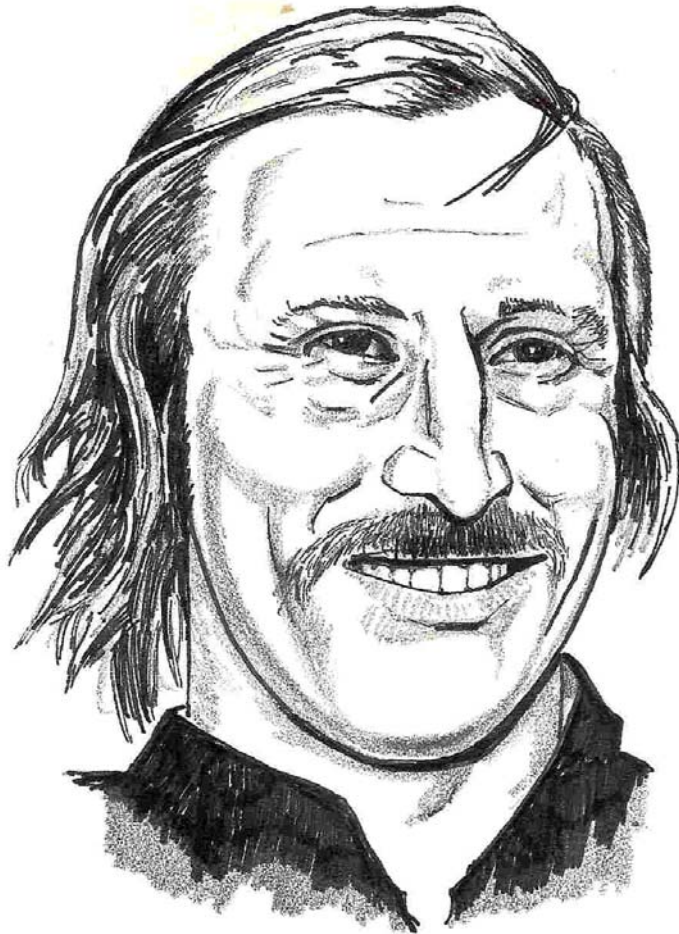


**Vol. 29, No. 3**  
**2007**

---

PFRA-ternizing Writing Awards	2
AAFC vs NFL: The Attendance Battle	3
Howard "Cub" Buck	8
Differential Scores	10
The Two and Only	12
Wilbur & Orville for the HOF	13
Ozzie Newsome - 3	16
Ozzie Newsome - 2	15
Bosh Pritchard	19
PFRA Committees	20
Pro Football Lore	22
Classifieds	24



*Fred* **BILETNIKOFF**

## PFRA-ternizing

### THE 2006 PFRA WRITING AWARDS

We are happy to report that once more each nominee for a PFRA Writing Award received votes. We believe that proves both the quality of the articles and the variation in readers' interests.

The winners:

#### PRE 1960:

1. Tom Benjey: "Birth of Modern Football"
2. Joel Bussert : "Pro Bowl Teams of the Fifties"

#### POST 1960:

1. Ed Gruver: "When Eagles Dared"
2. Coach Troup: "J.D. Smith and the 1961 49ers"

#### PERSONALITY:

1. Tom Danyluk: "Art Rooney, Jr. – Interview"
2. Andy Piascik: "Gene Hickerson," "Darrell Dess"

Thanks, all.

## THE COFFIN CORNER

Vol. 29, No. 3 (2007)

12870 Rt. 30, #39  
N.Huntingdon, PA 15642

724 863-6345

[Bob2296@Comcast.net](mailto:Bob2296@Comcast.net)

Website: [www.footballresearch.com](http://www.footballresearch.com)

PFRA MEMBERSHIP \$25 per year

Bob Carroll, Editor  
Melissa Thomas, Assistant  
Ken Crippen, Assistant Editor  
Frank Henkel, Website Editor

**Check the label on your CC envelope for the state of your membership. *Member thru 2007 (to 29-6)* means you are a member for this year.**

### PAST WRITING AWARD WINNERS

#### 2005

- Pre-1960 Andy Piascik – Why the AAFC Browns Were the Best Team in Football 1946-49; World War II and the Hall of Fame Winning Percentages  
Post-1960 Mark L. Ford & Massimo Foglio – The First NFL Europe  
Personality Chris Willis – Wilbur Henry; Don Hutson; Gale Sayers

#### 2004

- Pre-1960 Roy Sye – Kenosha aroons 1924  
Post-1960 Tim Brulis – Post-Season Football Announcers 1948-2003; Chronology of Pro Football on TV  
Personality Jim Sargent – Ron Kramer; Al Dorow; Jerry Groom; Walt Kowalczyk

#### 2003

- Pre-1960 John Hogrogian – 1939 College All-Star Game  
Post-1960 Doug Warren – Lions, Bears, and the First Thanksgiving  
Personality Jeff Miller – Ben Lee Boynton; Jim Kendrick; Sam Dana

#### 2002

- Pre-1960 Chris Willis – Remembering the Oorang Indians  
Post-1960 Ed Gruver - The Greatest Game Never Played  
Personality Andy Piascik -Jim Ray Smith, Marion Motley, Lenny Moore

#### 2001

- Pre-1960 Michael Berger – Good Year, Bad Year by the Bay  
Post-1960 Mark L. Ford – The Two-Day P.A.S.S.  
Personality Thomas Danyluk – Steve Sabol, & Larry Little

#### 2000

- Pre-1960 John Hogrogian – The NFL in 1939  
Post-1960 Mark L. Ford – 25 Significant "Meaningless" NFL Games  
Personality Jim Sargent – 3 biographies

#### 1999

- Pre-1960 Carl Becker – Ringers by the Van  
Post-1960 Richard Hack – Pro Football's Most Consistent Contenders  
Personality Mike Moran – Hap Moran, My Dad

#### 1998

- Pre-1970 Tom Farley – The 1960 Conference Races  
Post-1970 Mike Sparrow – The All-Time Non-Pro Bowl Team  
Personality Ed Gruver – Remembering Ray Nitschke

All articles from the Coffin Corner (1979-2006) are available to members at no charge via e-mail (limit 5 per week). Print-outs are \$1 each. You can receive a complete list either by e-mail (free) or regular mail (\$1).

## AAFC vs. NFL: THE ATTENDANCE BATTLE

By Andy Piascik

When the All-America Football Conference was formed in 1944, its founders adopted a two-pronged strategy regarding franchise location. One part of that strategy was to establish teams in Miami, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, cities where the NFL had never ventured. In so doing, the AAFC became the first major sports league to locate in the South and on the West Coast, the first league indeed to be truly national. (The NFL had briefly had a team called the Los Angeles Buccaneers in 1926, but the franchise actually operated out of Chicago and played all of its games east of the Mississippi).

At the time, the prevailing wisdom was that the South was college football country and would not go for a pro team. As for the West Coast, travel costs had been too prohibitive to make locating franchises there economically viable. That was less of a concern by 1946, however, as air travel became more feasible financially.

The AAFC had the foresight to put teams in both Los Angeles and San Francisco, which enabled visiting teams to stay over for a two-game road trip. When the Rams moved, by contrast, they were the only NFL team west of Chicago and they had to agree to share a larger percentage of gate proceeds to defray travel costs.

Attendance-wise, the AAFC venture into California proved a rousing success. The Dons did very well in their battle with the Rams even though they played in the same division as the powerhouse Browns and 49ers and never finished better than third. In San Francisco, meanwhile, the 49ers drew well enough that they were one of only a few teams in either league to show a profit during the four years of AAFC-NFL competition. Over the 1946-49 period, only the Browns, Rams, and Bears outdrew San Francisco.

The second part of the AAFC strategy was to challenge the NFL in Chicago, Cleveland, and New York City. Initially the sole New York entry was the Brooklyn Dodgers, but the AAFC got a big boost when Dan Topping brought his NFL franchise over to the new league and took up residence in Yankee Stadium as the New York Yankees. That Yankee Stadium was larger and newer than the Polo Grounds was undoubtedly a cause for concern to Giants' owner Tim Mara and the rest of the NFL.

AAFC founder Arch Ward was the sports editor of the *Chicago Tribune* and he was determined to establish the AAFC there. However, it is not surprising that

Chicago turned out to be a trouble spot for the new league. By 1945, Chicago was the only city with two NFL franchises, one of which was the powerhouse Bears. Ward did all he could to promote the AAFC, and the Rockets were successful in securing Soldier Field, not an insignificant fact both because it was newer than Wrigley Field and Comiskey Park and larger than the other two combined. In the end, although the Rockets were not as much of a disaster at the gate as they were on the field, they finished behind the Bears and Cardinals in attendance all four years.

The battle in Cleveland never came off. Despite the opposition of all of the NFL's other owners, Dan Reeves moved the Rams to Los Angeles in January of 1946. Even more than in Chicago and New York, stadium venue was an important issue in Cleveland. The Browns signed a lease to play in Cleveland Stadium, then less than 15 years old and with a seating capacity of over 80,000. The Rams, on the other hand, had played all but a handful of their games in League Park in nine years in the NFL. Like the Yankees and Rockets, the Browns would play in a stadium that was both larger and newer than their would-have-been rivals.

Reeves was also likely somewhat alarmed by the steamroller that the Browns had become in their first year of operation. Owner Mickey McBride vigorously promoted the new team and coach Paul Brown was an Ohio legend who consciously tapped into the strong interest in the game in the state. Brown signed a significant number of players who had played at Ohio State, others who were Ohio natives and/or had played at other Ohio colleges, and some from other Big Ten schools with whom Ohioans were very familiar.

Reeves took his team to Los Angeles knowing he would still have to face AAFC competition. Ben Lindheimer and a group of Hollywood producers and movie stars had been awarded the AAFC Dons, and both teams signed leases to play in the Los Angeles Coliseum. Lindheimer was at least as wealthy as Reeves and he proved himself willing to both spend money on his team and share it with struggling AAFC franchises.

The AAFC also brought major league football back to Buffalo. The city had been an original entrant when the NFL was formed as the American Professional Football Association in 1920 but had been without a team since 1929. Although things did not turn out well for Buffalo fans when the AAFC ended in 1949, for a three-year

## THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 29, No. 3 (2007)

period beginning in 1947 they proved themselves to be among the best fans in either league.

