

**SNOW BIRDS**  
**The 1948 Philadelphia Eagles**

By Bob Carroll & The Pro Football Hall of Fame

This is an upbeat story. You don't see many of them anymore, what with violence down in the street, nuclear holocaust around the corner, and much of the world 'round the bend. But this story happened in a less cynical age, and so we don't have to feel uneasy if there's a happy ending.

It's a story about a football team that kept losing until they hired a coach who had learned to win, about the team's greatest player, best season, and most crucial game. More than that, it's about "professionals," in the sense of men who knew what they were expected to do and went out and did it. It's about winners.

But, for a long time, they were anything but.

The Philadelphia Eagles were born in 1933 during the Depression -- their symbol was the Blue Eagle of Roosevelt's National Recovery Act -- and, for the remainder of the Thirties, they were a depressed area in the National Football League.

Future NFL commissioner Bert Bell, along with several partners, purchased the franchise for \$2,500 and an agreement to pay off a portion of the debts left behind in 1931 by the Frankford Yellow Jackets, Philadelphia's early NFL team. In the Eagles' first game, the New York Giants humiliated them, 56-0.

Although they improved from there, the Birds set up permanent residence at the bottom of the NFL pack. Despite some herculean efforts by a few players, the Eagles lost far more than they won, both on the field and at the turnstiles. Three years and \$80,000 later, the partners sold out to Bell for \$4,000. He took over as coach as well as owner and produced a team that was shut out six times. The leading scorer was the center who tallied nine points!

In 1939, Bell beefed up his attack by signing tiny Davey O'Brien, the country's most prolific college passer, to a then-royal contract calling for \$12,000 and a gate percentage. Many fans doubted O'Brien's slight frame could take the pounding of the pro game, and Bell got some publicity mileage out of insuring him with Lloyds of London. O'Brien never missed a game, and Lloyds never had to pay a cent.

For two years, the Eagles had a tosser to rival even Washington's great Sammy Baugh. But they won only two games. In his final game, O'Brien outdueled Baugh by completing 33 of 60 passes, a record at the time. As usual, Philadelphia lost.

O'Brien returned after the 1940 season and Bell was nearly ready to follow him. Instead, he became involved in a complicated deal that eventually put the Eagles in new hands.

The original idea was that Art Rooney of Pittsburgh would join Bell as a partner. Rooney's franchise was sold to Alexis Thompson of New York who planned to put a team in Boston. Meanwhile, Bell and Rooney would play in both Pittsburgh and Philadelphia as a kind of "Pennsylvania" team.

But the league balked at a Boston team, Beantown having flubbed two earlier franchises. Thompson did not want to be in Pittsburgh, and Rooney did not want to be totally in Philadelphia. Finally, Bell and Rooney went to Pittsburgh and gave Thompson Philadelphia.

In the long run, the only real dealing was in pieces of paper. The teams did not change places, as has sometimes been written. Today's Eagles are not the erstwhile Steelers, nor are the Steelers the former Eagles. A few players changed uniforms, but these were more in the way of side deals, certainly not full-scaled roster changes.

New owner Thompson went shopping for a coach, counseling with Steve Owen, the respected and successful mentor of the New York Giants. Owen sat drumming his fingers impatiently as Thompson ran through a long list of possible candidates, many of them among the top leaders in football. Finally, Thompson named the Yale University backfield coach, a man once famous but relatively obscure for the past half-dozen years. Owen stopped drumming.

The name was "Greasy" Neale.

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### The Coach

If Earle Neale had never coached the Eagles, he would still deserve a niche in somebody's Hall of Fame as one of the great athletic success stories of the first half of the 20th Century.

Born in Parkersburg, West Virginia, on November 5, 1891, he acquired his unusual nickname before he was ten years old. "I used to play with a boy who didn't take may baths. I told him one day he was dirty and he told me I was greasy. It stuck." It is highly appropriate that Neale's nickname be rooted in his outspokenness. That trait was to be his strength and his weakness throughout his career.

At Parkersburg High School, he starred in baseball, basketball and football. Before he was a senior, he signed a professional baseball contract.

By 1917, he was (1) head football coach at West Virginia Wesleyan, (2) a secret Sunday warrior under the pseudonym "Foster" with Jim Thorpe's Canton Bulldogs, and (3) a promising outfielder with the Cincinnati Reds.

