
THE ST. LOUIS GUNNERS

By Bob Gill

In the early years of the N.F.L., generally low interest in pro football often made it difficult to keep the league's poorer teams afloat, and it was not at all uncommon for clubs to drop out in the middle of a season. With scheduling not particularly regulated in those days, other league teams who had lined up games with the dropouts were left to find other opponents to replace them, or take a Sunday off.

But since the split of the N.F.L. into two divisions in 1933, only one team has been forced to close up shop during the season -- the 1934 Cincinnati Reds. By that time the league had achieved a sufficient degree of stability to make it rather embarrassing just to cancel the Reds' remaining games. Instead, for the first and only time in N.F.L. history, a team was admitted to the league in mid-season to complete the defunct club's schedule: the St. Louis Gunners, unquestionably the strongest independent pro team in the country at the time. Though the St. Louis franchise folded after completing the 1934 season, it still -- by virtue of its unique entry into the league -- is an interesting footnote to N.F.L. history.

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The Gunners had not been the first pro team in St. Louis. Back in 1923 a team called the St. Louis All-Stars had played a season in the N.F.L., winning only one game, though holding several good teams to respectable scores. Then in 1926-27 there had been the St. Louis Blues, a very strong independent team that lost only one game over two seasons.

Neither of these clubs had really caught on, though, and so St. Louis was unrepresented in pro football circles in 1931. That year the 126th Field Artillery of the National Guard, located at Battery A, announced through its spokesman, Captain Robert W. Sampson, that it would sponsor a team for the coming season. The club (quickly dubbed the Batter A Gunners from its association with the Guard) had soon signed several notable players, mostly from nearby schools in the Missouri Valley -- probably the most famous locally being halfback Ted "Red" Saussele, who had left Washington University with two years of eligibility remaining. But the team's biggest coup came in naming as its head coach the famous pro star and future Hall-of-Famer Jimmy Conzelman. Finally, with the securing of Public Schools Stadium as a home field, the Gunners were ready to open for business.

The 1931 season began in St. Louis on October 25, with a team from Peoria, Illinois as the opponents. The first score in Gunner's history came on a 32-yard pass from Saussele to Syl McIntosh, an end from St. Louis University. However a bad snap from center Bob Miller spoiled Scott Hornsby's attempted conversion. Peoria scored later, intercepting a pass from Russell Moffatt and returning it for a touchdown. The game ended in a 6-6 tie.

The following week Saussele, who had gained 85 yards rushing against Peoria, broke loose for 175 in a 24-0 rout of the famous Kansas City Cowboys, including one 74-yard touchdown run. The only drawback in the Gunners' first win was that Hornsby missed all four conversion attempts, despite Miller's improved snapping.

Then on November 8 the Gunners squeaked by the touch Chicago Panthers 6-0, with Saussele again starring. His 21-yard run from punt formation set up the game's only score, Bill Carroll going over from six yards out a few plays later. For the day, "Red" racked up 152 yards on the ground.

Saussele continued his great running the next week, picking up 127 yards this time, but the Gunners dropped a 14-6 decision to the Des Moines Hawkeyes. Bill Carroll again scored the St. Louis TD, while back Russell Fischer (84 yards rushing) and end Chuck Delmege stood out for Des Moines.

But the Gunners bounced back. A 25-yard touchdown pass from Saussele to Tony Kimmel gave them a 7-0 win over the famous Hominy (Oklahoma) Indians November 22. The season's largest crowd yet, 6,300, saw Moffatt make a drop kick for the team's first extra point in eight tries. A week later Saussele gained 154 yards in 19 attempts, including a one-yard plunge for the only score in a 6-0 win over the Cleveland Panthers. But the day was not a total success, as rainy weather kept the crowd down to 1,800.

Things were different the following Sunday, when 5,700 fans showed up for the rematch with Des Moines, which St. Louis won, 10-0. Mayes McLain, recently acquired from Staten Island of the N.F.L., scored all the points, with a touchdown, an extra point and a field goal. Delmege again starred for the visitors.

On December 13, the Gunners got their first taste of the big time when the Chicago Cardinals, featuring Ernie Nevers, came to town. A crowd of ten thousand watched the big leaguers polish off the locals 26-6, with Nevers scoring twice and gaining 100 yards on 25 attempts. Afterward, Nevers congratulated the St. Louis team, calling them the "best independent club we have ever faced." He singled out Saussele, tackle Paul Paris, and Chuck Delmege -- signed away from the Des Moines team two days earlier -- for praise. McLain also played well for the home team, gaining over 100 yards rushing.

Early in the next week, the Gunners' finale against the New York Giants and Benny Friedman, scheduled for December 20, was cancelled to avoid conflict with another game involving a team of Notre Dame All-Stars. But even ending on such a clear reminder of the pro game's second-class status, the season had to be considered a real success. The team's 5-2-1 record was very respectable, particularly since the loss to Des Moines had been avenged. Attendance for the eight games, all played at home, had averaged about 4,500, and newspaper coverage had been good. The Gunners had indeed caught on. Pro football, it appeared, could thrive in St. Louis.

