

## **Inflation of 1920; A Tale of Two Cities**

by Emil Klosinski

Pro football through its early history struggled for survival. Villages, towns and cities, through civic or individual efforts, fielded football squads consisting of various degrees of professionalism in performance as well as compensation. There were many road blocks impeding pro football's growth, and one such obstacle to progress was the inflation of 1920.

When the Armistice was signed on November 11, 1918, ending World War I, American troops began returning home only to find themselves out of a job. Industry had to re-tool from wartime to peacetime civilian goods production, so until that was accomplished there was wide-spread unemployment in 1919. War, however, creates shortages and shortages create inflation. When the economic picture saw tremendous rises in the cost of consumer goods in 1920, everyone's pocket book was affected. While employment was on the upswing and people had money, their earnings could not catch up with inflation. For instance the price of a Studebaker upon resumption of production in 1919 was announced as \$700.00 for a 4-door six sedan. Studebaker advertised the same car in the South Bend Tribune in the fall of 1920 as costing \$2150.00, and yet its employees were working for the same 1919 wages. Cost of railroad fares, hotel rooms, restaurant meals and uniforms -- all part of a football team's expenditure -- had risen dramatically.

South Bend Arrows football team had made plans for an ambitious traveling schedule and in the summer of 1920 had tentative agreements with the Cincinnati Celts, a McKeesport, Pennsylvania club and the Columbus Panhandles. But the Arrows suffered a double "whammy" when the Kann & Schellinger Brewing Company, makers of the very popular Arrow beer, fell victim to Prohibition. Congress passed a resolution in 1916 for the States to ratify the 18th Amendment which would prohibit the manufacture, selling and dispensing all alcoholic beverages and would give to the States concurrent power of enforcement. When the 18th Amendment was finally ratified on January 16, 1919, a provision within it mandated that it would become effective one year from the ratification date. Subsequently, Congress passed the Volstead Act in October of 1919 which spelled out that only 1/2 of 1% alcohol content would be considered as non-intoxicating beverage and also made provision for strict enforcement of the law.

In South Bend, plans for circumvention began immediately with the passage of the 1916 Resolution. Saloons in downtown South Bend began to change into cigar stores. The cigar store such as Goldie Mann's (he owned three of them) would have a cigar counter on one side of the aisle and an eating counter on the other side up in front of the building. This was a form of a "speakeasy" because in a large backroom, there were pool tables and gambling tables for poker as well as a bar for serving beverages.

Thus, while the dispensers of beverages were prepared, the manufacturers relied largely on a challenge to the constitutionality of the 18th Amendment and the Volstead Act. But in June of 1920, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the validity of the 18th Amendment and the Volstead Act, and the Breweries, such as Kann and Schellinger of Mishawaka, Indiana, and Muessel Brewery of South Bend, had to determine whether they would quit the business or try something else.

The Arrow football team had a very good deal with the Kann & Schellinger Company in 1919. All expenses were paid by the company which included travel, hotels, uniforms and meals. Much of this was paid by reimbursement when receipts were presented by J. Benko, the team manager. The team kept the home game revenue and out of town game guarantees. This turned out to be lucrative for the Arrows because the team averaged over 4,000 attendance per home game. The only problem was that the Arrows had to share the only adequate facility that could hold large crowds with another good South Bend outfit, the Koehler and Schaefer team. Springbrook Park was an all purpose facility with a huge grandstand and many-tiered bleacher seats which accommodated baseball, football and auto racing.

The Arrows were an undefeated club in 1919, but in fairness, I must add an asterisk. The Arrows played Koehler and Schaefer in what was the Tigers' home game at Springbrook Park and the Koehlers were responsible for obtaining the officials for the game, but the Arrows had a right of approval. The names were submitted mid-week and the Arrows approved, but came time for the game and a new official appeared as the referee, one whose name had not been submitted for approval. Some of the Arrows

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recognized the youngster from Notre Dame and knew that he was related to one of the owners of the Koehler and Schaefer cigar store. At first the Arrows declined to participate, but relented when the threat of withholding their forfeit money and bets was made.

