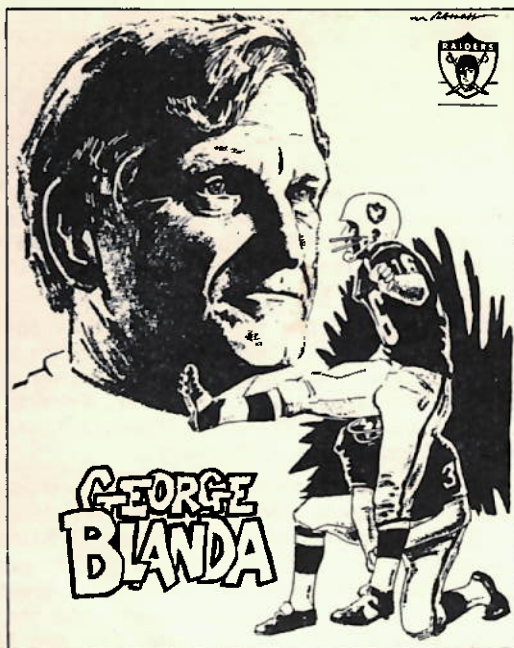




NFL COMPETITORS:

1926-1975

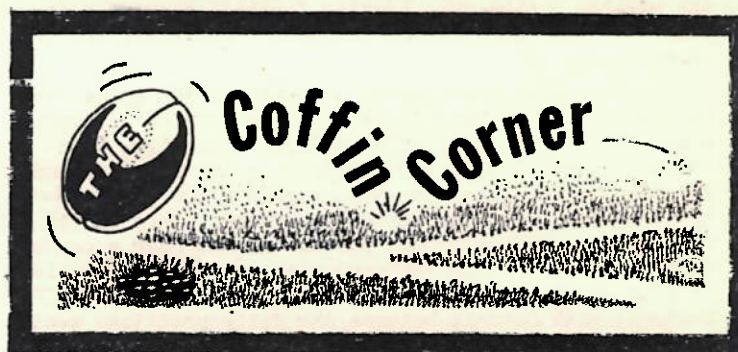
By Stephen Hensley

"There is a great public demand to see the game." Those are the words of W.H. "Big Bill" Edwards, the commissioner of the new American Football League in 1926. This was the first attempt to set up a rival league opposite the National Football League. It would not be the last. In all there have been six major attempts to wrestle part of the market from the NFL. A couple were successful but for the most part the attempts have been failures. Yet all of them started out with the same premise that Big Bill Edwards expounded over a half century ago, "There is a great public demand to see the game."

The first of these leagues was the American Football League (a name to be used several more times) which was founded in 1926 because Harold "Red" Grange was denied a franchise with the NFL in New York City. After turning pro with the Chicago Bears late in the 1925 season, Grange had led the Bruins through a 19-game, coast-to-coast tour which had been a financial lifesaver for all of pro football. Grange's manager, promoter Charles C. "Cash and Carry" Pyle, believed that Grange had enough fan appeal to start his own team. But the move was blocked by Tim Mara, owner of the year-old New York Giants. Although most of the NFL teams were willing to approve the move, Mara would not sanction another team in the Giants' area.

Undaunted, Pyle decided that a whole league could be supported by Grange's popularity. He formed a nine team league, the teams being the Boston Bulldogs, Brooklyn Horsemen, Chicago Bulls, Cleveland Panthers, New York Yankees (Grange's team), Newark Bears, Philadelphia Quakers, Rock Island Independents (who jumped from the NFL), and the Los Angeles West Coast Wildcats (a road team led by George "Wildcat" Wilson).

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER/MAGAZINE OF P.F.R.A.



Vol. III, No. 9

September, 1981

Big Bill Edwards assumed the \$25,000 a year post of commissioner. He was a former Internal Revenue Service Collector and Street Cleaning Commissioner of New York who had been a famous football player at Princeton. He was heavy into rhetoric in his promotion of the league with such quotes as, "I want to help preserve the high class football as it is played in the colleges ... Our slogan is football for all and all for football. We want to let the public in on the greatest of all red-blooded American sports!"

But the league was not successful. Not all of the teams that started that 1926 season finished it. The Philadelphia Quakers won the championship over Grange's Yankees.

In 1927, the NFL absorbed the AFL. New York ended up with two clubs -- the Giants and the Yankees -- after all. But the teams were to have no conflicting dates, leaving New York City with only one game per Sunday where there had been two or three in the metropolitan area the previous year. President Edwards and Pyle completed the final reorganization and also announced that the three teams in Chicago had been combined into two. Other developments from the absorption saw the reduction of teams from 29 to 12. With the abundance of over 300 players and a record number of newcomers, this would make for a faster game and also increase the roster limits.