As dismissive as they had been of the AAFC at the time of its founding, people in the NFL hierarchy certainly must have taken notice during the new league's first week of play in September of 1946. In the AAFC's first-ever game, the Browns and the Miami Seahawks established a new attendance record for a regularly scheduled game when 60,135 fans attended their game in Cleveland. Then a week later, the Browns played the Rockets before 51,962, the largest crowd ever for a pro game in Chicago.

1946 marked the beginning of a short-lived sports attendance boom, a boom that would benefit both the AAFC and NFL. By year's end, the NFL established its highest per game attendance mark, while the AAFC drew more fans per game than the NFL had in every one of its seasons except 1945 and 1946.

	Games	1946 Attendance	Average
<b>NFL</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>1,732,135</b>	<b>31,493</b>
<b>AAFC</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>1,376,998</b>	<b>24,589</b>

The Browns and Giants were the individual winners. Cleveland established a new pro record by averaging 57,138 per home date, while the Giants set a new record for all games by averaging 44,213, a mark that just topped Cleveland's 43,783. Three times the leagues played in the same city on the same day and the NFL came out ahead each time (occasions where the Giants and AAFC Dodgers went head to head are not included):

<b>11/10/46</b>	
<b>Eagles at Giants</b> 60,874	<b>Dons at Yankees</b> 30,765
<b>11/17/46</b>	
<b>Yanks at Giants</b> 35,583	<b>49ers at Yankees</b> 18,695
<b>11/24/46</b>	
<b>Steelers at Giants</b> 45,347	<b>Rockets at Yankees</b> 21,270

The NFL also won the head to head competition for the season in Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago:

	Games	Attendance	Average
<b>Rams</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>211,916</b>	<b>42,383</b>
<b>Dons</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>139,294</b>	<b>19,899</b>
<b>Giants</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>362,437</b>	<b>51,777</b>
<b>Yankees</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>194,140</b>	<b>27,734</b>
<b>Bears</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>253,748</b>	<b>42,291</b>
<b>Cardinals</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>134,966</b>	<b>33,741</b>

**Rockets 7 195,627 27,947**

In 1947, the AAFC scored a major victory by turning the tables on all accounts except for the race in Chicago. The new league won the overall attendance battle by establishing a record for per game average that stood until 1955. Both the Dons and Yankees outdrew their NFL rivals, while the Browns again finished first at 55,848 and also topped the Giants' 1946 record by averaging 47,573 for all games, home and away.

The AAFC also prevailed on all three occasions when the leagues played in the same city on the same day. Perhaps most impressive of all, the AAFC had three of the four best team marks, as the Browns, Dons, and Yankees ranked 1, 2, and 4, with the Bears finishing third.

	Games	1947 Attendance	Average
<b>AAFC</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>1,828,480</b>	<b>32,651</b>
<b>NFL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>1,837,437</b>	<b>30,624</b>
<b>Dons</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>304,177</b>	<b>43,454</b>
<b>Rams</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>200,103</b>	<b>33,351</b>
<b>Yankees</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>264,412</b>	<b>37,773</b>
<b>Giants</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>190,173</b>	<b>31,696</b>
<b>Bears</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>229,399</b>	<b>38,233</b>
<b>Cardinals</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>163,955</b>	<b>32,791</b>
<b>Rockets</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>135,274</b>	<b>19,325</b>

<b>11/9/47</b>	
<b>49ers at Yankees</b> 37,342	<b>Eagles at Giants</b> 29,016
<b>11/23/47</b>	
<b>Browns at Yankees</b> 70,060	<b>Packers at Giants</b> 27,939
<b>11/30/47</b>	
<b>Bills at Yankees</b> 39,012	<b>Cardinals at Giants</b> 28,744

There is no question that the AAFC was playing a high caliber, exciting game that appealed both to fans in cities like New York and Cleveland with pro football traditions and cities like San Francisco and Los Angeles where major league football was new. Success at the gate was uneven but that was just as true in the NFL. One factor in the AAFC's success is the pioneering role the league played in the integration of pro sports.

It is difficult if not impossible to calculate precisely how much of an impact black players had on attendance 60 years after the fact, but it's clear from accounts at the time that tens of thousands of black fans who had

## THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 29, No. 3 (2007)

probably not previously attended pro games turned out to watch the AAFC in action. That was especially true in Cleveland, New York, and Los Angeles as the Browns, Yankees, and Dons all featured black players sooner than most other teams. The Yankees had been just as good in 1946 as in 1947, yet their attendance improved by over 10,000 per home date. Part of the reason, perhaps the main reason, was the addition of the electrifying Buddy Young and the black fans he drew to the team's games.

As the following charts indicate, the AAFC was way ahead of the NFL in signing blacks beginning in 1947 even though in every year the AAFC had fewer teams and fewer roster spots:

### BLACKS IN PRO FOOTBALL

	1947	1948	1949
<b>AAFC</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>NFL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

### CUMULATIVE NUMBER OF INTEGRATED TEAMS

	1947	1948	1949
<b>AAFC</b>	<b>5 (out of 8)</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>NFL</b>	<b>1 (out of 10)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>

Perhaps the best illustration of the attendance boost black fans gave the AAFC in 1947 were the crowds for the three games between the Browns and Yankees. In those games, the teams drew 80,067 in Cleveland, 70,060 in New York, and 61,879 in the league title game, also in New York, an average of over 70,000. Each game set some kind of attendance record: the crowd for the first was the largest ever in Cleveland, the turnout for the second was the largest ever in New York (a record that lasted until 1958), and the 61,879 was the largest ever for a Championship Game, a record that stood until 1955.

The total of 212,006 was also the most for games between two teams in a season until the Colts and Dolphins topped it in 1971. Estimates at the time indicate that a quarter to a third of the fans for the three games were African-Americans.

The AAFC again won the battle in 1948. The Giants slipped past the Yankees but the Dons again bested the Rams. AAFC teams again accounted for three of the top four spots with Browns 1st, the Dons 3<sup>rd</sup>, and the 49ers 4<sup>th</sup>, while the Bears were 2<sup>nd</sup>. Considering how bad they were, it's surprising the Rockets did as well as they did, although they were outdrawn decisively by both the Bears and Cardinals.

Attendance in Cleveland slipped, but the Browns again set an all-time pro mark of 82,769 for their game against the 49ers to go along with their number one finish at 45,517 per home date. By the end of 1948, the AAFC had attracted the seven largest crowds in the

history of pro football in just three years, a remarkable feat for a new league to have accomplished so quickly.

	Games	1948 Attendance	Average
<b>AAFC</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>1,618,626</b>	<b>28,904</b>
<b>NFL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>1,525,243</b>	<b>25,421</b>
<b>Dons</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>287,676</b>	<b>41,097</b>
<b>Rams</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>194,408</b>	<b>32,401</b>
<b>Giants</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>139,568</b>	<b>23,261</b>
<b>Yankees</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>166,864</b>	<b>22,793</b>
<b>Bears</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>262,435</b>	<b>43,739</b>
<b>Cardinals</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>181,217</b>	<b>30,203</b>
<b>Rockets</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>103,481</b>	<b>14,783</b>

There were head-to-head games in Chicago for the first time in 1948, and not surprisingly the NFL was the winner each time, as it was in the four head-to-head battles in New York:

<b>10/17/48</b>	
<b>Cardinals at Giants</b> 35,584	<b>49ers at Yankees</b> 29,743
<b>10/24/48</b>	
<b>Yanks at Cardinals</b> 23,423	<b>Dodgers at Rockets</b> 5,964
<b>10/31/48</b>	
<b>Giants at Bears</b> 41,608	<b>Yankees at Rockets</b> 13,239
<b>11/7/48</b>	
<b>Eagles at Giants</b> 24,983	<b>Dons at Yankees</b> 17,386
<b>11/14/48</b>	
<b>Rams at Giants</b> 22,766	<b>Dodgers at Yankees</b> 17,642
<b>11/28/48</b>	
<b>Yanks at Giants</b> 19,636	<b>Bills at Yankees</b> 18,376

Virtually every team in both leagues was losing money and 1949 turned out to be the last year for the AAFC. However, the upstart league closed on a successful note as it won the attendance battle for the third year in a row. The Rams shot past the Dons in Los Angeles and also went past Cleveland for overall supremacy, but the Yankees rebounded to top the Giants in New York. The Rockets were re-named the Hornets but they were worse than ever, the clear attendance loser in Chicago.

The 49ers were probably the most exciting team in either league and it showed as they wrested the AAFC attendance crown from the Browns by drawing 39,032.

## THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 29, No. 3 (2007)

The fact that the Rams and Bears ranked first and second among all teams while the NFL was losing the league-wide battle serves to partially refute the common perception that the NFL was less top-heavy than the AAFC.

1949			
	Games	Attendance	Average
<b>AAFC</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>1,122,811</b>	<b>26,734</b>
<b>NFL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>1,391,735</b>	<b>23,196</b>
<b>Rams</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>299,128</b>	<b>49,855</b>
<b>Dons</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>134,980</b>	<b>22,497</b>
<b>Yankees</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>144,659</b>	<b>24,110</b>
<b>Giants</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>143,489</b>	<b>23,915</b>
<b>Bears</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>262,946</b>	<b>43,824</b>
<b>Cardinals</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>172,444</b>	<b>28,740</b>
<b>Hornets</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>107,222</b>	<b>17,870</b>

The AAFC won five of the six head to head match-ups in 1949, all of which occurred in New York:

<b>9/22/49</b>	
<b>Dons at Yankees</b> 14,437	<b>Eagles at Bulldogs</b> 8,426
<b>10/23/49</b>	
<b>49ers at Yankees</b> 38,187	<b>Bears at Giants</b> 30,587
<b>10/30/49</b>	
<b>Colts at Yankees</b> 10,692	<b>Redskins at Bulldogs</b> 3,678
<b>11/6/49</b>	
<b>Bulldogs at Giants</b> 23,222	<b>Bills at Yankees</b> 16,758
<b>11/13/49</b>	
<b>Hornets at Yankees</b> 9,091	<b>Cardinals at Bulldogs</b> 9,072
<b>11/20/49</b>	
<b>Browns at Yankees</b> 50,711	<b>Lions at Giants</b> 21,338

For the four years, the NFL won ten of the same day, same city battles, the AAFC eight. NFL teams also won the cumulative battles in New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago. However, the AAFC's average attendance for the four years was higher. Again, that is a remarkable accomplishment for a new league engaged in a battle with a much older rival.