How he came to the Bulldogs is worth noting. Neale's buddy and assistant at Wesleyan, John Kellison, played a pretty fair tackle under the name of "Ketcham" in Canton's opening game of the season. Although they'd won easily, the 'Dogs had gotten their best end banged up. Kellison told Thorpe that Neale could catch passes better than anybody the Bulldogs had, and if he couldn't, they could take Kellison's \$75 for the next game to pay Greasy. "Ketcham" was paid as usual after the next Sunday's game, and "Foster" was a sensation.

Incidentally, Wesleyan had a strong season. Neale's star back was Pete Calac, who also performed at Canton that year, under the name of Andrews."

The Bulldogs claimed the 1917 pro title, and then took a year off for World War I. The Dayton Triangles decided to keep going, and Neale was brought in as coach and fullback. The Tris ran roughshod over eight indifferent opponents to claim the 1918 pro football title, placing Greasy on two championship teams in two years.

1919 saw a different kind of championship, this time in baseball, as the Cincinnati Reds won the World Series -- or more precisely, were allowed to win it by the infamous Black Sox. Although he was better known for his defense in the outfield, Neale was the leading Reds' hitter during the "fixed" Series.

Two years later, Greasy had his biggest season as a college football coach. His little Washington and Jefferson team went undefeated and was invited to meet California's famed "Wonder Team" in the Rose Bowl. Some experts called it a classic mismatch. Others denied there was anything classic about it. "The only thing I know about Washington and Jefferson," went the joke, "is that they're both dead."

But, in a game still regarded as one of the all-time sports upsets, tiny W. & J. outplayed the "Wonders" and held them to a scoreless tie. Neale was the toast of the football world.

After leaving the Presidents, Neale coached at Virginia and West Virginia Universities. He was known as a coach who could get more out of a team than the material warranted, but there were no more Rose Bowls. However, in 1930, as coach of the Ironton Tanks, an independent pro team, he shocked the NFL by beating Portsmouth, the Bears, and the Giants in exhibition games.

Still, by the mid-1930's, Neale's accomplishments had faded, and he was hired as an assistant at Yale. There he remained, respected, but largely forgotten, until Alexis Thompson, on Steve Owen's recommendation, tapped him to coach the Eagles.

1940 had seen the Bears spring their 73-0 win on Washington in the NFL championship and proclaim the triumph of the T-formation. Neale, who always liked to see points piling up for his charges, decided to install the T in Philadelphia. He got hold of films of the Bears' win and noted every move. "I didn't borrow the Bear's T-formation, I stole it!" he chuckled later. "Anything that could score 73 points I wanted."

The Bears had Sid Luckman. All Greasy had was a sullen, one-eyed, tailback that Pittsburgh had let go because he couldn't run a lick. His name was Tommy Thompson, and he was no relation to the Eagles' new owner and certainly not the boss's favorite player either. But he could pass and Neale decided to make him his quarterback.

Relieved of any necessity of running the ball, Thompson was pleased with the switch of positions. "I ought to last twenty years in this job," he insisted, adding that if the rules permitted, he would bring a chair on the field and sit in it. In his first couple of years as a T-man, Tommy passed well enough, developing a reputation for pinpoint long passes. But his personality, mistrustful and sulking, made him less than the perfect team leader.

Neale's first two years in Philadelphia were less than sensational, T or not. In 1941, the Eagles won only twice. When they could only match that total the next season, there were some ominous rumblings in the stands.

Neale was building, and in a way new to pro football. Everyone laughed when he showed up at a draft meeting with 64 notebooks of notes on college players. Drafting had always been done through the advice of cronies and sports pages. By the time the rest of the league caught on to what Neale was doing, he had a big headstart.

But as fast as Neale could draft 'em, Uncle Sam could draft 'em. The Eagles' top three runners went in '42, leaving Neale with a one-dimensional attack of Thompson's passes. Tommy hadn't reminded anyone of Luckman, but he was getting there.

Then the army decided a soldier needed only one eye.

Because of the limited manpower available, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh combined for 1943 into the "Steagles," a name that still sets the hearts of trivia buffs palpitating. Neale shared coaching duties with Pittsburgh's Walt Kiesling. Surprisingly, the team turned out pretty well, winning one more game than it lost. Former Sammy Baugh-backup LeRoy Zimmerman settled in at quarterback.