Right from the kickoff, which the Tigers received, there were penalties called after the Koehlers were stopped on third downs, and the referee was the one calling them. The Tigers were getting first downs to keep a drive going. It was a call by the referee, which should have been called by the headlinesman, that infuriated the Arrow team. Manager Benko immediately ordered his Arrow team off the field and the game was over. Koehler and Schaefer claimed a 1-0 forfeit victory while the Arrows labeled the game "no contest" and not a blot on their record. The young referee was a gentleman who became Notre Dame's baseball coach, Jake Kline. Many years later, at a father and son smoker, Jake admitted that he was carried away by his enthusiasm for the Koehler and Schaefer club.

It is difficult to research the South Bend teams of that era because of the spotty coverage of the independents in the South Bend papers. Although South Bend had a population of about 75,000 and was a growing manufacturing base, the newspapers still had that small town attitude and format. Notre Dame was covered by Notre Dame students of journalism for the South Bend Tribune. There was no Sunday edition, so Monday's sport page covered Notre Dame and other college games. It was considered lucky to have the pro score mentioned. Too, just like Toledo, South Bend usually had more than one team vying for the spotlight.

When 1920 season was about to get into swing, there was a reality that the Arrow team had to contend with. The Kann-Schellinger Company informed the team at a preseason meeting that the company could no longer give the team the support that had been given in 1919. If the team agreed to continue using the Arrow name in 1920, the company would contribute \$500.00 at the start of the season and another \$250.00 in mid-October.

When one considers the fact that 12 Arrow players were given a \$200.00 bonus each and the rest of the subs received \$100.00 at the end of the 1919 season, this sum offered was an indication of the company's uncertainty of existence and viability. The Arrow beer was to become a non-alcoholic drink and the company would also bottle root beer, an orange drink and other fruit drinks. The company's dark beer, the K&S Special, would also be a non-alcoholic drink. Both the Arrow and the K&S drinks were referred to as creamy, delicious and refreshing cereal drinks.

The Arrows decided to play as many home games as they could and hoped to travel no further than 50 or 75 miles as to avoid hotel costs. An overture by Stanley Cofall to join a proposed league was turned down. Cofall had been visiting with Knute Rockne, who coached Stan when he starred at Notre Dame. The agreement with Hunk Anderson to coach the Arrows was kept. Hunk would coach the team three days a week for \$25 and if he could make it on Sunday for the game, he'd get an additional \$20. Hunk was a junior guard at Notre Dame and like many of his predecessors who coached South Bend pro teams by moonlighting, Hunk found this an easy way to get some extra cash. In 1919, the Arrows were coached by Rockne's assistant Gus Dorais and senior center, Slip Madigan. But then Kann & Schellinger was footing the bill. Most of the practice sessions were held at night except the one on Mondays. Rockne always gave his first stringers a day off on Monday while the reserves were obliged to practice, so daytime practice was possible on Monday for the pros under coach Anderson.

Prohibition also brought uncertainty to the Koehler and Schaefer "cigar store" and the team was disbanded. Thus the South Bend Arrows picked up two backs, a center and an end. The rest of the Tiger team was picked up by some of the other local teams. Finley, Gemberling, Schagel and Meyers of Koehler and Schaefer joined the Arrows mainstays of Colip, Klosinski, Gore, Makielski, Grey, Klysz, Walling, Grueyr, Yeager, and Paluski, to form a talented and experienced aggregation that claimed the 1920 Indiana State Championship, having gone through the season with an unblemished record.

In 1920, South Bend Arrows gained exclusive use of Springbrook Park, and remembering the large crowds the team drew for its games, tried to schedule as many home games as was possible. Inflation's grip on the football follower's pocket book resulted in a drop-off at the gate. It can be said though, that the Arrows outdrew Notre Dame, whose Cartier Field had been enlarged to a capacity of 20,000, on one particular weekend when the Irish played to a sparse (for Notre Dame) crowd of only 3200 fans. The opposition for the Irish was its weakest opponent on the schedule, the hapless Western State Normal team; the advance promise of great battle between the Arrows and Goshen Delts, who supposedly

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boasted of Purdue and Valparaiso University stars on the squad, seemed to be more attractive and drew almost 5,000 fans.