The owners looked with hope to a future of prosperity after the war of the previous year. The abundance of players as a result of the elimination of franchises enabled the owners to cut salaries and the increased competition resulted in a better brand of football and higher attendances. As for Grange, he played for the Yankees in 1927, sat out a year with a bad leg, and then returned to the Bears where he played until 1934.

In November of 1935, another new league was announced by Dr. Harry A. March. This new American Football League was to be composed of eight northeastern teams and, he said, would in no way conflict with the NFL.

In the fall of 1936 the AFL began operation in Boston, Providence, New York, Jersey City, Syracuse, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia. The AFL set player limits at 25 for the first three games and 22 after that.

The new league started out in a state of flux. The Syracuse franchise was moved to Rochester because of a lack of support for a winless team. A week later the

team disbanded with coach Don Irwin switching to New York. A week after this, the Brooklyn team moved to Rochester to finish the season. In the midst of all this, Dr. March resigned as the commissioner because of the way the owners were signing football players. Apparently they were raiding NFL clubs, colleges, and other teams.

In most major newspapers, accounts of AFL games were hardly more than space fillers at the ends of columns. However, in 1937 an article appeared which drew headlines. Larry Kelley, the former Yale All-American and Heisman Trophy winner in 1936, signed a one-game contract to play with the Boston Shamrocks. Here was a player of repute (although Boston did not have a passer to go with him). His contract also gave him the option to play in four more games. Kelley had rejected an NFL contract with Detroit because the daily practices would have made him unable to teach school in New Jersey during the week. He could fly to the Boston games on the weekends without practicing. Apparently this was the high water mark for the second attempt at establishing a rival to the NFL.

A week later, Kelley announced he would not play after all.

For two seasons, the NFL went unchallenged. Then, in Chicago in 1940, a new league was organized with the catchy title of the American Football League. Big Bill Edwards was mentioned as a possible commissioner but the job went to William D. Griffith, the former publicity director at Ohio State University. The league was composed of six teams: Columbus, Milwaukee, Boston, New York, Buffalo, and Cincinnati.

The Columbus Bullies won the 1940 championship and the league announced an expansion for 1941. They expanded from six to five teams.

The AFL did try a new tactic to obtain college players. They voted to draft fifty outstanding 1940 college stars and letting these players decide which teams they wanted to play with. Douglas Grant Hertz, a well-known promoter, purchased the New York team and vowed to make a great effort to sign Michigan's Tommy Harmon, the Heisman Trophy winner, and All-American "Jarrin" John Kimbrough of Texas A & M, the two biggest college stars of the previous year. Hertz also announced in August that he had withdrawn his team from the league only to play "exhibition" games against the other AFL teams. The New Yorkers were carried in the league standings, which -- despite a few appearances by Harmon and Kimbrough for Hertz's team -- were led again by Columbus.

In early 1942 the league made claims that it was not experiencing any financial difficulties and that it would return the following fall. Yet when September arrived, the owners insisted that they were so tied up with war work they were unable to operate the league.

Thus ended AFL III.

In September of 1944, a group of millionaires announced the All-American Football Conference. This new league was to be the most successful attempt at capturing some of the NFL market to this time.

Many famous names were announced as being connected with the AAFC. Mrs. Lou Gehrig was to be the owner of the New York club. Baltimore was supported by former world heavyweight champion Gene Tunney. The Los Angeles team boasted such backers as Don Ameche, Bing Crosby, and Bob Hope. "Sleepy Jim" Crowley, one of the Four Horsemen of Notre Dame, was named commissioner with a five year contract of \$25,000 per year.

The league started with two rules concerning their operation: no team was to have a player or coach who had a contract with an NFL team and they were to sign no player with college eligibility left.

In 1945, the league went to work gaining talent. Paul Brown, the Great Lakes Naval Center coach and former coach of Ohio State's 1942 National Champions, was named to coach Cleveland. In another deal Dan Topping, owner of the Brooklyn team in the NFL, "jumped" his NFL team to the AAFC, giving the new league an established team in New York. It turned out that Topping had been paid \$100,000 to join the new league. An additional help was that Topping had contract rights to many players from his years in the NFL. These players were to be divided over the league.

The fact that America was just emerging from World War II worked in favor of the new league. Many college stars were just ending their terms in the service so there was a lot of available talent. Such former college and service team stars as Glenn Dobbs, Frankie Sinkwich, Otto Graham, Norm Standlee, Frankie Albert, and Elroy Hirsch signed with AAFC teams.