In 1944, the Eagles were back on their own and finished a strong 7-1-2, good for second place in the NFL East. More importantly, it was the first Eagle team ever to have a winning record. Zimmerman had another good year at QB, but a bright new star appeared in running back Steve Van Buren.

The team won seven games again in 1945, as Van Buren led the league in both rushing and scoring. But, toward the end of the season, the army discharged Tommy Thompson and Philadelphia had its first "quarterback controversy."

The fans and owner Alexis Thompson favored Zimmerman: Neale favored Tommy Thompson. The pair split the duty through the 1946 season, and the Eagles never quite jelled. Even more devastating than the unsettled quarterback situation was an injury that hobbled Van Buren for much of the year. Without their star runner at his best, the Eagles could manage only a 6-5 mark, still good for second place in the East, but seemingly a step backward from the previous couple of years.

But knowledgeable observers looked at the players Neale was assembling and predicted the Eagles were on the verge of greatness. Before the next season rolled around, Greasy moved to push them over the edge. He traded away LeRoy Zimmerman.

Owner Thompson didn't like it; the fans hated it; Tommy Thompson loved it! Given a giant vote of confidence, Tommy's whole personality changed -- actually it had been changing for years under Neale's careful prodding -- and he became at last the leader the Eagles had needed. During 1947, it became no longer sacrilege to mention Thompson in the same breath with Sid Luckman.

Neale gave Thompson a new weapon for his arsenal by drafting a fullback from Indiana and turning him into an end. Pete Pihos turned out to be one of the finest passcatchers who ever laid stickum-ed-finger to pigskin, but after he caught the ball, he reverted to pure fullback, making him as dangerous downfield as a perturbed bull. Neale put a screen pass especially for Pete, and it became one of the most feared yardage-gatherers since Attila the Hun hung up his spikes.

With Thompson passing, Pihos catching, and health Van Buren becoming the first player to rush for over a thousand yards since Beattie Feathers in 1934, the 1947 edition of the Eagles had a devastating attack. They won their opener from Washington, 45- 42, topped the Giants later by 41-24, and totaled more than 300 points for the season.

On the other hand, the defense still needed some tinkering. It was uneven, to say the least. Three times the Birds shut out opponents, and three times they were plunked for 40 or more points.

It all added up to an 8-4 record, matched by the Pittsburgh Steelers, for first place in the East. In the playoff, Pittsburgh was handicapped by an injury to tailback Johnny Clement and the Eagles won easily, 21-0. For the first time in their history, the Birds were in a championship game.

Pre-game hype was a publicity man's dream, as two perennial league losers -- the Eagles and the Chicago Cardinals -- had the strongest teams in their long, honorable, and losing histories. Both based their strength in brilliant offenses. The Eagles had Thompson, Pihos, and Van Buren: the Cards sported the famed "Dream Backfield" of Paul Christman, Charley Trippi, Elmer Angsman, and Pat Harder. In a regular season game, the two teams split 66 points with the Cards winning.

Everyone predicted fireworks for the title game.

Comiskey Park came up ice-covered. The Eagles filed their spikes to help the footing, but just before kickoff Shorty Ray, the league's supervisor of officials, ruled the spikes illegal. The Eagles never adjusted. Although Thompson passed brilliantly, Van Buren gained only 26 yards on 18 carries. Meanwhile, the Cardinals confined their offense to four plays -- a 44-yard burst from scrimmage and a 75-yard punt return by Trippi and a matched set of 70-yard dashes by Angsman. The final score of 28-21 made the Chicagoans the 1947 champs.

It was back to the drawing board for Neale and the Eagles. Wait 'til next year.

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### The Runner

Steve Van Buren answered to a lot of names during his brilliant eight-year career in the National Football League -- Wham Bam! ... The Bayou Boy! ... Supersonic Steve! ... Blockbuster! ... The Flying Dutchman!

They all could be translated to the same conclusion -- even his contemporaries recognized that Van Buren, a product of Louisiana State University, would be remembered as one of the greatest football players who ever lived. Just to make it official, he was enshrined in 1965 into the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Like so many who are eventually flushed with great success, the path to greatness was not at all direct. Born in Honduras in 1921, Steve was orphaned when very young and he came to New Orleans to live with his grandparents. He was at first advised to quit high school football because he was too small, and years later at LSU, he served as a blocking back. Finally as a college senior, he got his chance as a running back and he accumulated 832 yards rushing. Still, not too many clubs had a book on the Tigers' star.

