

1929 ALL PROS

by John Hogrogian

Herbert Hoover had a bad season, but the Green Bay Packers and New York Giants prospered in 1929. The Packers added Mike Michalske, Cal Hubbard, and Johnny Blood to their team and swept undefeated to their first NFL title. The Giants absorbed the cream of the 1928 Detroit team, including the famous Benny Friedman, and finished only a whisper behind the Packers. In a time of economic unease, the Packers enjoyed stable public ownership and the Giants made a profit after losing \$40,000 in 1928.

The annual All Pro poll of writers and officials contained six Packers and four Giants among the top 22 players. Of the Packers, Verne Lewellen, Lavern Dilweg, and Jug Earpe had been in Green Bay for several seasons. Mike Michalske had come from the New York Yankees and Johnny Blood from the Pottsville Maroons, both defunct team, and Bill Kern was a rookie from Pittsburgh. Surprisingly, tackle Cal Hubbard did not appear in the poll selections. For the Giants, Benny Friedman and Joe Westoupal came from the failed Detroit franchise and Ray Flaherty from the late Yankees. Tony Plansky was in his second season with the Giants.

first team

E- Lavern Dilweg, GB
E- Ray Flaherty, NY
T- Bull Behman, Fra
T- Bob Beattie, Ora
G- Mike Michalske, GB
G- Milt Rehnquist, Prov
C- Joe Westoupal, NY
Q- Benny Friedman, NY
H- Verne Lewellen, GB
H- Tony Plansky, NY
F- Ernie Nevers, ChiC

second team

E- Bob Lundell, Min
E- Luke Johnsos, ChiB
T- Bill Kerns, GB
T- Duke Slater, ChiC
G- Frank Racis, Bos
G- Hal Hanson, Fra
C- Jug Earpe, GB
Q- George Pease, Ora
H- Ken Strong, SI
H- Johnny Blood, GB
F- Wally Diehl, Fra

honorable mention

E- Chuck Kassel, ChiC
E- Tony Kostos, Fra
T- Steve Owen, NY
T- Don Murry, ChiB
G- Walt Kiesling, ChiC
G- Jim Bowdoin, GB
C- Ted Mitchell, Ora
Q- Red Dunn, GB
H- Swede Hagberg, Buf
H- Gibby Welch, Prov
H- John Singleton, Day
F- Tony Latone, Bos
F- Bo Molenda, GB

Source: Green Bay Press *Gazette*, December 20, 1929; Milwaukee *Journal*, December 19, 1929; Milwaukee *Sentinel*, December 22, 1929.

All 16 first-team ballots contained Friedman, Lewellen, Michalske, and Ernie Nevers, who joined the Chicago Cardinals after sitting 1928 out. Red Grange also returned to pro ball after taking a year off, but he made no All Pro teams this year.

Two big-city sports writers published their own 1929 selections.

Rud Rennie of the New York *Herald Tribune* chose an eleven man team with six Packers.

E- Lavern Dilweg, GB
E- Tom Nash, GB
T- Cal Hubbard, GB
T- Bull Behman, Fra
G- Mike Michalske, GB
G- Jim Bowdoin, GB
C- Joe Westoupal, NY
Q- Benny Friedman, NY
H- Verne Lewellen, GB
H- Tony Plansky, NY
F- Ernie Nevers, ChiC

THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 5, No. 5 (1983)

Source: New York *Herald Tribune*, December 10, 1929.

Rennie did honor Cal Hubbard, snubbed in the annual poll.

Wilfred Smith of the Chicago *Tribune* continued his annual practice of picking a team.

E- Lavern Dilweg, GB	C- Joe Westoupal, NY
E- Ray Flaherty, NY	Q- Benny Friedman, NY
T- Bull Behman, Fra	H- Verne Lewellen, GB
T- Duke Slater, ChiC	H- Tony Plansky, NY
G- Mike Michalske, GB	F- Ernie Nevers, ChiC
G- Cal Hubbard, GB	

Source: Chicago *Tribune*, December 22, 1929.

Like Rennie, Smith named Cal Hubbard as among the best linemen.

One NFL coach picked a team for publication. Leroy Andrews of the New York Giants named 22 players, including six Packers and six Giants.

first team	second team
E- Lavern Dilweg, GB	E- John Spellman, Prov
E- Ray Flaherty, NY	E- Tom Nash, GB
T- Steve Owen, NY	T- Don Murry, ChiB
T- Bull Behman, Fra	T- Duke Slater, ChiB
G- Mike Michalske, GB	G- Walt Kiesling, ChiC
G- Jim Bowdoin, GB	G- Rudy Comstock, Fra
C- Joe Westoupal, NY	C- Jug Earpe, GB
Q- Benny Friedman, NY	Q- Ernie Lewellen, GB
H- Doug Wycoff, SI	H- Ken Strong, SI
H- Tony Plansky, NY	H- Walt Holmer, ChiB
F- Ernie Nevers, ChiC	F- Tiny Feather, NY

Source: New York *Post*, Dec. 14, 1929; New York *World*, Dec. 14, 1929.

Andrews divided his picks evenly between east coast and midwestern teams.

In retrospect, the Packers and Giants dominated pro football in 1929. The Packers excelled on defense, and the Giants scintillated on offense. Each team had a star with a specialized skill that blended perfectly with the team's character. Verne Lewellen was a solid two-way back who also was the NFL's premier punter. This era of football placed a high premium on field position and considered punting a major strategic weapon. Benny Friedman, on the other hand, made frequent use of the forward pass in an era which did not yet know what to make of this weapon. With Lewellen kicking, the Packers allowed 22 points in 13 games; with Friedman throwing, the Giants averaged 21 points scored per game, six more than the next best team. Neither Lewellen nor Friedman is enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.