There appeared to be acceptance for the brand of football that was played by the All American Football Conference. The largest crowd in pro football history attended the opening game between the Cleveland Browns and the Miami Seahawks in September 1946. The Browns proved to be the class of the league by winning the championship in each of the four seasons that the AAFC operated. Each year the Browns challenged the NFL champion to a playoff game but to no avail. In fact, the only response that was received was no response.

The All-American Conference was somewhat unstable. It had three commissioners in the brief span in which it operated, and although some teams were very successful, the Miami entry lasted only one year and the Brooklyn entry was disbanded before the last season. The question at the time was could two football leagues be supported? In the end, the answer was no.

The war between the two professional leagues continued into 1949 and early that year eight of ten NFL owners were willing to accept Cleveland, San Francisco, Baltimore, and Buffalo into the NFL. But the vote had to be unanimous.

By the end of the year the leagues did merge. Dan Topping was persuaded to sell his Yankees and Washington agreed to let Baltimore operate in their area. These were contributive factors in the merger. Cleveland, San Francisco, and Baltimore became members of the NFL. The players on the remaining teams ended in a pool to be drafted by the teams in the new National Football League.

The final attestation as to the quality of play in the AAFC was shown in 1950. The Browns, in their first NFL season, won the championship.

Sunday afternoons in 1960 brought to the TV football fan a new game to watch. Instead of (or after) watching Jimmy Brown or Johnny Unitas, one could tune in a wide open attack unrivaled by anything seen in the established National Football League. Here was a game that created new stars for the American football fan and thus the name of the new league was the American Football League.

The AFL was founded by Lamar Hunt, the son of H.L. Hunt, the Texas multimillionaire. The league was supported by vast sums of money -- most of the owners were very wealthy -- but the factor that did the most to establish the AFL was television exposure. TV brought more games to more people than any other medium had been able to do. Another important factor was the caliber of the talent they got. The AFL picked up such NFL castoffs as future Hall of Famer George Blanda, who led Houston to the first AFL title. Billy Cannon, the 1959 Heisman Trophy winner, was signed, but one of the favorites was a little 5'6" cannonball named Charley Tolar. Two players, kicker Ben Agajanian and linebacker Hardy Brown, became the only men to play in the NFL, AFL, and AAFC.

The battle for player talent escalated into a full scale war with both leagues vying for the same college players. Although the lure of the established NFL attracted a majority of the big name college players, the AFL still signed many quality stars. Probably the most celebrated signee for the AFL was a quarterback from Alabama named Joe Namath.

Although the AFL met with ultimate success by merging with the NFL and creating a post season extravaganza called the Super Bowl the first few years were not a total success. Even with a \$185,000 per club TV contract the league lost over \$1½ million the first season. When H.L. Hunt was told that his son Lamar had lost one million dollars this first year he remarked, "Goodness, the boy has only 123 more years to go." But it continued on in June, 1966, it was announced that a merger agreement had been completed leading to full integration with a plan for 28 teams by the 1970 season. This merger led to the present setup of the NFL with its two conferences and three divisions within the conferences. Thus the AFL succeeded far better than any attempts previously had because of three elements: money, TV exposure, and name players.

The World Football League was the last try, to date, to establish a league opposite the NFL. The WFL was the brain child of Gary Davidson, a corporate lawyer and founder of both the World Hockey Association and the American Basketball Association. Davidson's premise was that one would probably lose money at first but those coming in on the ground floor would make a lot of money if it succeeded. He sought the three things that had made the AFL: money, TV exposure, and name players.

The money available for the 1974 season was from the assortment of backers of each of the teams that set up franchises in such places as Jacksonville, Memphis, Birmingham, and Honolulu. The WFL then went out to capture talent. Through raids on the NFL they signed such established stars as Calvin Hill, Larry Csonka, Jim Kwik, and Paul Warfield to large contracts. But the league could never get the television exposure that had been so important to the AFL's success. Except for a few scattered games the TV coverage was practically nil.

So, by the 1975 season the WFL was in dire straits. Despite claims that the league was healthy and planning for expansion in 1976, many clubs were unable to meet payrolls. This was in September. Two weeks later the league announced that it was beginning a national marketing program to boost sagging attendance figures.

Despite such last minute efforts, the WFL went out of business on October 22, 1975.

Why did the WFL fail? Well, lack of the three essentials were three important reasons. The money ran out; there was no television; and the name players who were signed were either injured or lacked competent supporting casts. Also the WFL was not able to sign the good college players as the old AFL had done. But another factor enters here for conjecture. Had pro football reached a saturation limit? The large established markets were not threatened. Smaller cities were used and they were unable to sustain teams.

There have been six attempts to capture some of the NFL market. In a couple of cases success of the league was accomplished not by independent operation but rather by merger. In most of the cases though, there was not a "great public demand to see the game."

