

THE PEREGRINATIONS OF FRANKIE FILCHOCK

By Bob Braunwart, Bob Carroll and Joe Horrigan
from "Professional Football Researchers Association Annual," 1981.

1946 -- FRANK IS ENMESHED IN A BETTING SCANDAL. World War II had just been brought to a victorious conclusion, but this time there was no immediate return to normalcy. The war had wrought many changes in American life, not the least of which was a strong sense of moral siege. With the Cold War continuing from where the real one had left off, America felt threatened by subversion at home and aggression abroad.

As if foreign-inspired political threats weren't enough to worry about, in December the startling news broke that professional gamblers had attempted to fix the National Football League's title game. Although there had been rumors of a police investigation around New York the previous week, the story was first confirmed in radio broadcasts only a few hours before the game. The earliest newspaper accounts appeared December 16, the day after the game. According to the Associated Press:

"Alvin J. Paris, a self-styled 'big bettor' on athletic contests, was arraigned on a bribery charge, accused of having offered Merle Hapes and Frank Filchock, Giant backfield men, \$2,500 each to agree not to play their best in the championship contest.

"Police exonerated both players but Hapes was kept out of the game at the order of Bert Bell, commissioner of the league. Filchock, the key man in the Giants' backfield, played virtually all the game."

Later revelations established a more complete story. The accused fixer was a 28-year-old New York playboy, florist shop operator and sometime novelty salesman. According to police he first met Filchock and Hapes at a cocktail party November 23, where there was some innocent discussion of N.F.L. games. Thereafter he entertained both players several times at parties and nightclubs.

Paris later testified that the first bribe offers were made to Hapes December 8 and to Filchock two days later. Both were rejected. The most damaging accusation against Filchock was that he continued to see Paris socially even after the offer had been made. In fact Paris visited him at the Giants' training camp on Friday, just two days before the game, in a last-ditch effort to secure his cooperation.

However there was never any evidence that either player accepted an offer to perform at less than his full ability.

Made suspicious by rapid changes in the point spread quoted for the game, the New York Police Safe and Robbery Squad had begun an investigation. Headed by Captain Raymond Maguire, this was the same police unit which had broken the 1945 basketball betting scandal, the attempted bribery of five Brooklyn College players. (As it turned out, one of the gamblers was the same as well.) Plainclothes police were sent to the Giants' training camp at Bear Mountain and a court order permitting wiretaps on Paris's business telephones was obtained.

No Giants' players were heard on the wiretaps, but there were discussions of Filchock and Hapes by Paris and his associates. At one point Paris claimed he could "do business" with the pair; later he was heard to say, "F.F. won't go."

The police swooped the Saturday before the game. That afternoon Police Commissioner Arthur Wallander, N.F.L. Commissioner Bert Bell, Assistant Chief Inspector of Police William O'Brien and Giants' owner Tim Mara met with Mayor Bill O'Dwyer in the mayor's office. O'Dwyer was informed of the results of the investigation. He wanted to meet with the players, and that evening both Hapes and Filchock were brought by the police to the mayor's residence.

At 2 a.m. Sunday, only twelve hours before game time, Assistant District Attorney George Monaghan announced that Filchock and Hapes had been offered \$2,500 each plus the profits from a \$1,000 bet that Chicago would win by more than ten points. The players also had been offered off-season jobs supposed to bring them another \$15,000 as part of the bribery package. Monaghan also announced that Alvin Paris had been arrested and that he was thought to be the representative of a large out-of-state bookmaking syndicate. Paris, he said, was being held in lieu of \$25,000 bail.

Commissioner Bell also had an announcement. He stated that although no player had taken a bribe, the league would conduct its own investigation of the offers. Filchock, who during the meeting in the mayor's office had denied being approached, would be allowed to play in the game; Hapes, who had admitted his failure to report the bribe attempt, would not be permitted to play. The police had cleared both players, and Mayor O'Dwyer concurred in Bell's decision.

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Thus the Giants went into the championship game minus one of their backfield stars and with a cloud hanging over another; the news could not have done much for team morale. There had been suggestions by some team owners that the title game be postponed until after the investigation, but Bell nixed that idea. Filchock was to get a chance to show what he could do.

