

THE NFL IN 1939

By John Hogrogian

In 1939, 17.2 percent of the workforce of the United States was unemployed. This amounted to 9.4 million idle workers. This was better than the ruinous 24.9 percent rate of 1933, but nowhere near the miniscule 3.2 percent rate of 1929.

Despite the economy's lukewarm performance, the NFL enjoyed record attendance for the fourth straight year. According to the *1940 Official National Football League Guide*, "official [1939] figures show that 1,280,332 attended fifty-five league championship games, 32,279 saw the title play-off at Milwaukee between Green Bay and New York, and another 262,678 witnessed nine all-star contests."

The *1940 Guide* printed the following table of regular-season attendance:

Teams	1939 Attendance	Games	Largest Crowd
New York	233,440	6	62,543
Detroit	185,061	6	48,492*
Washington	164,509	6	36,183*
Brooklyn	137,191	7	34,032*
Chicago Bears	135,684	5	40,537
Philadelphia	110,334	5	33,258
Cleveland	107,378	6	30,691*
Green Bay	87,738	5	24,308* @
Chicago Cardinals	60,311	4	18,965 @
Pittsburgh	58,686	5	19,708

* = new home game record
@ = Milwaukee home game

The Cardinals played one home game against Green Bay at Milwaukee. The Packers played one home game against Washington at Milwaukee. The Rams played one home game against Philadelphia at Colorado Springs, Colorado.

The Giants had a league-high average of 39,000 fans per game, and the Lions had an impressive 31,000 average. Most impressive, however, was the attendance record of the Redskins. Their average of 27,000 was about 95 percent of seating capacity in 29,000-seat Griffith Stadium. Attendance at NFL games was on the upswing, as was newspaper and radio coverage of those games. On October 22, the Dodgers-Eagles game from Ebbets Field was televised to the few receivers of the new medium in New York City. From this first NFL telecast, big things would grow.

A New League President

NFL president Joe Carr did not live to see the million-fan season. He died on May 20, 1939. He had been president of the league since 1921 (when it was known as the American Professional Football Association) and steered it to financial stability. The prosperity of the television era was still in the future and largely unforeseeable, but the instability of the 1920's was a thing of the past. Succeeding Carr as president was another stalwart from the NFL's early days, league vice-president Carl Storck.

The Pre-Season All-Star Games

If (like the author) you are fifty-years-old or more, you probably remember the College All-Star game, played in Chicago every year before the season between the defending NFL champs and a squad of the

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best graduated college players. The last game of the series was played in 1976, with NFL teams having tired of their top draft choices missing the first part of training camp.

In 1939, there were seven of these games. They were popular pre-season attractions. The pros won each game.

<u>Date</u>	<u>NFL team</u>	<u>Opponent</u>	<u>Site</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Att.</u>
8/22	Eagles	Eastern Coll A-S	Phil.	17- 0	25,000
8/30	Giants	College A-S	Chicago	9- 0	81,456
9/4	Packers	S.W. Coll A-S	Dallas	31-20	20,000
9/6	Rams	Ohio Coll A-S	Cleveland	28- 0	21,442
9/7	Giants	Eastern Coll A-S	New York	10- 0	38,667
9/11	Redskins	College A-S	Boston	30-27	25,000
9/15	Giants	College A-S	Providence	31- 0	12,000

The Alpha Dogs in the East

In 1939, the NFL had ten teams and a thirty-man roster limit. All ten teams returned from last year. Among the five teams in the Eastern Division, the New York Giants and the Washington Redskins were the powerhouses. In each of the last three years, they had faced each other in New York on the final weekend of the regular season with the divisional title at stake. The Redskins had won in 1936 and 1937, the Giants in 1938.

The Giants were now the defending NFL champions. Coach Steve Owen wisely kept his 1938 squad almost entirely intact. The Giants had so much talent that Owen fielded two separate elevens and alternated them by quarters (although Mel Hein played most of the minutes at center in all quarters). On the unit that usually started, Ed Danowski and Ward Cuff were the backfield stars, while Hein, John Dell Isola, Orville Tuttle, John Mellus, and Jim Poole excelled up front. The leaders of the alternate eleven were tailback Tuffy Leemans and tackle Ed Widseth. The Giants were the best defensive team in the NFL. Although their offense was good, it slumped a bit because of disappointing seasons by passer Danowski and runner Hank Soar.