The AAFC won the four-year attendance battle despite an NFL policy in 1946 and 1947 of granting some stronger and better-drawing teams more home games than others. The Giants, for example, played seven

home games and only four road games in 1946, while the Eagles played seven of twelve games at home in 1947. All AAFC teams, by contrast, played the same number of home games. Had the league copied the NFL and put more games in Cleveland, Los Angeles, and San Francisco and fewer in Chicago and Brooklyn, its overall numbers and margin of victory would have been larger.

1946-49			
	Games	Attendance	Average
<b>AAFC</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>5,946,915</b>	<b>28,319</b>
<b>NFL</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>6,486,550</b>	<b>27,600</b>
<b>Rams</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>905,555</b>	<b>39,372</b>
<b>Dons</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>866,127</b>	<b>32,079</b>
<b>Giants</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>835,667</b>	<b>33,427</b>
<b>Yankees</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>770,075</b>	<b>28,521</b>
<b>Bears</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1,008,528</b>	<b>42,022</b>
<b>Cardinals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>652,582</b>	<b>31,075</b>
<b>Rockets</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>541,604</b>	<b>20,059</b>

Stadium size naturally favored teams with the largest seating capacities like the Rams and Browns. Playing its games in a stadium that was far smaller but with a succession of excellent teams, the Bears consistently drew crowds that were at or near capacity. It's possible the Bears might have drawn the kinds of crowds the Browns did had they played in a stadium of comparable size, as might the 1946 Giants.

However, AAFC attendance was also held down somewhat for the same reason. Given that they all played at least occasionally in front of full houses, the 49ers, Bills, Yankees, and even the Browns might have drawn more had they played in larger stadiums. One counter-argument to the notion that the Browns dominated in attendance because of the size of their stadium is the case of the Rams. Despite having a string of good teams and playing in a stadium with 15,000 more seats, the Rams did not approach the overall attendance accomplishments of the Browns.

The Bills and Colts, while not among the attendance leaders, did quite well in percentage of tickets sold. Buffalo in particular was a success story considering that it was the smallest city in either league except for Green Bay, although the Packers played half of their home games in Milwaukee, which was larger than Buffalo. Given that the Bills were one of the few teams in either league whose attendance was higher in 1949 than 1948, it was especially unfortunate that the NFL refused to include the Bills in the 1950 merger.

When the AAFC came to an end, eight of the ten largest crowds of all time were for AAFC games (six in Cleveland, one in Los Angeles, and one in New York) while only two were in the NFL (both in Los Angeles).

## THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 29, No. 3 (2007)

The AAFC accomplished that feat despite having played only 210 games, compared to 1,910 for the NFL:

### 10 LARGEST CROWDS, 1920-49

- 1.) 86,080 (Bears at Rams 10/30/49)
- 2.) 82,769 (49ers at Browns 11/14/48)
- 3.) 82,675 (Yankees at Dons 9/12/47)
- 4.) 80,067 (Yankees at Browns 10/5/47)
- 5.) 76,504 (49ers at Browns 11/16/47)
- 6.) 74,673 (Cardinals at Rams 12/4/49)
- 7.) 72,189 (49ers at Browns 10/30/49)
- 8.) 71,134 (Dons at Browns 10/20/46)
- 9.) 70,385 (49ers at Browns 10/27/46)
- 10.) 70,060 (Browns at Yankees 11/23/47)

Almost three seasons after its demise, the AAFC still accounted for seven of the ten largest crowds in pro

football history. The one change in that time to the list above was a notable one: on September 16, 1950, 71,237 fans in Philadelphia saw the Browns destroy

the Eagles 35-10 in the better-late-than-never AAFC-NFL Super Bowl.

As far as quality of play goes for a comparable period of time, the AAFC was the best insurgent league in the history of pro sports. That is the main reason the NFL has pretended and continues to pretend that it never existed. The historical record tells a different tale, however, and a big part of that tale is this: the negotiating table is about the only place the NFL got the better of the AAFC. It never did so on the playing field and it certainly didn't do so at the turnstile.

## AVERAGE HOME ATTENDANCE, 1946-49

1946		AAFC	
NFL Team	Avg	Team	Avg
Bos	19,440	Mia	7,009
ChiB	42,291	Bkn	13,953
ChiC	33,742	Buf	16,708
Det	20,603	Chi	27,683
GB	22,880	Cle	57,052
LARm	42,383	LA	20,616
NYG	51,777	NY	27,800
Phi	35,350	SF	26,509
Pit	35,365		
Was	33,656		
LG Avg	31,493	LG Avg	24,589

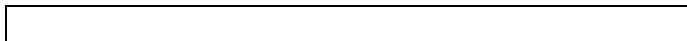
1947		AAFC	
NFL Team	Avg	Team	Avg
Bos	20,203	Bal	28,523
ChiB	38,233	Bkn	11,014
ChiC	32,791	Buf	31,100
Det	25,889	Chi	18,665
GB	27,743	Cle	56,109
LARm	33,344	LA	43,453
NYG	31,696	NY	37,773
Phi	31,692	SF	34,643
Pit	34,382		
Was	35,811		
LG Avg	30,624	LG Avg	32,651

1948		AAFC	
NFL Team	Avg	Team	Avg
Bos	11,906	Bal	29,448
ChiB	43,739	Bkn	10,357
ChiC	30,203	Buf	25,171
Det	19,833	Chi	16,008
GB	22,552	Cle	45,517
LARm	32,401	LA	40,050
NYG	23,261	NY	22,793
Phi	25,928	SF	40,853
Pit	29,121		
Was	32,586		
LG Avg	25,421	LG Avg	28,904

1949		AAFC	
NFL Team	Avg	Team	Avg
ChiB	43,824	Bal	25,353
ChiC	28,741	Buf	26,640
Det	19,375	Chi	17,870
GB	17,472	Cle	31,601
LARm	49,855	LA	22,064
NYB	8,001	NY	23,313
NYG	23,915	SF	38,232
Phi	27,948		
Pit	25,461		
Was	27,863		
LG Avg	23,196	LG Avg	26,734

The yearly League Average Attendances may differ slightly from the averages produced by adding the team averages because some game attendances used were the unofficial figures published in newspapers.

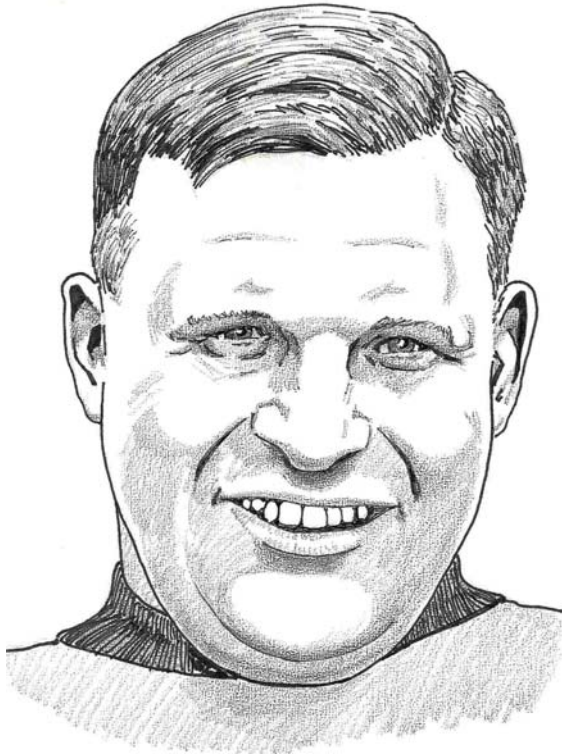
Additionally, two teams sometimes list slightly different attendances for games.



## Howard “Cub” Buck

By John Maxymuk

Adapted from *Packers By the Numbers*, Prairie Oak Press, 2003.



There's a reason the Pro Football Hall of Fame is housed in the small Ohio town of Canton. In the pre-NFL Jurassic Era of professional football, Canton was a giant in the town team football prevalent at the time. The Canton Athletic Club formed a team in 1905 that would become known as the Bulldogs and would begin a fierce rivalry with the cross-state Massillon Tigers. In 1906 the two teams split a pair of games between them, but the Tigers won the coveted Ohio State title and were known as the best pro team in the nation.

Financial instability and a betting scandal caused interest in pro football to dwindle at the time, but things began to improve in the teens. The best football player in the country,

Jim Thorpe, signed with Canton in 1915 and the Bulldogs went on to win the Ohio League Championship in 1916, 1917 and 1919. By the next decade, the problems of free form, free lance professional football led to the organization of the American Professional Football Association in the showroom of a Canton auto dealer in August 1920. Two years later, the league would change its name to the National Football League. The Canton Bulldogs would win the NFL title in 1922 and 1923, but would be defunct by 1927 as the league outgrew its small town roots everywhere but Wisconsin.

One of Thorpe's leading blockers in the early days in Canton was Howard "Cub" Buck, a mountainous tackle weighing in the range of 280 pounds in a period when 220 pounds was considered very big. Buck had been an All-America at the University of Wisconsin before joining Canton in 1916. In that season, he coached the line for the Badgers at his alma mater during the week and on Sundays would meet up with his Bulldog teammates for the league game. In 1917, he became head football coach at Carleton College in Minnesota and continued with his bifurcated career. Thorpe once called Buck the best linemen he had ever played with, and Cub played in Canton through 1919.

In 1921 the Green Bay Packers joined the new league and Curly Lambeau signed Buck as his first real professional player at \$75 a game. Cub was a hard negotiator who insisted that the money be guaranteed; Lambeau agreed as long as Buck also worked as the line coach.

The 1919 and 1920 versions of the Packers



were essentially professional town teams made up of local players. Although Buck was a native of Eau Claire and had played collegiately at UW, he was a five-year veteran of professional football who brought credibility to the franchise and provided an anchor to the line.

Cub was a tremendous competitor with a high voice that could be heard screaming instructions from across the field. He was alternately called "jovial" and "serious-minded" by those who knew him. Stories of his exploits on the field abound. That's Buck giving "donkey ears" to George Vergara in the 1925 team picture.

Cub was the victim of the first cheap shot in the history of the Bears-Packers rivalry when Tarzan Taylor broke his nose with a sucker punch in 1921. On another occasion, he was slugged by a different Bear and brow-beat the opponent for not being a gentleman. When still another Bear tried to break his nose with a quick jab, Cub caught the player's arm and broke it with a sharp twist. In an exhibition game against the Lapham Athletic Club of Milwaukee, Buck grabbed two slight scatbacks from Lapham and hoisted them in the air by their belts. While each story is eminently possible, most of these tales are unconfirmed.