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One man who thought so was Bud Yates. In 1926-27 Bud had been the general manager of the St. Louis Blues, and in 1931 he worked under Captain Sampson as the Gunners' assistant GM. Yates, a true sports entrepreneur, figured that if one pro team could make such a good showing in St. Louis, why not two? And, lining up the Disabled American Veterans of World War I as sponsors (ties with the military had helped the Gunners, right?), he organized a new team for 1932, called the St. Louis Veterans.

As general manager, Yates hired Red Grange's brother Garland of the Chicago Bears as coach, and Joe Lintzenich, another player from the Bears, as his assistant. He also signed other notable players like center Larry Bettencourt and back Whitey Shelton from the Memphis Tigers, the most famous team in the South, and Chuck Braidwood from the Portsmouth Spartans in the N.F.L. The rest of the Veterans' roster was filled in with a number of players from the 1931 Gunners squad, including center Gus Butz and back Lee Derry.

Meanwhile, the Gunners had named a new coach. He was Roy "Bullet" Baker, who had joined the team from the N.F.L. for the last few games of 1931. Other newcomers included back Dick Thornton and end Mack Gladden from Missouri. And with Saussele, Carroll, Hornsby, Delmege and others returning, the Gunners looked to be even stronger than the year before.

They kept up that appearance in their first two games, beating the Staunton (Illinois) Maroons 31-0 and the Quantico Marines 18-6 in two night games, played at Sportsman's Park. The Vets also opened their season on an encouraging note, beating Peoria 14-0 at Public Schools Stadium October 2.

At the same site a week later, the Gunners beat the tough Hominy Indians, featuring former New York Giants star Len Sedbrook, 14-7. The winning score came on a disputed 30-yard pass from Harry "Bud" Brubaker to Tom Coffman with less than two minutes to go. During the play, the referee sounded his horn, indicating a penalty, and some of the Hominy players let up -- apparently confusing the horn with

the whistle, which stops play. Afterward they argued that the play should have been declared dead, and the touchdown nullified, but to no avail.

As for the Veterans, they traveled to Staunton on October 12 for a night game with the Maroons. They won 14-6 before returning to play the Chicago Shamrocks in St. Louis the following Sunday. Before a disappointing crowd of only 1,500 the two teams battled to a scoreless tie.

On the same day the Gunners visited the Springfield (Illinois) Lumberjacks, and won 7-0 on Seaman Squyres' touchdown run, which capped a sustained march.

Both teams had important dates for the following Sunday, October 23. The Gunners were scheduled to play the Cleveland Bulldogs. Both teams had applied for a franchise in the N.F.L. League president Joe Carr had helped to arrange the game between them, to determine which request the league should consider -- if it chose to consider either one. The high stakes made the game important, but the reality was anticlimactic. Before 4,247 fans, the season's best turnout to date, the Gunners swamped Cleveland 33-0.

While all this was going on, the Veterans were in Memphis for a game with the Tigers, self-proclaimed "independent pro champions" since 1929. The St. Louis club put up a good fight before losing 13-6. Coach Grange scored the Vets' touchdown on an interception, but it wasn't enough.

A week later the Gunners invaded Memphis for the first time, and probably surprised even themselves -- certainly the Tigers were shocked -- by coming away with a 6-0 win. Saussele's short plunge, following his reception of a long pass from Thornton, accounted for the game's only score. Euphoric after the victory, the Gunners claimed a share of the "independent championship."

Back in St. Louis things weren't going as well for the Veterans, who lost their second straight game. This time it was to the Cincinnati Blues by another 13-6 score. A crowd of only five hundred showed up for the game, and with the Gunners' big win in Memphis sure to solidify the established club's position with the St. Louis fans, the Veterans called it quits a few days later. Coach Grange went back to Memphis to join the Tigers, and assistant coach Lintzenich moved over to the Gunners, this time as a player. As for the rest of the squad, they drifted off to wherever out-of-work football players go, most of them never to be heard from again.

With two victories -- one on the field, one off -- in one week, the Gunners, once again the only team in town, went into their November 6 game with feeling a bit lightheaded. But their next opponents, the Wisconsin Blackhawks had lost only once -- to the Green Bay Packers -- over the past two seasons, and they gave the Gunners almost more than they could handle. After Gil LeFebvre's 25-yard field goal in the first quarter gave the Gunners the lead, the game became an evenly matched defensive struggle. Then, in the last period, after a blocked punt, the Blackhawks moved to a first down on the St. Louis one-yard line. Three plunges netted nothing, and on fourth down Gunner center Ed Stever broke through the line to make a game-saving tackle. The game's final minutes were uneventful, and the Gunners escaped with a 3-0 win that sent the season's largest crowd, 8,500, home happy -- or at least relieved.

Three days later an even tougher test loomed for St. Louis: the Portsmouth Spartans of the N.F.L. came to town for a rare night game, to be played at Francis Field. The Gunners, saw their seven-game winning streak come to an end. They were clearly outclassed -- the Spartans made 20 first downs to the Gunners' 5 -- but they hung in there enough to keep the final score at a respectable 12-0. The star of the game was Glenn Presnell, who, according to one St. Louis newspaper, "outshone [Dutch] Clark." The Gunners were led by fullback Swede Johnston, who had been signed away from the Wisconsin team after nearly leading them to an upset win on Sunday.

