

# ALL-PROS OF 1931

By John Hogrogian

As one would expect of three time champions, the Green Bay Packers flooded the 1931 honor rolls. Eleven Packers were mentioned on at least one published All-Pro team. The habitual Green Bay championship was not without challenge, as the Portsmouth Spartans rocketed out of obscurity to finish only one game off the pace. In their NFL debut in 1930, the Spartans lost more often than they won. With no nonsense coach Patsy Clark recruited from the college ranks, the Spartans assembled a fine collection of new players, some of them rookies and some of them from other pro teams. Seven Portsmouth players won berths on someone's All-Pro team, a fitting compliment to the club's fine finish in the standings.

The annual poll of writers, team managers, and game officials placed four Packers and two Spartans on the first team.

## First Team

E- Lavern Dilweg, GB  
E- Red Badgro, NY  
T- Cal Hubbard, GB  
T- George Christensen, Port  
G- Mike Michalske, GB  
G- Butch Gibson, NY  
C- Frank McNally, ChiC  
Q- Dutch Clark, Port  
H- Red Grange, ChiB  
H- Johnny Blood, GB  
F- Ernie Nevers, ChiC

## Second Team

E- Luke Johnsos, ChiB  
E- Bill McKalip, Port  
T- Jap Douds, Port  
T- Dick Stahlman, GB  
G- Walt Kiesling, ChiC  
G- Al Graham, Prov  
C- Mel Hein, NY  
Q- Red Dunn, GB  
H- Ken Strong, SI  
H- Glenn Presnell, Port  
F- Bo Molenda, GB

## Third Team

E- Ray Flaherty, NY  
E- Al Rose, Prov  
T- Bill Owen, NY  
T- Lou Gordon, Bkn  
G- Zuck Carlson, ChiB  
G- Maury Bodenger, Port  
C- Nate Barrager, Fra-GB  
Q- Benny Friedman, NY  
H- Roy Lumpkin, Port  
H- Dick Nesbitt, ChiB  
F- Herb Joesting, Fra-ChiB

Sources: Green Bay *Press-Gazette*, Dec. 19, 1931; Milwaukee *Journal*, Dec. 20, 1931.

The results of this poll apparently produced the first entry for the official teams published in the league record manuals of the mid-1930's.

Another long-running All-Pro team made its debut this year as United Press (not yet International) printed its first selections. The Associated Press had for several years carried All-Pro teams selected by various people, but it had never endorsed one itself. The U.P. article did not indicate how the team was chosen.

## First Team

E- Lavern Dilweg, GB  
E- Luke Johnsos, ChiB  
T- Len Grant, NY  
T- Cal Hubbard, GB  
G- Mike Michalske, GB

## Second Team

E- Bill McKalip, Port  
E- Chuck Braidwood, Cle  
T- Bill Owen, NY  
T- Link Lyman, ChiB  
G- David Myers, Bkn

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G- Butch Gibson, NY	G- Walt Kiesling, ChiC
C- Frank McNally, ChiC	C- Nate Barrager, Fra-GB
Q- Dutch Clark, Port	Q- Red Dunn, GB
H- Red Grange, ChiB	H- Dick Nesbitt, ChiB
H- Ken Strong, SI	H Johnny Blood, GB
F- Ernie Nevers, ChiC	F- Dutch Kitzmiller, NY

Sources: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, Dec. 15, 1931; *Cleveland Press*, Dec 15, 1931; *Chicago Daily News*, Dec 15, 1931; *New York World Telegram*, Dec 15, 1931 (first team only).

The accompanying text specifically mentioned Benny Friedman's absence, citing his duties as assistant coach at Yale which kept him off the playing field until November. Eventually, wire service selections would become the most prestigious of All-Pro teams.

The Associated Press this year distributed a team selected by Jack Reardon, a game official based in New York. Reardon had picked a squad in 1927 which A.P. carried. Only Reardon's first eleven plays went over the news wire, but he did pick two full squads.