The Redskins were top-notch on both offense and defense. Coach Ray Flaherty strengthened his already-strong squad by keeping eleven rookies, including such useful talents as backs Dick Todd and Wilbur Moore and linemen Bo Russell and Steve Slivinski. Flaherty enjoyed riches in the backfield, especially with third-year passing star Sammy Baugh and multi-talented second-year backs Frank Filchock and Andy Farkas. Veterans Turk Edwards, Jim Barber, Jim Karcher, and Wayne Millner were the pillars of the line. The Redskins had reason to hope for a return to the NFL championship game for the third time in four games.

The Alpha Dogs in the West

The Packers, Lions, and Bears were the best teams in the Western Division. Although they lost the 1938 championship game, the Packers were at the peak of their pre-World War II form. Coach Curly Lambeau had a solid veteran line, built around Buckets Goldenberg, Russ Letlow, and Buford Ray. Don Hutson was the league's premier pass receiver, with tailbacks Arnie Herber and Cecil Isbell doing most of the tossing. Isbell and Clarke Hinkle were the top runners. Two rookies strengthened the lineup. Larry Craig of South Carolina played blocking back on offense and end on defense, freeing Hutson to use his speed in the defensive secondary. Charley Brock of Nebraska had a nose for interceptions at linebacker. The Packers were good on both sides of the line of scrimmage.

The Lions ended the 1938 season in gut-wrenching fashion, losing 21-7 to the lightly-regarded Eagles on the final day of the season to fall out of a first-place tie with the Packers. Since that game, Dutch Clark, Ace Gutowsky, Ernie Caddel, and George Christensen had all left the Lions, essentially breaking up the squad that had won the 1935 NFL title and compiled a record of 39-18-2 since the team moved to Detroit in 1934. The Lions had some established stars in fullback Bill Shepherd, wingback Lloyd Cardwell, and tackle Jack Johnson, but it needed to rebuild around them. One key move was to replace Dutch Clark as head coach with Gus Henderson, a successful coach with USC, Tulsa University, and the Los Angeles Bulldogs (probably the best pro team outside the NFL). The Lions signed three 1938 All-Americans in tailback Johnny Pingel of Michigan State, fullback Howie Weiss of Wisconsin, and tackle Steve Maronic of North Carolina. Only Pingel, however, won a first-string position. Guard John Wiethe joined the Lions after playing with the Cincinnati Bengals (an independent pro team) in 1938 and immediately excelled. Although Henderson was known as an innovative coach, the Lions continued in their traditional role as a tough defensive team with a ball-control offense.

The Bears were assembling a special team in Chicago. They had made it to the NFL championship game in 1933, 1934, and 1937, winning the title in 1933. After the 1937 season, fullback Bronko Nagurski retired, removing the strongest player on a strong team. The Bears fell to a 6-5 record in 1938, with fumbles plaguing them on offense. George Halas was rebuilding the Bears on two fronts, talent and theory. As to talent, he had a strong foundation in veteran linemen Joe Stydahar, Danny Fortmann, George Musso, Frank Bausch, and Dick Plasman. With several clever trades that stockpiled draft choices, Halas added a remarkable class of nine rookies to his team. Among them were four 1938 All-American backs: Sid Luckman of Columbia, Bill Osmanski of Holy Cross, Bob MacLeod of Dartmouth, and Billy Patterson of Baylor. Luckman would become the starting quarterback in the latter part of the season. In the early going, Luckman often played halfback while studying up on the complex duties of a T-formation quarterback. He ultimately mastered the position. Rookie linemen who would play for years with the Bears were Aldo Forte of Montana, Ray Bray of Western Michigan, and John Siegal of Columbia.

In addition to raising his team's talent level, Halas was also polishing the Bears' T-formation offense. While the single-wing offense (used by every other NFL team) emphasized power plays with massed blocking, the T-formation offense emphasized quick-opening runs and deceptive ball-handling by the quarterback. Halas and University of Chicago coach Clark Shaughnessy often consulted and added new wrinkles to the offense.