The next Sunday it was back to Memphis for a rematch with the Tigers. This time, though, the Gunners, who were playing their fourth tough game in 14 days, suffered a letdown and lost 12-0. Garland Grange, their former intercity rival, scored the Tigers' first TD.

For the second Wednesday in a row, the Gunners had scheduled a night game at Francis Field. This time it was with the powerful Chicago Bears. But on November 15, the day before the game, Red Grange sprained an ankle in practice. Grange was going downhill as a player by this time, chiefly valuable as a defensive back and a receiver, but his appeal at the gate was still undeniable. So rather than play without Grange the Gunners called the game off, and later attempts to reschedule it were unsuccessful.

There wasn't much time for the Gunners to rest, though, because on Sunday the Oklahoma City Chiefs came to town. The Chiefs were a new team, playing only their third game, but they had a powerful lineup. One of the Chiefs was Len Sedbrook, who had already played in St. Louis with the Hominy Indians.

Prospects were good for an exciting game, but the weatherman didn't cooperate. In pouring rain and a sea of mud, both teams battled through three scoreless quarters. Finally, with just four minutes left to play Lintzenich, forced to punt from his own end zone, fumbled the snap and was tackled by the Chiefs' Spot Gentry. The resulting safety gave Oklahoma City a surprise 2-0 victory. St. Louis supporters weren't particularly concerned, however, pointing to the terrible playing conditions as sufficient reason to discount the result. Neither team had attempted a single pass in the downpour.

Rather than crying over past losses, St. Louis fans preferred to look forward to anticipated victories. They focused their attention on November 27, when the Memphis Tigers were to invade St. Louis for a game that would decide, by mutual agreement, the "independent pro championship" for 1932. In addition, the two teams had agreed that the winner would take all of the gate receipts, with the loser going home empty-handed. But even with such a high-stakes attraction, only four thousand fans showed up; possibly the Gunners' three-game losing streak had something to do with the disappointing turnout after all.

Those who did attend were treated to a punting duel between Lintzenich and Frosty Peters of Memphis, a former N.F.L. player. In addition to his punting, Peters also tried five drop kicks for field goals, but missed them all. The scoreless tie that resulted decided nothing, but it did send each team home with half a paycheck, which was certainly better than no paycheck at all.

The following Sunday the Chicago Cardinals came to town again, and again they outplayed the Gunners, winning 20-7. Ernie Nevers had retired, but the team that showed up was still too much for St. Louis, especially center Tom Moynihan, who seemed to break up nearly every play the Gunners ran. The only St. Louis score came in the fourth quarter, after Walt Holmer's fumble on the Chicago 38-yard line. From there Johnston took it all the way to the end zone on a series of straight plunges.

For the second straight year the Gunners had to cancel their final game -- this time the last two games, and both with N.F.L. clubs. But very cold weather and poor playing conditions made cancellation of dates with the Boston Braves on December 11 and with the Green Bay Packers on December 18 unavoidable. So the team completed the 1932 season with a 7-4-1 record, slightly disappointing considering that they finished on a five-game winless streak. Attendance had not risen as expected, given the better caliber of opponents brought to town. In fact, the average was down slightly from 1931. But the team had improved, even if the record didn't show it; and the blossoming rivalry with Memphis was also a positive development.

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For 1933, there were changes in the Gunners' organization. Though Captain Sampson still made some official announcements, the team had severed most of its ties with the National Guard. For example, they were no longer referred to as the Battery A Gunners, and the players no longer stayed at the Battery A barracks, as they had in the past. Edward Butler was the team's new president, with Garrett Mills as vice-president and Bud Yates, returned from a year in the wilderness, taking over as general manager.

On the field Gwinn Henry took over as the Gunners' new coach -- their third in three years. New players included halfback Dick Frahm, tackle Babe Lyon, and end Charley Malone, later one of Sammy Baugh's

favorite receivers with the Washington Redskins. Swede Johnston and Mack Gladden were standouts among the holdovers, many of whom lost their jobs to the talented group of newcomers. Without a doubt the 1933 squad was the Gunners' finest; all they needed was a chance to prove it.

The schedule opened with a 21-0 victory over the Des Moines All-Stars, essentially the same team that had appeared two years earlier as the Hawkeyes. Then came an incredible game with the Chicago Shamrocks. The Gunners registered 20 first downs while Chicago made none, but somehow St. Louis almost wound up on the short end of the score. St. Louis scored first, Frahm going over on a short plunge and kicking the extra point; the visitors retaliated on Art Bramhall's 70-yard return of a quick kick. But Jim Mooney's conversion attempt was blocked, and the Gunners still held a 7-6 lead. In the fourth quarter, both teams narrowly missed touchdowns, the Gunners when they were held for downs at the Chicago one-yard line, and the Shamrocks when a long pass was dropped on the goal line. The game ended with the Gunners still only one point ahead, and 1,500 fans wandered what had become of the potentially potent St. Louis scoring machine.

A week later, on October 15, the Oklahoma City Chiefs returned for a rematch of 1932's 2-0 mud bowl. This time conditions were better, but neither team could score anyway. St. Louis outgained the Chiefs nearly three to one, but once again failed to get the ball into the end zone. The offense stalled twice, once on the eight-yard line, on their only two real scoring threats. Final score, Oklahoma City 0, St. Louis 0.

