	1952	qb
Chris Weinke	Toronto Blue Jays	1990	Haywood Sullivan	Chicago Cardinals	1953	b
Kerry Collins	Detroit Tigers	1990	Earl Hersh	Philadelphia Eagles	1953	b
Rob Johnson	Minnesota Twins	1991	Laurin Pepper	Detroit Lions	1953	b
Kerry Collins	Detroit Tigers	1991	Steve Korcheck	San Francisco 49ers	1954	c
Mark Brunell	Atlanta Braves	1992	Tom Yewcic	Pittsburgh Steelers	1954	qb
Lawyer Milloy	Cleveland Indians	1992	Laurin Pepper	Pittsburgh Steelers	1954	b
John Lynch	Florida Marlins	1992	Paul Giel	Chicago Bears	1954	b
Akili Smith	Pittsburgh Pirates	1993	Carroll Hardy	San Francisco 49ers	1955	b
Josh Booty	Florida Marlins	1994	Norm Cash	Chicago Bears	1955	rb
Kerry Collins	Toronto Blue Jays	1994	Tom Gastall	Detroit Lions	1955	b
Duante Culpepper	New York Yankees	1995	Em Lindbeck	Los Angeles Rams	1956	qb
Lawyer Milloy	Detroit Tigers	1995	Charlie Dees	Los Angeles Rams	1956	t
Tom Brady	Montreal Expos	1995	Gordon Massa	New York Giants	1957	c
Ricky Williams	Philadelphia Phillies	1995	Ron Luciano (umpire)	Detroit Lions	1959	t
Chad Hutchinson	Atlanta Braves	1995	Jim Hickman	Boston Patriots	1960	t, g
Isaac Byrd	St. Louis Cardinals	1996	Dean Look	Denver Broncos	1960	qb
Quincy Carter	Chicago Cubs	1996	Jake Gibbs	Cleveland Browns	1961	qb
Doug Johnson	Tampa Bay Devil Rays	1996	Jake Gibbs	Houston Oilers (AFL)	1961	qb
Kay-Jay Harris	Texas Rangers	1997	Tom Brown	Green Bay Packers	1963	b
Antwaan Randle-El	Chicago Cubs	1997	Merv Rettenmund	Dallas Cowboys	1965	hb
Marques Tuiasosopo	Minnesota Twins	1997	Steve Renko	Oakland Raiders (AFL)	1966	qb
Vernand Morency	Colorado Rockies	1998	Tom Paciorek	Miami Dolphins (AFL)	1968	db
Chad Hutchinson	St. Louis Cardinals	1998	John Stearns	Buffalo Bills	1973	db
Drew Henson	New York Yankees	1998	Dave Winfield	Minnesota Vikings	1973	te
Michael Vick	Colorado Rockies	2000	Rick Leach	Denver Broncos	1979	qb
Ronnie Brown	Seattle Mariners	2000	Kirk Gibson	St. Louis Cardinals	1979	wr
Roydell Williams	Cincinnati Reds	2000	Bo Jackson	Tampa Bay Bucs	1986	rb
Mewelde Moore	San Diego Padres	2000	D.J. Dozier	Minnesota Vikings	1987	rb
Cedric Benson	Los Angeles Dodgers	2001	Bo Jackson	Los Angeles Raiders	1987	rb
			Deion Sanders	Atlanta Falcons	1989	db
			Brian Jordan	Buffalo Bills	1989	db
			Mike Busch	Tampa Bay Bucs	1990	te
			Josh Booty	Seattle Seahawks	2001	qb

Drafted Players, by the MLF

Bob Finley Pittsburgh Steelers 1937 b

The Right Place at the Wrong Time

By Gino Malattia

By November the New York Giants' 1966 season was dead. The final six losses burned the 1-12-1 team. If the defense often appeared in a race with the game clock as to which would reach sixty first, the offense seemed to leave no footprints. Backs gained yards by the inch, while the quarterbacks Gary Wood and Earl Morrall were either injured or ineffective.

When Morrall went down with a broken wrist, Coach Allie Sherman contacted former Giant Andy Robustelli, head coach of the Continental League Brooklyn Dodgers. With one game left in a last place season, Robustelli agreed to sell the league's leading quarterback, Tom Kennedy, to his old team. On the 5th Kennedy had led the Dodgers to a win over Hartford. Eight days later he would quarterback the Giants against the Los Angeles Rams.