The Beta Dogs

Two teams were pretty good but not yet ready to challenge the big dogs. The Brooklyn Dodgers had several outstanding players, but a weak interior line limited the team's progress. Coach Patsy Clark had at his disposal an excellent passer and runner in third-year tailback Ace Parker, a superb second-year tackle in small-but-quick Bruiser Kinard, and an outstanding pass receiver in second-year end Perry Schwartz. Of this year's rookie crop, Pug Manders played blocking back for the first part of the schedule, then shifted to fullback and gained good yardage as a power runner. The rest of the roster, however, consisted of players either past their peak or lacking the ability to excel in the NFL.

The Cleveland Rams had new leadership in head coach Dutch Clark, the longtime Lions star and, for two years, player-coach. Like the Dodgers, the Rams lacked excellence in the interior line but had stars in the backfield and at end. The centerpiece of the team was rookie tailback Parker Hall of Mississippi, a terrific passer, runner, and defender. Other standouts for the Rams were fullback Johnny Drake, blocking back Vic Spadaccini, and end Jim Benton.

The Omega Dogs

The Eagles, Pirates, and Cardinals each won just one game. Ironically, four men now in the Pro Football Hall of Fame coached these punching bags. Bert Bell coached the Eagles, Johnny Blood coached the Pirates for their first three games, Walt Kiesling completed the season for the Pirates, and Ernie Nevers ran the Cardinals.

The Eagles expected to be at least beta dogs this year. They had won five games in 1938, had knocked the Lions out of the post-season by beating them 21-7 in Detroit on the last day of the season, and had signed their first marquee player in rookie Davey O'Brien. Small in build, O'Brien had won the 1938 Heisman Trophy with prolific passing and open-field running at Texas Christian University. Bert Bell, however, had trouble blending O'Brien's talents in with his returning players. Last year's Eagles used a ball-control offense featuring fullback Dave Smukler and a surprisingly tenacious defense. This year's Eagles would pass frequently and lose frequently.

The Pittsburgh Pirates played on without their 1938 star, Byron (Whizzer) White. When last season ended, White went to England as a Rhodes Scholar to study at Oxford University. When England went to war in September, all the foreign Rhodes Scholars were sent home. White enrolled in the Yale Law School. Owner Art Rooney and coach Johnny Blood replaced White and other departing players with relatively unknown, cheaper talent. The outclassed Pirates would draw only about 11,000 fans per game at Forbes Field. During the season, newspapers would report rumors that the Pirates would move to either Boston or Los Angeles.

The Chicago Cardinals were a sad afterthought both in Chicago and in the NFL. The Cards would play three games in Wrigley Field (two of them blowout losses to the Bears), one game in Soldier Field, and seven games out of town. Each of the two home games not involving the Bears would draw modest

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crowds of 10,000 fans. Owner Bill Bidwill hired Ernie Nevers, one of the greatest players in Cardinals history, as head coach. He also signed two talented 1938 All-Americans, center Ki Aldrich and tailback Marshall Goldberg of Pittsburgh. Although Goldberg was a strong runner, he was not a good passer. The team's passing offense was crippled by the retirements of end Gaynell Tinsley and passer Pat Coffee and by the trade of passer Dwight Sloan to Detroit. With an undersized line, the Cards had little cause for optimism.

September and October

At the end of October, the standings read as follows:

<u>East</u>		<u>West</u>	
NY	5-0-1	GB	5-1-0
Was	4-1-1	Det	5-1-0
Bkn	3-3-1	ChiB	4-3-0
Phi	0-4-1	Cle	2-4-1
Pit	0-6-1	ChiC	1-6-0.

The only true upset was Cleveland's 27-24 victory at Green Bay on October 1. Otherwise, the standings were shaped by meetings of the best teams.

The Giants and the Redskins played a scoreless tie in the rain and mud in Washington on October 1. Otherwise, the Giants beat four lesser opponents and proved their strength by edging the Bears 16-13 before 58,963 fans in the Polo Grounds on October 22. The Giants took a 16-0 lead on Len Barnum's 13-yard touchdown run and Ward Cuff's three field goals. Sid Luckman started the game at halfback for the Bears, moved to quarterback in place of Bernie Masterson, and threw his first NFL touchdown pass to Dick Plasman midway through the fourth quarter.

The Redskins won four games against lesser teams, then lost 24-14 to the Packers in Milwaukee on October 29. With rain creating a slippery condition, the Packers intercepted five Sammy Baugh passes and one Frank Filchok pass. Packer tailback Cecil Isbell passed and ran well despite the rain.