The *South Bend News Times* did cover some of the Arrows' games in 1920. Whenever there was coverage, the game report was fairly complete. The home games that were not covered could be found in some obscure spot in the sports page with only the score of the game printed. When a review of the season was printed by the paper, it only noted the games that were either mentioned only by score or the ones that had game coverage. The newspaper's files did not have anything on the two games the Arrows played on the road and won.

The road games could have been one of four Chicago teams -- the Thorn Tornadoes, Racine Cardinals, Cornell Hamburgs or the Boosters. The other road game might have been an Indiana team. The players interviewed some 40 years later, named the above mentioned teams as possibilities, but there was no consensus and there was an admission by each of them that it could have been another year and another team that the individual played with, which met those Chicago clubs. Indianapolis McGraws was an Indiana team mentioned, but it was highly unlikely that the Arrows played the McGraws because Indianapolis is 135 miles from South Bend, pretty much past the Arrow team's travel restriction. It was more likely Pine Village, Kendalville or Muncie Meadow Golds, who preceded the Congerville Flyers, that was the out-of-town game for the Arrows.

The Arrows opened the 1920 season against the star-studded Goshen Delts. There was no report or score on that game, but subsequent articles about the Arrows' future games also reviewed the season up to date with mention of a rout of the Goshen Delts in the season opener. There were three games in 1920 that were given some decent amount of space in the *South Bend News Times*. One article described the lop-sided 41 to 0 Arrow victory over the Michigan City Nepos as one "where the South Bend driving forwards opened holes on every play through which the backs marched almost at will." Klysz scored twice and a host of regular and substitute backs managed one score each. The Nepos had three former college stars in their line-up.

The defeat of the Wabash A.A. team by a score of 20 to 6 marked the only time the Arrows team was scored on all season. Allowing only six points in nine contests certainly gave evidence that rookie coach Hunk Anderson was destined to become, as George Halas put it, "The greatest line coach who ever lived." The Arrows line outplayed the Wabash line, and as the game report stated, "Much heralded Wabash found itself unable to gain through the line or the flanks and early on, relied on the aerial way which was employed throughout the entire contest." Paluski, Grey and Makielski scored for the Arrows.

The Arrows also triumphed over Rum Village 18-0 and the Mishawaka Pastimes by two touchdowns. A good Fort Wayne Pyramids team with ex-collegians in the line-up, such as player/coach Louie Island, a former Carlisle Indians player and Jim Thorpe's teammate, Walde and Smith of Purdue and Kenton Baker, ex-Ohio University star, lost to the Arrows by a score of 13-0. It was a bruising, hard-hitting affair with the Pyramids getting so battered, that in the following mid-week they cancelled a game against Cincinnati in order to heal their injuries.

During the course of the season, another area team from Mishawaka, Indiana emerged on the gridiron scene with a formidable team. The Pastimes wanted a game with the Arrows and the team manager, Pop Frankel, later to become a legend in South Bend baseball circles, took out a grand sized advertisement in the local paper issuing a public challenge to the Arrows. The challenge was accepted and the Arrows won by a couple of touchdowns. This victory enabled the Arrows to be proclaimed northern Indiana champions. Still another challenge was issued by wire to the Arrows from the Gas City eleven, located a little over a hundred miles downstate from South Bend.

Because Gas City and the South Bend Arrows were the only two undefeated teams in Indiana, the proposed game was to decide the Indiana State Football Champion. Indiana's largest newspaper, the *Indianapolis Star*, called it "a game for the State independent football championship." The Arrows made the normal guarantee offer for the game to be played in South Bend, but Gas City counter-offered a much larger guarantee which made the expenses of the trip and overnight stay at a hotel the day before the game, well within what the Arrows wanted to pay. Also there was more than enough in the pot left over for a hefty players' share. The game was a two-community project. Businessmen from Gas City and nearby Marion, the grand County seat, provided a lion share in the form of a subsidy in order to have the championship game.

