

GUIDES

by Joe Cronin

After almost thirty years of slow growth, NFL teams began to distribute their press guides to fans. This very successful advertising ploy helped lay the foundation for the rapid growth of the NFL in the '50s and '60s.

It began in 1978 when the Amoco Oil Company distributed the Washington Redskins press guide. The next year, a sister oil company, Standard Oil of Indiana, distributed the Chicago Bears guide.

Putting the press guide in the hands of the fans solved several problems. The helmeted player on the field became more human and fans could relate to him more easily. And, commercial opportunities opened up for the player. A good situation was created, and the result was solid and rapid growth of pro football.

Long lasting ties developed between teams and advertisers. Standard Oil of Indiana sponsored the bears' guide for 21 seasons. Amoco was with the Redskins for 16 years, Ford with the Packers for 15 years, National Beer (through three name changes) with the Colts for 15 years, and Goebel Beer with the Lions for 12 years.

With data through the 1981 season and disregarding defunct franchises, 56.4 percent of the NFL press guides have had sponsors.

Beer and football have always mixed. 29 per cent of the sponsored books were sponsored by a total of eighteen different beers. Miller brewing Company of Milwaukee began with the 1950 Packers guide, and by 1952 had also sponsored the Giants, Steelers, and Eagles. At one time or another, four different beers backed the Steelers guides: Miller, Duquesne, Carling, and Schmidt. The Forty Niners had a similar experience with Goebel, Burgermeister, Fallstaff, and Hamms. And, did you know that Altes, Gunther, and American beers were press guide sponsors?

Cars were next with 16.8 per cent of the sponsored books. Ford is the dominant car; at one time or another they backed guides from seven different teams. Chrysler-Plymouth is a distant second. Six others, including Buick, Fiat, and Datsun have also been involved.

Ready for a surprise? In third place (13.5 per cent) are financial institutions, almost always a strong local or regional bank.

Food-related businesses are next with 13.0 per cent. The choice is yours. You can go to Stuart Anderson's or the Top of the Mart for dinner, or if you want pizza, you can go to Shakey's, Pizza Hut, or Square Pan Pizza. Or to Del Taco, Burger King, or Jack in the Box for a hamburger. Even Ron's Chicken and Dunkin' Donuts.... And you can shop at Ralph's, Seven Eleven, Pick 'n' Pay, or U 'Tote' M markets.

Oil companies account for 12 per cent of the sponsored books. Of course, Amoco and Standard of Indiana dominate the group of eight, but Tidewater, Sinclair, and Merit/Saveway were also represented.

Radio/TV stations account for 7 per cent and airlines with Delta, Braniff, Eastern, and United have 3.5 per cent. And five per cent of the sponsors could not be classified.

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Oddities creep in...like the '68 Patriots guide that has both Coke and Seven-Up as sponsors. In fact, Cold Power soap was another Pats backer. General Finance (remember Friendly Bob Adams?) backed the 1955 Chicago Cardinals book. The '74 Bears book was backed by Spelson's Insurance Agency, and Independent Agent.

But one is a real head scratcher. The 1970 Cleveland Browns book was sponsored by Goldrush Junction, a Gatlinburg, Tennessee, resort. The connections between the resort and pro football is, at best, unclear.

Here's a complete list of sponsored guides through 1981:

ATLANTA FALCONS (16/16)

1966: American Gas
1967-68: Sinclair
1969: BP (Sinclair)
1970-71: WQXI, Ford, Citgo
1972: WQXI, Delta, 1st National Bank
1973: WQXI, Atl Leasing, Delta
1974: WQXI, Delta
1975-81: Delta

BALTIMORE COLTS (31/33)

1948-50: American Beer
1951-52: no team
1953: Gunther Beer
1954-60: Nat. Bohemian Beer
1961-68: National Beer
1969: Schaefer Beer
1970: none
1971-79: Chrysler-Plymouth
1980: none
1981: WCBM

BUFFALO BILLS (20/22)

1960-61: none
1962-65: Pontiac
1966-69: Bank of Buffalo
1970-72: Genesee, Liberty National Beer
1973-81: Genesee

CHICAGO BEARS (29/36)

1946-48: none
1949-69: Standard Oil of Indiana
1970-71: none
1972: American National Bank
1973: Ford
1974: WBBM, Spelson Ins
1975: none 1976: American National Bank
1977: none
1978-81: American National Bank

CINCINNATI BENGALS (13/14)

1968: none
1969-73: 1st National Bank of Cincinnati
1974-81: Central Trust

CLEVELAND BROWNS (9/36)

1946-62: none

1963-66: Ford
1967: none
1968: Capital Bank, WHK
1969: none
1970: Goldrush Junction
1971: Pick 'n' Pay Stores
1972-76: none
1977: Pick 'n' Pay Stores
1978: none
1979: Nescafe
1980-81: none

DALLAS COWBOYS (1/22)

1960: Falstaff
1961-81: none

DENVER BRONCOS (13/21)

1960: no book
1961-62: none
1963: Rkymtn Journal
1964-66: none
1967: Chrysler-Plymouth
1968-69: Carlson Frink Dairy
1970-76: Sinton Dairy
1977-79: none
1980-81: Coors

DETROIT LIONS (24/36)

1946-47: none
1948-59: Goebel Beer
1960-62: Falstaff beer
1963: Altes Beer
1964-65: Marathon Oil
1966: Ford
1967: Hughes-Hatcher-Suffrin
1968-70: none
1971: Fiat, Crowleys, Marathon
1972-75: none
1976: Ford
1977-79: none
1980-81: Delta

