

1949 AAFC CHAMPIONSHIP: FINISHING IN STYLE

The fourth and final All-America Football Conference championship game took place only a few days after word leaked out that a merger agreement had been reached between the AAFC and the NFL, one that would close the AAFC forever. No doubt the knowledge that this was a lame duck championship was a factor in holding the crowd at Cleveland's Municipal Stadium to a disappointing 22,550.

Nevertheless, the game had an interesting plot line in that it was the last chance for the San Francisco 49ers to sully the Cleveland Browns' four-year record of AAFC dominance. In each of the AAFC's first three seasons, the 49ers had finished behind the Browns in the league's western division. When the league was reduced to seven teams for 1949, the division format was discarded in favor of a playoff system to determine the champion. In the opening round, Cleveland, which had finished first during the regular season, defeated fourth-place Buffalo, 31-21. Second-place San Francisco knocked off the third-place Yankees, 17-7, to put the 49ers into a championship game for the first time.

The field was a mixture of mud and slush, but surprisingly neither team lost the ball on either a fumble or interception. Only one penalty was walked off all afternoon, a mere five yards against Cleveland.

Cleveland's Edgar (Special Delivery) Jones scored the only touchdown of the first half on a two-yard plunge midway through the first quarter. Lou Groza converted to make it 7-0. After that, the teams played on even terms to the intermission.

Marion Motley, Cleveland's big fullback, scored the Browns' second touchdown on the game's most spectacular play in the third quarter. He burst up the middle on a trap play for 63 yards and the score. Groza advanced the score to 14-0.

The 49ers responded with a 74-yard drive culminating in a Frankie Albert-to-Paul Salata touchdown toss good for 23 yards. That allowed little Joe Vetrano to kick his 107th consecutive extra point and preserve his record of having scored in every San Francisco game since they began.

With the score narrowed to 14-7, the Browns began a march of their own to cinch the victory. It ended successfully 69 yards later on Dub Jones' four-yard smash for a touchdown. Groza kicked the final AAFC point.

Municipal Stadium, Cleveland, December 11, 1949 Attendance: 22,550

CLEVELAND BROWNS 21		SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS 7				
Speedie	LE	Shoener				
Groza	LT	Mike				
Ulinski	LG	Hobbs				
Gatski	C	Johnson				
Houston	RG	Grgich				
Rymkus	RT	Woudenberg				
Lavelli	RE	Beals				
Graham	QB	Albert				
E.Jones	LH	Eshmont				
D.Jones	RH	Perry				
Motley	FB	Standlee				
Cleveland Browns	7	0	7	7	-	21
San Francisco 49ers	0	0	0	7	-	7

Cle: E.Jones (2-yard run), XP: Groza
Cle: Motley (68-yard run), XP: Groza

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SF : Salata (23-yard pass from Albert), XP: Vetrano
Cle: D.Jones (4-yard run), XP: Groza

Substitutions:

CLEVELAND - E: Young, Gillom, Yonakor; T: Palmer, Grigg, Spencer; G: Willis, Agase, Gaudio, Humble; C: Saban; B: Lewis, Lahr, James, Adamle, Sustersic.
SAN FRANCISCO - E: Salata, Bruce, Maloney; T: Evans, Quilter, Carpenter; G: Clark, Banducci; C: Wismann, Sabuco; B: Cathcart, Cason, Garlin, Vetrano, Wagner, Lillywhite.

Referee: Thomas A. Timlin; Umpire: William A. Pritchard; Head Linesman: William H. Ohrenberger; Field Judge: Lloyd Brazil; Sideline Judge: Edward F. Fendt.

Each Brown received \$266.11; each 49er \$172.61.