The Memphis Tigers were next to visit St. Louis, and the invaders jumped out to a 13-0 lead in the first quarter before the Gunners knew what had hit them. One Memphis touchdown was scored by former Gunner Ted Saussele, on a 53-yard pass from Ed Storm. But Johnston went over in the third quarter to make it 13-7, and Frahm hit Malone with a short touchdown pass in the fourth to tie it. Joe Spudich then had a chance to win the game for St. Louis, but his conversion attempt was wide, and the Gunners had to settle for a 13-13 tie.

Their next opponents were the Cincinnati Reds, one of the N.F.L.'s three new teams for 1933. Six thousand three hundred fifty fans, the first good crowd of the season, witnessed a tough defensive struggle, with Lew Pope's short touchdown run giving Cincinnati a 7-0 win. The loss left the Gunners with a 2-1-2 record, and while certainly the competition had been stiff, St. Louis fans expected more from their team.

They got it.

The streak began on November 5, with the Wisconsin Blackhawks returning for a replay of the previous year's nailbiter. This time Swede Johnston ran wild against his former teammates, scoring all three St. Louis touchdowns in a 20-0 romp. Only two thousand fans showed up for the game. Apparently St. Louis was still waiting to be convinced of the Gunners' improved lineup.

Next came a Wednesday night game in Chicago, played indoors at the 124th Field Artillery Armory. The Gunners backed up their earlier squeaker over the Shamrocks with a convincing 19-6 victory. Johnston's two touchdown runs in the second quarter broke open what had been a 6-6 tie, and the team played a defensive game the rest of the way for the win.

Then four days later in St. Louis the Gunners demolished a team called the Cleveland Skeletons (!) 61-0, with quarterback Don Moses scoring twice on runs of 71 and 65 yards and Johnston breaking away on a 91-yard scoring jaunt. The 7,500 fans who observed the massacre no doubt left satisfied that the Gunners were for real.

In case anyone was still wondering, the Gunners left no room for doubt on Wednesday night, when they routed the N.F.L.'s Brooklyn Dodgers 21-2. Three touchdown passes from Moses to Malone accounted for the St. Louis scoring. The game was played at Washington University Stadium, the Gunners' usual home, since Public Schools Stadium had no lights. A crowd of five thousand persons attended, despite

very low temperatures. Everyone -- except perhaps a few transplanted New Yorkers -- went away happy.

The following Sunday the team traveled to Memphis for a rematch with the Tigers. Again Memphis took an early lead, this time on Storm's field goal; but Johnston scored twice for the Gunners, once on a run and once on a pass from Blake Workman, to pace a 14-3 St. Louis victory. With no time to celebrate, the Gunners took the train back home for another Wednesday night game -- with Oklahoma City. The Chiefs' defense, after posting two consecutive shutouts in St. Louis, finally yielded, and the Gunners came away with a hard-earned 19-0 win. Johnston again led the way with two touchdowns, one on a 79-yard run. The one disappointment was that the game, played at Francis Field, drew only two thousand fans.

Another disappointing crowd of 4,500 was on hand the next Sunday as the Gunners routed the Detroit Indians 41-0. Johnston scored three times and Spudich twice, as St. Louis completed the month of November with seven straight wins. For the month the Gunners, finally locating their scoring punch, ran up 195 points in seven games to their opponents' 11.

The winning streak continued into December a week later, when the Gunners beat the Tulsa Drillers before 8,216 fans. The final score was 33-7. In this game Johnston ran for two scores, one a 65-yarder, and threw to Malone for another.

For their next game, the Gunners had scheduled a rematch with the Cincinnati Reds, the only team that had beaten them in 1933. But Cincinnati had somehow managed to schedule another game for the same day in Dayton. The Reds' management wanted to send half the team to Dayton and the other half to St. Louis, but the Gunners, who believed they were better than Cincinnati and were itching to prove it against the whole squad, refused.

Instead, they booked a game with the Chicago Cardinals. Soon, though, another problem had developed: Cards' owner Charles Bidwell, claiming that he hadn't approved the scheduling of the St. Louis game, ordered his players not to play and threatened them with suspension, or worse, if they took the field. Some of the local legal experts then decided that everything would be all right if the team just didn't use the name Cardinals, and so the game went on as scheduled, but with the Chicago All-Stars as the attraction.

All this maneuvering didn't really fool anybody, but it did provide an entertaining sidelight in the sports pages during the week before the game. Then on Sunday the Gunners provided all the entertainment necessary for the crowd of 10,991 with an easy 28-7 victory. Malone caught two more touchdown passes, Moses threw for two, and Benny LaPresta ran a kickoff back 90 yards for another St. Louis score.

Now the victors in nine straight games, the Gunners prepared to take on the Green Bay Packers the following Sunday. Back-to-back victories over N.F.L. teams are never easy to come by, and St. Louis had its streak come to an end, 21-0, before 15,080 disappointed fans. Clarke Hinkle, in an unfamiliar role as a passer, gave the Packers the only score they needed when he hit Johnny Blood for a touchdown in the second quarter. The Gunners couldn't have been happy about the numbers on the scoreboard, but they must have been excited about the numbers in the stands: This was the largest crowd ever to see them play.