* * *

Stephen Hensley investigated the attempts to establish NFL rivals as a research project for P.F.R.A. member Robert C. Barnett while a student in Professor Barnett's class at Marshall University.

A Prescription from Dr. Joe

In any field, be it in the arts, professions, industry, or athletics, the first in leadership must suffer the white lights of publicity. Therefore, to meet the demands of the public, the athlete must be well-prepared physically, mentally, and spiritually.

The price of success in athletics is to develop good working habits. There are no bargain tables where you can exchange promises and good intentions. A prime essential in developing good working habits and training is having your own self-starter, your own 'go' button. This attitude is not something that comes from the outside. It is a quality you must develop from within. It requires personal motivation. Bad habits are like a soft bed. They are easy to get into but hard to get out of.

How can you personally motivate yourself to develop good work habits and training? I certainly do not claim that the formula that I am suggesting is simple and easy to follow; however, nothing worth achieving is ever easy. Good work habits and training will help you develop an internal toughness. These build a self-confident attitude that will sustain you through adversity and temporary discouragement. In a capsule, this formula is measured by the five D's, namely: Desire, Determination, Durability, Discipline, and Divinity! These five D's are integrated and enmeshed into one solid block called success.

The first step on your road to athletic prowess and achievement is desire. This must be uppermost in your makeup. This is your starter button. Desire carries you through many ordeals and keeps your spirit up. This is your starter button. Desire carries you through many ordeals and keeps your spirit up. This desire in turn is joined by the second D, determination. Determination makes for the get up and go. It sets the spark for carrying on. Next, the third D, durability, enters into the picture. As a consequence, you welcome every challenge, and you will know that with good training and working habits firmly ingrained you are strengthening your youthful body to withstand the rigors of a successful athletic career. This then, is further cemented by the fourth D, discipline. Without discipline to uphold the other D's you are doomed for mediocrity. Discipline is the binding link that makes for the stature of the man. Finally, the fifth D is Divinity. The belief that the pursuit of excellence is a God-given opportunity to glorify our Creator from whom all excellence emanates will give you faith and support you always. If you do not have faith, no amount of explanation will motivate you. This is your spiritual guidance on the road of success. Remember that striving for perfection is difficult and endless.

There you have the five essentials of excellence: desire, determination, durability, discipline, and divinity!

-- Joseph E. Kopcha, M.D.

* * *

Dr. Joe Kopcha, who penned the above expression of his philosophy, lists his credits as: Chicago Bears, 1929-1935; Detroit Lions, 1936, All-Pro Guard Four Years; Chicago Bears Hall of Fame; Indiana Hall of Fame; and charter member of P.F.R.A.



Johnny UNITAS

AND THE BALTIMORE COLTS MADE THE FINAL STANDINGS IN THE WESTERN CONFERENCE APPEAR MUCH CLOSER THAN THEY REALLY WERE BY COASTING THROUGH THEIR LAST TWO GAMES AFTER THEY'D LOCKED UP THE TITLE. THE COLTS HAD THE BEST OF EVERYTHING. THE HIGH-POWERED OFFENSE FEATURED ALAN "THE HORSE" AMECHE BLASTING UP THE CENTER, THE OUTSIDE RUNNING OF LENNY MOORE, & THE PASSING COMBO OF UNITAS-TO-RAYMOND BERRY. THE DEFENSE WAS ROCK-SOLID, TOO. ITS HEART WAS THE GREAT FRONT FOUR OF GINO MARCHETTI, ARTIE DONOVAN, GENE "BIG DADDY" LIPSCOMB, & ORDELL BRASSE.