What is confirmed is that Cub was a player. He was a force on both the offensive and defensive lines and was a skilled kicker and punter as well. Football was vastly different in those days and kicking and punting abilities were highly valued. From 1922 through 1932, the Packers recorded at least five shutouts each year except 1930 when they only rang up four. And Curly Lambeau was known as an offensive coach!

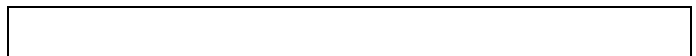
Games were determined by field position, kicking, and mistakes. For example on November 4, 1923, the Packers played the St. Louis All-Stars in a muddy Sportsman's Park. Cub punted 19 times that day, an unofficial league record -- punting statistics were not kept until 1939. To show the value of field position, Buck punted five times on

first down, once on second, eight times on third, and only five times on fourth down. The only score of the game occurred in the third quarter when Jimmy Simpson of St. Louis fumbled Cub's 50-yard punt and Green Bay recovered at the St. Louis 16. On third down, Cub drop-kicked a 20-yard field goal. The Packers won 3-0 on field position, kicking, and mistakes.

As a matter of fact, Cub played an integral role in the Green Bay's very first game on October 23, 1921 against the Minneapolis Marines in Hagemeister Park. The Packers won that day 7-6 in a fourth quarter comeback. Dave Hayes of the Marines muffed Buck's punt at the Minneapolis 35 with six minutes to play, and six plays later, Art Schmael went over from the four to tie the game. The winning margin was provided by Lambeau's conversion from the hold of Buck.

Cub Buck is the only interior lineman/punter in team history as well as the only interior lineman/drop-kicker although Tiny Engbretsen, Ernie Smith and Jerry Kramer were all linemen/placement kickers. Cub scored 54 points for Green Bay on 24 of 35 extra points and 10 of 28 field goals. He led the team in scoring in 1923 and even threw a touchdown pass in 1924. In 1923

Buck took on the head coaching job at Lawrence College, and he would stay there for his last three years as a Packer. Cub became the very first head coach at the University of Miami in 1926 and retired as a professional football player. After three years in Florida, Cub quit coaching altogether and opened an automobile dealership in Rock Island, Illinois where he would live the rest of his life until he passed away at 74 in 1966. The Packers' first significant free agent acquisition, Buck was elected to the Packer Hall of Fame posthumously in 1977. He had been elected to the Wisconsin Hall of Fame in 1955.



# DIFFERENTIAL SCORES

By Bob Irving

When I open the sports pages on Sunday morning, my first check is for the football scores of my favorite college teams. First of all, it's who won? Then, what was the score? Next, the details. Lately however, I had begun to look at all this in a somewhat different way, but let me turn that 'different look' to pro football where each of us has one or two favorite teams.

Paying attention to "points for" and "points against" my favorite team( s), updated in the sports pages each week, I began to wonder about what importance could be attached to a victory or a defeat, as such, compared to the margin of victory or defeat . . . in both cases . . . extended over a season. I speculated that a team could win a dozen games, each by a point OR another team could win a dozen games each by a margin of two touchdowns; each has a dozen victories. Standings in the sports pages have made them equal but it's obvious they're really not. These mind-game possibilities soon proliferated into thoughts about comparing "margins of victory" (or point differentials) game by game for an entire season for a whole league and then, to include not only the 32-team NFL but other pro football leagues as well. Where might all this lead?

With the foregoing in mind, in January of 2006 I began to record scores game by game during the regular season, giving each team a plus (+) or a minus (-) score with the accompanying margin of its victory or defeat. For example, "X" beats "Y" 20 - 17 so, in addition to the actual score, it's recorded as "X" +3 and "Y" -3. As a consequence of this I recorded, in that fashion, all the regular season scores for all the teams in: NFL Europe, Arena Football, Arena Football2, the Canadian Football League, and the National Football League. I also added all the teams from the old All America Football Conference (AAFC), 1946, '47, '48, and '49, to the mix.

The principle motive for all this was the knowledge that the Arena leagues for example, play a different brand of football; smaller field, indoors, different rules, faster game, no punting allowed, much higher scoring. BUT, are the Margins of Victory different between these teams and those of conventional football? Also, the Canadian League plays an 18-game schedule on a larger field, way up north, and NFL Europe played a 10-game schedule. Some of the leagues allowed one

bye per season, some two, some none. Was the game as played in the AAFC sixty years ago very much different from the way it's played now? What would be the score differentials between these various leagues, separated by as much as 60 years, and distinguished by contrasting styles of play, and added to that, some teams whose players played both offense and defense? These hypothetical questions provided reason for a closer look.

## Conclusions

When all necessary computations had been made I found there was **no significant difference between any of the average scores of the leagues enumerated earlier**; there were differences to be sure but none were convincingly large enough to be considered beyond the realm of chance. As I finalized each individual league in turn I had calculated its own analysis of variance hoping I'd find a significant difference between teams within the league but it didn't turn out that way. In every case, there was more variability between teams WITHIN each CONFERENCE than there was between teams of opposing CONFERENCES. I did find something however, that I wasn't looking for ----- maybe something more important.

I rank-ordered all 32 teams of the NFL into a single series based on their 'differential scores' because sports news media had stated from almost the beginning of the season that the AFC was superior to the NFC but I knew of no evidence to support that claim. More on this later. When the AFC and the NFC teams were rank-ordered into a single series based upon the official final standings it was seen that only San Diego which ranked 1st, Tampa Bay which ranked 31 st, and Oakland at 32<sup>nd</sup> had ranks which stood by themselves; all other teams were involved in ties in rank, a total of nine tied ranks.

When this 'final standings rank-order' was compared to the rank-order by 'differential scores', the latter showed no ties in rank at all. Final standings, obviously, was based only on each teams' win-loss record without any regard to "margins of victory or loss." Lots of teams had identical win-loss records whereas 'differential scores' were the plus (+) and minus (-) accumulations, team by team, of differences in points in games won

and lost. Suddenly this appeared to be a fool-proof way to compare teams and leagues which was impossible with standings alone, ----- except on a bar stool!

Had I stumbled upon anything really useful ? That, of course, depends upon how readers view what I've described. I wondered how the two ranking methods would compare to each other --- what was the correlation between them? The answer to that question was **.885** (for the NFL), which I felt was surprisingly high given the way the two methods seemed to treat the basic information. That correlation (and others in the series here), means that both methods of ranking are legitimate. Also, 'point differentials' separates teams away from each other who are otherwise tied thus allowing meaningful comparisons between teams which is otherwise impossible. After all, how can two teams with 12-4 records be compared if they didn't play each other? Inevitably I rank-ordered teams within the AFC and the NFC separately.

What I found provided the answer to the question in the paragraph above: the AFC was overwhelmingly superior to the NFC and I had the **evidence** to prove that! I graphed the evidence on graph paper; I was sort of stunned. I placed the plus and minus values for the two conferences side by side, each rank-ordered from top to bottom. That was even more stunning, particularly when teams with negative sums were written in red ink, as in, "ending up in the red."

The AFC had more teams with + differential totals and occupied much more space above the zero line on the graph; the reverse was true for the NFC.

The Chicago Bears were the only really impressive team in the NFC, in contrast to the AFC with three teams that ranked high – San Diego, Baltimore, and New England.

As I examined the point differentials of the AFC and NFC I wondered why this obvious and extreme difference had occurred. The player draft occurs in reverse order of NFL final standings, teams pay comparable salaries, assumedly both are equally endowed with coaching talent, etc. Team trades occur for both conferences in the same manner and team ownership seems comparable. Nothing comes to mind that would adequately explain the huge differences between the conferences.

This dilemma begged a heretofore neglected question. What would be revealed by an examination of the other leagues mentioned at the beginning of this paper? That wouldn't answer the dilemma faced in the NFL but in might confirm or deny a trend.

It was necessary to answer the question above with

team ranking which depended upon 'differential scores'. Ranking by team standings was impractical because of so many ties in rank; individual team identities are lost when submerged in tied standings.

To address the possible issue of a 'trend' in conference dominance I looked at three different lines of inquiry, the first one the least important. The correlations between 'league standings' and 'differential standings' varied :trom .869 to .971, with an average of .916. Next, I examined the difference between conferences in each of the eight leagues mentioned earlier. For Arena Football the National Conference had a significantly higher rank than the American Conference; so great that less than 5 times in a thousand would such a difference occur simply by chance. For the following four leagues, the differences between conferences was so small that it was simply chancerelated: Arena Football2, AAFC 1947, AAFC 1948 and the Canadian Football League. It was found that in AAFC 1946, the West Conference outranked the East --- the dominance by the West occurred at a value less than one time in twenty by chance alone. AAFC 1949 and NFL Europe played as single leagues and thus no comparison with another entity was possible. The value for the NFL favored the A F C over the N F C at a value so great that it would have occurred by chance less than once in a hundred times!

Quite amazing!

To finalize here: it should be kept in mind that no significant difference is far preferable than its opposite because it means that in the league the two conferences play pretty much on a par rather than one thoroughly dominating the other.

Finally, I found that the A F C won 62.5% of its games with teams from the NFC. By chance, this would occur less than once in twenty time~. The exact same thing happened to the N F C except that they lost 62.5% of their AFC games with the margin exactly as given above. We've found that the 2006 NFL season was really unusual, as was the 1946 AAFC and this year's Arena Football, as well. The latter is another story. What's been found, overall, doesn't suggest a 'trend' but it's worth a look next year.

Do I expect what I found here to be taken seriously in how the various leagues calculate 'league standings'?

Not at all--- I'm a realist, and a team's win -loss record will continue to be it's tradition-bound legacy. But we're still left, here and now, with WHY, HOW COME the two NFL conferences are so disparate? Finally, it's interesting to note that Jax, ranked 5<sup>th</sup> overall by 'Differentials', was one of 16 teams with an 8 - 8 'Standings' record. They were obviously MUCH better than that and, via 'Differentials', perhaps deserved a spot in the A F C playoffs; could this be an instance

where a team should be considered to have earned a play-off spot by way of an alternative route?