But he was drafted by Greasy Neale and was an instant success in the pros. He won all-league honors as a rookie, in spite of an appendectomy that sidelined him for several games, and then won all-NFL awards five of his first six years.

He was a rushing leader in 1945 and then again in 1947, 1948 and 1949. His 5860 career yards and 68 rushing touchdowns were both top pro marks when he retired.

He lined up as a halfback. But if a fullback is considered to be the battering ram of the offense, Steve certainly filled that bill. He was without question the power man of the great Eagles teams of the late 1940s.

The Eagles' great records of 1947, 1948 and 1949 are, in a sense, the truest yardstick of Van Buren's contribution to pro football. When Steve was going well, the Eagles went very well. When severe injuries reduced his effectiveness, so too did the Eagles tail off into an also-ran club.

The Eagles had never been a threat until Van Buren joined them in 1944. They then finished second three straight years before their three straight championship campaigns. But when Supersonic Steve was struck down in 1950, the Eagles' fortunes dipped so sharply that it was a full decade before they could enjoy championship status again.

Greasy Neale rated Van Buren the equal of Jim Thorpe and better than Red Grange. He felt Van was as elusive as the redhead and a more powerful runner.

One peculiarity of Van Buren's running style was that he always carried the ball in his right arm. This stemmed from an early injury that banged up his shoulder and made it difficult for him to grasp the ball firmly with his left hand.

Although his running overshadowed his other abilities, he was a devastating blocker, sure tackler, strong punter, and deadly receiver on short tosses. He had trouble with long passes because of impaired vision.

Except for his election into the Pro Football Hall of Fame, Van Buren's greatest honor came in 1957, when the Eagles, celebrating their silver anniversary, named Steve "the greatest player in club history." If the Eagles were to make a similar award today, most likely the honor would still go to the guy who made Philadelphia's greatest teams click -- Pro Football Hall of Famer Steve Van Buren.

### VAN BUREN'S RUSHING RECORD

<b>Year</b>		<b>Att</b>	<b>Yds</b>	<b>Avg</b>	<b>Td</b>
1944	Phil	80	444	5.6	5
1945	Phil	143	832	5.8	15
1946	Phil	116	529	4.6	5
1947	Phil	217	1008	4.5	13
1948	Phil	201	945	4.7	10
1949	Phil	263	1146	4.4	11
1950	Phil	188	629	3.3	4
1951	Phil	<u>112</u>	<u>327</u>	<u>2.9</u>	<u>6</u>
8 years		1320	5860	4.4	68

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### The Season

The Eagles got off to a staggering start, losing to the Cardinals in a rematch of the '47 title game and then being tied by the Rams while they were still mulling over the opener. After that, it was Katy-bar-the-door! They easily roared to another division championship, scoring more than 40 pints on five different

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occasions. A late loss to the otherwise inept Boston Yanks came only after the eastern title was wrapped up and while Van Buren sat out the game with an injury.

They were the team that had everything. Thompson was the NFL's most effective passer, whether throwing to Pihos (who caught 11 TD passes), clever Jack Ferrante or young Neill Armstrong. Van Buren and foxfast Bosh Pritchard were the league's best one-two running punch. Fullback Joe Muha seldom carried the ball in Greasy Neale's scheme, but he was a strong blocker, tough linebacker, and the NFL's leading punter with a 47.2 average. Vic Sears and Al Wistert were all-league linemen, but Vic Linskog, Cliff Patton, Bucko Kilroy, Al Wojciechowicz, and a couple of others might well have been named. Patton even led all kickers with eight field goals.

The Eagles showed their class off the field, too. After that opening loss to the Cards, Chicago's great tackle Stan Mauldin collapsed and died in the dressing room. Later in the season, when Philadelphia had their division title in their pocket while the Cards were in a death struggle with the Bears, the Eagles voted that, should the Cardinals not make it to the championship game, Mauldin's widow would receive a full share of Philadelphia's championship game money.