All sources are agreed that he played his best (as, indeed, he had every reason to do at this point) in the Giants' ten-point loss to the Bears. This was the precise betting line of Paris and friends; they neither won nor lost their bets. According to football researcher Jim Stewart, who was present at the game:

"The '46 game was a great game and Filchock played his heart out. He was all busted up [and had] a bloody broken nose.... I can remember we sat in our car overlooking the Polo Grounds about two hours before game time listening to the car radio and we heard it. Then when they introduced Frankie, he got an awful booing."

Frank played fifty minutes and was responsible for all of the Giants' points, throwing TD passes to Frank Liebel and Steve Filipowicz. He completed 9 of 26 passes for 128 yards and had six intercepted. The winners received \$1,975.82, the losers \$1,295.57. Both Filchock and Hapes received full shares.

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Without a doubt, this was the biggest scandal in N.F.L. history, and it hit at a time when the public (and the league) was least likely to show leniency. In his testimony at Paris's trial, Frank did admit lying to Mayor O'Dwyer when he claimed he had never been approached. He added that he hadn't felt that reporting was necessary and that "I just forgot all about it after saying 'No' to Paris's proposition. I wouldn't even think of doing anything dishonest in football."

Paris was convicted January 8. The same day Bell placed both players involved on the league's suspended list, even though General Sessions Judge Saul S. Streit had found that "Frank Filchock was not an accomplice, and was in fact an unfortunate victim of circumstances." This point was important because the uncorroborated testimony of an accomplice was inadmissible in a New York court. The jury was instructed to decide for themselves whether or not Hapes was an accomplice.

After his trial Paris was brought before a grand jury, where his testimony led to the indictment of three others on bribery and conspiracy charges.

At the trial of the three conspirators, Harvey Stemmer, David Krakauer and Jerome Zarowitz, Paris was the prosecution's star witness. Since he had not taken the stand in his own defense, his account of the events became public for the first time.

Paris testified that Stemmer asked him to fix the Giants' final 1946 regular-season game December 8 versus the Redskins, but that he replied that "I didn't think I could because they were very certain of winning and wanted to get in the championship playoff against the Bears." The Giants needed the win to avoid a tie in the standings and a playoff with the Redskins.

As a consequence of Paris's recommendations, the syndicate bet on the Giants to win, which they did. Paris testified that \$500 was bet on Stemmer's orders for each of the two players (presumably without their knowledge) and that Paris paid them the proceeds shortly after the game. According to him Merle Hapes accepted the money without argument, but Filchock required some persuasion. Paris further claimed that Hapes was willing to throw the championship game and that Filchock considered the offer overnight before rejecting it.

When the players took the stand, they emphatically denied ever receiving any money from Paris or ever considering any bribery offers.

All three defendants were convicted. Stemmer and Krakauer received sentences of five to ten years and Zarowitz received an indeterminate sentence with a maximum of three years. The syndicate had been headquartered in New Jersey, but at the time of the attempted fix, Stemmer -- no stranger to gambling scandals -- was serving a one-year prison sentence at Riker's Island for his involvement in the Brooklyn College basketball shenanigans in 1945. Paris had been able to talk with him on the telephone, and in person whenever he had been able to finagle furloughs.

At the sentencing hearing for the trio, Judge Streit declared that they had "attempted to destroy the faith and confidence of the public in American sport." He continued:

"Athletes become models for millions of youngsters throughout the nation. The public, youth and adult as well, has faith in its athletes, and anyone who tampers with this faith and corrupts an athlete or a sport injures the confidence of millions of people who believe they are witnessing contests played in the American tradition of honesty and fair play."

Paris's sentence had been deferred until after the Stemmer-Krakauer-Zarowitz trial. His testimony for the prosecution was taken into account, and he received only a one-year sentence. He was paroled after nine months.

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If the punishments for Filchock and Hapes were less severe, they were longer. Bell had suspended both players the day of Paris's conviction. Within twenty-four hours of the verdict in the second trial the commissioner extended the suspensions "indefinitely." He did this, he said, because he had found the players "guilty of actions detrimental to the welfare of the National Football League and of professional football."

After the commissioner's action, Hapes was quoted as saying he felt the penalty "...was a little bit stiff. It's a bunch of baloney about hurting the league. All that they got against us is just not reporting the attempt. I don't think we did anything to hurt the league, but I'm through with professional football anyway."

When Filchock was asked about his plans, he replied "I haven't made any future plans simply because I never thought of being out of football. I still want to play football. I guess I always will."