Kennedy's journey to that final interborough move was not unlike that of other minor league hopefuls. Raised in Pasadena, California, he attended Washington State and Glendale College before settling in at Los Angeles State; where he threw for 1043 yards his senior year. The next five seasons were spent with five teams in four minor leagues. He was 1st team all league at Wheeling in the United League, 2nd team with the Atlantic Coast Providence Club and the Continental's top signal caller. In between were tryouts with the Browns, Rams, Steelers, Winnipeg and Saskatchewan.

Three days after being placed on the Giants Roster, Kennedy replaced Wood in the Los Angeles Coliseum. The team, league, and level of play were new; but he showed poise in the midst of the Giants worst defeat since 1952 (14-55), completing 18 of 28 for 126 yards and a 25 yard touchdown to Joe Morrison.

The next week, Kennedy replaced Wood in the second quarter, went 18 for 29 for 188 with a three-yard score to Joe Morrison. His two fumbles and an interception were converted into Atlanta scores and the Falcons' first NFL victory.

Starting against Washington, Kennedy threw an eighteen-yard touchdown to Aaron Thomas, fumbled once and had three interceptions. He was 13 of 21 for 165 yards before being replaced by Wood. The game is remembered for the 113 points scored. Unfortunately, the Redskins captured 72 of them.

At Pittsburgh, Kennedy had his career game. Subbing for Wood in the second quarter, he hit Thomas for a one-yard touchdown. Before the half ended, he connected with Homer Jones for an 82-yard score. He again found Thomas, this time for a five-yard

touchdown in the third quarter. In the fourth Bobby Crespino took a pass sixteen-yards for the final score. Kennedy was 14-25-229 4/0. The four touchdown passes put him in the Giants record book at 3rd, but the Steelers won 47-28.

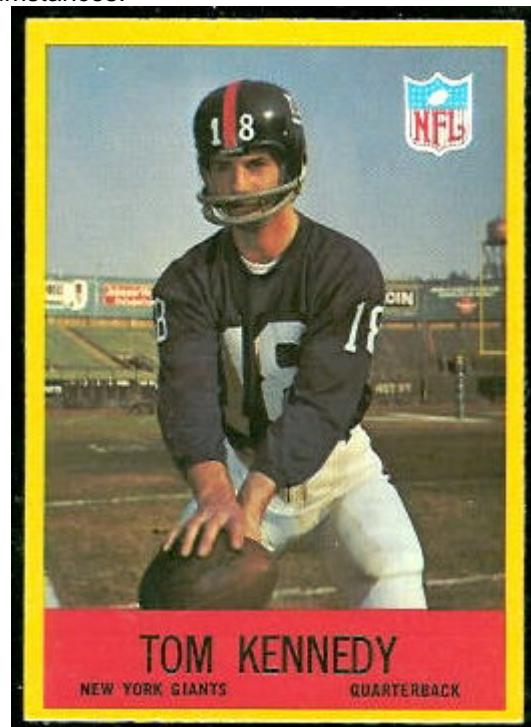
Kennedy finished the season at 55-100-748 7/8, the best numbers among the Giants' quarterbacks.

Being a Giant quarterback had its perks, among them were a personal appearance at Abercrombie and Fitch with teammate Jim Katcavage and his picture on a 1967 bubble gum card.

New York acquired Fran Tarkenton in 1967, but Kennedy was having a good camp until a season-ending broken collarbone on September 11, against Green Bay. Returning in 1968, Kennedy tossed scores of twelve and fifteen yards in a preseason scrimmage. He was released by the Giants on September 5.

Unclaimed by any NFL team, yet unwilling to let go, Kennedy signed with Sacramento in the Continental League. His play earned him 2nd team all league recognition. In 1969, he moved on to Seattle and in 1970 returned east to quarterback the Atlantic Coast League Bridgeport club.

Kennedy's minor league statistics (13,693 yards 109/77 touchdown/interception ratio) can stand with those of any of the quarterbacks in the top 1960s minor leagues – the United, Atlantic Coast and Continental. Don Jonas, Bob Broadhead, and King Corcoran were among the best of his contemporaries, yet none came near Kennedy's NFL numbers. Kennedy simply made the most of his opportunity, regardless of the circumstances.



OVERTIME OPINION

BY KYLE STANDERFER



Do too many OTs end in Field Goals?