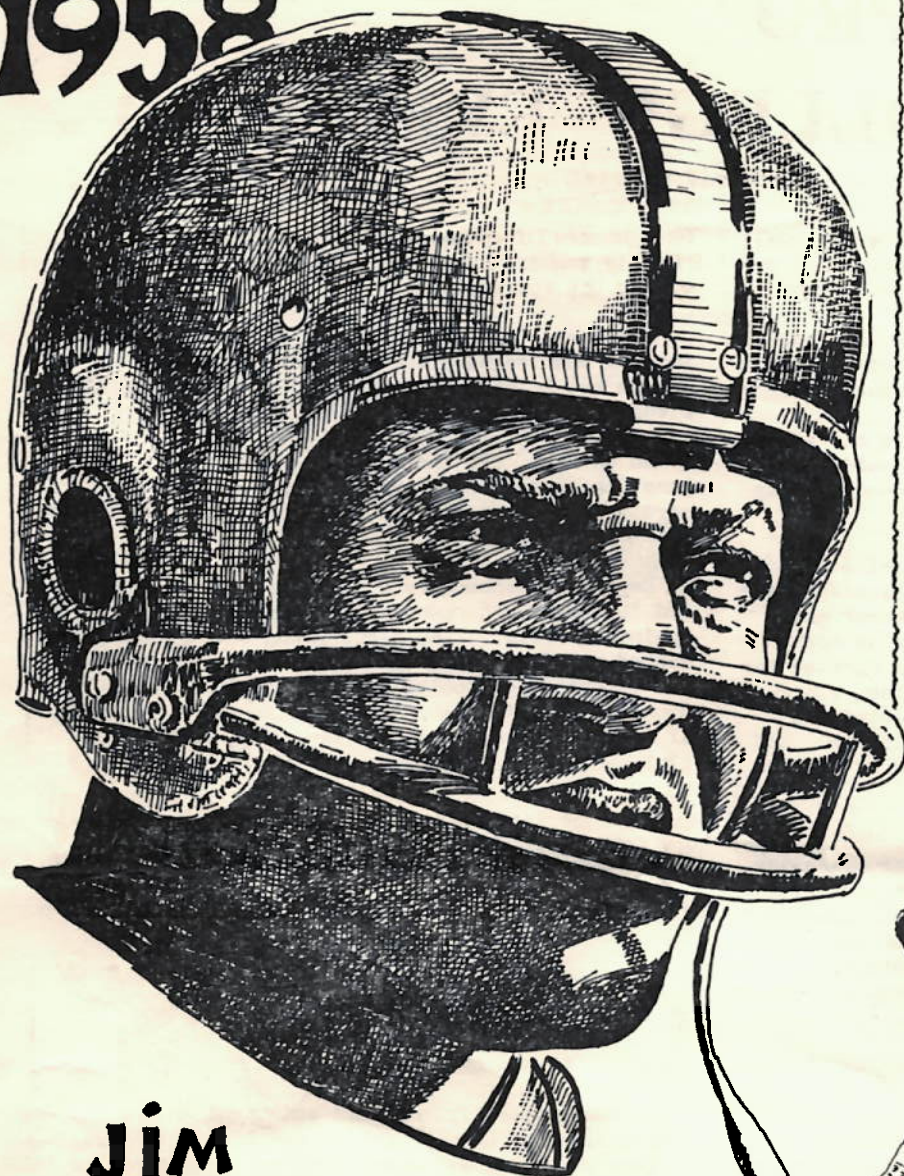
THE CHAMPIONSHIP PROVED AN EVEN MATCH — SO EVEN THAT AFTER 60 MINUTES OF EXCITEMENT THE COLTS AND GIANTS WERE TIED, 17-17. IN THE FIRST "SUDDEN-DEATH" PERIOD EVER PLAYED, THE COLTS KICKED OFF TO THE GIANTS, BUT THE NEW YORKER'S COULD NOT GAIN AND PUNTED TO THE BALTIMORE 20-YARD LINE. UNITAS BROUGHT HIS TEAM RELENTLESSLY DOWNFIELD WITH A CLEVER, VARIED ATTACK. AT LAST,



Alan AMECHE

SMASHED OVER FROM THE ONE-YARD LINE AFTER 8:15 OF OVERTIME TO WIN IT ALL FOR THE COLTS.

1958



JIM BROWN

SET A NEW PRO RUSHING MARK WITH 1,527 YARDS AS HE LED CLEVELAND TO A TIE FOR THE EASTERN CHAMPIONSHIP. HE WAS NEARLY UNSTOPPABLE UNTIL THE BROWNS MET THE NEW YORK GIANTS IN THE DIVISION PLAYOFF. THE GIANTS HAD EARNED A TIE WITH A LAST-DITCH WIN OVER THE BROWNS ON THE SEASON'S FINAL SUNDAY—PAT SUMMERALL'S 49-YARD FIELD GOAL WITH LESS THAN A MINUTE TO GO PROVIDING THE MARGIN OF VICTORY.

ANDY ROBUSTELLI, ROSEY GRIER, JIM KATCAVAGE, SAM HUFF, DICK MODZELEWSKI & THE REST OF THE NEW YORK DEFENSE DOMINATED THE PLAYOFF. BROWN WAS HELD TO A MERE EIGHT YARDS, AS THE GIANTS WON, 10-0.