\* \* \* \* \*

**Rank by Standings**

AFC			NFC		
		Rank			Rank
SD	14-2	1	Chi	13-3	1
Balt	13-3	2	NO	10-6	2.5
NE	12-4	3.5	Phil	10-6	2.5
Ind	12-4	3.5	Dal	9-7	4.5
NYJ	10-6	5	Sea	9-7	4.5
KC	9-7	6.5	NYG	8-8	9.5
Den	9-7	6.5	Caro	8-8	9.5
Jax	8-8	9.5	GB	8-8	9.5
Cin	8-8	9.5	StL	8-8	9.5
Pitt	8-8	9.5	Atl	7-9	10.5
Tenn	8-8	9.5	SF	7-9	10.5
Buff	7-9	12	Minn	6-10	12
Mia	6-10	13.5	Wash	5-11	13.5
Hous	6-10	13.5	Az	5-11	13.5
Cle	4-12	15	TB	4-12	15
Oak	2-14	16	Det	3-13	16

**Rank by 'Differentials'**

AFC			NFC		
		Rank			Rank
SD	+179	1	Chi	+175	2
Balt	+152	3	NO	+ 91	6
NE	+148	4	Dal	+ 75	7
Jax	+ 97	5	Phil	+ 70	8
Ind	+ 67	9	Sea	- 6	15
Cin	+ 42	10	NYG	- 7	16
Pitt	+ 38	11	StL	- 14	18
KC	+ 26	12	Caro	- 35	20
NYJ	+ 21	13	Atl	- 36	21
Den	+ 14	14	Minn	- 48	22
Buff	- 11	17	GB	- 65	23
Mia	- 23	19	Wash	- 69	24
Tenn	- 76	26	Az	- 75	25
Hous	- 99	28	Det	- 93	27
Cle	- 118	30	SF	- 114	29
Oak	- 164	32	TB	- 142	31

In Standings, nine ties in rank occur; no ties in rank under 'Differentials'. In Rank by 'Differentials', the top ten AFC teams have "+" signs; NFC has four; the last six teams under AFC are in the "-" category; the last twelve teams in the NFC are in the "-" category.

**THE TWO AND ONLY -**

by Jim Campbell

Quite a bit of newsprint, airtime, and other media were devoted to the fact that Atlanta Falcons QB Michael Vick's gained more than 1,000 rushing yards (1,039) this past season—in addition to his 2,474 passing yards.

Running QBs, going back to the days of Chicago Bears Bobby Douglass have flirted with the thousand-yards rushing milestone. Douglass barged and banged his way to 968 yards in 1972, while passing for only 1,246 yards.

Once tabbed "the Ultimate Weapon," Randall Cunningham of the Philadelphia Eagles also got very close to 1,000 yards. In 1990, he dodged and darted for 942 yards and passed for 3,466 yards.

While Vick is truly the first NFL player to gain at least 1,000 yards rushing and passing in the same season, he's not the only—nor the first—to have done that as a pro.

Overlooked by many is what Orban "Spec" Sanders did with the New York Yankees of the AAFC in 1947. The University of Texas tailback (the Yankees were still a single-wing team) threw for 1,442 yards while running for 1,432 yards.

As if his versatility was in doubt, Sanders, as a defensive back, led the NFL in interceptions with 13 while playing for the New York Yanks in 1950.

The length, or lack thereof, of Sanders's career probably precludes his enshrinement in the Pro Football Hall of Fame, but he is most deserving of a niche in Bob Carroll's Hall of Very Good.

## WILBUR AND ORVILLE FOR THE HOF

By Bob Carroll

So you're sitting at the Big Table and it's the Big Moment. Will the famous quarterback be voted into the Hall of Fame or not?

Sure, the very fact that he's famous gives the QB a headstart. But people can be famous for the wrong reasons. Roy Riegels was famous. So was that Alabama fullback who jumped off the bench to tackle Dicky Moegle during a bowl game. Tommy somebody? If he was any more famous, we'd remember his name.

Okay, the quarterback is more famous than the surprise tackler, but it's still true that a player needs more than fame to get into the Hall in Canton. How many quarterbacks were more famous than John Brodie? All-America and all those great years with the 49ers! And how about Charley Conerly who won an NFL championship one year and was league MVP another year! Jim McMahon won a Super Bowl! Doug Flutie won everything but!

All of them were famous. None of them made the Hall.

If fame alone won't do it, perhaps the answer is in statistics. There are fans who believe entrance to the Hall of Fame should be based entirely on statistics – make the numbers, make the Hall.

Our quarterback nominee does okay on total passing yards with more than 26,000 and touchdown passes with nearly 200. He should have done well; he played in the NFL for a decade and a half. A peg-legged halfback could tote up a lot of yards in fifteen years; small wonder our quarterback rung up fair totals.

But let's look at our some of our quarterback's other figures. He threw 47 more interceptions than touchdowns. His NFL Passer Rating was an embarrassing 63.4. That ranks number 131 among all those who have thrown more than 1,500 passes all-time. And, almost unbelievably, he completed fewer than half of his passes! With those kind of statistics, this guy couldn't carry a clipboard for your favorite team, much less go to the Hall of Fame.

His defenders might point out that back when this guy was throwing his passes into the ground, passing stats for everybody were a lot lower than today for a number a reasons. For example, offenses were more wide open and that led to many more interceptions than you'll see in today's game. It's also true that back then you didn't see a whole lot of those little passes out in the wing that so pad a completion percentage.

Okay, let's compare our guy's dreadful 63.4 Passer Rating with the ratings of some of his contemporaries. Y.A. Tittle, who starred through the 1950s with the 49ers and then took the Giants to three straight championship games, had a rating of 74.3. Norm Van Brocklin, who won NFL titles with the Rams in 1951 and the Eagles in 1960, rated 75.07. Otto Graham played only six years in the NFL, but when you add in his AAFC numbers, he has a rating of 86.6. Yat, the Dutchman, and Automatic Otto were our QB's contemporaries and all are in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Rather than opening the way to the HOF, it looks like our guy's stats padlocked the door and dug a moat around the place. But remember, Van Brocklyn and Tittle, two of the best slingers who ever slung a prolate spheroid, didn't set the house on fire with their career Passing Ratings. Sammy Baugh was fewer than ten points higher than our guy at 72.2. You can still find folks who believe Baugh was the very best passer ever.

The truth is, statistics mean very little when you look at players from different eras. Different strategies, different rules, different experiences. You may believe Peyton Manning is the niftiest passer ever, just don't try to prove it by comparing his 93.5 Passer Rating with Baugh's.

So a player needs more than just fame and statistics to get his bust in Canton. Without a certain *je nais se quoi*, he'll BE a bust.

Before we get into what "mores" our QB has, it's about time we give you his name. Bobby

Layne. Yes, the Detroit Lions' firebrand from the 1950s. He's been in the Pro Football Hall of Fame since 1967. We're not trying to decide whether or not he should go in; we're discussing whether he should stay. Forty years ago, he was a shoo-in to the Hall. How does he rank today?

Obviously in 40 years, a goodly number of outstanding quarterbacks have come on the NFL scene. That's true about any position. When Steve Van Buren led the NFL in rushing four times from 1945 thru 1949, a load of people were quick to decide that he was the greatest running back ever. Then along came Jim Brown, O.J. Simpson, Emmett Smith, and now Ladaianian Tomlinson. But, if Van Buren is no longer the be-all and end-all of running backs, he still belongs on the A-list. While the B-list has many outstanding runners; the A-list guys go into the Hall of Fame.

Does Bobby Layne make the A-list? Does he belong in with Graham, Van Brocklyn, Montana, Elway, Jurgensen, Luckman, et.al.

The A-listers were all famous and got themselves named to a whole wallfull of all-pro teams, Pro Bowls, and other awards. Along the way, they amassed a boatload of stats.

One thing all the A-list quarterbacks have in common is that they won games. Sure, Tittle, Dan Fouts, Jim Kelly, and Fran Tarkenton never quite won the big one, but they kept their teams poised on the brink. Maybe they needed a few extra stats to make it into the Hall, but the first test was winning.

What Bobby Layne did best was win. At the University of Texas from 1945 thru 1947, Layne presided over 26 wins in 30 regular season games plus victories in both the Cotton and Sugar Bowls. The Chicago Bears drafted him, and he spent a season backing the great Sid Luckman. His winning ways took a sabbatical in 1949 when he was sent off to quarterback the inept New York Bulldogs. Your grandmother with a broom could have beaten the Bulldogs. Call it a "learning year."

Things really got going in 1950 when the Bulldogs, renamed "Yanks," decided their future was in George Ratterman so they could trade Layne to Detroit. Two seasons later it turned out the Yanks had no future at all. But Detroit was ready to roll.

A year after Layne got to Detroit, the Lions hired another Texan as coach, Raymond "Buddy" Parker. Layne and Parker had a mutual friend named Jack Daniels, but it didn't seem to hold them back. In 1952, Detroit won the NFL's Western Division in a playoff over the '51 champion Rams and then defeated the Cleveland Browns in the title game.

The same two teams met for the 1953 championship. This time Cleveland held a six-point lead with three minutes to go when Layne threw a 33-yard TD pass to Jim Doran to give the Lions the crown. Despite the extra minute, this game is often cited as evidence that Layne invented the "two-minute drill."

Teammate Doak Walker said, "Bobby never lost a game. Some days, time just ran out on him." Similar statements have been made about other clutch players, but Layne was definitely one of the first quarterbacks to be recognized for his ability to lead his team to come-from-behind victory.

He was also recognized as a player who flaunted curfews and was known to celebrate extensively on the evening before a game. The stories are so widely told that at this point there's no separating truth from fiction. One side holds that had he followed training rules, he would have been an even greater quarterback. The other side insists that a sober Layne would never have been able to gain the team's allegiance as he did.

Layne took his team to a third-straight title meeting with Cleveland in 1954, but this time the Browns turned on them for a one-sided 56-10 drubbing. In the off-season, Layne suffered a shoulder separation in a riding accident. His passes lacked zip throughout the 1955 season, and that, along with some key retirements, sent the Lions to the bottom of the standings. The team bounced back with a healthy Layne in 1956. Going into the final game, Detroit held a half-game lead over the Bears, a team they'd beaten 42-10 earlier. Then Chicago defensive end Ed Meadows caught Layne not looking and blind-side-blasted him out of the game. The Bears went on to victory and the NFL title game. Meanwhile, Coach Parker got a lot of off-season ink decrying the thuggish behavior of a certain NFL lineman who played for the Bears. A lot of ink, but no satisfaction.

## THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 29, No. 3 (2007)

The following season, Parker shocked everyone by walking out on the Lions during training camp. He had just signed a new two-year contract, but he declared that he couldn't win with the team and rather than suffer what he was certain would be a losing season, he announced his exit at a "Meet the Lions" Banquet two days before the first pre-season game. The next thing he did was take over as coach of the Pittsburgh Steelers – a team that never had won anything for anybody!