I posted a blog on my MySpace page about the NFL overtime format, but I'm sure at least some of you don't have MySpace accounts. The purpose here is to express an opinion, not to promote my page:

Quit whining about the NFL overtime format.

Too many people make unfounded assertions about what's 'wrong' with sudden death in the National Football League. I know I'm in a tiny minority, but I have no problem with the current format.

Everybody who is against it proposes something to change the rules. Some people want the NFL to adopt the college rules, where each team gets alternating, untimed possessions starting twenty-five yards away from the end zone. Among these, some propose that the possession start farther away.

Some are OK with kickoffs and punts, but want each team to be guaranteed at least one offensive possession. A lot of these folks are OK with the game reverting to sudden death if still tied after each team has had the ball.

Some folks propose a "first to six" rule, where you must score at least one TD or two field goals to win. A few suggest the league should do away with regular season OT altogether. I don't think any preseason game should EVER go to OT, but I digress.

So the zeitgeist basically says two things. One, most people will support just about any format other than the current sudden death rules. Second, although a lot of people say they don't like first possession scores deciding games, it appears that they are specifically offended by first-possession *field goals* deciding OT games.

Here's where I stand:

First of all, if I hear or see one more person utter "The coin toss decided the winner", I'm going postal. **The coin toss never has, and never will determine the outcome of the game.** This is indisputable fact, yet people accept the common bromide about the coin toss as gospel due to constant repetition. When you can demonstrate that a coin flip landing the wrong way for your team made them powerless to stop the opposing offense's march into field goal range, we'll talk. Until then, try something that can be supported by facts.

If a game goes into OT, that tells me one thing. You didn't play well enough to win in regulation. As far as I'm concerned, you deserve to be at risk of not seeing your offense on the field again. If you are a defensive player and have to enter the field at the beginning of OT, you're still paid millions of dollars to get the opposing offense off the field. You are not excused because you are tired and/or because the game extended beyond sixty minutes. Do your job! Besides, football is the one sport where the defense can score. A couple

of overtime games in the past have ended on a safety.

If fans aren't complaining about the supposed lack of fairness in NFL overtime rules, they're complaining about how anti-climatic the games often become. That, to me, is a much more valid reason than the crying about 'unfairness,' but I still disagree. If you are basketball fans, you know that some games have dramatic regulation endings that force OT, only to see the overtime period end with much less drama. The objective of a team sport is to win, not to provide constant titillation for the spectators. I don't need constant titillation to stay tuned.



Ron Jaworski

Also, please spare me the "what if baseball, basketball, tennis, etc. adopted sudden death?" (that means you, Bob Costas). They're different sports, genius. In basketball, it's much easier to score. Golf and tennis play with much different premises. And the rules of baseball only allow you to score runs when your team is at bat. Football, on the other hand, does not require you to be the team that puts the ball in play to score points - except during a try in the pros and in high school.

I know full well about the Boise State-Oklahoma Fiesta Bowl ending last January. I still detest the college overtime rule. It's an absolute joke that you are handed possession of the ball in scoring range, and are still within range of a makeable field goal if your possession nets -3 yards. Plus, the four OT, 68-66 games are absolutely ridiculous, and if any of you are doubting, that's not a compliment.

In the NFL's past, you have the Eagles backed up not on their one-yard line, but on the one-inch line, only to see Ron Jaworski hit Mike Quick on a slant that turned into a 99-yard, game-winning OT touchdown. You have Dave Williams and Chad Morton returning the OT kickoff for a touchdown to dramatically end the game. You have Steve Smith catching a Jake Delhomme pass, eluding a couple of Rams defenders, and racing for a 69-yard touchdown to send Carolina to the NFC Championship Game and the Rams to the golf course. You saw Garrison Hearst break several tackles and follow a convoy of blockers for a 96-yard TD to give the 49ers an OT win over the Jets.

The Dave Williams and Chad Morton endings are not possible with the college football OT format. And the others are nearly impossible without the mother of all offensive meltdowns followed by a defensive meltdown that makes "4th and 26" pale by comparison.

With as many people as there are adamantly insisting on each team being guaranteed a possession in overtime, count me as probably the only one in America that's dead set against that.