First Team	Second Team
E- Lavern Dilweg, GB	E- Bill McKalip, Port
E- Ray Flaherty, NY	E- Lou Gordon, Bkn
T- Cal Hubbard, GB	T- Lou Lubratovich, Bkn
T- Link Lyman, ChiB	T- Bill Owen, NY
G- Mike Michalske, GB	G- Zuck Carlson, ChiB
G- Al Graham, Prov	G- Charlie Diehl, ChiC
C- Nate Barrager, Fra-GB	C- Mel Hein, NY
Q- Benny Friedman, NY	Q- Red Dunn, GB
H- Ken Strong, SI	H- Johnny Blood, GB
H- Dutch Clark, Port	H- Glen Presnell, Port
F- Ernie Nevers, ChiC	F- Joe Lintzenich, ChiB

Sources: *Milwaukee Journal*, Dec. 16, 1931; *New York Times*, Dec. 18, 1931 (A.P. story, first team only); *Milwaukee Sentinel*, Dec. 18, 1931 (A.P., first team only); *New York Daily News*, Dec. 18, 1931 (A.P., first team only).

The next year, A.P. would endorse a poll of NFL coaches which would also serve as the official and recognized honor roll.

Another New York-oriented team was chosen by Charles W. Houston of the *New York Post*.

E- Laverne Dilweg, GB	C- Mel Hein, NY
E- Luke Johnsos, ChiB	Q- Dutch Clark, Port
T- Cal Hubbard, GB	H- Ken Strong, SI
T- Len Grant, NY	H- Ernie Nevers, ChiC
G- Mike Michalske, GB	F- Bronko Nagurski, ChiB
G- Lou Gordon, Bkn	

Source: *New York Post*, Dec. 17, 1931.

Houston named four New York players despite the non-contender status of the Giants, Dodgers, and Stapes.

Two All-Pro teams were issued from Green Bay. Curly Lambeau named seven Packers among his top twenty-two.

First Team	Second Team
E- Lavern Dilweg, GB	E- Tom Nash, GB
E- Ray Flaherty, NY	E- Luke Johnsos, ChiB
T- Dick Stahlman, GB	T- Cal Hubbard, GB
T- Bill Owen, NY	T- Len Grant, NY
G- Mike Michalske, GB	G- Zuck Carlson, ChiB

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G- Bill Bucklin, ChiB	G- Butch Gibson, NY
C- Frank McNally, ChiC	C- Nate Barrager, Fra-GB
Q- Dutch Clark, Port	Q- Benny Friedman, NY
H- Johnny Blood, GB	H- Red Grange, ChiB
H- Ken Strong, SI	H- Glenn Presnell, Port
F- Ernie Nevers, ChiC	F- Bronko Nagurski, ChiB

Source: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, Dec. 16, 1931.

Lambeau evidently thought highly of his linemen, honoring six of them with his selections.

Another team was chosen by H.L. Bassett, a Green Bay football fan. This was the second straight year in which Bassett's musings were published.

Frst Team	Second Team
E- Lavern Dilweg, GB	E- Bill McKalip, Port
E- Luke Johnsos, ChiB	E- Chuck Kassel, ChiC
T- Dick Stahlman, GB	T- Jap Douds, Port
T- Link Lyman, ChiB	T- Red Sleight, GB
G- Mike Michalske, Gb	G- Al Graham, Prov
G- Walt Kiesling, ChiC	G- Rudy Comstock, GB
C- Bert Pearson, ChiB	C- Nate Barrager, Fra-GB
Q- Dutch Clark, Port	Q- Benny Friedman, NY
H- Ken Strong, SI	H- Red Grange, ChiB
H- Deck Shelly, Prov	H- Glenn Presnell, Port.
F- Ernie Nevers, ChiC	F- Roy Lumpkin, Port.

Source: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, Dec. 9, 1931

Four men won first team berths on every team considered above: Dutch Clark, Ernie Nevers, Lavern Dilweg, and Mike Michalske. Nevers was a perennial All-Pro who was playing his final year before going into college coaching. Clark was a rookie from Colorado College whose many talents launched Portsmouth's rise in fortune. Dilweg and Michalske starred in the Green Bay line, both excelling on defense. The annual poll placed Michalske on the first team for the fifth time in his five NFL seasons. A mobile lineman who sometimes functioned as a linebacker, Michalske was at the peak of a career which rightfully led to the Hall of Fame in Canton.