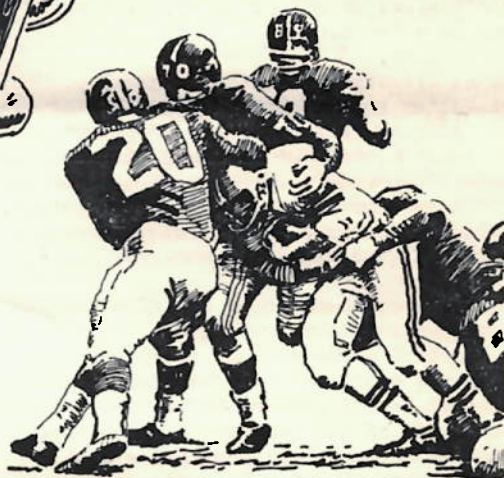
1958 ALL-LEAGUE

OFFENSE

E- Raymond Berry, Balt. (AP, UPI)
 E- Del Shofner, L.A. (AP, UPI)
 T- Roosevelt Brown, N.Y. (AP, UPI)
 T- Jim Parker, Balt. (AP, UPI)
 G- Dick Stanfel, Wash. (AP, UPI)
 G- Duane Putnam, L.A. (AP, UPI)
 C- Ray Wietecha, N.Y. (AP, UPI)
 Q- Johnny Unitas, Balt. (AP, UPI)
 H- Lenny Moore, Balt. (AP, UPI)
 H- Jon Arnett, L.A. (AP, UPI)
 F- Jim Brown, Cleve. (AP, UPI)

DEFENSE

E- Gino Marchetti, Balt. (AP, UPI)
 E- Andy Robustelli, N.Y. (AP)
 E- Gene Brito, Wash. (UPI)
 T- Gene Lipscomb, Balt. (AP, UPI)
 T- Ernie Stautner, Pitt. (AP, UPI)
 LB- Joe Schmidt, Det. (AP, UPI)
 LB- Sam Huff, N.Y. (AP, UPI)
 LB- Bill George, Bears (AP, UPI)
 H- Jack Butler, Pitt. (AP, UPI)
 H- Yale Lary, Det. (AP, UPI)
 S- Jim Patton, N.Y. (AP, UPI)
 S- Bobby Dillon, C.B. (AP, UPI)



NFL 1958 FINAL STANDINGS

	W	L	T	Pct
WESTERN CONFERENCE				
Baltimore Colts	9	3	0	.750
Chicago Bears	8	4	0	.667
Los Angeles Rams	8	4	0	.667
San Francisco 49ers	6	6	0	.500
Detroit Lions	4	7	1	.364
Green Bay Packers	1	10	1	.091
EASTERN CONFERENCE				
New York Giants	9	3	0	.750
Cleveland Browns	9	3	0	.750
Pittsburgh Steelers	7	4	1	.636
Washington Redskins	4	7	1	.364
Chicago Cardinals	2	9	1	.182
Philadelphia Eagles	2	9	1	.182
Playoff: New York 10, Cleveland 0				
Baltimore 23, New York 17				

The BEST PRO a COLLEGE EVER HAD

By Bernie McCarty

Only one man in the history of the game of football was a member of a major professional club and THEN returned to the college level to play another season.

That man was Bob Steuber, a spectacular All-American halfback who paced the University of Missouri to Big Six Conference championships in 1941 and 1942.

Fact is, Steuber's case may be unique in all of American sports history. Only a world war could have created a situation where Steuber was allowed to play again in college and nobody made a fuss.

Some folks may argue, but this writer believes Bob Steuber was the best backfield operative Missouri ever had. He could do it all. As a runner Steuber exhibited blazing speed, power, and agility in an open field. Across 21 games in 1941-42 Steuber carried the ball 262 times from scrimmage for 1953 yards, averaging 7.5 yards per attempt. He passed, punted and kicked from placement. He was a wicked blocker. And Steuber often was every bit as spectacular on defense as he was on offense.

The 1943 Illustrated Football Annual picked an All-Missouri Valley team of the decade. Writer Frederick Wade remarked, "My ace halfbacks are Lloyd Cardwell, Nebraska '34-'36, and Bob Steuber, Missouri '40-'42. Both these 200-pounders were sprint artists on the track team. Both were brilliant, shifty ball-carriers. They also could block like a pair of subway-commuters and on defense they always got their man. Or men."

In what was supposed to be his final collegiate game, against a powerful Iowa Preflight service team in 1942, Steuber burst 58 yards through the line for a touchdown and booted the extra point. That raised his season scoring total to 121 points, a Big Six all-games record. The A.P. review of the game noted: "The speedy Tiger halfback terminated a brilliant college career by turning in one of his finest all-around performances. The St. Louis senior was a defensive standout." Missouri won the contest 7-0.

Steuber entered the last clipping in his college football scrapbook and was ready to launch his pro career. He was the number one pick of the Chicago Bears in the spring draft of 1943. But before joining the Bears he had an August date to play with the college all-stars against the pro champion Washington Redskins.