January 23 the team owners, in a strong show of support for Bell, extended his contract at a substantial increase in salary and amended the league constitution to include the following provision:

"The commissioner is authorized and empowered to suspend for a specific period of time or indefinitely or bar from the league for life any club officer, league officer, director, stockholder, partner, player, coach, official or employee of a member club who has knowledge of an offer of a bribe or has received an offer directly or indirectly, by insinuation or implication, to control, fix, or bet money or anything of value on the outcome or score of a game and fails to report the same immediately."

In May he was granted the same authority by the N.F.L.'s five minor-league affiliates.

As a final cleansing action, the 1947 official N.F.L. record manual omitted all mention of Filchock's and Hape's accomplishments on the field (on whose authority is not clear). The statistics have since been restored.

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Today these suspensions seem somewhat harsh. After all, the players had only been OFFERED bribes; they had not ACCEPTED them. Paris had testified that Hapes was agreeable all along but this was never substantiated, and no such allegation was even made concerning Filchock. In 1963 when Paul Hornung and Alex Karras were found to have bet on their own teams to win (essentially what Paris claimed Filchock had done), they were reinstated after only one-year suspensions. Why did Bell react the way he did? Several factors must have been involved.

First there was the national mood -- defensive, to say the least. In 1946 Joe McCarthy had just been elected U.S. senator from Wisconsin. Post-war inflation was high and there was considerable concern over the amount of work lost due to labor disputes -- at 1%, 1946 had the highest annual rate of any year in U.S. history except 1919.

As another example, the newly installed president of Vassar College felt obliged to reassure parents in a national magazine that sending their female offspring to college would "probably" not result in their conversion to communism. In short, many American institutions were felt to be threatened, and sports was no exception.

(But it is interesting to note that the biggest scandals in the history of American sport seem to have occurred in the first few years of readjustment after major wars: The New York Mutuals baseball fix in 1865, the Black Sox scandal in 1919, the basketball, football and boxing scandals after World War II.)

Secondly, in 1946 the N.F.L. was in the unfamiliar position of having to compete for players, fans and news coverage with another professional league, the All-America Football Conference. The A.A.F.C. had concluded its first season just before the N.F.L. title game. Bell naturally must have felt that quick and firm action in the face of criticism by the public and press was necessary in order to preserve the league's competitive position.

Finally, there was Bert Bell himself. He was new at this business of commissioner (he had been appointed in January 1946 to succeed Elmer Layden), and may have viewed the crisis as a personal test of his leadership. From a wealthy and influential Philadelphia family -- his brother served briefly as interim governor of Pennsylvania -- Bell's interest in professional football was as a hobbyist. He could not have had the same conception of the sport that players from less favored backgrounds frequently had -- that it was a means of upward mobility or a strenuous form of employment, rather than an amusing spectacle or a healthful means of exercise.

This is not to say that professional athletes are naturally inclined to throw games, nor to excuse any improprieties actually committed by Filchock or Hapes. Nevertheless, it is true that traditionally one of the strongest arguments against professional sports in English-speaking countries has been that a player's reliance on sport for his income naturally leads him into more frequent contact with gamblers, and

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presumably into greater temptation. (Indeed, it sometimes seemed that sporting Englishmen considered professionalism, working-class players, and illicit gambling three not very distinct aspects of the same evil.) This argument has been made precisely by those members of the middle and upper classes who did not look upon professional sport as a method of upward mobility because they had already arrived.

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1938 -- FLASHBACK: FRANK IS DRAFTED INTO THE N.F.L. Filchock had entered the N.F.L. as the Pittsburgh Pirates's second draft choice in the first round in 1938, after they had picked Byron "Whizzer" White of Colorado. White got the lion's share of the publicity and of the money: He postponed his Rhodes scholarship and signed for a then record \$15,800 for one year.

Part way through his first N.F.L. campaign Frank was sold to the Washington Redskins, where he saw limited action as understudy to the great Sammy Baugh. For several years during his tenure at Washington, "Flingin' Frank" and "Slingin' Sam" alternated quarters for the Redskins.

In 1939 Frank threw the first 99-yard touchdown pass in N.F.L. history, to Andy Farkas. In 1944 he won the league passing championship, just edging out teammate Baugh.

Frank was the typical small-town-boy-turned-football-star. From a poor Slovak family in Crucible, a tiny Pennsylvania mining town, he starred successively at Redstone Township High School and Indiana University. The Big Ten may have been the only football league Frank ever played in where he did not generate more controversy than football.