Layne took "the team that couldn't win" and led them to the brink, but late in the season he suffered a broken ankle. Tobin Rote had been acquired from Green Bay as back-up, and he was brilliant at season's end. He brought the Lions into a tie with San Francisco for the division lead. Detroit got behind 27-7 in the playoff but then Rote rallied them to score 24 points in the final 22 minutes and win 31-27. Detroit again met Cleveland in the championship game, but this time it was no contest as the Lions slaughtered the Browns 59-14.

Rote had enjoyed some fine seasons in Green Bay before coming to Detroit, and he was wonderful at the end of the '57 season. Many in Detroit felt it was time to put Layne out to pasture and go with Rote. Two games into the

1958 season Layne was traded to Pittsburgh where he rejoined Buddy Parker.

Layne spent five seasons with the Steelers before he retired after the 1962 season. He never got the team a title, but Pittsburgh's 33-28-3 record for those five years was the best spell in team history up to then.

Five years after he played his final NFL game, Bobby Layne was elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame. He was the fifth T-quarterback to be enshrined after Baugh, Graham, Luckman, and Bob Waterfield. So far as we know, no one seriously objected to Layne's enshrinement at the time, but every year new players will accomplish new feats statistically, mythically, and victoriously. That's in the nature of the game. There are always new heroes.

Nevertheless, we must continue to recognize those who brought us to today's level.

Think of it this way. If you were to choose the "best" American pilot ever, you might opt for one of today's jrt jockies. The sheer flying ability you can find in today's air force is wondrous indeed.

But if you were to choose the "greatest" pilot, you might go for one of the guys who made it all possible – Wilbur and Orville Wright.

Year	Team	G	PASSING					RUSHING					
			Att	Com	Pct	Yds	TD	IN	Rating	Att	Yds	Avg	TD
1948	Chicago Bears	11	52	16	30.8	232	3	2	49.5	13	80	6.2	1
1949	NY Bulldogs	12	299	155	51.8	1796	9	18	55.3	54	196	3.6	3
1950	Detroit	12	336	152	45.2	2323	16	18	62.1	56	250	4.5	4
1951	Detroit	12	332	152	45.8	2403	26	23	67.6	61	290	4.8	1
1952	Detroit	12	287	139	48.4	1999	19	20	64.5	94	411	4.4	1
1953	Detroit	12	273	125	45.8	2088	16	21	59.6	87	343	3.9	0
1954	Detroit	12	246	135	54.9	1818	14	12	77.3	30	119	4.0	2
1955	Detroit	12	270	143	53.0	1830	11	17	61.8	31	111	3.6	0
1956	Detroit	12	244	129	52.9	1909	9	17	62.0	46	169	3.7	5
1957	Detroit	11	179	87	48.6	1169	6	12	53.0	24	99	4.1	0
1958	Detroit/Pittsburgh	12	294	145	49.3	2510	14	12	77.6	40	154	3.9	3
1959	Pittsburgh	12	297	142	47.8	1986	20	21	62.8	33	181	5.5	2
1960	Pittsburgh	12	209	103	49.3	1814	13	17	66.2	19	12	0.6	2
1961	Pittsburgh	8	149	75	50.3	1205	11	16	62.8	8	11	1.4	0
1962	Pittsburgh	13	233	116	49.8	1686	9	17	56.2	15	25	1.7	1
Career Totals		175	3700	1814	49.0	26768	196	243	63.4	611	2451	4.0	25

**Additional Career Statistics:** Scoring: 34-50 FG, 120-124 XP; Punting: 1-24

# One on One with Ozzie Newsome, Part 3

By Roger Gordon

Originally published in the Orange and Brown Report

*The OBR recently conducted an exclusive interview with former Cleveland Browns Hall of Fame tight end Ozzie Newsome. In this, the third and final installment of the interview, “The Wizard of Oz” talks about The Move, the success he has enjoyed in Baltimore, the Browns of today and much, much more.*

---

**The Orange and Brown Report: Describe exactly how it felt around the front office the second half of the 1995 season after Modell officially announced the Browns were moving to Baltimore.**

Ozzie Newsome: You know what? It was tough because it was tough to corral the players. Belichick did a great job of trying to find any other time in the history of sports that something had happened like that in the season so that he could have some reference to, and there *was* none. And so it made it very tough. The players were so distracted that, even when they came to practice, it was hard to get them to focus on their daily jobs.

**The OBR: The Houston game, the day before the [official] announcement, it was like calling hours at the stadium, wasn't it?**

ON: Yeah, because I think that was when there were no signs ... I mean, it was eerie.

**The OBR: How long had you known the move was going to be a reality before it was officially announced?**

ON: I found out that Friday.

**The OBR: Whose fault was it, the city of Cleveland's, Modell's or a combination?**

ON: I think it was a combination, more so the city of Cleveland's.

**The OBR: Was there any way other than selling the team that Art Modell could have financially kept the Browns from moving to Baltimore?**

ON: If they would have had what we have right now, called G3, where the owners are loaning up

to \$150 million to each other to help build stadiums, then yes. If G3 would have been in place at that point, Art could have got the stadium built in Cleveland. That would've been the only other way other than to sell it.

**The OBR: You followed Modell to Baltimore because, obviously, it was a great career move. What would you say to a Browns fan who might have said, “Ozzie's a traitor?”**

ON: I was called that a number of times, but if I was working for Sherwin-Williams and I would've left to go to another paint company, would they have called me a traitor then? I had to feed my family.

**The OBR: You're the Ravens' general manager. Are you the first African-American to hold that high of a position with an NFL team?**

ON: Yes. I was the first African-American general manager in professional football, *not* in professional sports.

**The OBR: You've made some fine moves and acquired some great talent, and won a Super Bowl. Are there any goals left to achieve?**

ON: Two more Super Bowls.

**The OBR: Did the Super Bowl title in 2000 mean more or less to you than a Super Bowl title would have meant to you as a player?**

ON: It was no doubt that winning a Super Bowl as a player would have meant a lot more because I would have had a chance to actually *play* in a Super Bowl, to play *and* win. But it was the next



## THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 29, No. 3 (2007)

---

best thing in that all of the talent that was on the field, I had acquired.

**The OBR: Talk about the first few years in Baltimore. Was it strange?**

ON: Yeah, it was ... because I felt like I was a visitor here, and I felt more at home when I would go back to Cleveland. But the fans really accepted us, and then gave us a chance because we were 4-12 and 6-9-1 and 6-10, so they hung in there with us.

**The OBR: Did it feel somewhat bizarre looking at the standings for three years and not seeing Cleveland in them?**

ON: No, I knew there was no team there. I knew we were Cleveland. So it did not.

**The OBR: How strange was it for you when the Ravens and Browns played for the first time in 1999, and for the first time in Cleveland?**

ON: Well, we had to go back. We had to go back there. And it was different watching those uniforms out there on that field and knowing all of the players that had played in it. And everybody was saying these are the “new” Browns, and I couldn’t digest this “new” Brown thing. The Cleveland Browns are the Cleveland Browns, but they were saying the “new” Browns, and I had a tough time digesting that.

**The OBR: Explain the feeling you had when the Ravens beat the Giants in Super Bowl XXXV. Was there a part of you that felt, for the loyal Browns fans, the title deep down should have been theirs?**

ON: It was even more so when we beat Oakland in the AFC Championship Game and got a chance to go to the Super Bowl. I wish that those fans who had been so much a part of my life could have been a part of that.

**The OBR: Talk about how important Trent Dilfer was to the Ravens’ Super Bowl title.**

ON: Number one, Trent is a very good leader. I think he understood his role during that time, and he made the plays that we needed for him to make to help us get over the hump.

**The OBR: Had the Browns stayed in Cleveland somehow, some way, do you think the Browns would have won Super Bowl XXXV?**

ON: If we could have maintained with Belichick, yes.

**The OBR: But not with the crew you had in Baltimore?**

ON: We had to go through a change. I think if we could have maintained with what we had ... because, remember, Bill put all of that together. So, if we could have maintained with that staff ... and you can look back on that staff with Nate, Kirk and Mike Shepherd and all of those people, that was one hell of a staff. And then all the personnel people, Phil Savage, Jim Schwartz, George Kokinis, Scott Pioli ... we had a great staff together, so if we could’ve stayed together, yes, we could’ve won a Super Bowl.

**The OBR: Compare Ray Lewis with the L.T.’s, Dick Butkuses and Mike Singletary’s of the world.**

ON: He belongs with those guys. No doubt that when you talk about middle linebackers, he belongs right there with Singletary and Butkus. I mean, he’s not the pass rusher that L.T. was.

**The OBR: How do you feel the Ravens’ 2000 defense ranks with the greatest defenses of all time, namely the ’85 Bears and the mid-’70s Steelers?**

ON: I think they are equal to them. I don’t think there will ever be a better defense than the ’70s Steelers. I mean, they had, what, four or five Hall of Famers on that team. The team that I played against in ’78 and ’79, it was unbelievable.

**The OBR: And their defense was even better earlier in the ’70s, in the mid-’70s.**

ON: That’s what they say. They say the ’76 defense was better than that.

**The OBR: Why did Baltimore release Dilfer after the Super Bowl season?**

ON: Because we felt like we could not win a Super Bowl the way we had won it the year before. We needed more production on the

## THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 29, No. 3 (2007)

---

offense, and we went out and got a quarterback *and* we also went out and got a right tackle.

### **The OBR: Grbac? Is that who you got?**

ON: We got Grbac, yep, and Leon Searcy, who played right tackle. We wanted to improve our offensive production.

### **The OBR: Elvis Grbac, Jeff Blake, Kyle Boller, Anthony Wright, Steve McNair ... would the Ravens have fared any better the last five-plus seasons with Dilfer leading the way instead of those guys?**

ON: No.

### **The OBR: When Jamal Lewis ripped the Browns for 500 yards rushing in two games in 2003, was there was a part of you that was embarrassed for Cleveland considering you spent your entire career there before heading off to Baltimore?**

ON: No.

### **The OBR: Compare Browns fans to Ravens fans.**

ON: Similar, except that Baltimore fans went more than a decade without football. Cleveland only endured three years. You had a whole decade of fans that grew up without football here in Baltimore.

### **The OBR: We'll reel off some names for you. Just give two or three sentences on each. First, Bear Bryant.**

ON: Impacted my life more than anyone, never allowed you to become complacent.