The Dodgers beat Pittsburgh and Cleveland to start the season, but they were trounced in their first two meetings with alpha dogs. After a 41-13 humiliation at Washington on October 8, coach Patsy Clark cut five players and reduced his roster from 27 to 24. He began to play many of his starters for most of each game. Against the Eagles on October 22, Ace Parker, Bruiser Kinard, and Waddy Young all played 60 minutes, while Pug Manders played 55. On October 29, eight players played 50 or more minutes against the Giants in a 7-6 loss before a record Ebbets Field crowd of 34,032 fans. The iron-man stuff continued for the rest of the season.

The Eagles and Pirates had few highlights in going winless. The Eagles drew a record crowd of 33,258 to Municipal Stadium to see a 7-0 opening day loss to the Redskins. Fullback Dave Smukler quit the team after four games, never to return. Veteran center Hank Reese was cut after five games. The best the Eagles could manage was a 0-0 tie in the rain against the Dodgers on October 1. Starting with the October 22 game against Brooklyn, Bert Bell put Davey O'Brien on the field for most of each game and made his passing the focus of the offense for the rest of the season. Against the Dodgers, he completed 11 of 25 passes for 140 yards, high totals in 1939. The Pirates lost their first six games, with Johnny Blood quitting as head coach after three games. On October 29, the Pirates tied the Rams 14-14 in Cleveland and celebrated.

The Packers played all of their first six games at home, four in Green Bay and two in Milwaukee. They beat the Bears narrowly and the Lions handily. Against the Bears on September 24, the Packers trailed 13-0 at halftime. They capitalized on two crucial Chicago fumbles in the second half to take a 21-16 victory. One week later, the Rams upset the Packers 27-24 by scoring two touchdowns in the fourth quarter. A close 27-20 victory over the weak Cardinals one week after that made the Packers look very vulnerable. They responded, however, by beating the Lions 26-7 and the Redskins 24-14 in battles of alpha dogs.

The Lions had an easier schedule. After winning four games against lesser opponents, the Lions were outclassed in a 26-7 loss to the Packers. One week later, the Lions unexpectedly shut out the Bears 10-0

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at Wrigley Field, with Bill Shepherd, Jack Johnson, John Wiethe, and Alex Wojciechowicz going sixty minutes and with Chuck Hanneman missing only one play. The Bears faced three alpha opponents (the Packers, Giants, and Lions) and lost each time. The Rams were 1-4 against alpha dogs, the Cardinals 0-5.

November and December

On November 5, there were two meetings of alpha dogs. The Giants went to Detroit and lost 18-14. The Lions scratched out one touchdown and four field goals (three by Phil Martinovich) against the league's best defense and held the Giants to two touchdowns. With the Redskins beating the Eagles 7-6, New York and Washington were tied for first place in the East.

Meanwhile, the Packers and Bears met in Wrigley Field. Both teams made big plays in a seesaw high-scoring game. For the Packers, Joe Laws scored on a 72-yard punt return and Milt Gantenbein on an 81-yard pass play. For the Bears, Bob Swisher scored on a 43-yard run, while Sid Luckman set up a score with a 70-yard interception return. Late in the fourth quarter, the Packers led 27-23. With Luckman completing several key passes, the Bears drove downfield and scored on a short run by Bill Osmanski. The Packers drove back to the Chicago 23 yard line, but the clock ran out. The Lions thus moved into first place in the West, one game ahead of the Packers and one and a half games ahead of the Bears.

On November 12, the only confrontation of alpha dogs was in Detroit, where the Lions met the Bears. Both teams were coming off victories over top teams last week. The Lions could not gain on the ground, while Bears fullback Bill Osmanski ran for 111 yards on 18 attempts. With Chicago ahead 16-13 late in the fourth quarter, a Detroit drive came to naught when Bears halfback Bob MacLeod intercepted a pass. The Bears then drove to a touchdown that secured the 23-13 victory.

On that same day, the Giants, Packers, and Redskins all beat lesser opponents. The Redskins annihilated the Dodgers 42-0. The Packers edged the Eagles 23-16 despite Davey O'Brien's completing 19 of 37 passes for 189 yards. In the East, the Giants and Redskins stayed tied for first place. In the West, the Lions fell back into a first-place tie with the Packers, with the Bears one half game behind.