For a few years after graduation Filchock not only played professional football, but also minor-league baseball. In 1942 and 1943 he was out of pro football and on active duty with the Navy. While in the service he played for Georgia Pre-Flight, where he was named to the U.P. All-Service team at tailback. In 1944 he returned to Washington, where the Redskins had just switched to the T-formation.

After the 1945 season coach Steve Owen of the Giants asked owner Tim Mara to get Filchock to serve as passer in Owen's A-formation offense. Mara made the trade with the Redskins, but actually signing Filchock was something else again. Not only did Mara exceed his traditional salary ceiling, but he also agreed to the first multi-year contract in Giant's history: Filchock got a reported \$35,000 for three seasons. Even such Giant greats as Bennie Friedman, Mel Hein, and coach Steve Owen had never received multi-year contracts.

In spite of a painful arm injury, Frank had a good year in New York, passing for 1262 yards and 12 touchdowns. He ran for another 371 yards and was chosen an all-pro halfback and the most valuable player for the Giants. His passing threat was just what the Giants needed to make Owen's offense work, and he led the team from a 3-6-1 record in 1945 to 7-3-1 and first place in the Eastern Conference in 1946.

When he got into trouble with the Giants, some New York columnists suggested that his was a case of a small-town kid wined and dined and dazzled in the Big Apple who simply made a costly error in judgment. But by then Frank had graduated from Indiana, played six years of pro ball in Pittsburgh and Washington, and served a two-year hitch in the Navy. Granted, Bloomington and Washington were not New York, but (New York sportswriters' views notwithstanding), neither were they the Podunk Junction coal pits. Frank had been around. He should have known better.

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1947 -- FRANK TRIES HIS LUCK IN THE NORTHLAND; IT IS MIXED. Things looked bleak for Frank after his suspension. At the age of thirty he was not only out of a job in his chosen profession, but was formally barred from playing in six leagues. And the A.A.F.C., struggling with its own problems, was not about to pick up a player banned by the older league for his gambling connections. In addition, the crisis had been too much for an already troubled marriage, and Frank's wife divorced him.

He returned to his home in Washington and opened a frozen custard shop. It looked as though his career in football was over.

Enter John Gauld Langs, attorney and President of the Hamilton Tigers, then the entry of that Ontario town in the Interprovincial Rugby Football Union. The I.R.F.U., more colloquially known as the "Big Four," later merged with the Western Interprovincial Football Union to form the Canadian Football League. Langs offered Filchock a position on this AMATEUR team.

Of course the Tigers by this time were only slightly less professional than the Giants -- they were just less open about it. Lew Hayman, then in the process of building his new Montreal franchise, the Alouettes, but who had been involved in football in eastern Canada for many years, said in 1946:

"In the days before the war, the players were paid off in the dark. Some of the Canadian players took money and others didn't, though nearly all of them accepted gifts. Imports from the United States were paid in cash -- somewhere between \$1,000 and \$1,200 for a season. Today you have to pay them all, homebreds or imports, and you have to pay them about four times as much as you did before the war."

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Like the United States, Canada was going through a painful period of post-war readjustment, complete even with its own Red scare. In the sphere of football, the senior civilian leagues had just resumed operations after a wartime layoff from 1942 to 1944. Formalities lagged well behind realities; it was not until the 1950 season that the big leagues openly abandoned their pretense of amateurism.

On August 13 Frank, having rejected a less attractive offer from the Ottawa Rough Riders, joined the Tigers at a salary apparently known only to himself and the Hamilton paymaster. (Rumor set the figure at about \$7,000 for the season.) He was to be an assistant coach as well as a player.

Immediately the Canadian Rugby Union, an umbrella organization for all levels of football throughout the Dominion, rejected his application for a player's certificate without comment, and the I.R.F.U. voted three to one that he could not play for Hamilton.

No one mentioned the word "blacklist," but at this point in the story Filchock was officially barred from every professional football team in the world except for those in the A.A.F.C., where an informal ban was equally effective. And this was an individual who had never been charged with any illegal activity.

Opposition in the Big Four was led by Ottawa Rough Riders. Their American player-coach Sammy Fox, once an end with the New York Giants and Filchock's former roommate in training camp, was fearful that Canadian leagues would become "outlaw" organizations in American eyes if Filchock was allowed to play.