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The game was won by the South Benders by a score of 6-0. This is the game that was shortened by the officials by two minutes to protect the South Benders from the unruly and threatening crowd. The defenses of both teams were superb. Near the end, a Gas City defender hit the Arrows quarterback head-on and jarred the ball loose for a fumble and a Gas City recovery deep in the South Benders' territory. Gas City lost yardage on the first two downs and passed on third only to be intercepted by Bobby Colip, the man who had fumbled. It appeared that he might go all the way with Gas City players in pursuit. The overflow crowd had been ushered along the sideline because the stands were full, and it was one of the fans who tripped Colip and made him lose stride and stumble enough for the Gas City players to pounce on him. Bobby and a couple of others started to go after the fan but other teammates restrained them. The officials did not see what had happened because everybody was running after Bobby, either to tackle him or block for him. There had been altercations between some of the players and of course sensing defeat, this incident didn't sit well with the crowd. The officials were obscured by the mass of players in the pursuit and therefore could not make a call. Shooting the gun off a couple of minutes early to end the game was indeed a prudent thing to do.

The South Bend Arrows, 1920 Indiana State Champions

E- Wynberg, LE, (QB); Paluski, RE; Walling, LE-RE; Paster Sobieralski, LE-RE; Cavanaugh, RE; J. Swift, RE, (QB).

T- John Klosinski, LT-RT; T. Pokrop, RT; J. Myers, LT-RT.

G- Bulldog Gore, LG-RG; Gruse, RG-LG; Buck Zalas, RG-LG; Jim Worth, RG-C.

C- Schagel, Butch Dion.

H- Flash Makielski, LH-RH; Bob Grey, RH; Scooter Yeager, LH; Gemberling, RH-LH.

F- F. Findley, Steve Klysz, FB-QB.

Q- Bobby Colip; J. Swift, QB-RE; E.Z. "Easy" Barron, QB-C.

COACH- Hunk Anderson. MANAGER- J. Benko.

Thus in 1920, the Arrows team was successful at the gate and on the gridiron. The strategy employed by the Arrows to counter inflation was also used by another Indiana independent club named the Fort Wayne Friars, but with different results.

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Prior to World War I, Fort Wayne had an athletic club named the Friars, which consistently fielded good and noteworthy teams. Because the city is situated near the Ohio border, the Friars often played Ohio teams as well as those from Indiana. As was the custom in those days among teams with important games scheduled, Fort Wayne would on occasion employ a "ringer" or two who usually turned out to be a current-matriculating college football player. Knute Rockne played for the Friars sub-rosa in 1913 under the alias, Jones. Having blown the whistle on a Notre Dame contingent in 1914 playing for the South Bend Silver Edge, the Friars thereafter relied on graduated stars for its roster when needed.

In 1919, Fort Wayne had two good teams organized to resume postwar football. A team called World War Vets and another called the T.O.P.'s were in the forefront. Although losing earlier in the season to the South Bend Arrows, the Vets billed a game with Pine Village as a state championship contest. The game ended in a scoreless tie.

In 1920, the Friars Athletic Association decided to put an excellent team on the gridiron and recapture the glory of its past. Some players from the World War Vets and the T.O.P.'s were signed, but the Friars also held tryouts before taking anyone on. There was a rivalry for talent because a team called the Pyramids also tried to siphon off the talent of the Fort Wayne teams of the previous year. What the Pyramids didn't know, was that the Friars had League Park sewed up for every Sunday during the football season. Because of the inflation, the Friars planned on playing all their games at home.

Newspapers headlines in late summer heralded a proposed march on Washington by various citizens groups to protest the high cost of living. But when the decade of the '20's ended, it was referred to as "The Golden Age of Sports" by some and the "Roarin' Twenties" by others. Given the right to vote in 1920 by the 19th Amendment, women began to find new freedoms. Entrepreneurs such as C.C. Pyle proliferated; movie houses that rivaled ornate opera houses of Europe in appointed splendor were built, and general economic growth in our nation spread to every segment of our population.