On November 19, there were no alpha-alpha games. The Giants and Redskins each beat omega dogs to remain tied for first place in the East. The Packers shut out the Dodgers 28-0, while the Bears beat the Eagles 27-14, with Davey O'Brien completing 21 of 36 passes for 247 yards. The key game of the week took place in Municipal Stadium in Cleveland, where the Rams upset the Lions 14-3 before 28,142 fans. Parker Hall threw two touchdown passes, intercepted two Detroit passes, and played the full sixty minutes, as did seven of his teammates. Cleveland coach Dutch Clark could take satisfaction in knocking his former team out of first place in the West.

On Thanksgiving Day, the only game was a clash of winless omega dogs. Before 20,000 fans in Municipal Stadium in Philadelphia, the Pirates led the Eagles 14-10 with two minutes left in the game. Davey O'Brien then passed to Bill Hewitt, who lateralled to speedy blocking back Jay Arnold, who sprinted to the end zone to cap a 66-yard scoring play. The Eagles won the game 17-14 to leave the Pirates the only winless NFL team.

Three days later, the Pirates turned the tables by beating the Eagles 24-12 before 8,788 fans in Forbes Field. The Pirates won their first game of the season in their last game. Meanwhile, the Giants topped the Dodgers 28-7, as Brooklyn ended the season with three thorough beatings. Washington beat the Lions 31-7, eliminating Detroit from the race and preserving a two-way tie for first place in the East with one week to go. The Lions sealed their own fate by giving up two fumbles and four interceptions. The Bears ended their season by crushing the Cardinals 48-7. With a final 8-3 record, the Bears ended the day one-half game behind the Packers. Before 30,690 fans in Cleveland, the Packers and Rams were scoreless at halftime. The Rams scored in the third quarter on a pass from Parker Hall to Jim Benton, but they missed the extra point. The Cleveland defense held off the Packers until, with two minutes left in the game, Cecil Isbell threw a touchdown pass to Joe Laws. Tiny Engebretsen kicked the extra point, and the Packers hung on for a 7-6 victory to retain first place in the West.

On December 3, the last day of the regular season, there were three games scheduled. One game had no impact on the championship hunt, while the other two were crucial. The low pressure game was in Colorado Springs, Colorado, where the Rams beat the Eagles 35-13. The resurgent Rams closed their season with a 4-1-1 record in their final six games and a 5-5-1 record overall.

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I presume that assistant coach Jim MacMurdo was in charge of the Eagles in Colorado, because owner/head coach Bert Bell was one of over 62,000 fans assembled in the Polo Grounds to watch the Giants-Redskins game. 15,000 fans came up from the Washington area to cheer on the Skins. Both teams were 8-1-1, and the winner would go on to the NFL championship game. The day was rainy, muddy, and dreary. The Skins got minimal service from Sammy Baugh, Andy Farkas, Charley Malone, and Turk Edwards, each of whom went early to the sidelines with injuries. After three quarters of wrestling in the muck, the Giants led 9-0 on two field goals by Ward Cuff and one by Ken Strong. For a description of the fourth quarter, I quote the Associated Press account of the game, which appeared under the byline of Sid Feder:

For three periods, the Redskins, crippled by injuries, were belted all over the field by the Giants. Then in the final chapter, they started to roll with Frank Filchock's passing and Dick Todd's galloping through the mud and occasional rain.

Filchock passed 20 yards to Bob Masterson for a Redskin touchdown with six minutes to go. They kept right on going after that, staging a march from the Giant 44 to the 10. With 45 seconds left, Beau Russell rushed onto the field to try a field goal from the 15-yard marker. Referee William Halloran, standing behind Russell, ruled the kick wide of the goal posts by the margin of a whisker.

The Redskins didn't agree with him. Several rushed up to argue the matter. Washington Coach Ray Flaherty galloped onto the field and protested vehemently. As usual, the official stood by his guns.

The Giants took the ball and ran a couple of line plays to end the game.

Immediately after the gun sounded, Flaherty and some of the Washington players dashed out after Halloran again. They followed him off the field and toward the officials' dressing rooms. As they neared the exit, Ed Justice, 200-pound Redskin halfback, was seen to swing a punch at the official. Flaherty grabbed him and pushed him away before he had a chance to do any more.