Rough Riders' President Eddie Emerson was also outspoken in his opposition. Apparently there was still some pique in Ottawa over Frank's earlier rejection of the Rough Riders' offer.

The Canadian press was sympathetic. Kimball McIlroy, in his "Sporting Life" column in the popular Canadian magazine "Saturday Night," summed up the feelings of many Canadian sportswriters:

"They say that because Filchock is barred for life from American professional football, therefore with fine international accord he should also be barred from Canadian amateur rugby. This is palpable nonsense. No charges were ever laid against Filchock. He was even allowed to play in the final play-off game after the story broke. He was banned only because professional football got scared stiff that a scandal might slow down the lovely spinning of the turnstiles, and tossed out anyone who had been involved, however innocently, in any funny goings-on."

(Canadians still called their game "rugby" or "rugby football," although it was much closer to American football than to English rugby. Like their American counterparts, Canadian team and league officials were not above considering gate receipts in their decisions.)

McIlroy went on to say that if Filchock was to be barred from Canadian football, it should be because of his obvious professionalism rather than because of his suspension in the U.S.

In the face of all opposition, Langs was adamant: Filchock would play. In 1947 the Big Four had yet to adopt gate-sharing, and with the smallest metropolitan population and the smallest stadium in the league, the Tigers needed a big draw at home. At the very least Filchock would provide a much-needed financial boost by filling up the hometown stands.

Langs threatened legal action -- a novel idea at the time -- if Frank were not allowed to play. The C.R.U. counterthreatened to declare any game in which he did play forfeit. The Tigers played him anyway.

Frank's name and the associated publicity had every bit as much drawing power as Langs had hoped, although he wasn't enough to guarantee victories on the field. With Filchock at the helm the Tigers split two exhibition games and lost their first three league games, but sold every seat in spite of the fact that the contests were forfeit in advance.

Alouettes' President Leo Dandurand meanwhile had gone to New York to read the depositions taken at the Paris trial. After his return he announced a change in the position taken by the Alouettes -- Frank had been cleared in court and should be allowed to play.

The announcement of the Alouettes' reversal came shortly before back-to-back Hamilton-Montreal contests, but as there was no scheduled meeting of the Big Four executive, no formal vote was taken and Filchock was still banned. That Saturday the Tigers beat Montreal 11-7 in Hamilton, and the following day in Montreal the Alouettes returned the favor, 20-9. Filchock was kept out of both games on doctor's orders because of an elbow injury.

The elbow became infected, and Frank spent ten days in the hospital. However, as Jim Coleman put it in the "Globe and Mail," there was no truth to the Hamilton rumor that he had been bitten on the arm by an official of the Big Four. He missed a third game the following weekend.

On October 6 Tigers' head coach Andy Mullen resigned because of ill health and the poor showing of the team. On his recommendation Frank was appointed player-coach. He promptly scrapped the T-formation offense Mullen had installed (it was legal this year for the first time

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since 1921) because he thought it was ill-adapted to Canadian rules. He reintroduced the single-wing, in the process converting himself from quarterback to halfback.

Frank's first game back in uniform was Saturday, October 11 against Toronto, and he had to play with a heavily bandaged left arm. Toronto sportswriters congratulated the Argos on sparing his arm without letting up in their tackling. Frank was still technically ineligible and the game was presumably forfeit, but the Tigers lost anyway.

Shortly before the return match on Monday -- Sunday games were still illegal everywhere but in Montreal -- the Big Four voted unanimously to grant his playing certificate. At the end of the season he was chosen quarterback on the eastern all-star team. North of the border at least, his ordeal was over.

The Tigers finished the season at 2-9-1. Unfortunately no individual statistics were kept in eastern Canada until 1954, so no quantitative account of Filchock's season is available. It is known however that he threw three touchdown passes.

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Frank was back with the Tigers for 1948, but in the meantime the team had resigned its position in the I.R.F.U. Filchock's appearance in Big Four games had increased every team's attendance, but due to the continuing lack of a gate-sharing program, the Tigers were able to benefit from the increase only up to the 12,000 seat capacity of their own stadium. Since they were paying Filchock's salary -- undoubtedly the highest in the league -- they felt they should receive some of the benefits from increased attendance at other parks. The three other teams did not see it that way, and the Tigers withdrew from the league.