That 1943 college all-star outfit had perhaps the finest backfield in the history of the series, gridders like Otto Graham, Glenn Dobbs, Pat Harder, Bob Kennedy, Charlie Trippi and Steve Filipowicz. And Bob Steuber. And Steuber earned a starting halfback berth and returned a punt 50 yards for the first all-star touchdown. The collegians went on to drub Washington 27-7.

The Chicago Tribune's Wilfrid Smith rated Steuber "the fastest man on a fast team." And Coach Clark

Shaughnessy, in another Tribune article, exclaimed, "Unholy smokes. I never saw such a collection of backs on any one aggregation."

Steuber joined the Bears and saw duty as a substitute in the league opener against Green Bay Sept. 26. It can not be disputed that Steuber was now a full-fledged professional football player.

So on Sept. 27, the day after his first official NFL game, the navy ordered Steuber to report to Depauw University in Greencastle, Indiana, for training as an aviation cadet.

Depauw had scheduled a slate of six games in 1943, and in the season opener struggled to a scoreless tie against Oberlin. Then Steuber and several other experienced gridders among the naval cadets arrived on campus and reported for football duty. Apparently nobody questioned Steuber's right to play with the team, and none of Depauw's five remaining opponents, only one a service club, voiced an objection.

In those last five games, with Steuber in the lineup, Depauw outscored the opposition 206-6.

Their record:

Depauw 0 - Oberlin 0
Depauw 50 - Illinois Normal 0
Depauw 39 - Indiana State 6
Depauw 33 - Wabash 0
Depauw 42 - Ohio Wesleyan 0
Depauw 42 - Fort Knox 0

Steuber literally ran wild and compiled a record so incredible that he may rank as the greatest "small" college player of all time. In just five games he tallied 19 touchdowns and kicked 15 conversions for 129 points. And he rushed for over 1000 yards, averaging 10 yards per carry. He was the national leader in both scoring and rushing in 1943. Imagine what Steuber's figures would have been if he had played a full season's schedule!

After two years in the service, Steuber returned to pro football and put in three years in the All-America Football Conference.

Thus Bob Steuber stands unique in football history for three reasons. He was a "major" college All-American and probably the University of Missouri's best. back. He was a bonafide professional who was allowed to play another season of amateur football. And he may have been the finest back ever to play "small" college football.

* * *

Bernie McCarty is an acknowledged authority on the history of college football and a charter member of P.F.R.A.



'Never apologize' is a fine slogan for a middle line-backer, but not so terrific for a harried editor. Several of you have written to mention, more or less pointedly, that your July Coffin Corner was late. Well, we're sorry. But let us explain

First off, the Corner was put together by working around the 1981 P.F.R.A. Convention and that put us almost a full week behind. Then, for many of you, the Corner came in a package, along with your Annual and Directory and it's a well-known fact that packages move slower through the mails than plain Coffin Corners (this is because packages are heavier and sink to the bottom of the mail bag).

Now then, some of you may have also received your August Corner a little late, too, because of the controllers' strike or the full moon or whatever. Sorry about that, too.

There is also, of course, something insidious about summer that causes your editor to put things off 'til the last minute, but we won't go into that now.

* * *

Anyway, because of late deliveries, a few of you may have decided you'd missed the boat on the Oakland Raiders All-Time Team survey, so we'll extend the voting period for one more month to let everyone catch up.

We won't tell you who's leading, but we will say that several positions are very closely contested.

* * *

The response to the proposal for research teams has been very pleasant. More details next month.

* * *

As most of you know, P.F.R.A. cannot endorse any books, etc. by members. However, we do wish to let other members know about your efforts.

Lee Ballinger has published his book on racial prejudice in sports, In Your Face!

Joe Tucker, long-time voice of the Steelers, has a new one on the club he knows best: Steelers' Super Dynasty.

Contact the authors for further information.

* * *

Members should also be reminded that P.F.R.A. gets a commission on everything members purchase from the Sports Bookshelf (you should have received the summer catalogue).

* * *

Congratulations to Vince Popo and Debbi Popo on their marriage. Vince is P.F.R.A. treasurer and now he has a reason to embezzle.

* * *

Your editor was pleased to attend the 10th Annual SABR (Society for American Baseball Research) Convention at Toronto at the end of July. As most of you know, SABR was of great help when we organized P.F.R.A., and we have many dual members.

It certainly was humbling for a football person to be in among all those baseball experts. We had to constantly stifle the urge to say things like: "The 'Immortal Babe'! Do you mean Parilli?"

However, the SABR-ites were very forgiving -- even the ones who think a football is a new trick pitch by Gaylord Perry. A couple even feigned interest when we told them that Christy Mathewson scored two touchdowns in 1902.

But seriously, SABR is a great organization and the people in it are terrific. And that goes double for our Canadian hosts.