This was the second-largest crowd in NFL history, trailing only the Red Grange game in the same Polo Grounds in December of 1925.

Meanwhile, back in Detroit, the Lions and Packers met in similar cold, mud, and drizzle. The Packers came into the game with an 8-2 record, one-half game ahead of the idle Bears, who ended their season last week at 8-3. The Lions were 6-4, the losers of three straight games, and eliminated from the Western Division race. George Halas, Sid Luckman, Joe Stydahar, George Musso, and Bernie Masterson were among the 30,000 spectators in Briggs Stadium, rooting for the Lions to knock the Packers into a divisional tie. At halftime, the Lions led 7-3. In the third quarter, Packer end Larry Craig blocked Johnny Pingel's punt through the end zone for a safety. Early in the fourth quarter, Clarke Hinkle plunged over for a Green Bay touchdown. The Packers hung on for a 12-7 victory to clinch their second straight Western title. The Green Bay linemen struggled heroically in the mud, as tackle Bill Lee played sixty minutes and guard Buckets Goldenberg and center Bud Svendsen played most of the game.

The Championship Game

On December 10, the Packers and Giants met for the NFL championship at the State Fair Grounds in Milwaukee. A capacity crowd of 32,279 filled the small stadium on a clear day with a 35-mile-per-hour wind blowing. Assistant coach Bo Molenda was in charge of the Giants because head coach Steve Owen had been called home because of his mother's death. Owen's absence apparently hurt, as the Packers routed the Giants 27-0.

The Packers led only by 7-0 at the half, but they broke the game open in the second half. After the game, Packer coach Curly Lambeau said "[we] were hotter today than we ever have been before. Everything worked to perfection. No matter who we sent in, they all performed like champions. No club could beat our team today."

It was Green Bay's fifth NFL championship, their fourth in the 1930's. It avenged last year's loss to the Giants in New York.

After The Season

On January 14, 1940, the Packers beat an NFL All-Star team 16-7 in the second annual all-star game. A near-capacity crowd of 18,000 fans crowded into Gilmore Stadium in Los Angeles to see the match. The nine NFL teams other than the Packers contributed to the All-Stars. The starting lineup was:

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LE – Poole (NY)
LT – Stydahar (ChiB)
LG – Gentry (Pit)
C – Hein (NY)
RG – Kinard (Bkn)
RT – George (Det)
RE – Schwartz (Bkn)
QB – Vanzo (Det)
LH – Hall (Cle)
RH – Pinckert (Was)
FB – Drake (Cle).

The substitute backs were O'Brien (Phi), Manders (Bkn), Filchok (Was), Farkas (Was), and Cuff (NY). The substitute linemen were Benton (Cle), Smith (ChiC), Carter (Phi), Blazine (ChiC), Edwards (Was), Johnson (Det), Musso (ChiB), Tuttle (NY), and Aldrich (ChiC). Each team scored one touchdown, but the Packers also kicked three field goals. The Green Bay touchdown came late in the second quarter, when the Packers were bogged down on their own 8-yard line. Don Hutson ran a fly pattern, caught a Cecil Isbell bomb on the All-Star 35-yard line, and sprinted untouched the rest of the way. The All-Stars scored on a short pass from Davey O'Brien to fellow Eagle Joe Carter.

Bill Osmanski won the rushing title with 699 yards on 121 carries. Parker Hall won the passing title with 106 completions in 208 passes for 1094 yards and 11 touchdowns. Don Hutson won the receiving title with 34 catches for 846 yards and six touchdowns. Andy Farkas scored the most points, combining 11 touchdowns with two extra points for 68 points. The Bears set new league season records with 3,988 total yards gained and 298 points scored.

The major selectors of All-Pro teams this year were the NFL coaches, the Professional Football Writers Association, the United Press, the International News Service, and the *New York Daily News*.

The consensus selections were Hutson and Poole at end, Stydahar and Barber at tackle, Fortmann and Dell Isola at guard, Hein at center, and Osmanski, Leemans, Hall, and Farkas in the backfield. The selections of the NFL coaches served as the official All-Pro team; the only difference from the consensus selections was the substitution of O'Brien for Hall in the backfield. The Professional Football Writers Association named Parker Hall as league MVP. Don Hutson was second in the polling, Davey O'Brien third.

And that's what happened in the NFL in 1939.