

# STAN JONES: COMMON NAME, UNUSUAL GUARD

By Bob Carroll

Today's football players get larger every year, and, regardless of what the cynics say, it's not all bigger living through chemicals. Some of the neo-jumboism you can blame on Stan Jones.

Stanley Paul Jones, you'll remember, was one of the best pro linemen of the 1950's. Strong as an ox, but far, far from dumb as one. When he came into the league in 1954, he was a tidy 250 pounds of hard-as-stone muscle, the result of years spent lifting weights.

Okay, that sounds pretty normal to our modern ears. We're used to thinking of reps as something other than short for reputations. But when Jones showed up during the Eisenhower Era, he was considered sort of an odd ball who was risking his career for the dubious joy of hoisting serious amounts of weight in defiance of the laws of gravity and the collective wisdom of the football world.

Weight lifting would make him musclebound, said the wisemen of the gridiron. He'd be able to bulge but not block. Too bad, they said. Nice boy. Good -- well, great -- college player, but he won't be around the NFL for long. So Jonesy showed 'em. He did it in an eminently practical way. He knocked people down.

Particularly appreciative of Stan's abilities were folks like Rick Casares and Ed Brown, to name only two of the Chicago Bears' backfielders who benefited from Jones' knack of keeping opponent tacklers at bay.

But the most sincere form of flattery came from Jack Stroud of the New York Giants and Duane Putnam of the Los Angeles Rams. Both were offensive guards, the position Jones settled into after his rookie year at offensive tackle, and both were somewhat undersized, a status that Stanley had long since overcome. Stroud and Putnam took to the weights, bulked up 20-30 pounds, and saved their careers. Not coincidentally, in the latter 1950s, when All-NFL teams were being announced each year to a breathless public, the offensive guard positions were often filled in with the names Putnam, Stroud, and, of course, Jones.

Stan was born in the western Pennsylvania city of Altoona during the Depression year of 1931. He played his high school football at a place called Lemoyne, and it was as a high school freshman that little Stanley began lifting weights. He put on 20 pounds a year for eight straight years and nobody called him little ever again.

In the fullness of time and the fullness of muscle, Jones entered the University of Maryland at the time when Coach Jim Tatum was turning the Terrapins into terrors. If names like Jack Scarbath, Ed Modzelewski, and Bob Ward ring a few bells, you know the kind of football players Tatum was luring to College Park. Jones rang more bells than any of them. Just for the record, in 1977, he was named to the Atlantic Coast Conference's 25-year All-Star team.

As a sophomore, Jones started as a two-way tackle for the 1951 squad that went undefeated through the regular season and then upset Tennessee in the Sugar Bowl, 28-13. The Vols had been mistakenly designated National Champions before New Year's Day, but Maryland set the record straight.

In 1953, after his junior year, the Chicago Bears drafted Jones on the fifth round as a future. Stan made them look like Nostradamus when he earned unanimous All-America honors as a senior and received the Knute Rockne Memorial Trophy as the nation's outstanding college lineman. Maryland's 1953 team was voted the national title by both the Associated Press and the United Press after the regular season, but this time the Terrapins got bowl-blitzed, losing in the Orange Bowl to Oklahoma, 7-0.

After starting for the 1954 College All-Stars against NFL champ Detroit, Stan joined the Bears and was immediately ensconced at offensive tackle. The Bears were going through the doldrums. Luckman,

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McAfee, and the other stars of the '40s Monsters of the Midway had hung up their hip pads and retired from monstering. Having wasted 1953 at 3-8-1, the Bears were being referred to as "the once proud franchise."

The pride came back with Jones, as the Bears bobbed up to a solid second place at 8-4-0. Not that Stan was solely responsible for the turnaround. As a matter of fact, at 6'1", he was a little short of the most-recommended proportions for professional offensive tackles. The next year, he was moved to guard where he could really excel.

In 1956, the Bears won the Western Division title and met the New York Giants for the championship. Earlier the two teams had played an exciting 17-17 tie at New York, with a 79-yard pass from Bear end Bill McColl to Harlon Hill the big play. But in the Championship Game, the Giants made all the big plays and won easily, 47-7. Chicago finished second in the West in 1958 and '59 but played out the decade without a title.

Meanwhile, Jones was earning what recognition was possible for his offensive guarding. Trying to get famous for playing anywhere on the offensive line is kind of like trying to get rich by delivering newspapers. You may be performing a vital service, but nobody ever seems to notice you unless you fail to deliver. Of all the positions on the line, the most obscure is guard. Do you know how many people have gone into the Pro Football Hall of Fame strictly for playing offensive guard? The same number as are at Canton for supervising the officials. You can count him on one finger!

As much as people try to ignore guards, when All-League Teams are picked, there is a happy tendency to list a couple -- probably because not doing it would leave a big blank in the middle of the page. Or, just maybe, a few selectors realize that no football genius has yet devised a way for a team's attack to work without a couple of functioning guards.

All-League and Pro Bowl selections are the offensive lineman's statistics. Such mentionings are the only time his name is likely to be heard unless he has a real penchant for jumping offsides. From 1955 through 1961, Jones was named to seven consecutive Pro Bowls. And during that period, he earned more first and second team slots on major all-league teams than any other OG.

