

A CENTURY OF 'FIRSTS' IN PRO FOOTBALL, 1892-1992

Reprinted from Insider! By permission of the Pro Football Hall of Fame

FIRST PRO - November 12, 1892 - William "Pudge" Heffelfinger is paid \$500 to play for the Allegheny Athletic Association.

FIRST NIGHT GAME - November 21, 1902 - The Philadelphia Athletics defeated the Kanaweola A.C. at Elmira New York, on a lighted field.

FIRST INDOOR GAME - December 28, 1902 - The Syracuse A.C. defeated New York 5-0 in Madison Square Garden.

FIRST BLACK - September 16, 1904 - Halfback Charles Follis reportedly signed a contract to play with the Shelby A.C.

FIRST SEASON A TOUCHDOWN WAS WORTH SIX POINTS – 1912 - From 1892 to 1898., a TD was worth four points. From 1898 to 1911 it was worth five points.

PRO FOOTBALL'S FIRST LEAGUE

On September 17 1920, pro football's first league, the American Professional Football Association, was organized in Canton, Ohio. Two years later, the APFA changed its name to the National Football League.

First APFA President - Jim Thorpe

First APFA Games Between League Members - October 3, 1920:

Dayton Triangles 14, Columbus Panhandles 0 ; Rock Island Independents 45, Muncie Flyers 0

First APFA Champion - Akron Pros, 1920

First Two-Time NFL Champion – Canton Bulldogs, 1922-1923

FIRST NFL TEAM TO TRAIN OUT OF TOWN - 1926 New York Giants at Lake Ariel, Pennsylvania.

FIRST NFL TEAM TO HOST A NIGHT GAME - November 6, 1929 – Providence Steam Roller lost to Chicago Cardinals 16-0.

FIRST NFL INDOOR GAME - December 17, 1930 - The Chicago Bears defeated the Chicago Cardinals 9-7 in an exhibition game in Chicago Stadium.

THE 1932 INDOOR GAME AND NEW RULES 'FIRSTS'

For the first time in NFL history, two teams, the Chicago Bears and Portsmouth Spartans, decide to stage a one-game playoff to determine the 1932 championship. The game was played indoors in Chicago Stadium. Because of the cramped quarters, several NFL rules 'firsts' were employed. They included:

1. Inbound lines or "hashmarks".
2. Goal posts moved from end line to goal line.
3. 80-yard field

The first two items were made into new rules in 1933. On February 25, 1933, the NFL discontinued the use of the Collegiate Rules Book and began to develop its own rules. The most significant change was that the forward pass became legal anywhere behind the scrimmage line.

On July 8, 1933, the NFL was divided into **two divisions** for the first time. On December 17, 1933, the Chicago Bears defeated the New York Giants 23-21 in the **first official NFL championship game**.

FIRST COLLEGE ALL-STAR GAME - August 31, 1934 - NFL Champion Chicago Bears and College All-Stars played to a scoreless tie.

FIRST NFL PLAYER TO RUSH FOR 1,000 YARDS – 1934 - Beattie Feathers Chicago Bears, 1,004 yards on 119 carries.

THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 14, No. 5 (1992)

FIRST PLAYER PICKED IN FIRST NFL DRAFT - February 8, 1936 – Jay Berwanger, University of Chicago Heisman Trophy winner, selected by Philadelphia Eagles.

FIRST PRO BOWL - January 15, 1939 - the New York Giants defeated the Pro All-Stars 13-10 at Wrigley Field in Los Angeles.

FIRST DIVISIONAL PLAYOFF GAME - Decembet 14, 1941 - The Chicago Bears defeated the Green Bay Packers 33-14 in the NFL Western Division championship playoff game.

FIRST ADOPTION OF FREE SUBSTITUTION RULE - 1943 - First adopted because of war-tirne manpower emergency. Rule was rescinded in 1946 bul adopted on a permanent basis in 1959.

FIRST “TRIPLE CROWN” WINNER - 1943 - Sammy Baugh, Washington Redskins, led the NFL in passing, punting, and interceptions.

FIRST USE OF PENALTY FLAG BY NFL OFFICIALS - 1948.

FIRST INTERNATIONAL GAME BY NFL TEAM - August 12, 1950 - The New York Giants defeated the CFL’s Ottawa Roughriders 20-6 in a game played in Ottawa.

FIRST TO RUSH FOR 1,000 YARDS TWO STRAIGHT SEASONS - 1953-1954 – Joe Perry, San Francisco 49ers.

FIRST OVERTIME GAME - August 28, 1955 - The Los Angeles Rams defeated the New York Giants 23-17 after three minutes of overtime in a pre-season game.

FIRST OVERTIME CHAMPIONSHIP GAME - December 28, 1958 - The Baltimore Colts defeated the New York Giants 23-17 in what many called “the greatest game ever played.”

FIRST VISITOR TO THE PRO FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME - September 7, 1963, Canton, Ohio.

FIRST SOCCER-STYLE PLACEKICKER - 1964 - Pete Gogolak, Buffalo Bills.

FIRST U.S. PRESIDENT TO ATTEND NFL GAME WHILE IN OFFICE - August 3, 1966 - Lyndon Johnson at D.C. Stadium for pre-season game.