But in 1920, there had to be adjustments made and the Friars based their financial strategy on the projection that they could draw at least 2,000 fans per game by playing at home in League Park. Players who were the fan's favorites in 1919 while playing for the Vets and T.O.P.'s were counted on to help

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attract good crowds. Ohio University stars Cy Seymore and Kenton Baker, as well as the popular Millers, Whitey and Hap, seemed to form a nucleus for a good team, although Baker shifted allegiance and decided to play for the Pyramids.

The season started at Legion Park on October 3, against the Cincinnati Celts. The Celts emerged victorious after a bruising battle, winning by a score of 6-0 on a 20-yard run by Shiner Knabb. The size of the crowd was not reported. The defeat experienced by the Friars wouldn't be as bad as what surprises were in store for them.

Jackson, Michigan tried to schedule a game with the Friars, but the Friars would not travel to Jackson, and Jackson felt the counter offer that the Friars made was insufficient for them to travel to Fort Wayne. The Pyramids, who had no facility for home games, immediately contacted Jackson and accepted the game. The Friars had negotiated with a Dayton, Ohio team for their next game at Legion Park on October 10. Sunday came and the Friars and their fans waited and waited and after several hours discovered that apparently the Dayton Computing Scales team would be a "no-show." There were no communications before that Sunday date in regard to cancellation and none after that date by the Dayton team. The Friars said that they would consult with their attorney. In speculation, one could guess that when the Dayton team inquired about their railroad tickets and how much they would cost, they decided to forget the game.

The following week, the Columbus Panhandles were scheduled and that team showed up. For this game, the Friars added three new men, one was an end named Reno, who had played for Wabash A.A.'s, and the other was former Purdue star Ken Huffine. Bob Peck, a former Pittsburgh University great, was also acquired to bolster the Friars center. The Friars won the game 14-0 on two sustained drives, with the newly acquired Huffine scoring both TD's. Coach Sturm of the Friars was once again smiling as the Friars evened their record at 1-1.

October 24 was the date that the Cleveland Panthers were going to be in town to battle the Friars. Friar Manager, Charles Pask, after a contract was signed, wanted to confirm the fact that the Panthers would indeed appear. George T. Jones, the manager of the Cleveland team, sent a voluminous wire with assurances which included an itinerary of departure time from Cleveland, arrival time in Fort Wayne, a token forfeit deposit, and, as a gesture of good faith, Jones promised to send an advance man ahead of the team. This made the Friar management a little more secure.

Sunday came and a good size crowd anticipated an entertaining afternoon of football. As 2:30 arrived, the scheduled time for the kickoff, the Friar management pressed the panic button. Efforts were made to try to locate the Panthers, and a check at the depot revealed that the train which was to bring the Cleveland team, came and departed with no football contingent disembarking at the station. At 3:30, the game was called off and the spectators were given a choice of a refund or a trade of their stubs on the coming Thursday for a ticket to the following Sunday's game. As for the taken forfeit, it wasn't big enough to pay the officials or the park's work crew.

Having been burned twice, the Friars asked of their next opponent to post a sizable forfeit deposit. The sports editor of the *Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette* also got into the act. He contacted the manager of Lansing Oldsmobiles asking if the Lansing team would indeed honor its contract by playing the game. A special delivery letter was received by the editor. The letterhead was impressive with an international cable address added, but more impressive was the reply. The manager of the Olds team informed the editor that they had chartered a train to bring the team, 125 supporters and a 35 piece band. He further stated that he had made a 12% deposit which came to \$1,300.00 with the New York Central line and that the editor could call that railroad's office in Fort Wayne for verification. The letter was signed J.H. Chapman, Football Manager - Oldsmobile Club Personnel Division. A call to New York Central verified the contents of that letter and the game was a certainty.

Two days before that letter exchange, a suit was filed on behalf of the Friars by attorney Stephen Callahan against the Dayton Computing Scales club and company. Compensation was sought for a breach of contract that resulted in financial losses and disappointment caused to the local Friar fans. As far as the Cleveland Panthers were concerned, the Friars were advised to seek compensation through negotiations before trying any legal action. The case against Cleveland was weak because there was a forfeit deposit, albeit meager, and legally the Panthers were in the clear.

