

# 1932 ALL-PROS

By Bob Carroll

The year 1932 saw Franklin Roosevelt elected President, and the following year his New Deal changed the direction of a Depression ridden nation. The events on NFL Football fields in 1932 brought about a "new deal" for the league in the following season.

The three-time champion Packers won the most games, but the Bears and Spartans tied each other for first place in the standings on percentage because of ties; Portsmouth played four and Chicago "kissed its sister" six times. In wins and losses, they were both 6-1. A special play-off was set up in Chicago to determine the champion. Played indoors at Chicago Stadium on an abbreviated field because of a midwestern blizzard, the game did much more than give the Bears a title on a 9-0 win. It showed the way public interest could be aroused by a championship game. The next year would see the NFL split into two divisions with a title game scheduled as the climax of the season.

Other steps opened up the offense and discouraged ties by making field goals more likely. As a result of all this, 1932 is usually remembered as a season that spawned important changes rather than a rousing good session on its own.

One really new thing happened in '32, however. For the first time, the NFL kept official statistics. The knowledge that he was officially the league's top passer probably helped Green Bay's Arnie Herber to be named to both of the important All-Pro teams picked in 1932. His 37 completions in 101 attempts for 639 yards and nine touchdowns look rather tame to a modern fan, but they were quite impressive in 1932. Herber continued as the NFL's premier passer until Sammy Baugh showed up in 1937. He was particularly adept at throwing long.

What no one knew – or, at least, could prove with statistics – at the time was that Benny Friedman, who was finishing his career as a part-season player with Brooklyn, had posted passing records that were far superior to Herber's in the late 1920's. As a result, succeeding generations were given a misleading picture of what constituted the passing game in this period. Taking Herber's 1932 record as the acme, and noting, that Arnie and others improved their marks as the decade went on, fans and even historians jumped to the conclusion that passing in the 1920's was far below the unimpressive standard Herber set.

In actual fact, as shown by PFRA's David Neft in his careful reconstruction of records from the '20s, several throwers had seasons superior to the one that won Herber a title in 1932. Among the best were Ernie Nevers, Curly Lambeau, and Red Dunn. Friedman, of course, was far ahead of even these when it came to winging the football.

One thing Dutch Clark did only tolerably was pass, but he was so sensational at every other skill on a football field that he was easily the NFL's top quarterback, as he led the league in scoring. Significantly, he missed the play-off with the Bears. Had he been available, Portsmouth fans were convinced, the Spartans would have been champions in 1932.

The Official Team was the most widely distributed All-Pro eleven in '32. The only other team of note was that named by the United Press. Interestingly enough, the U.P. choices differed in several spots from those honored on the Official team, underlining the contention made here that all valid All-Pro teams should be preserved as memorials to excellent players who might otherwise be forgotten.

**OFF** = Official Team; chosen by seven of eight league coaches; released by Associated Press, December 17, 1932.

**UP** = United Press; second annual poll.

## THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 8, No. 1 (1986)

---

PO	Player	Team	OFF	UP
E	RAY FLAHERTY	NYG	1	1
	TOM NASH	GB	h	1
	Luke Johnsos	ChiB	1	-
	Lavie Dilweg	GB	2	2
	Bill Hewitt	ChiB	2	2
	Milan Creighton	ChiC	h	-
	Bill McKalip	Por	h	-
T	CAL HUBBARD	GB	1	1
	TURK EDWARDS	Bos	1	-
	Len Grant	NYG	-	1
	George Christensen	Por	2	2
	Lou Gordon	ChiC	h	2
	Jake Williams	ChiC	2	-
	Lloyd Burdick	ChiB	h	-
	Paul Engebretsen	ChiB	h	-
	Jim MacMurdo	Bos	h	-
	Bill Owen	NYG	h	-
	Dick Stahlman	GB	h	-
G	ZUCK CARLSON	ChiB	1	1
	OX EMERSON	Por	h	1
	Walt Kiesling	ChiC	1	-
	Joe Kopcha	ChiB	h	2
	Joe Zeller	GB	h	2
	Maury Bodenger	Por	2	-
	George Hurley	Bos	2	-
	Phil Handler	ChiC	h	-
	Tom Jones	NYG	h	-
	Mike Michalske	GB	h	-
C	NATE BARRAGER	GB	1	2
	Tim Moynihan	ChiC	h	1
	Mel Hein	NYG	2	-
	Frank McNally	ChiC	h	-
Q	DUTCH CLARK	Por	1	1
	Keith Molesworth	ChiB	2	2
	Benny Friedman	Bkn	h	-
H	ARNIE HERBER	GB	1	1
	FATHER LUMPKIN	Por	1	1
	Glenn Presnell	Por	h-Q	2
	Bob Campiglio	Sta	-	2
	Red Grange	ChiB	2	-
	Jack Grossman	Bkn	2	-
	Cliff Battles	Bos	h	-
	Johnny Blood	GB	h	-
	Dale Burnett	NYG	h	-
	Chris Cagle	NYG	h	-
	Henry Hughes	Bos	h	-
	Ken Strong	Sta	h	-
F	BRONKO NAGURSKI	ChiB	1	1
	Clarke Hinkle	GB	2	2
	Ace Gutowsky	Por	h	-
	Jim Musick	Bos	h	-