A week later the Chicago Bears came to town for the Gunners' 1933 finale, the two teams battling to a scoreless tie. The locals had no reason to be embarrassed, considering that the Bears had beaten the New York Giants for the N.F.L. title only a week before. Blood had remained in St. Louis, and started the game at fullback for the Gunners. Another excellent crowd of 12,892 helped to close out the season on a positive note.

For the year, the team had compiled an 11-2-3 record and had scored 297 points to their opponents' 72. Swede Johnston scored 17 touchdowns; Charley Malone caught 8 touchdown passes. The Gunners

had finally been able to hold their own (two wins, two losses, and a tie) with established N.F.L. teams. And financially, the picture was bright: Attendance averaged close to 6,000 for fourteen home games. The 1933 season was an unqualified success.

Only one objective remained: an N.F.L. franchise.

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And on August 8, 1934, before the start of the N.F.L. season, even that dream became an apparent reality. St. Louis purchased the Cincinnati Reds' league franchise for \$20,000. As soon as the other league owners approved the sale, the Gunners would be official members. But during the next week it became increasingly clear that the other owners weren't pleased with the transaction, probably because St. Louis was too far removed from the rest of the clubs, all in the Northeast, and yearly trips there would have increased travel expenses. Whatever the reason, by August 17 the N.F.L. had definitely turned thumbs down on the Gunners, and Cincinnati had decided to remain in the league after all.

During that same summer a new league was being formed, this one to feature Memphis, Oklahoma City, and -- so the organizers hoped -- St. Louis as its main attractions. But the Gunners, preoccupied with their abortive attempt to enter the big league, had not wanted to commit themselves to this new venture, christened the American Football League. A.F.L. officials, who were depending on a strong franchise in St. Louis, sought -- and found -- backers for a new team to go head-to-head with the Gunners.

With Clarence Howard, Jr. as chief stockholder, Al Hayes as president, and the omnipresent Bud Yates as general manager, the new club, named the Blues, set about putting together a squad strong enough to compete with the Gunners for the attention and receipts of St. Louis fans and media. One of the Blues' biggest coups was the signing of Dick Frahm, one of the 1933 Gunners' stars. In addition, the Blues obtained the rights to play in the Gunners' traditional home, Public Schools Stadium.

The most important problem for the Gunners as September approached, though, was not replacing Frahm or finding another place to play -- Sportsman's Park was available. The real question was who to play. With all the top southern teams in the A.F.L., the Gunners found themselves searching for worthy opponents. They got a break in late August when Oklahoma City was refused admission to the new league because of a problem with their stadium; immediately the Gunners scheduled the Chiefs as guests for their opener on October 7. Other opponents would be harder to find, but the team was determined to stick it out in hopes that the situation in Cincinnati would continue to deteriorate until the N.F.L. would be glad to welcome St. Louis as a replacement.

As for the team itself, there were more changes for 1934 -- for one thing, Chile Walsh became the obligatory new head coach. The best of the new backs were Cy Casper and Manny Rapp, while in the line Russ McLeod became a starter at center, and Paul Moss took over at end for Charley Malone, now with Boston in the N.F.L.

The season opener with Oklahoma City showed that the new Gunners were still tough, as they handled the Chiefs with apparent ease. They won 19-7 while outgaining the visitors nearly three to one. This was to be the Chiefs' last game. Facing the same scheduling difficulties as the Gunners and without the hope of an N.F.L. franchise, they decided that the best choice was simply to pack it in.

But the Gunners continued to play. They followed their opening victory with easy wins over the Chicago Tigers, the Chicago Gophers, and the Wisconsin Blackhawks. Actually, the Gunners' management had temporarily beaten the scheduling problem -- these were all strong clubs. But with the Blues racing to the A.F.L. title, the Gunners' games seemed rather meaningless by comparison. The fans, who had supported the team for the past three years, were still coming out -- 10,000 against the Gophers, 8,400 against the Blackhawks. Despite their apparent problems, the Gunners were outdrawing the Blues; the question was, would it last?

On November 4, the Gunners routed a team called the Minnesota All-Stars, led by player-coach Ken Haycraft, 54-6, before another excellent crowd of over 10,000. Casper scored three times, once on a 97-

yard punt return. With this game, apparently, the teams' most important resource -- decent opposition -- had run out. But two days later, on November 6, the problem was solved when the N.F.L. finally approved the sale of the Cincinnati embarrassment to St. Louis for somewhere between twenty and thirty thousand dollars. The sale solved another problem, too: Rather than compete with a major-league club, the Blues moved to Kansas City two days later.

The Gunners had finally made the big time!

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Their first N.F.L. game was against the Pittsburgh Pirates November 11, and it brought even more success. With Bill Senn and Gene Alford booting field goals, the Gunners beat Pittsburgh 6-0 before 13,678 fans. Their N.F.L. record stood at a perfect 1-0! (Actually, since St. Louis had assumed Cincinnati's 1934 record, it was officially 1-8, but this was no time for nit-picking.) However, a week later the Gunners ran into the Detroit Lions, who stretched their own winning streak to ten games with an easy 40-7 victory. The Gunners' only score came on a 71-yard pass from Rapp to Moss. The St. Louis players, still new to the realities of the big league, were shocked. A dazed Coach Walsh said only that the Lions were "the best football team I've ever seen," or words to that effect.