If this was a bluff, it was singularly unsuccessful. Hamilton Wildcats, an upstart team that had been playing senior football in the Ontario Rugby Football Union (a cut below the Big Four) only since 1943, promptly applied to fill the vacancy. They were accepted and the Tigers, a team dating back to 1876 and one of the founding members of the Big Four in 1907, were forced to play in the O.R.F.U. In 1950 the Tigers and the Wildcats finally ended their battle for local fan support by merging as the Big Four's Tiger-Cats.

In 1948 Filchock continued to perform the dual roles of quarterback and coach. Not unexpectedly, the Tigers swept through all O.R.F.U. opposition and finished 11-0 in the regular season and league playoffs; they won one game 60-1. In the meantime the Wildcats could manage only one win and one tie in the I.R.F.U. Frank threw 24 TD passes, rushed for one touchdown and returned an interception 55 yards for another. He was chosen the most valuable player in the O.R.F.U.

In the interleague playoff game to determine the eastern champions, the Tigers were pitted against a strong Ottawa Rough Rider team which had finished 10-2 in the Big Four. The game was played in Ottawa but was attended by several hundred Tiger fans who had followed the team north.

The Hamilton rooters waited in vain for Frank's expected aerial bombardment. Unbeknownst to his supporters in the audience, Frank had broken his right wrist on the third play of the game. He did not get off a single pass, and the Tigers went down to defeat and elimination 19-0.

The following season, 1949, Filchock was back in the Big Four, having joined Lew Hayman's Montreal Alouettes. His salary was reported to be \$20,000 for two years. Frank's earning power was beginning to approach what it had been with the New York Giants.

The Alouettes in 1949 included such Canadian greats as Ches McCance and Virgil Wagner. They did not have a particularly great season, finishing at 8-4, but they still managed to win the I.R.F.U. In the eastern finals for a berth in the dominion championship game they met -- who else -- the Hamilton Tigers, once again winners of the O.R.F.U. This year the Tiger's player-coach was none other than Merle Hapes, who had been lured out of retirement. The Alouettes defeated the Tigers in a romp, 40-0, and earned the right to represent the east in the Grey Cup game.

Montreal was faced by western champion Calgary Stampeders, a strong team led by imports Keith Spait as quarterback and Sugarfoot Anderson as his favorite receiver. The Stampeders were 28-2-1 over the last two seasons, including a 12-7 Grey Cup victory over Ottawa in 1948. In the game, Filchock went 11 of 19 for 204 yards, one TD and one interception. He also intercepted three Calgary passes. The Alouettes ended up on the long end of a 28-15 score.

Filchock was chosen to the eastern all-star team again in 1949, and he was also chosen Canadian male athlete of the year.

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1950 -- REINSTATEMENT. Frank had never given up trying to clear himself in the United States. In July 1950 he appeared at a hearing before Bert Bell. He was accompanied by Leo Dandurand, Alouettes' president, and the two presented testimonials from businessmen, clergymen and sportsmen lauding his conduct. New York Mayor Bill O'Dwyer and Assistant District Attorney George Monaghan also urged that the suspension be lifted.

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Bell concurred. In his announcement he stated that Filchock "has at all times conducted himself in a manner reflecting the highest standards of sportsmanship... [and] has made a real contribution to the promotion and development of clean sports in Canada."

Bell also announced that no action had been taken concerning Merle Hapes because his application for reinstatement had just been received and there had not been sufficient time to study it. Hapes was eventually reinstated by the N.F.L. in 1954 but he never played in another league game.

Jack Mara of the Giants announced that he was "glad to hear that Frank has been reinstated... [but] we do not plan to make him an offer because we are stressing youth." Frank was thirty-three.

He returned to Montreal and played the entire 1950 season there. The Alouettes finished out of the playoffs and Frank then signed with the Baltimore Colts, whose season had not yet ended. When that team folded after the 1950 campaign, he had played his last game of professional football in the United States.

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Nineteen fifty-one found "Flingin' Frank" playing with the Edmonton Eskimos of the Western Interprovincial Football Union, and for the first time in Canada his statistics were compiled. (Official record-keeping had begun in western Canada the previous year.) He was made player-coach of the Eskimos in 1952 and led them to the W.I.F.U. championship. He was named to the second team western all-stars the same year. The Eskimos fired him after they lost the 1952 Grey Cup, reportedly because he demanded more money.