Incidentally, P.F.R.A. member John Thorn wrote an account of the meeting that appeared in The Sporting News.

Anyone interested in learning more should write to: SABR, P.O. Box 323, Cooperstown, N.Y. 13326.

* * *

Joe Horrigan reports a recent acquisition by the Pro Football Hall of Fame of the Beadle's Dime Book, recognized by historians as the first book of rules and instructions dealing with American football.

* * *

Information wanted:

Paul Bennett needs a newspaper account of the Cleveland Brown - New York Giant AAFC game of Sept. 12, 1947.

Bob Gill is looking for information on the Memphis Tigers, an independent team of the early 1930s.

* * *

Everyone is having labor problems these days. When you can't give 'em a raise, you give 'em a new title!

The Coffin Corner is happy to announce that Kathy Carroll, heretofore head of our composing room, has been promoted to assistant editor.

* * *

We expected to announce P.F.R.A.'s newest media guide -- on the American Football League of 1936-1937 -- in this issue, but Tod Maher and Bob Gill, the authors, are determined to make this effort as complete as humanly possible. So there will be a slight delay while new discoveries are added. The book will include a summary of the league's history, rosters, statistics, game information, etc. It will run about 50 pages.

The delay gives us a chance to plan a little. It has been our policy to publish a limited number of guides -- essentially, we are printing only enough for interested members, plus a few extra. It would be very helpful to know ahead of time how many members are likely to want copies. The price has not yet been set, but we anticipate about \$2.

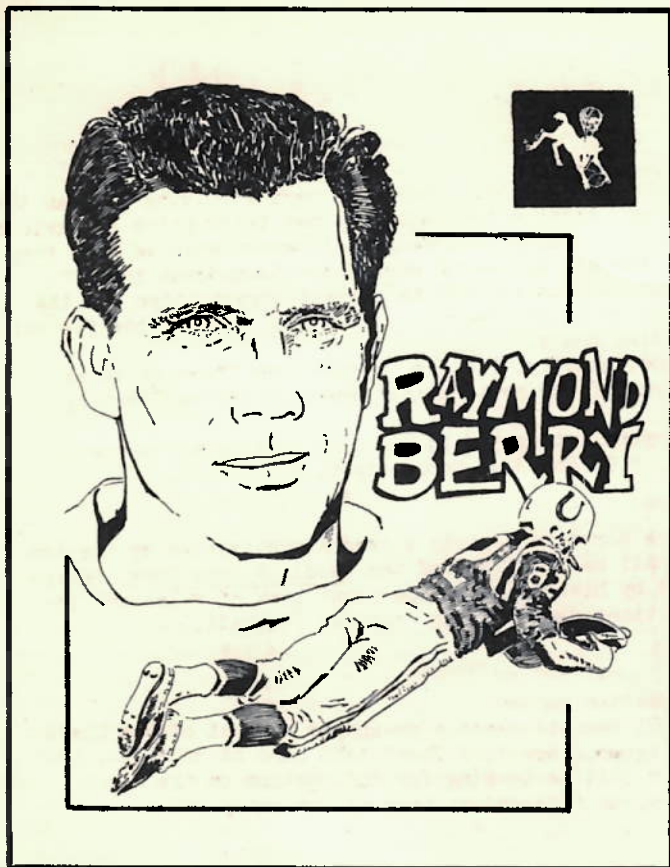
If you think you will want a copy, please remit the coupon below. (Remember: this is not an order form, and you are under no final obligation.)

To: Bob Carroll, ed.
The Coffin Corner
12870 Rt. 30

From: _____

N.Huntingdon, PA 15642

☐ Yes, I expect to purchase a copy of the AFL Guide, 1936-37, as described in The Coffin Corner when it is published.



ABOUT PFRA:

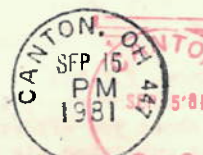
The Professional Football Researchers Association was founded as a non-profit organization on June 22, 1979, at Canton, Ohio. The purpose of the association is to foster the study of professional football as a significant social and athletic institution. It further hopes to establish an accurate historical account of professional football and to disseminate research information.

Membership in P.F.R.A. is open to anyone with a sincere interest in the history of professional football or related subjects. Members receive: twelve issues of The Coffin Corner, the official newsletter/magazine of the P.F.R.A.; the opportunity to submit material to be considered for publication in the newsletter/magazine; an end of year Directory of Membership; a specially prepared association publication to be offered at the end of the year at a membership discount; and a P.F.R.A. Membership Card.

To join, write to P.F.R.A./ 218 Wise St., N.E./ N. Canton, O./ 44720.

To help defray operational expenses of the association, reasonable dues of \$15 per year have been set.

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