

1949 NFL CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

CHAMPIONS, LED BY VAN BUREN, TALLY ON PASS AND BLOCKED KICK

Vicious Philadelphia Line Holds Los Angeles to 21 Yards Rushing for League Record

Los Angeles, Dec. 18. -- The Philadelphia Eagles marched through the mud and sailed through the air today to crush the Los Angeles Rams, 14 to 0, and win the National Football League championship for the second straight year.

The Eagles, masters in every department of play, left no room for doubt that they were the finest club in the National League as they racked up one touchdown in the second quarter on the crack-shot passing arm of Tommy Thompson, and added seven more points in the third on a blocked punt.

Biggest disappointment was the weather and the crowd. It rained all night preceding the game -- Los Angeles' first view of a major league title show -- it rained during most of the game, and all in all, reduced the contest to a rather sluggish exhibition of the pro brand of football.

Bell Prevents Postponement

The owners and the players wanted to postpone the game until Christmas Day, and so did thousands of protesting Los Angeles fans.

But Commissioner Bert Bell, in Philadelphia, forced the contest -- the seventeenth National League title playoff -- to go on. As a result of the weather, only 22,245 fans braved the pelting rain to see the battle of the mud. Some 40,000 tickets had been sold in advance, and 70,000 and more were expected had the skies been clear.

Pre-game favorites by at least one touchdown, the Eagles lived up to their own calm confidence. They struck quickly for their first and what proved to be the deciding touchdown. With the ball on the Eagle 37 as the second quarter dawned, Thompson suddenly abandoned the ground and went into the air.

Before the Rams could put out the fire, Philadelphia had swept sixty-three yards, with Thompson rifling a pass to his All-Pro end, Pete Pihos, on a thirty-one-yard play for six points. Pihos made a leaping catch of the throw on about the fifteen-yard line and dashed on over the goal without a hand touching him. Reliable Cliff Patton booted the first of his two extra points after the touchdowns.

Thompson who threw only nine passes and completed five of them for sixty-eight yards, had set up the scoring play with completions of eleven and sixteen yards to Jack Ferrante, his other end. Bosh Pritchard had plunged for two yards and Steve Van Buren three in the series of plays.

The second Eagle tally came when end Leo Skladany charged in, blocked a punt attempt by Ram quarterback Bob Waterfield, gathered in the loose ball on the Ram two-yard line and rolled over the goal. The pass from center to Waterfield was high and the Ram punting star, who averaged thirty-eight yards with a muddy ball in his kicking during the weary afternoon, had to leap off balance to field it before trying to give it the toe.

From then on it was an all-Philadelphia matinee in the mud. They played the game close, took no chances, and made no errors.

The Rams' passing attack, Los Angeles' major weapon in scrambling into this championship finale, was completely nullified by the mud and the charging, ever aggressive Philadelphia linemen. The Rams only gained ninety-eight yards overhead -- completing a mere ten of the twenty-seven passes Waterfield and his understudy, Norman Van Brocklin, attempted.

The real hero of the game, although he never scored, was Van Buren, the belligerent bull of the bayous of Louisiana. Big Steve carried the ball thirty-one times and plagued the Rams with an accumulation of a net 196 yards gained. Twice Van Buren uncorked crushing gains that set up scoring opportunities. One went for forty-nine yards deep into Ram territory, but the chance was fumbled away when Jim Parmer was hit and lost the ball on the Ram 7. Another twenty-three-yard explosion went for naught when one of the Thompson's passes -- his second of the day -- was intercepted.

Eagle Line Is Sensational

The big Eagle line refused to back down in the sloppy going, and wound up handing the Rams the dubious distinction of gaining less on the ground than any club in the history of the N.F.L. playoffs. The Rams managed to gain only twenty-one yards rushing, one less than the previous mark of twenty-two registered by the Washington Redskins the year the Chicago Bears walloped them, 73 to 0, in 1940.

Star receiver for the Rams was huge Dick Huffman, their left tackle made eligible for two passes that gained eighteen and eight in successive catches.

All told, Philadelphia amassed 342 yards and the Rams -- in their poorest effort of the season when the chips were down -- a skimpy 119. Van Buren, Thompson, Clyde Scott, Pihos and Co. were too much of a football machine for the locals.

Once the Rams got to the Eagle 25, again to the 37. That was the nearest they came to scoring. Once from the 45-yard line Waterfield tried a field goal. It was wide.

The line-up:

Philadelphia Eagles (14)

Left ends -- Ferrante, Armstrong, Skladany.
Left tackles -- Sears, Savitsky.
Left guards -- Patton, Magee, Gianelli
Centers -- Lindskog, Wojciechowicz, Bednarik.
Right guards -- Kilroy, Barnes, Maronic.
Right tackles -- Wistert, Macdowell, Jarmoluk.
Right end -- Pihos.
Quarterbacks -- Thompson, Reagan.
Left halves -- Van Buren, Ziegler, Craft.
Right halves -- Pritchard, Parmer, McHugh, Scott.
Fullbacks -- Muha, Myers, Kish.

Los Angeles Rams (0)

Left ends -- Fears, Hubbell, Currivan, Brink.
Left tackles -- Huffman, Sparkman.
Left guards -- Dean, Finlay.
Centers -- Naumetz, Martin, Paul.
Right guards -- Yagiello, Lazetich.
Right tackles -- Bouley, Champagne.
Right ends -- Zilly, Shaw, Keane, Smyth.
Quarterbacks -- Waterfield, Van Brocklin.
Left halves -- Gehrke, Hirsch, Kalmanir
Right halves -- Smith, Younger, Williams, Sims.
Fullbacks -- Hoerner, Cowhig.

Philadelphia	0	7	7	0	-	14
Los Angeles	0	0	0	0	-	0

Philadelphia scoring: Touchdowns -- Pihos, Skladany;
Points after touchdowns -- Patton 2.

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Statistics	Eagles	Rams
First Down	17	7
Yards gained rushing	274	21
Yards gained passing	68	98
Passing	5 of 19	10 of 27
Passes intercepted by.....	1	2
Ball lost	1	0
Fumbles	0	0
Yards lost penalties.....	40	25