In 1953 he moved on to the Saskatchewan Roughriders, where he also served in the double capacity of quarterback and head coach. There he teamed up with two other American gadabout quarterbacks -- Glenn Dobbs and Frank Tripucka. This was his last season as a player but he continued to coach at Regina through 1957, compiling a regular-season record of 41-35-4 with the team but never making it to the Grey Cup.

In 1958 he became head coach of the Sarnia Golden Bears of the O.R.F.U. The team had an outstanding crop of imports, including quarterback and kicker Gino Cappelletti. It suffered only one defeat in ten games, and that by only a single point. Two playoff victories gave Frank his second league championship as coach, but the O.R.F.U. was no longer considered a major league and had lost its berth in the eastern playoffs.

In 1959 Frank served as backfield coach for the Calgary Stampeders of the C.F.L.

When the American Football League was formed in 1960 Filchock showed up as the first head coach of the Denver Broncos. Also with the Broncos were several players from Saskatchewan, including end Ken Carpenter and quarterback Frank Tripucka. Filchock was released by Denver after the 1961 season.

In 1964 he was offered a job as assistant coach with the Quebec entry in the United Football League, but the league never got off the ground. Even without the U.F.L., Frank had played or coached professional football in eleven cities, six leagues (he just missed the A.A.F.C. by playing with Baltimore the year of the merger) and two countries. He had also starred in high school, collegiate and service football, and he had played minor-league baseball with three teams. His overall major-league record as head coach was 67-65-7.

Off the field he had operated a restaurant and an asphalt company and driven a beer truck. All in all, his was a rather remarkable career, and it was probably saved by the dogged determination of President Langs of the Hamilton Tigers in his attempt to outdraw the Wildcats and by the sympathetic support of Hamilton fans and the Canadian press.

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Appendix: Frank Filchock's Career Statistics

PASSING									RUSHING		
Year	Team	Att.	Com.	Pct.	Yds.	Ave.	TDs	Int.	Att	Yds	Ave TD
1938	Pitt/Wash	101	41	40.6	469	4.6	3	11	69	198	2.9 1
1939	Washington	89	55	61.8*	1,094	12.3*	11*	7	103	413	4.0 1
1940	Washington	54	28	51.9	460	8.5	6	9	50	126	2.5 2
1941	Washington	68	28	41.2	327	4.8	1	11	115	383	3.3 0

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1942	Military Service												
1943	Military Service												
1944	Washington	147	84*	57.1	1,139	7.7	13*	9	33	-34	-1.0	0	
1945	Washington	46	18	39.1	169	3.7	1	7	9	21	2.3	0	
1946	NY Giants	169	87	51.5	1,262	7.5	12	25*	98	371	3.8	2	
1947	Hamilton T. IRFU	No official statistics						3					0
1948	Hamilton T. ORFU	129	83	64.3*	(Unofficial)		24*	12				1	
1949	Montreal	No official statistics						16					
1950	Montreal	No official statistics						12					0
	Baltimore	3	1	33.3	1	0.3	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	
1951	Edmonton WIFU	194	105	54.2	1,826	9.4	12	10	3	-11	-3.7	0	
1952	Edmonton WIFU	74	41	55.4	560	7.5	7	3	4	-9	-2.2	0	
1953	Saskatch.WIFU	106	62	58.5*	925	8.7*	5	7	9	-14	-1.6	0	
Official Totals		1051	550	52.3	8,232	7.8	71	99	493	1,444	2.9	5	

*Led league

COACHING

Year	Team League	W	L	T	Playoffs
1947	Ham. Tigers IRFU	1	4	1	---
1948	Ham. Tigers ORFU	9	0	0	Eastern final
1952	Edmonton WIFU	9	6	1	Lost Grey Cup
1953	Saskatchewan WIFU	8	7	1	Semi-finals
1954	Saskatchewan WIFU	10	4	2	Semi-finals
1955	Saksatchewan WIFU	10	6	0	Semi-finals
1956	Saskatchewan WIFU	10	6	0	Western final
1957	Saskatchewan WIFU	3	12	1	---
1958	Sarnia ORFU	9	10	0	League champ.
1960	Denver AFL	4	9	1	---
1961	Denver AFL	3	11	0	---
Totals		76	66	7	

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The authors also wish to thank Elaine Irvine, Robert Sproule and Jim Stewart for the information they kindly supplied.