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The Lansing Oldsmobiles did show up and battled the Friars to a scoreless tie with each team failing to cash in on scoring opportunities on several occasions. The largest crowd in the team's history was on hand for the game, totaling 3,500 rabid Friar fans.

There were no pre-game hassles for the Friar's remaining games. The Detroit Herald came to town and played the Friars on even terms with that game too, ending in a scoreless tie. The Friars beat the Pitcairn Quakers 7-0 on a touchdown by Chambers that was set up by an interference penalty. The grand finale that year was the game with the Notre Dame freshman squad. Knute Rockne started the practice at Notre Dame whereby freshmen would scrimmage as a unit against the varsity using the opponents' plays on Wednesday of game week. Near the end of the season, Rockne scheduled one or two games for the freshmen as a reward and also a valuable vehicle for the youngsters to obtain game experience. Rockne contacted Purdue but the Boilermakers had ended the season for their freshmen. Knowing Hunk Anderson coached the Arrows, Rock asked Hunk to check with them since he was going to rush out after practicing with Notre Dame and hold his own session with the Arrows. Hunk said, "I'll see Rock, but I'm pretty sure they already had signed contracts to play Gas City." In the meantime, Charlie Pask had contacted the Arrows for a game against the Friars and was told that the Gas City game they had scheduled was a solid commitment. They told him however, that Rockne was trying to schedule a game for his freshman squad. Pask then called Rockne and all details were worked out over the phone in what was a verbal contract.

This game was played on a Saturday afternoon on a muddy gridiron. Rockne went with Notre Dame's varsity to East Lansing where the Irish played the Michigan Aggies -- now Michigan State -- and sent Notre Dame's assistant coach Walter Halas (George's younger brother) to guide the freshmen. The muddy field and slippery ball hampered both teams and they resorted to straight football with a pass thrown now and then. There were many fumbles on both sides but as the half ended, the Friars led 6-0 on a touchdown by Stuart after a sustained drive. And the Friars led until almost the end of the 3rd quarter when Notre Dame's Bergman intercepted a Friar pass and ran 70 yards for a touchdown. The mud caused all the kicks for extra points to be missed.

On the first Notre Dame possession of the ball in the fourth quarter, coach Halas decided to "open up." As the *Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette* described it, "Notre Dame cut loose with a bewildering array of forward passes, trick plays, shift formations, and massed interference in the first quarter that spelled defeat for the locals." Notre Dame scored twice more and then the game ended with the freshmen threatening to score again, with the final tally being 18-6 in favor of Notre Dame's freshmen.

Both Notre Dame varsity and freshmen were victorious on the same day. The varsity beat Michigan State 25-0 and they played without the Gipper. Gipp was in South Bend's St. Joseph Hospital battling for his life. What started as a strep throat had developed into pneumonia. On December 1, the doctors thought a transfusion of blood might help and Hunk Anderson, whose blood was compatible with Gipp's, was the donor. Gipp rallied and appeared to be regaining energy, but a day later his condition worsened and he died on the morning of December 14, at 3:23 a.m.

The attendance figures for the Friar-Notre Dame game were not given but it can be assumed that it was less than hoped for. It was a Saturday game and a lot of the Friar fans were at work while others caught up with shopping. Secondly, it had rained heavily through the night and as morning came, the threat of more rain persisted. Can one speculate that the all-home games strategy was a financial success?

Actually it can be assumed that the Friars were lucky to break even. The two "no show" games hurt. There were expenses for those games but no receipts, because of refunds or free ticket exchanges for the following game. There was some sort of adjustment for the players for those unplayed games, but not a full salary. The Friars lost a couple of players after those unplayed games, but it isn't clear as to whether they departed because of the fiasco or whether they left because they were "team hoppers" playing for one team on one Sunday and another team the following Sunday.

It can be safely said that the South Bend Arrows' strategy for fighting inflation worked. With an almost identical strategy the Fort Wayne Friars were successful as well, because they avoided traveling expenses and the club was again dedicated to putting a good team on the field and playing all comers. They saved money but did the Friars make money?