Still optimistic, though, the Gunners returned home for a November 25 date with the Pirates. This game, scheduled while the St. Louis team was still playing independently, was consequently ruled an exhibition. But that didn't lessen the satisfaction the Gunners and a crowd of 8,500 felt when Gene Alford scored all the points in a 10-0 St. Louis victory. Whatever else happened in the season, this game proved that the Gunners were better than at least one N.F.L. team.

A week later they put on another good show for the home folks -- 10,000 of them this time -- as they played what all agreed was their best game of the year. Even so, they still wound up losing to the Green Bay Packers 21-14. Two passes from Bob Monnett to Roger Grove, the first good for a touchdown and the second setting up Clarke Hinkle's plunge for a score, did them in.

Their league schedule (or actually Cincinnati's schedule) completed, the Gunners concluded the season with an N.F.L. record of 1-2-0 (1-10-0, when the Red's games were included). But though the N.F.L. season was officially through, the Gunners weren't. The following week the Brooklyn Dodgers came to town for an exhibition game. Arnie Herber of the Packers stayed in St. Louis to strengthen the Gunners for the contest, which turned out to be a good one. Ralph Kercheval's field goal provided the margin of victory in a 17-14 Dodger win before a disappointing crowd of only five thousand.

Hastily the St. Louis management arranged one last game, this one a showdown with the Kansas City [nee St. Louis] Blues, who had gone on to win the A.F.L. title. Herber again suited up for the Gunners, but again he wasn't much help -- this time, though, the team didn't need him anyway. Charley McLaughlin's touchdown pass to Benny LaPresta gave the Gunners a 7-0 win, and the championship of Missouri.

That was the good news.

After the game, the bad news came in the form of an announcement that all receipts for the contest were being held up pending the resolution of several claims against the team for unpaid debts, including one from the government for \$1,700 in taxes. Two days later, on December 18, club president Butler revealed that he was \$9,000 in debt. N.F.L. president Joe Carr promised that the league would guarantee players' salaries if the team couldn't pay -- which in fact it couldn't.

Apparently the whole problem was the purchase price for the cherished N.F.L. franchise -- not that it was too high in itself. It was simply that even with attendance as high as it had been in 1934, the Gunners couldn't pay their own expenses as still have \$20,000 left over to meet this additional obligation. If the sale had been approved by the league when it was first agreed upon, in August, St. Louis would have had the benefit of several additional N.F.L. home dates, which would have drawn considerably larger crowds than some of the early-season games they had scheduled instead. That extra revenue might

have been enough to cover the franchise payments; but with entrance into the league delayed three months, the benefits of a few large crowds were not enough to outweigh that one big liability.

For a while there was talk of selling the club to a new owner who could assume all the debts, but this idea fell through, and at the N.F.L. meeting on June 16, 1935 the Gunners' franchise was revoked by the league. Too far in debt to contemplate another season as independents, team officials disbanded the club for good. The dream of an N.F.L. franchise had turned out to be a nightmare -- one from which the Gunners never awakened.

1931 St. Louis Gunners

Player	Pos	Hgt	Wgt	Age	College
Bill Behringer	HB				
Brodhage	QB				
Gus Butz	C		198		Washington (StL)
Bill Carroll	FB		195		none
Carver	FB				
George Coover	E		178		Washington (StL)
Chuck Delmege	E		195		Drake
Friedman	E		175		Washington (StL)
Frohauf	G				
John Fuhrman	T		185		Iowa
Green	E				
Bud Harnett	FB				Washington (StL)
Scott Hornsby	HB-FB		185		Washington (StL)
Steve Kalmer	G		187		St. Louis U.
Tony Kimmel	HB		160		St. Louis U.
Ollie Kjar	HB		160		Missouri Mines
John Kyler	HB		168		none
Jack Lally	G		160		Rockhurst
Lamb	G				
Syl McIntosh	E		175		St. Louis U.
Bob Miller	C-G		198		Missouri
Russell Moffatt	HB-QB				
Bill O'Connor	G		187		Georgetown
Dick Parina	T		190		USF
Paul Paris	T		195		Washington (StL)
Pascover	T				
Pellesco	C				
Dick Powell	E	6-2	207	24	Davis & Elkins
Rowland	T				Texas A&M
Ted Saussele	QB	5-10	174	20	Washington (StL)
Schneider	T				
Senn	T				Washington (StL)
Snell	QB				
Sorenson	E				
Wilson	E				
Bob Wright	G		180		Drake

Coach: Jimmy Conzelman

Sun O-25	H	Peoria Independents	6-6	T	1,200
Sun N- 1	H	Kansas City Cowboys	24-0	W	2,100
Sun N- 8	H	Chicago Panthers	6-0	W	3,900
Sun N-15	H	Des Moines Hawkeyes	6-14	L	4,000
Sun N-22	H	Hominy (Okla.) Indians	7-0	W	6,300
Sun N-29	H	Cleveland Panthers	6-0	W	1,800
Sun D- 6	H	Des Moines Hawkeyes	10-0	W	5,700
SUN D-13	H	Chicago Cardinals	6-26	L	10,000
Sun D-20	H	New York Giants	--	--	Canc.
1931:	71	5-2-1 (all games)	46	71-48	35,000