There's one OT format change that's palatable to me. For the regular season, make the extra period anywhere between ten and fifteen minutes. The first ten minutes are not sudden death. Each team gets two timeouts. There's no scoring limit during the ten minute period. The team that's ahead after ten minutes of OT wins. This still doesn't guarantee a possession for each team. If the defense can't get off the field after nine+ minutes, they deserve to lose. If the game is still tied after ten minutes, the game clock is reset to five minutes, play resumes at the dead ball spot, and sudden death ensues. First team to score in any manner wins. The game ends in a tie if not resolved after the five-minute sudden death, but continues until somebody scores if it's the playoffs.

FORWARD PASS RULES

Courtesy of James Whalen, Sr. and NFL Record & Fact Book

1906 - One forward pass per down was permitted as long as the passer was at least five yards behind the line of scrimmage and the ball passed five yards or more to the left or right of the point from which the ball was centered.

If the pass traveled within five yards of the center, the passing team forfeited possession of the ball at the line of scrimmage. If a pass touched the ground before touching a player of either side, the offensive team forfeited possession.

If a pass was touched but not caught, it became a free ball. If a pass was touched by an ineligible receiver, the offensive team forfeited the football.

If the passer threw the oval when beyond the line of scrimmage, his side forfeited possession. If a forward pass was thrown out of bounds, the ball went to the opponents where the pigskin crossed the sideline.

If a pass was incomplete over the goal or was caught by a member of either side over the goal, it was ruled a touchback. No touchdown could be made by completing a pass over the goal.

1907 - Incompleted passes and those thrown within five yards of the center were penalized fifteen yards instead of a forfeited possession. However, if the aerial was touched by either side, it remained a free ball the same as though fumbled.

1910 - A forward pass could cross the line of scrimmage at any point, but the passer was still required to throw from at least five yards behind.

1911 - Loss of down instead of a fifteen-yard penalty for an incomplete pass. An incompletely pass touched while in the air was a dead ball, not a free ball. However, an incompletely aerial thrown from behind the goal was ruled a safety and pass penalties were measured from the line of scrimmage instead of from where thrown.

1912 - Ten-yard end zones were established and a pass caught within that space was a touchdown, but a touchback if incomplete there. The ball was slimmed to 28 – 28 ½ inches in length, 22 ½ - 23 inches around the middle, weighing 14 to 15 ounces.

1914 - Roughing the passer and intentional grounding were both fouls subject to ten yard penalties. Both feet of a receiver had to be in the end zone to score a touchdown.

1915 - A pass thrown out of bounds no longer cost the throwing team possession.

1916 - An incomplete pass from the end zone gave up two points to the opponent.

1917 - The football was spotted at the point of a pass interference foul, not measured from the line of scrimmage.

1920 - The clock was to be stopped on an incompletion.

1926 - A five-yard penalty from the line of scrimmage was charged after each incompletely forward pass after the first incompletion in the same series of downs. (Forwards still carried restrictions after twenty yards.)

1929 - Football reduced in size again to 22-22 ½ inches short and 28-28 ½ long circumference. Length 11-11 ¼ inches with 14-15 ounces of pressure.

1930 - Size of football remained the same, but pressure reduced to 12 ½ to 13 ½ ounces.

In the 1930s, the NFL began originating its own rules.

1934 - A forward pass made hand-to-hand behind the line of scrimmage that becomes incomplete is a fumble and may be advanced by either team.

The second incomplete pass over the goal line in the same series or a fourth down incompletion in the end zone results in a touchback.

Forward passing is legalized from any spot behind the line of scrimmage.

When a team completes a legal forward pass, which is in turn followed by a second forward pass, the penalty will be loss of five yards from the point of the second and illegal forward pass.

1935 - A pass thrown beyond the line of scrimmage intended as a lateral but going forward will be declared downed at the point of throwing.

A fourth down incomplete pass, or a second incomplete pass in the same series that goes into the end zone, is returned to the point where the ball was put in play, except when the previous play originated inside the twenty-yard line.

1938 - The penalty for a second forward pass behind the line of scrimmage is loss of down, instead of loss of down and five yards.

1939 - The penalty for a forward pass touching an ineligible player on or behind his line of scrimmage is loss of down and fifteen yards from the previous spot and this penalty may not be declined.

The penalty for a forward pass striking an ineligible player beyond the line of scrimmage will be loss of the ball at the previous spot.

Before a forward pass is thrown from behind the line of scrimmage, ineligible players may not legally cross that line except in an initial line charge while blocking an opponent. The penalty is loss of down and fifteen yards.

1940 - The penalty for a forward pass not from scrimmage is five yards.