### **The OBR: Art Modell.**

ON: One of the most compassionate people that you could ever meet. I don't think there's ever been a player that played for him that doesn't have the utmost respect for him.

### **The OBR: Al Lerner.**

ON: A very bright man who I thought was a good friend to Art and I got to know very well through those years.

### **The OBR: Sam Rutigliano.**

ON: Lot of credit for recognizing my talents and utilizing them.

### **The OBR: Marty Schottenheimer.**

ON: Made me the professional that I am today. Did not want me to be one-dimensional. Wanted me to be the complete player. Allowed me to be a leader for him.

### **The OBR: John Elway.**

ON: [Long sigh]. Three Super Bowls ... I didn't play in it, and he's the reason why.

### **The OBR: Lindy Infante.**

ON: One of the best offensive minds that I've been around in my professional football career, player and/or non-player.

### **The OBR: Bud Carson.**

ON: All he wanted was whatever I had left in the tank. That's all he asked of me is whatever I had left, that's all he wanted.

### **The OBR: Clay Matthews.**

ON: Underrated. One of the better athletes to ever play the position. The reason why I can evaluate players right now is because of Clay Matthews.

### **The OBR: Eddie Johnson.**

ON: The Assassin. Tremendous leader. Very good from tackle to tackle.

### **The OBR: Mike Junkin.**

ON: You know, one of the lessons that happened that's probably been beneficial for me as a GM.

### **The OBR: Charles White.**

ON: A fun guy. A hard worker. Very passionate about the game.

### **The OBR: Brian Billick.**

ON: Very innovative in his approach to the game. Very player-friendly. A friend. A true friend.

### **The OBR: Jonathan Ogden.**

ON: One of the greatest to ever play his position and one of the most unassuming guys you've ever been around.

### **The OBR: Kellen Winslow, Sr.**

ON: Enjoyed competing with him. I have the utmost respect for him in the way he played the game.

### **The OBR: Kellen Winslow, Jr.**

ON: Really liked him coming out of college.

### **The OBR: Braylon Edwards.**

ON: Really liked *him* coming out of college.

### **The OBR: Charlie Frye.**

ON: Was a draftable player for us.

### **The OBR: Did you have mixed emotions when Savage left the Ravens to come to Cleveland?**

ON: No. He had prepared himself for this opportunity, and I thought it was a great opportunity for him.

### **The OBR: Give your impressions of the Browns brain trust of Randy Lerner, Phil Savage and Romeo Crennel.**

ON: I think all three are great people, I think all three are very much in love with football and very much want to win in Cleveland.

### **The OBR: Talk about your memories of the 1999 Hall of Fame Weekend when you were enshrined into the Hall.**

ON: Went in with mixed feelings, not knowing what the reception was going to be like. Came away in awe. The Browns fans are true and true.

### **The OBR: How has NFL football changed since your playing days?**

ON: Situational substitution. The players are faster, the players are bigger, but it's so much situational substitution.

### **The OBR: What are your impressions of Cleveland Browns Stadium?**

ON: I like it, but I much prefer the old one.

### **The OBR: Is there a part of you that still roots for the Browns?**

ON: Yes, there is. I root for the orange helmets. I mean, I just always will.

## **Bosh Pritchard**

**By John Maxymuk**

*Adapted from Eagles By the Numbers, Camino Books, 2005.*

The ninth of ten sons, Abisha Collins Pritchard was named for an uncle who promised to buy him his first pair of long pants when the time came. Pritchard never got the pants, but he became "Bish" which was botched to "Bosh" in the newspapers during his spectacular four-sport high school career. He accepted a football scholarship as a tailback to the Virginia Military Institute where he established a rivalry and friendship with the University of Virginia's All American tailback Bill Dudley. Bullet Bill was the first pick of the 1942 draft by Pittsburgh and would fashion a Hall of Fame career in three cities, but would never win a championship. Bosh's path would be different.

Pritchard went undrafted and signed on with the Cleveland Rams in 1942, but only got into one game in which he lost 27 yards on three carries before being waived. For \$100 the Greasy Neale's struggling Eagles picked him up and gave him a chance. Bosh showed brilliant flashes in the second half of the season. He returned a kickoff 97 yards for a touchdown against Washington and posted a 100-yard rushing day against the Brooklyn Dodgers. Neale finished his second year in Philadelphia 2-9, and Pritchard joined the Navy as a Chief Petty Officer. For the next three years, he served stateside during World War II. In 1945 while stationed in San Diego, he starred on the field and off for the San Diego Bombers of the Pacific Coast Football League. He was known as the "Crooning Halfback" on his own local radio show and even sang at halftime sometimes.

Upon his discharge in 1946, Bosh returned to Philadelphia where he found a vastly different Eagles team that had finished second the past two years and who were led by the best runner in the NFL, Steve Van Buren. Pritchard had walked into the perfect situation for someone of his slight (5'11" 165 pound) frame. The speedy and shifty Pritchard became the outside change of pace to Van Buren's speedy and powerful inside force, and the Eagles smooth functioning T-formation offense thundered to a 32-12-2 record over the next four years, winning two of three title game appearances. Bosh's 4.9 yards per carry average was actually higher than Van Buren's 4.6 during that time, although Van Buren was the workhouse who carried the ball more than twice as much as Pritchard. If he had been used more, Pritchard would have been more likely to break down; his skill was getting into the open field and breaking off big gains. He gained over 500 yards in both 1948 and 1949 and finished in the top 10 for rushing both years. In 1949, he was voted the Eagles MVP despite hurting his knee in the eighth game of the year. He missed the rest of 1949 and underwent surgery in 1950 when the knee failed to respond to rest. By 1951 neither he nor the Eagles were the same. Neale was gone, and Bosh was released. He was picked up by the Giants where he had one last moment of glory, returning a punt for a score.

After football, Bosh worked as a local sportscaster on television and radio. He was part of the Eagles radio team during the 1960 championship team and worked for Tel Ra Productions which created NFL highlights films for the league in the 1950s before Ed Sabol came along to create NFL Films. Pritchard stayed active in community theater and was elected to the Virginia and Pennsylvania Sports Halls of Fame. He was the quintessential Eagle scatback and died in 1996 at the age of 77.

# PFRA COMMITTEES

By Ken Crippen

The Hall of Very Good Committee is well under way and has started accepting nominations for the class of 2008. Send no more than ten nominations to Andy Piascik. His mailing address and e-mail address are listed below.

The Central New York Committee is putting the finishing touches on their first book, detailing the history of the Syracuse Athletic Association's Football team. *From Championships to Turmoil: The History of the Syracuse Athletic Association Football Team (1890-1900)* is due to be available in November of this year. The next project for them is detailing the first twenty-five years of the Watertown Red and Black.

The Western New York Committee is continuing their work on the history of the Rochester Jeffersons. PFRA member Kevin Carroll was gracious enough to share information on Dr. Eddie Anderson, who played with the Rochester Jeffersons in 1922. This information came from his book *Dr. Eddie Anderson, Hall of Fame College Football Coach* (McFarland Publishers). Interviews are continually being conducted with family members and friends of Jeffersons players. The most recent was an interview with Pittsburgh Steelers Chairman Dan Rooney, whose family was close with the Leo Lyons family.

There has been talk of holding a PFRA meeting or convention. An informal exploratory committee has been formed, tasked with determining how much interest there is in such an event. Once it has been determined that there is sufficient interest, a formal committee will be established to work on the details (group rates at hotels, meeting agenda, etc). If you would be interested in attending such an even, please contact me.

## **Hall of Very Good Committee:**

Committee Goal: To solicit and sort through nominees, to prepare all HOVG-related materials for *Coffin Corner* and to prepare write-ups on the nominees.

Contact Information:  
Andy Piascik  
25 Cartright St.  
Bridgeport, CT 06604  
andy@nflhistory.net

## **Membership Committee:**

Committee Goal: To find ways to make it easier for PFRA members to contact each other and to know who is working on what research.

## Contact Information:

John Fenton  
11184 Hendrix St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19116  
(267) 235-2164  
jjfenton@comcast.net

## **Pre-NFL Pro Football Committee:**

Committee Goal: To research all semi-professional and professional games played prior to 1920. This would include line scores, game summaries and rosters.

## Contact Information:

Roy Sye  
708 W. Braeside Drive  
Arlington Heights, IL 60004  
(847) 577-1442  
syeroy@wowway.com

## **Team Radio and TV Commentators Committee:**

Committee Goal: To document the play-by-play announcers, analysts and field reporters for every single broadcast of NFL and AFL games (regular season and post season) from 1939 to the present.

## Contact Information:

Tim Brulia  
14 Altoona Avenue  
Enola, PA 17025  
(717) 728-9739  
coolbrul@yahoo.com  
tbrulia@state.pa.us

## **Uniforms of Past Teams Committee:**

Committee Goal: To document every uniform design and color (helmets, jerseys, pants and socks) for each NFL, AFL and AAFC team from 1933 to the present.

## Contact Information:

Tim Brulia  
14 Altoona Avenue  
Enola, PA 17025  
(717) 728-9739  
coolbrul@yahoo.com  
tbrulia@state.pa.us

## **All-Pros and Awards Committee:**

Committee Goal: To generate a complete listing of All-Pro teams from all sources. For the Awards

## THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 29, No. 3 (2007)

---

Committee: generate a complete list of all AP and UPI awards and the voting for each of them.

Contact Information:

John Hogrogian  
580 84<sup>th</sup> Street  
Apt. 3-I  
Brooklyn, NY 11209  
(718) 680-1710  
jhogrogi@msn.com

or

John Turney  
2615 18<sup>th</sup> Street  
Alamogordo, NM 88310  
jturney@totacc.com

**Stadiums Committee:**

Committee Goal: To document and publish information on all stadiums used by professional football teams. The stadium Committee has started and is concentrating on the stadiums in use since 1946. This would include all AAFC, NFL and AFL teams. For each stadium, the committee would like to gather the following:

- A) An aerial view
- B) An exterior view (a view taken of the stadium at street level)
- C) An interior view (a view taken from the stands)
- D) An action view (a view of a game being played in the stadium, which shows both players and some portion of the stadium from the field level)

Along with this information, factual data on each stadium will be compiled. This data would include construction dates, dates of use, anecdotal history, etc. The committee would also like to work on stadiums from other eras (pre-1946), but they will start with post-1946 stadiums. The goal of the committee is to compile book to be published.