1932 St. Louis Veterans

Player	Pos	Hgt	Wgt	Age	College
Larry Bettencourt	C	5-11	215	26	St. Mary's
Chuck Bradiwood	E	6- 0	190	27	Chattanooga
Gus Butz	C-T		220		Washington (StL)
Bill Carroll	FB		200		none
Crowley	E		175		
Whitey Decker	FB		185		St. Louis U.
Lee Derry	HB		185		Missouri
Bud Edwards	HB	5-11	180	26	Brown
Shorty Ellness	HB		185		Ohio State
Harold Falter	FB		212		Illinois
Fisher	G		195		
Garland Grange	E	6- 0	185	26	Illinois
Joe Green	HB				Westminster
Firpo Joseph	T-FB		210		St. Louis U.
Steve Kalmer	G		200		St. Louis U.
Ollie Kjar	HB		160		Missouri Mines
Jack Lally	G		175		Rockhurst
Bernie Leahy	HB	5-11	190	24	Notre Dame
Syl McIntosh	E		175		St. Louis U.
Carl Neidig	QB		178		
Jack Norris	E		185	23	Maryland
Paul Paris	T	205			Washington (StL)
Jim Pederson	HB	5- 9	187	24	Iowa
Pence	FB				
Richardson	G				
Rioth	E		185		
Whitey Shelton	QB		175		Oklahoma A&M
Soellman	HB				

Head Coach: Garland Grange

Assistant: Joe Lintzenich

Sun	O- 2	H	Peoria Fans	14- 0	W	
Wed	O-12	A	Staunton (Ill.) Maroons	14- 6	W	
Sun	O-16	H	Chicago Shamrocks	0- 0	T	1,500
Sun	O-23	A	Memphis Tigers	6-13	L	2,000
Sun	O-30	H	Cincinnati Blues	6-13	L	500
1932:		40	2-2-1 (all games)	32		

1932 St. Louis Gunners

Player	Pos	Hgt	Wgt	Age	College
Al Bookout	E	205			Oklahoma Baptist
Harry Brubaker	HB	6- 0	175	22	Loyola of LA
Bill Capps	T	6- 1	235	26	E. Cen. Okla. St.
Bill Carroll	FB	200	none		
Tom Coffman	E	190			Missouri Mines
Chris Cowley	T	225			Texas
Chuck Delmege	E	192			Drake
George Dye	C	210			USC
Mack Gladden	E	6- 2	206	20	Missouri
Scott Hornsby	FB	180			Washington (StL)
Toby Hunt	T	200			St. Mary's (Cal)
Swede Johnston	FB	5-10	194	22	Elmhurst
Cowboy Kyle	HB	170			Arkansas
John Kyler	QB	171	none		
Joe Lintzenich	HB	5-11	190	24	St. Louis U.
Gil Lefebvre	HB	5- 6	155	22	none
Bob Miller	G	205			Missouri
Joel Moore	T	6- 4	245		Arkansas
Cecil Muellerleile	C	205			St. Louis U.
Al Pezolt	G	175			St. Louis U.
Chris Poppelreiter	G	175			Loyola of Chi.
Dave Ribble	G	6- 1	220	25	Hardin-Simmons

Coach: Roy "Bullet" Baker

Sep 24	Sa	H	31	Staunton (Ill.) Maroons	0	W
Oct 3	M	H	18	Quantico Marines	6	W 3700
Oct 9	Su	H	14	Hominy (Okla.) Indians	7	W 2200
Oct 16	Su	A	7	Springfield Lumberjacks	0	W
Oct 23	Su	H	33	Cleveland Bulldogs	0	W 4247
Oct 30	Su	A	6	Memphis Tigers	0	W 2500
Nov 6	Su	H	3	Wisconsin Blackhawks	0	W 8500
Nov 9	W	H	0	Portsmouth Spartans	12	L <3000
Nov 13	Su	A	0	Memphis Tigers	12	L 2500
Nov 16	W	H	--	Chicago Bears (can.)	--	-- --
Nov 20	Su	H	0	Oklahoma City Chiefs	2	L 3000
Nov 27	Su	H	0	Memphis Tigers	0	T 4000
Dec 4	Su	H	7	Chicago Cardinals	20	L 4000
1932:			119	7-4-1 (all games)	59	