1942 - Pass interference by the offense in the defense's end zone is a touchback during any down.

A forward pass that has touched a second eligible or an ineligible player may be intercepted.

1943 - The offense may intercept and advance the defense's illegal pass from end zone.

1944 - Offensive pass interference in the end zone is not a touchback.

1946 - When a forward pass from behind the line touches either team's goal post or crossbar it is incomplete. (Previously a pass from behind the goal line hitting a goal post was a safety.)

1947 - During a forward pass if the spot of a pass violation is behind the offense's goal line, the penalty is enforced from previous spot.

1948 - If an intended pass is downed behind the line, it is a referee's time out until any players who have gone down field for a pass have had a reasonable time to return.

1949 - Eligible pass receivers of a given team may wear different color helmets than their teammates. All the receivers must wear the same color.

1951 - A center, guard, or tackle is not eligible to touch a forward pass from scrimmage, even when he is on the end of the line.

1952 - The penalty for offensive pass interference is fifteen yards from the previous spot and not loss of down.

1968 - Compulsory numbering system makes only players numbered other than 50-79 eligible forward pass receivers.

1971 - A new pass blocking definition is added. Pass blocking is the obstruction of an opponent by the use of that part of the blocker's body above his knees. During a legal block, the hands must be cupped or closed and remain inside the blocker's elbows and must remain inside the frame of the opponent as well as the blocker's body. The arms must be in a flexed position, but cannot be fully extended to create a push. By use of up and down action of flexed arms, the blocker is permitted to ward off the opponent's attempt to grasp his jersey or arms and prevent legal contact to his head. The blocker is not permitted to push, clamp down on, hang on to, or encircle the opponent.

A passer can be penalized when he throws, tosses, or lobs the ball away with a deliberate attempt to prevent a loss of yardage by his team.

1974 - Eligible pass receivers can only be chucked once by any defender after the receiver has gone three yards beyond the line of scrimmage.

Eligible receivers who line up in a position within two yards of a tackle may be legally blocked below the waist at the line of scrimmage.

Eligible receivers who line up more than two yards from a tackle may not be blocked below the waist at or behind the line of scrimmage.

1975 - A fourth down pass that is incomplete in or through the end zone when the line of scrimmage is inside the twenty will result in the opponent taking possession at the previous line of scrimmage.

1976 - Offensive blocking changed to provide half extension of arms to assist pass blocking.

1977 - A defender will be permitted to make contact with an eligible receiver either in the three-yard zone beyond the line of scrimmage or once beyond that zone, but not both. (Limits the "Bump-and-Run.")

1978 - Extended arms and open hands are permissible in pass blocking. (Tremendous effect on pass blocking.)

A double touch of a forward pass is legal, but batting a pass in flight toward an opponent's goal line is illegal.

The penalty for intentional grounding in the field of play is reduced from a loss of down and fifteen yards to a loss of down and ten yards. It is a safety when a passer illegally grounds a ball in the end zone.

Defenders are permitted to maintain contact with receivers in a five-yard zone beyond the line of scrimmage, but contact is restricted beyond that point. (Ends "Bump-and-Run.)

1980 – Retreat blocking added with full arm extension to assist pass blocking and illegal use of hands reduced to five yards.

1981 - It is illegal for players to use any form of adhesive substance while participating in a game.

A player will be credited with a catch if he controls the ball when his second foot clearly lands on the ground inbounds.

Players who change their eligibility by virtue of a change of position must report such change to the referee before the start of each play.

An intentional grounding penalty will result in a loss of down and the ball will be put in play at the spot of the foul if that spot was more than ten yards behind the line of scrimmage.

When an ineligible receiver touches a forward pass on or behind the line of scrimmage, the penalty will be loss of down. When an ineligible receiver is touched beyond the line of scrimmage, the penalty will be a loss of ten yards.

1982 - The player possession rule was altered to read: A player other than an eligible receiver is in possession when he has held the ball firmly in his grasp long enough to have established control. In order for an eligible receiver of a forward pass to be in possession, he must control the ball throughout the act of clearly touching both feet, or any other part of his body other than his hand(s), to the ground inbounds. If the player is hit, causing the ball to come loose simultaneously while clearly touching both feet, or any other part of his body except the hand(s) inbounds, there is no possession.

Pass interference only on a catchable forward pass. Forward pass intentionally grounded to conserve time (spiked) permitted.

1983 – First down added to roughing the passer.