Contact Information:

Bill Pepperell  
3427 Overland Drive  
Holiday, FL 34691  
(510) 776-5649  
billpepperell1@yahoo.com

or

Ace Hendricks  
2074 County Road A14  
Mabel, MN 55954  
(563) 735-5713  
Acehendricks37@yahoo.com

**Empire Football League Committee:**

Committee Goal: To research and document the history of the semi-professional Empire Football League.

Contact Information:

Dave Burch

1016 Irving Ave.  
Endicott, NY 13760  
(607) 748-7140  
EmpireFoot@aol.com

**Western New York Committee:**

Committee Goal: To research and document all amateur, semi-professional and professional teams that played in the Western New York Area. The committee would like to publish an encyclopedia when the research has been completed.

**Rochester Jeffersons Subcommittee:**

Subcommittee Goal: To publish a book on the complete history of the Rochester Jeffersons. This book will contain scores, rosters, game summaries and biographies of all of the players.  
<http://www.RochesterJeffersons.com>

Contact Information:

Ken Crippen  
740 Deerfield Road  
Warminster, PA 18974  
(215) 421-6994  
<http://www.wnypfra.org>  
Ken\_Crippen@billsbackers.com

**Central New York Committee:**

Committee Goal: To research and document all amateur, semi-professional and professional teams that played in the Central New York Area. The committee would like to publish an encyclopedia when the research has been completed.

Update: As mentioned previously, *From Championships to Turmoil: The History of the Syracuse Athletic Association Football Team (1890-1900)* is due to be published this summer and will be available in the fall. The committee website will be updated this summer with details of the S.A.A. team. The focus will then turn to the Watertown Red & Black project, detailing the first twenty-five years of the organization. Coach George Ashcraft of the Watertown Red & Black, as well as Coach Mike Britton of the St. Lawrence Trailblazers (Watertown Red & Black historian) have provided a great deal of assistance to date. The committee is grateful for their efforts.

Contact Information:

Ken Crippen  
740 Deerfield Road  
Warminster, PA 18974  
(215) 421-6994  
<http://www.wnypfra.org/CNY/>  
Ken\_Crippen@billsbackers.com

*Ken Crippen is responsible for oversight of the PFRA Committees. If you would like to help out with a committee or if you want to form your own committee, contact him at: [Ken\\_Crippen@billsbackers.com](mailto:Ken_Crippen@billsbackers.com).*

## PRO FOOTBALL LORE

By Joe Horrigan

From his article in *Total Football I*



**Chuck Bednarik**

**T**he Philadelphia Eagles' two-way star, Chuck Bednarik, intercepted 3 passes while playing linebacker in 1957. Eagles management rewarded Bednarik by adding a clause to his 1958 contract that provided for a \$10 bonus for each pass he intercepted that season. Unfortunately, the high-stake bonus went unclaimed as Bednarik was, for the first time, used almost exclusively on offense as a center.

\* \* \* \*

**O**nly one man in pro football history has rushed and passed for more than 1,000 yards in the same season. Orban (Spec) Sanders, a running back with the 1947 New York Yankees of the All-America Football Conference, rushed for 1,432 yards and passed for 1,442 yards. A do-everything back, he also punted 46 times for a 42.1 yard average, intercepted 3 passes, returned 6 punts, and led the AAFC that year in kickoff returns with 22.

\* \* \* \*

**T**he *Ripley's Believe It or Not* feature in the October 17, 1927, edition of the Milwaukee Journal reported as fact, that "Al Nesser of the New York Giants professional football team played an entire game in a bathing suit." The game was listed as the 1926 meeting between the Giants and the Canton Bulldogs.

\* \* \* \*

**S**t. Louis Cardinals guard Conrad Dobler was considered by many to be a "dirty" player. It wasn't uncommon for him to use such tactics as biting, kicking, scratching, and spitting when locked up with an opponent. Hall of Fame defensive tackle turned actor Merlin Olsen, an outspoken critic of Dobler, once used the set of his television show *Father Murphy* to exact some measure of revenge against the Cardinals' lineman. In a scene shot in the Old West's Boot Hill Graveyard, a tombstone seen in the background was inscribed: "Here Lies Conrad Dobler, Gone But Not Forgotten."

\* \* \* \*

**B**ob Suffridge, a guard with the 1941 Philadelphia Eagles, once blocked three kicks on the same play. The unbelievable hat trick occurred on December 7, in a game against the Washington Redskins. After scoring a go-ahead touchdown late in the fourth quarter, the Redskins lined up for the almost-automatic extra-point attempt. Suffridge reasoned his Eagles still had a chance to win if he could block the extra point. Determined, he burst through the Redskins' line and blocked the kick. However, a penalty on the play gave the Redskins another shot. Undaunted, Suffridge again penetrated the Washington line and again blocked the extra-point attempt. This time, however, the ball bounced out of bounds. The rules of the day were such that a ball blocked out of bounds before being recovered meant the offense retained possession. Thus, the Redskins got yet a third shot at the elusive extra point. This time, Suffridge not only blocked the kick, he smothered the ball with his body until the official whistled the play dead. Unfortunately, the Eagles couldn't capitalize on Suffridge's remarkable effort, and the Redskins held on to win 20-14.

\* \* \* \*



**George Musso**

**P**ro Football Hall of Fame tackle George Musso is the only man to play football against two future United States Presidents. Musso, as a collegian at Millikin, faced 175-pound guard Ronald Reagan from Eureka College. As a pro with the Chicago Bears, Musso played in the 1935 Chicago All-Star Game, where he faced a College All-Star center from Michigan, Gerald Ford.

\* \* \* \*

**L**yndon B. Johnson was the first sitting U.S. President to attend an NFL game. LBJ was a surprise visitor to D.C. Stadium in 1966, where he watched the Washington Redskins and Baltimore Colts open their exhibition season. The president was the guest of Redskins owner Edward Bennett Williams. The Washington Star reported breathlessly that LBJ seemed to enjoy the game and "feasted on two hot dogs, a hamburger, ice cream, and milk."

\* \* \* \*

**O**n October 10, 1943, Associated Press reported that, due to a freak accident, Chicago Cardinals end-punter Clint Wager would miss the upcoming game against the Chicago Bears. The 6-foot 6 1/2-inch Wager was hospitalized with a fractured skull after kicking himself in the head while practicing his punting.

\* \* \* \*

**T**he 1952 Dallas Texans, the last NFL team to fold, actually began their one-year existence on a high note—they scored first in their opening game against the New York Giants. Just minutes into the game, a Giants' defensive back fumbled a punt return, and, two plays later, the Texans scored. The nearest Giants defender was the defensive back who set up the drive with his fumble, none other than future Dallas Cowboys coach Tom Landry.

\* \* \* \*

**D**oug Dieken played 14 seasons with the Cleveland Browns. A tight end at Illinois, Dieken's only touchdown reception as a pro came on a fake-field-goal in 1983. During his career, however, he did block a punt, recover an opponent's fumble, score a safety, gain a first down, and return a kickoff, not too shabby for an offensive tackle.

\* \* \* \*

**D**avid (Deacon) Jones chose his nickname "because," he reasoned, "no one would ever remember a player with the name David Jones." As it turned out, Jones played football so well, it really wouldn't have mattered what nickname he selected. In fact, he wasn't even the first Deacon Jones to play in the NFL. Marshall (Deacon) Jones was a back with the Hammond Pros (1920), Detroit Heralds (1920), and the Akron Pros (1921).



**Deacon Jones**

# **Bosh Pritchard**

## **By John Maxymuk**

Adapted from *Eagles By the Numbers*, Camino Books, 2005.

The ninth of ten sons, Abisha Collins Pritchard was named for an uncle who promised to buy him his first pair of long pants when the time came. Pritchard never got the pants, but he became “Bish” which was botched to “Bosh” in the newspapers during his spectacular four-sport high school career. He accepted a football scholarship as a tailback to the Virginia Military Institute where he established a rivalry and friendship with the University of Virginia’s All American tailback Bill Dudley. Bullet Bill was the first pick of the 1942 draft by Pittsburgh and would fashion a Hall of Fame career in three cities, but would never win a championship. Bosh’s path would be different.

Pritchard went undrafted and signed on with the Cleveland Rams in 1942, but only got into one game in which he lost 27 yards on three carries before being waived. For \$100 the Greasy Neale’s struggling Eagles picked him up and gave him a chance. Bosh showed brilliant flashes in the second half of the season. He returned a kickoff 97 yards for a touchdown against Washington and posted a 100-yard rushing day against the Brooklyn Dodgers. Neale finished his second year in Philadelphia 2-9, and Pritchard joined the Navy as a Chief Petty Officer. For the next three years, he served stateside during World War II. In 1945 while stationed in San Diego, he starred on the field and off for the San Diego Bombers of the Pacific Coast Football League. He was known as the “Crooning Halfback” on his own local radio show and even sang at halftime sometimes.

Upon his discharge in 1946, Bosh returned to Philadelphia where he found a vastly different Eagles team that had finished second the past two years and who were led by the best runner in the NFL, Steve Van Buren. Pritchard had walked into the perfect situation for someone of his slight (5’11” 165 pound) frame. The speedy and shifty Pritchard became the outside change of pace to Van Buren’s speedy and powerful inside force, and the Eagles smooth functioning T-formation offense thundered to a 32-12-2 record over the next four years, winning two of three title game appearances. Bosh’s 4.9 yards per carry average was actually higher than Van Buren’s 4.6 during that time, although Van Buren was the workhouse who carried the ball more than twice as much as Pritchard. If he had been used more, Pritchard would have been more likely to break down; his skill was getting into the open field and breaking off big gains. He gained over 500 yards in both 1948 and 1949 and finished in the top 10 for rushing both years. In 1949, he was voted the Eagles MVP despite hurting his knee in the eighth game of the year. He missed the rest of 1949 and underwent surgery in 1950 when the knee failed to respond to rest. By 1951 neither he nor the Eagles were the same. Neale was gone, and Bosh was released. He was picked up by the Giants where he had one last moment of glory, returning a punt for a score.

After football, Bosh worked as a local sportscaster on television and radio. He was part of the Eagles radio team during the 1960 championship team and worked for Tel Ra Productions which created NFL highlights films for the league in the 1950s before Ed Sabol came along to create NFL Films. Pritchard stayed active in community theater and was elected to the Virginia and Pennsylvania Sports Halls of Fame. He was the quintessential Eagle scatback and died in 1996 at the age of 77.