

ALL-PROS OF 1923

by John Hogrogian

The childhood memories of pro football recall Jim Thorpe and the Canton Bulldogs as a glamorous couple. Actually, they were together from 1915 through 1920, pushing the game to new heights in Ohio. By 1923, their paths had parted. The Bulldogs marched to a second straight NFL title under the leadership of Guy Chamberlin. Thorpe played and coached for the Oorang Indians, an Ohio-based road team made up of real Indians. They lost ten of eleven NFL games, and newspaper reports indicate that Thorpe's skills had declined in all areas. In a sad reunion, Thorpe brought his Indians to Canton on November 18 to absorb a 41-0 beating before the fans who best remembered his brilliance.

Both Thorpe and the Bulldogs were represented on the first annual All-Pro team selected by Newspaper reporters. This poll grew into an established practice, beginning with the 1923 team selected by 14 newspapers in 13 cities. Several newspapers published the results with an article by George Calhoun of the *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. The poll may have been conducted by the *Press-Gazette*, but there is no conclusive evidence to support that surmise.

first team

E- Inky Williams, Ham
E- Gus Tebell, Col
T- Wilbur Henry, Can
T- Ed Healey, ChiB
G- Swede Youngstrom, Buf
G- Bub Weller, StL
C- Harry Mehre, Min
Q- Paddy Driscoll, ChiC
H- Jim Thorpe, Oor
H- Al Michaels, Akr
F- Doc Elliott, Can

second team

E- Guy Chamberlin, Can
E- Duke Hanny, ChiB
T- Duke Slater, RI
T- Russ Hathaway, Day
G- Hec Garvey, ChiB
G- Frank Morrissey, Buf
C- Larry Conover, Can
Q- Jim Conzelman, Mil
H- Harry Robb, Can
H- Curly Lambeau, GB
F- Dinger Doane, Mil

third team

E- Ben Winkelman, Mil
E- Dick O'Donnell, Dul
T- Cub Buck, GB
T- Tillie Voss, Tol
G- Tom McNamara, Tol
G- Al Nesser, Akr
C- Charlie Guy, Cle
Q- Johnny Armstrong, RI
H- Milt Romney, Rac
H- Hal Erickson, Mil
F- John Kyle, Cle

Sources: *Green Bay Press Gazette*, December 21, 1923; *Rock Island Argus*, December 21, 1923; *Ohio State Journal*, December 21, 1923; *Canton Repository*, December 21, 1923; *Duluth News Tribune*, December 23, 1923.

Thorpe still drew fans to the park with his magical name, but his selection reflected a mostly past excellence. The Bulldogs placed five men on the honor roll, two on the first team and three on the second. Tackle Wilbur Henry and fullback Doc Elliott had claims to top rank at their positions, while halfback Harry Robb, end Guy Chamberlin, and center Larry Conover had similar claims which fell shy in the poll. Two black players were chosen, end Inky Williams on the first team and tackle Duke Slater on the second.

Another syndicated All-Pro team was chosen by E.G. Brands, a writer for the Chicago office of *Collyer's Magazine*.

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first team

E- Guy Chamberlin, Can
E- Luke Urban, Buf
T- Wilbur Henry, Can
T- Duke Slater, RI
G- Swede Youngstrom, Buf
G- Hec Garvey, ChiB
C- Walt Kreinheder, StL
Q- Paddy Driscoll, ChiC
H- Hal Erickson, MIL
H- Tex Grigg, CAN
F- Hank Gillo, RAC

second team

E- Duke Hanny, ChiB
E- Dick Reichle, Mil
T- Link Lyman, Can
T- Elmer McCormick, Buf
G- Dale Sies, RI
G- Stan Keck, Cle
C- George Trafton, ChiB
Q- Joe Sternaman, Dul
H- Harry Robb, Can
H- Pete Stinchcomb, Col
F- Jack Crangle, ChiC

Sources: Canton *Daily News*, December 15, 1923; Ohio State *Journal*, December 15, 1923; Buffalo *Express*, December 15, 1923.

Brands named Stan Keck, an All-American from Princeton, to his second team despite Keck's NFL season of only two games.

Two other teams appeared in the Canton *Daily News*, selected by Canton personalities. Vince Dolan, the sports editor of the *Daily News*, named seven Bulldogs to the first team, two to the second team, and two to the list of honorable mention.

first team

E- Bird Carroll, Can
E- Inky Williams, Ham
T- Wilbur Henry, Can
T- Link Lyman, Can
G- Rudy Comstock, Can
G- Hunk Anderson, ChiB
C- Larry Conover, Can
Q- Harry Robb, Can
H- Jim Conzelman, Mil
H- Paddy Driscoll, ChiC
F- Doc Elliott, CAN

second team

E- Guy Chamberlin, Can
E- Gus Tebell, Col
T- Duke Slater, RI
T- Fred Gillies, ChiC
G- Hec Garvey, ChiB
G- Swede Youngstrom, Buf
C- George Kinderdine, Day
Q- Lin Winters, Col
H- Ben Winkelman, Mil
H- John Mohardt, ChiC
F- Ben Jones, Can

honorable mention

E- Tillie Voss, Tol
E- Luke Urban, Buf
E- Paul Goebel, Col
T- Steamer Horning, Tol
T- Gus Sonnenberg, Col
T- Cub Buck, GB
G- Duke Osborn, Can
G- Al Nesser, Akr
C- George Trafton, ChiB
C- Charlie Guy, Cle
Q- Wooky Roberts, Can
H- Pete Stinchcomb, Col
H- Al Casey, StL
F- Hank Gillo, Rac
F- John Kyle, Cle

Source: Canton *Daily News*, December 16, 1923.

On the same day as Dolan's selections, the *Daily News* printed Guy Chamberlin's picks. The Canton coach named 32 men to an undivided squad.

E- Glen Carberry, Buf
E- Luke Urban, Buf
E- Paul Goebel, Col
E- Gus Tebell, Col
E- Tillie Voss, Tol
E- Bird Carroll, Can
T- Wilbur Henry, Can
T- Link Lyman, Can
T- Ed Sauer, Day
T- Russ Hathaway, Day
T- Gus Sonnenberg, Col

G- Hec Garvey, ChiB
G- John Sack, Col
G- Clyde Zoia, ChiB
C- Larry Conover, Can
C- George Trafton, ChiB
C- Charlie Guy, Cle
Q- Harry Robb, Can
Q- Jim Conzelman, Mil
Q- Joey Sternaman, Dul
H- Lou Smyth, Can
H- Tex Grigg, Can

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T- Ralph Scott, ChiB	H- Ed Sternaman, Dul
T- Steamer Horning, Tol	H- Paddy Driscoll, ChiC
G- Duke Osborn, CAN	H- Goldie Rapp, Col
G- Rudy Comstock, CAN	F- Doc Elliott, Can
G- Ed Healey, ChiB	F- Ben Jones, Can

Source: Canton *Daily News*, December 16, 1923.

Chamberlin named eleven Bulldogs and left himself off the list.

Despite the rather chauvinistic choices of Dolan and Chamberlin, the Bulldogs were indeed very good. They rolled undefeated through the NFL for a second straight year, combining individual talent and fine teamwork. Financially, however, the Bulldogs lost over \$10,000, a sizable sum of 1923 money. By the start of the 1924 season, the franchise would be sold and moved to Cleveland, leaving Canton with an NFL pennant and no team to defend it.