### PHILADELPHIA EAGLES 1948

S-24	at	Chicago Cardinals .....	14-21
0- 3	at	Los Angeles Rams .....	28-28
0-10		New York Giants .....	45- 0
0-17	at	Washington Redskins .....	45- 0
0-24		Chicago Bears .....	12- 7
0-31	at	Pittsburgh Steelers .....	34- 7
N- 7	at	New York Giants .....	35-14
N-14		Boston Yanks .....	45- 0
N-21		Washington Redskins .....	42-21
N-28		Pittsburgh Steelers .....	17- 0
D- 5	at	Boston Yanks .....	14-37
D-12		Detroit Lions .....	45-21

Roster	Pos	Hgt	Wgt	Ag	Yr	School	Gm
Armstrong, Neill	OE-DB	6-2	188	22	2	Okla. A& M	12
Barnes, Walter "Piggy"	G	6-1	233	30	1	LSU	11
Craft, Russ	HB-DB	5-9	170	28	3	Alabama	12
Doss, Noble	HB-DB	6-0	189	28	2	Texas U.	11
Douglas, Otis	T	6-0	225	36	3	Wm. & Mary	5
Ferrante, Jack	OE-DE	6-1	205	32	6	None	12
Green, John	OE-DE	6-1	192	26	2	Tulsa U.	12
Gianelli, Mario	G	6-0	271	27	1	Boston Col.	12
Hartman, Fred	T	6-1	222	28	2	Rice	12
Humbert, Dick	OE-DB	6-1	180	29	5	Richmond	12
1-Johnson, Alvin	DB	6-0	175	23	1	Hard-Sim	5
Kilroy, Frank "Bucko"	G	6-2	244	27	6	Temple	12
Kish, Ben	FB-LB	6-0	211	31	7	Pittsburgh	9
Linskog, Vic	C-LB	6-1	205	32	5	Stanford	12
Mackrides, Bill	QB	5-11	180	23	2	U. Nevada	10
Magee, John	G	5-10	220	25	1	Rice	12
MacDowell, Jay	T	6-2	215	29	3	Washington	12
Maronic, Dusan "Duke"	G	5-9	209	27	5	None	12
2-Manzini, Baptiste	C-LB	5-11	195	28	3	St. Vincent's	3
McHugh, Wm. "Pat"	HB-DB	5-11	166	28	2	Ga. Tech	10
Muha, Joe	FB-LB	6-1	206	27	3	V.M.I.	11
Myers, Jack	FB-LB	6-2	199	23	1	U.C.L.A.	12
Palmer, Leslie	HB-DB	6-0	179	24	1	N.Car. St.	5
Parmer, Jim	HB-DB	6-0	189	21	1	Okla. A& M.	11
Patton, John "Cliff"	G	6-2	240	24	3	T.C.U.	12

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Pihos, Pete	OE-DE	6-1	215	24	2	Indiana	12
Prescott, Harold	OE-DB	6-2	193	27	3	Hard-Sim	11
Pritchard, A. "Bosh"	HB-DB	5-11	163	29	4	V. M. I.	12
Savitsky, George	T	6-2	245	24	1	Penn	12
Sears, Vic	T	6-3	226	30	7	Oregon St.	12
Steele, Ernie	HB-DB	6-0	186	30	7	Washington	12
3-Steinke, Gil	HB-DB	6-0	172	28	4	Texas A. & I	2
Szymanski, Frank	C	5-11	230	25	4	Notre Dame	9
Thompson, Tommy	QB	6-1	196	32	7	Tulsa U.	12
Van Buren, Steve	HB-DB	6-0	205	27	5	LSU	11
Wistert, Al	T	6-1	214	27	6	Michigan	12
Wojciechowicz, Alex	C-LB	5-11	232	33	11	Fordham	10

- (1) Released after 5th game.
  - (2) Released after 3rd game.
  - (3) Joined club for last two games.
- \* \* \* \* \*

## The Game

In mid-December 1948, the coming National Football League championship encounter between the Chicago Cardinals and the Philadelphia Eagles loomed as a classic showdown struggle.

Two finely-coached, well-balanced, offensive oriented elevens were to meet headon in a repeat of the 1947 championship duel, when, on an icy field in Chicago, the Cardinals had prevailed over the Eagles, 28-21.

Even under adverse conditions, the talent-laden combatants had staged a sparkling show, with five of the seven touchdowns coming from 44 yards or more away and Eagles' Quarterback Tommy Thompson setting a playoff mark with 44 passes attempted and 27 completions.