1933 St. Louis Gunners

<u>Player</u>	<u>Pos</u>	<u>Hgt</u>	<u>Wgt</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>College</u>
Johnny Blood	FB	6-1	190	28	St. John's (Mn.)
John Breidenstein	HB		205		Akron
Marion Broadstone	T	6-2	240	26	Nebraska
Chuck Delmege	E		190		Drake
Lee Derry	HB		185		Missouri
Dick Frahm	HB	5-10	190	27	Nebraska
Mack Gladden	E	6-2	216	21	Missouri
Bob Gonya	E	6-2	210	23	Northwestern
Ray Jennison	G	6-3	210	25	North Dakota
Swede Johnston	FB	5-10	200	23	Elmhurst
Ed Kawal	C	6-2	200	23	Illinois
Walt Kiesling	G	6-2	245	30	St. Thomas
Winton Kyle	B		170		Arkansas
Benny LaPresta	FB	5-9	185	24	St. Louis U.
Babe Lyon	T	6-2	240	26	Kansas State
Charles Malone	E	6-4	200	23	Texas A&M
Len McGirl	G		215		Missouri
Joel Moore	T	6-4	245		Arkansas
Don Moses	QB	5-11	190	26	USC
Cecil Muellerleile	C		205		St. Louis U.
Al Pezolt	G		175		St. Louis U.
Carl Pike	QB				St. Louis U.
Homer Reynolds	G	5-10	180	23	Tulsa
Dave Ribble	T	6-0	225	26	Hardin-Simmons
George Rogge	E	6-0	200	26	Iowa
Sandy Sandberg	T	6-2	225	23	Iowa Wesleyan
Ted Sauselle	B	5-10	175	22	Washington (StL)
Bill Senn	B	6-0	185	28	Knox
Joe Spudich	QB		185		McKendree
Joe Stephan	QB				St. Louis U.
Dick Thornton	B	5-11	195		Missouri Mines
Blake Workman	HB	5-11	185	23	Tulsa

Coach: Gwinn Henry

Oct 1	Su	H	21	Des Moines All-Stars	0	W	3200
Oct 8	Su	H	7	Chicago Shamrocks	6	W	1500
Oct 15	Su	H	0	Oklahoma City Chiefs	0	T	1000
Oct 22	Su	H	13	Memphis Tigers	13	T	1500
Oct 29	Su	H	0	Cincinnati Reds	7	L	6350
Nov 5	Su	H	20	Wisconsin Blackhawks	0	W	2000
Nov 8	W	A	19	Chicago Shamrocks	6	W	3500
Nov 12	Su	H	61	Cleveland Skeletons	0	W	7500
Nov 15	W	H	21	Brooklyn Dodgers	2	W	5000
Nov 19	Su	A	14	Memphis Tigers	3	W	
Nov 22	W	H	19	Oklahoma City Chiefs	0	W	2000
Nov 26	Su	H	41	Detroit Indians	0	W	4500
Dec 3	Su	H	33	Tulsa Drillers	7	W	8216
Dec 10	Su	H	28	Chicago Cardinals	7	W	10991
Dec 17	Su	H	0	Green Bay Packers	21	L	15080
Dec 24	Su	H	0	Chicago Bears	0	T	13000
1933:			297	11-2-3 (all games)	72		

1934 St. Louis Gunners

Player	Pos	Hgt	Wgt	Age	College
Gene Alford	HB	5-9	180	28	Texas Tech
J.B. Andrews	QB		200		Texas Mines
Ray Beeman	E				
Cy Casper	HB	6-0	188	22	TCU
Red Corzine	FB	6-0	210	25	Davis & Elkins
Stumpy Cronin	QB				Notre Dame
Charlie Diehl	T	6-0	215	27	Idaho
Earl Elser	T	6-1	225	22	Butler
Jess Flowers	G		190		Mississippi
Mack Gladden	E	6-2	210	22	Missouri
Arnie Herber	HB	5-11	203	24	Regis
Ray Jennison	T	6-3	210	26	North Dakota
Swede Johnston	FB	5-10	200	24	Elmhurst
Benny LaPresta	QB	5-9	185	25	St. Louis U.
Russ Lay	G	5-11	198	23	Michigan State
George Lyon	T	6-2	235	27	Kansas State
Len McGirl	G		210	25	Missouri
Charlie McLaughlin	HB		183		Wichita State
Russ McLeod	C		190		St. Louis U.
Bill Montgomery	G	5-6	190	23	St. Louis U.
Paul Moss	E	6-2	200	25	Purdue
Lee Mulleneaux	C	6-2	216	24	Utah State
George Munday	T	6-2	206	26	Kansas St. Tch.
John Norby	HB	6-0	195	23	Idaho
Manny Rapp	HB-FB		210	21	St. Louis U.
Homer Reynolds	G	5-10	185	24	Tulsa
George Rogge	E	6-0	185	27	Iowa
Sandy Sandberg	T	6-2	225	24	Iowa Wesleyan
Bill Senn	B	6-0	175	29	Knox
Joe Spudich	QB		185		McKendree
Hal Weldin	C	6-0	185	23	Northwestern
Blake Workman	QB	5-11	185	24	Tulsa
Al Wunsch	G	5-11	215	22	Notre Dame

Coach: Chile Walsh

Oct 7	Su	H	19	*Oklahoma City Chiefs	7	W	1600
Oct 14	Su	H	27	*Chicago Tigers	2	W	3000
Oct 21	Su	H	21	*Chicago Gophers	0	W	8000
Oct 28	Su	H	27	*Wisconsin Blackhawks	0	W	8424
Nov 4	Su	H	54	*Minnesota All-Stars	6	W	10622
Nov 11	Su	H	6	Pittsburgh Pirates	0	W	13678
Nov 18	Su	A	7	Detroit Lions	40	L	
Nov 25	Su	H	10	*Pittsburgh Pirates	0	W	8500
Dec 2	Su	H	14	Green Bay Packers	21	L	10088
Dec 9	Su	H	14	*Brooklyn Dodgers	17	L	5000
Dec 16	Su	H	7	*Kansas City Blues	0	W	6000
1934:			206	8-3-0 (all games)	93		