Oh, gee, you say, so what? Well, just take a gander at the competition: Duane Putnam, Harley Sewell, Abe Gibron, Dick Stanfel, Art Spinney, Jim Ray Smith, Jack Stroud, John Nisby, and Bill Austin, to name only a few. If you're an offensive line aficionado, those names will make you genuflect. Jones may be a common name, but the one named Stan was one very un-common football player.

He was the Bears' offensive captain through those years. (Did we mention he was smart, too?) But he began slowing down in 1962 -- literally. Speed had never been his strong point. By '62, when he pulled out the only Bear he could lead on a sweep was Halas. The future looked bleak for Stan.

However, Bears assistant coach George Allen decided his future was new -- a new position: defensive tackle. He shifted Stan to a side of the line he'd not played on since those days when he was terrapin' ball carriers back at Maryland. Allen realized the Bears could still utilize Jones' tremendous strength on D, and though the big guy couldn't sprint anymore, he still had the quickness needed to avoid an enemy blocker.

It wasn't quite like riding a bicycle; Stan took the better part of a season to get the knack back. After his first try at stopping runners instead of blocking for them, he admitted: "It was a little strange. I never saw so many guys come at me at once. Once I went in and nobody touched me. I was so surprised I didn't know what to do."

But with help and encouragement from assistant coach Jumbo Joe Stydahar, Jones was ready to rumble in 1963. "On offense, you're limited," Stan said. You have more freedom on defense. You can dish it out for a change."

In Allen's new defensive alignment, Stan's primary responsibility was run control. Somebody did something right: the Bears held enemy runners to a league-low of 103 yards per game.

As a role model, Jones used Artie Donovan, the big Baltimore lineman. "He was always the toughest defensive tackle for me to block. Donovan was not only big, he was quick. He was like a matador. He'd

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move one way and go the other. Art was the smartest tackle I ever faced. He was the man who covered for Gino Marchetti against running plays when Marchetti rushed the passer."

Chicago roared through the regular season with an 11-1-2 mark while holding the opposition to a miniscule 144 points. Defense met offense in the championship game, and the Bears prevailed over the Giants' league-leading offense to win 14-10. Jones calls it his greatest thrill as a player.

Two years later, after 12 seasons and 144 regular-season games with the Bears, Jones was traded to the Washington Redskins. The move was a reward for long and honorable service. George Halas, Jr. explained: "We made the deal as a favor to Stan. He lives near Washington [Rockville, MD] and though he advised us last spring he was quitting after 12 years, he recently showed an interest in playing another season. But he wanted to play near his home."

After the 1966 season, Stan retired as a player, but there was no way pro football was going to let an intelligent guy with Stan's understanding of both offensive and defensive line play get away. In 1967, he began 22 years as an NFL assistant coach. He was with the Denver Broncos until 1971, spent 1972-76 with the Buffalo Bills, and then returned to Denver, where he remained through the 1988 season.

## STAN JONES - Stanley Paul Jones

Offensive Guard and Tackle, Defensive Tackle

Born: 24 November 1931, Altoona, PA

Height: 6'1" Weight: 250

High School: Lemoyne, PA

Colleges: Maryland (lettered 1951-53); Geo. Washington U. (BS, Education)

## COLLEGE HONORS

1953 All-America 1st Team: AP, UP, INS, AA Board, Colliers, Look  
Knute Rockne Memorial Trophy (Top College Lineman)  
Drafted by Chicago Bears on 5th Round 1953

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>TEAM</u>	<u>Lg</u>	<u>GM</u>	<u>Team Record</u>	
1954	Chi Bears	N	12	8-4-0	2nd West
1955	Chi Bears	N	12	8-4-0	2nd West
1956	Chi Bears	N	11	9-2-1	1st West, Lost Champ. Game
1957	Chi Bears	N	12	5-7-0	5th West
1958	Chi Bears	N	12	8-4-0	2nd West
1959	Chi Bears	N	12	8-4-0	2nd West
1960	Chi Bears	N	12	5-6-1	5th West
1961	Chi Bears	N	14	8-6-0	4th West
1962	Chi Bears	N	14	9-5-0	3rd West
1963	Chi Bears	N	13	11-1-2	1st West, Won Champ. Game
1964	Chi Bears	N	14	5-9-0	6th West
1965	Chi Bears	N	6	9-5-0	3rd West
1966	Wash.	N	13	7-7-0	5th East
13 years			157	100-64-4	---

## PRO HONORS

1955 Pro Bowl. All-NFL: (1) AP, TSN; (2) UP, NEA, NY News  
1956 Pro Bowl. All-NFL: (1) AP, UP, TSN, NY News; (2) NEA  
1957 Pro Bowl. All-NFL: (2) NEA, NY News  
1958 Pro Bowl.  
1959 Pro Bowl. All-NFL: (1) AP, TSN West; (2) UPI  
1960 Pro Bowl. All-NFL: (1) UPI, TSN West; (2) AP  
1961 Pro Bowl. All-NFL: (2) UPI  
Pennsylvania Sports Hall of Fame  
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