Now in 1948, the Cardinals won their second straight western division crown with a best-in-history 11-1-0 mark, but they had to beat their cross-town rivals, the Bears, on the final Sunday of the season to insure their title. Philadelphia lost only one game in the last ten as Greasy Neale's squad powered to a comparatively easy division championship.

Both teams were loaded with stars, some of whom would be destined for Pro Football Hall of Fame enshrinement. Chicago had its "dream backfield" -- Charley Trippi, Paul Christman, Pat Harder and Elmer Angsman, but Philadelphia could counter with the NFL's No. 1 passer in Thompson and the No. 1 rusher in Van Buren.

Everything pointed to a standing-room-only gathering in Philadelphia's Shibe Park -- 36,309 tickets had been sold and scalpers already were demanding premium prices. Even coverage of the game was to be in record proportions -- 200 writers were to be on hand and a 46-station radio and television network was slated to bring millions more "into the action."

But at 7 a.m. on D-Day, December 19, one of the worst blizzards in Philadelphia's history hit. A tarpulin had covered the field for a week, but now even this presented a problem. With heavy snow piled high on the tarpulin, it took 90 men, including members of both teams, to jerk and pull the covering off the field. The yard lines had been previously marked but within three minutes, there were obliterated.

All yardage had to be estimated and, in an emergency measure, the officials had to mark the sidelines with stakes every 10 yards and the end zones with flags to retain some idea as to where the game was to be played. Both teams agreed that there would be no measuring for first downs, that the decision of Referee Ron Gibbs would be final. Once, when the Eagles reached the Chicago 8-yard line, the officials called time out to measure the distance to the "submerged" goal line.

Commissioner Bert Bell had pondered the possibility of postponing the game and Greasy Neale wanted to do so, protesting that "I don't want to work all year for one big climactic game and then lose on a break like this." But the Cardinals wanted to play and, with 28,864 fans miraculously in the stands, Bell decided to go on.

Christman, Chicago's ace passer, was to miss the game with a broken finger on his throwing hand, but even without Christman, the Cardinals were 3-1/2 point favorites the day before the game. The Eagles, who had lost five straight to the Cardinals, bitterly resented those odds and were steaming for revenge.

The loss of Christman may or may not have had a telling effect on the game, considering the circumstances, for the teams completed only five passes. Yet the Eagles almost broke the game open on the first scrimmage play with a 65-yard pass from Thompson to Jack Ferrante. But the Eagles were offside and the game settled into an infantry duel with both sides waiting for one big break.

Throughout the game, Philadelphia had the best of it, but couldn't quite cash in. Chicago never advanced beyond the Eagles' 30 and that one thread died on Harder's missed 37-yard field goal try.

The first half ended with no score, and the second half looked like it was going to be more of the same. Then, just before the close of the third quarter, Chicago's Ray Mallouf fumbled and Frank "Bucko" Kilroy recovered for the Eagles on the Cardinal 17. Chicago braced for Van Buren but Bosh Pritchard slammed over the left side of the line for six instead.

Then the quarter ended and both teams walked the length of the field through a blizzard. The lights had been turned on but reflections off the falling snow only made visibility worse.

Second and four at the eleven. Again Thompson ignored Van Buren, handing to fullback Joe Muha for three.

Third and one. Thompson faked a handoff and spun into the line himself. The man who could not run gave his team a first down on the five.

It was time to fire the big gun. Van Buren hit a big hole at right tackle, shook off the frantic grasp of Corwin Clatt and plowed into the end zone. Cliff Patton, who had to scrape away a pile of snow to try the point, made it 7-0.

The Cardinals had a couple more tries but they couldn't hit the key pass. Between Van Buren's smashes and an astonishing series of surprise sneaks by Thompson, the Eagles controlled the ball to victory. When the game ended, they were third and goal at the Cardinal two.

The 1948 game was significant for several reasons. It provided win-starved Philadelphia fans with their first championship and was a tribute to the great building program Neale instituted in Philadelphia. It also marked the last time the Cardinals were to fight it out for an NFL crown.

But it may most be remembered in the football history books as a monumental tribute to the adage: "The show must go on!"

For under the worst conditions imaginable, it did!

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"The Runner" and "The Game" courtesy of Pro Football Hall of Fame.