GREEN BAY PACKERS (21/36)

1946-49: none
1950-55: Miller Beer
1956-64: none
1965-79: Ford
1980-81: none

HOUSTON OILERS (5/21)

1960: no book
1961-73: none
1974: Army
1975: Navy
1976-78: none
1979: Ron's Chicken
1980: Texas Bank, Pilgrim, Coors
1981: Pabst, U' Tote 'M

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS (5/19)

1960-62: no book
1963-75: none
1976: Sears
1977: none
1978-80: Coors, Pizza Hut
1981: Coors

LOS ANGELES RAMS (17/36)

1946-54: none
1955-56: Bergermeister beer
1957-60: Falstaff
1961: U.S. Royal Tires
1962-68: none
1969-72: KMPC
1973-74: none
1975: Shakey's Pizza
1976-78: Ralph's
1979-81: Del Taco

MIAMI DOLPHINS (12/16)

1966-68: none
1969: Burger King
1970: none
1971-79: Chrysler-Plymouth
1980-81: Ford

MINNESOTA VIKINGS (15/21)

1961-64: none
1965: Twin City Federal
1966: Bolger Printing
1967: none
1968-70: Northwestern Banks
1971-75: Twin City Federal
1976-79: Ford
1980: none 1981: Dayton's

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS (17/19)

1960-62: no book
1963: Hood Dairy, WHEE
1964: none
1965-67: Seven-Up
1968: Coke, Seven-Up
1969-70: Seven-Up
1971: none
1972-73: Cold Power
1974: Army
1975-76: WBZ
1977: Frito-Lay
1978: Dunkin' Donuts
1979-81: Lays

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS (14/15)

1967: Falstaff, Humble
1968: National Bank of Commerce
1969: Lou & Son Life Insurance
1970: 1st Homestead, Lou & Son Life Insurance

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1971: 1st Homestead
1972: Top of Mart, Burger King, WWL
1973-74: Top of Mart, WWL
1975: Top of Mart, Burger King, WWL
1976: none
1977: Devineys, United Way
1978-79: United Way
1980: United Way
1981: Kenwood Water, Pro! Magazine, Braniff

NEW YORK GIANTS (19/36)

1946: Thorp Sporting Goods, WHN Radio
1947-50: none
1951-55: Miller Beer
1956-63: Balentine Beer
1964: Howard Clothes
1965-67: none
1968: Franklin Bank, Rick Reilly, Peach Tree Press
1969: Franklin Bank, Chap Stick, Wickersham Press
1970: Schaefer beer
1971: Marlboro
1972-79: none
1980: Delta
1981: none

NEW YORK JETS (3/19)

1960-62: no book
1963: Many sponsors
1964: none
1965-66: Rheingold Beer
1967-74: none 1975: Eastern Air Lines
1976-81: none

OAKLAND RAIDERS (1/20)

1960: no book
1961: Veedoloil Tidewater Oil Co.
1962: no book
1963-81: none

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES (16/36)

1946-50: none
1951-52: Miller Beer
1953: Boscul Coffee
1954-62: none
1963-64: Schmidt's Beer
1965-67: Balentine Beer
1968: Harbison's Dairy
1969: 1st Penn. Bank
1970: none
1971: Merit, Saveway Gas
1972-76: none
1977-79: Lays
1980-81: Lays, United Airlines

PITTSBURGH STEELERS (16/36)

1946-51: none
1952-54: Miller Beer
1955-61: Duquesne Beer

1962-63: Carling Beer
1964-66: Schmidt's Beer
1967: Duquesne Beer
1968-81: none

ST. LOUIS CARDINALS (12/36)

1946-54: none
1955: General Finance
1956-59: none
1960-61: Falstaff
1962: KMOX, Sporting News
1963: American Gas, Sporting News
1964-65: Sporting News
1966: Falstaff Beer
1967-76: none
1977-78: Hamilton St. L.
1979: Coors
1980: none
1981: Community Fed. St. L.

SAN DIEGO CHARGERS (9/22)

1960-72: none
1973: Seven-Eleven
1974: United Way
1975: S.D. Fed., Army 1976: United Way
1977-78: Jack in the Box
1979: Square Pan Pizza
1980-81: Sears

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS (14/35)

1946-50: none
1951-52: Goebel Beer
1953: none
1954: Burgermeister Beer
1955: none
1956-57: Falstaff Beer
1958: no book
1959-63: Falstaff Beer
1964: none
1965: Hamm's Beer
1966-67: none
1968: Spreckels Dairy
1969-79: none
1980-81: SAGA, Stu Anderson's

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS (6/6)

1976-81: Datsun

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS (6/6)

1976: Freedom Trust
1977: Hutchinson Lincoln-Mercury
1978: Metro Bank & Trust
1979-81: Exchange Bank

WASHINGTON REDSKINS (35/36)

1946: none
1947-62: American Oil
1963: Ford

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1964: American Oil
1965-69: Ford
1970: Dodge
1971: WMAL-TV
1972-75: Am. Sec. Bank, WMAL, WRC-TV
1976: Am. Sec. Bank, WMAL, Washington Star
1977: Am. Sec. Bank, Washington Star
1978: Jeff. Hotel, People Drug, WMAL
1979-80: Jeff Hotel, WJLA-TV, WMAL
1981: Lays, WJLA-TV, WMAL