1985 – Retreat block deleted and open hands and extended arms permitted anywhere on the field.

1987 - Passer who wants to stop clock will be permitted to throw ball away - out of bounds or to ground - so long as he begins throwing motion immediately after receiving snap.

1994- Ball must be catchable for offensive player to be charged with pass interference.

1995 - A receiver knocked out of bounds by a defensive player can now return to the field to make a play

2007 - The penalty assessed when a forward pass is touched inadvertently by an ineligible player is eliminated (i.e., a pass hits an offensive lineman in the back). However, if that player is the intended receiver, the illegal touching penalty will be assessed.



Steve Young is the NFL's all-time top-rated passer according to the league's Passer Rating System, first used in 1973. The system uses yards per attempt, completion percentage, touchdown percentage, and interception percentage to produce a rating. Young's lifetime mark is 96.8.

CLASSIFIEDS

WANTED: "The Second American Football League Fact Book" and "The Unofficial 1940-41 American Football League Guide," both by Tod Maher and Bob Gill. Charley Hall, 1410 Lake Pointe Way #9, Centerville, OH 45459, hallbucket@Sbcglobal.net

2007 Cuts and Keeps (covers 2006 season). Registry of nearly 2500 rookie and first year NFL, CFL and Arena players with bio data and career transactions; Big, definitive, comprehensive 444 pages. \$75 plus \$5 postage. For researchers, pro personnel, and serious students of football. Sports Information and Research, 1515 Radcliff Ct. Visalia, CA 93277.

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WANTED: Game films or highlight films from Washington Redskins games 1970-76, especially need 1974 Miami Dolphins game. John Jacob / P.O. Box 4155 / Merrifield, VA 22116 / (703) 909-6395.

EARLY AMERICAN & CANADIAN 'FOOTBALL': BEGINNINGS THRU 1883-84. Mel Smith / 1st Books Library 2959 Vernal Pike / Bloomington, IL 47404

Need the following NFL team photos from the 1950s to complete my research: 1950, 1953-1957 Baltimore Colts; 1950-51 NY Yanks; 1952 Dallas Texans; 1953 NY Giants; 1957 Redskins; 1951 Bears; 1951 Lions; 1958 Rams. Michael Lemongello / 5 Brookline Ave. / East Hanover, NJ 07936. Tel. 973-428-3752. Fax 973-844-1433.

LOOKING for AFL video/film footage, 1960-1969. Please contact John via e-mail at jcart@sbcglobal.net.

"Pride & Poise: The Oakland Raiders of the American Football League is the most takes a definitive look into the formation and turbulent early history of the American Football League." For info please visit www.raidershistory.net

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WANTED: Any Philadelphia Eagles items from 1933-43. Programs, contracts, wire photos, newspapers, etc. Photo copies work but I may ask to buy the original if it is for sale. Also interested in 1902 Athletics, Frankford Yellowjackets, 1926 Quakers, Allentown Demons and Bethlehem Bulldogs. E-mail Steve at homebuilder@epix.net

"Keep A-goin': the life of Lone Star Dietz" by Tom Benjey. Softcover \$19.95, hardback \$32.95, s&h \$6.00. Put PFRA on order for a 5% discount. Benjey Media / 546 E. Springville Rd. / Carlisle, PA 17015. 717-258-9733 voice / 717-243-0074 fax / www.LoneStarDietz.com

Cleveland Brown A to Z by Roger Gordon. 500 A to Z items on Browns history. 7x10 h/c. 230 pgs. Nearly 150 b/w photos. Signed copy: money order \$24.95 to: Roger Gordon, Box 2443 North Canton, OH 44720. For more information, call 330-371-1661 or e-mail gordon425@yahoo.com

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WANTED: Information on the backgrounds of the players on the rosters of the 1917-1926 Akron Pros and Canton Bulldogs teams. Specifically interested in where they worked and where they lived. Please contact Lee at (805) 981-8678 or speedylee@sprynet.com

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BOOK: "McKay's Men: The Story of the 1979 Tampa Bay Buccaneers," published by Seaside Publishing of Palm Harbor, FL. Written by Denis Crawford, 218 pages with photos. Tell how John McKay led the Bucs from 0-26 to the brink of a Super Bowl in just two short years. Contains first hand accounts from Lee Roy Selmon and Doug Williams. Book is available for \$14.95 (plus S&H) at seaside-publishing.com or call (888) 352-2665.

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