

## Statistical Leaders of the '20s

By Bob Gill

Probably the most ambitious undertaking in football research was David Neft's effort to re-create statistics from contemporary newspaper accounts for 1920-31, the years before the NFL started to keep its own records. Though in a sense the attempt had to fail, since complete and official stats are impossible, the results of his tireless work provide the best picture yet of the NFL's formative years.

Since the stats Neft obtained are far from complete, except for scoring records, he refrained from printing yearly leaders for 1920-31. But it seems a shame not to have such a list, incomplete though it may be. Of course, it's tough to pinpoint a single leader each year; so what follows is my tabulation of the top five, or thereabouts, in passing, rushing and receiving for each season, based on the best information available – the stats printed in *Pro Football: The Early Years* and Neft's new hardback edition, *The Football Encyclopedia*.

These stats can be misleading, because one man's yardage total will be based on, say, five complete games and four incomplete, while another's might cover just 10 incomplete games (i.e., games for which no play-by-play accounts were found). And then some teams, like Rock Island, Green Bay, Pottsville and Staten Island, often have complete stats, based on play-by-plays for every game of a season.

I'll try to mention variations like that in discussing each year's leaders – for one thing, "complete" totals will be printed in boldface.

<b>1920 Passing</b>	<b>No-Yds</b>
Mahrt, Day	28-591
King, Akr	21-300

<b>Rushing</b>	<b>Yds</b>
Stemaman, Dec	<b>274</b>
Driscoll, ChiC-Dec	<b>246</b>
Calac, Can	<b>243</b>

<b>Receiving</b>	<b>No-Yds</b>
Thiele, Day	8-181
Reese, Day	8-170
Shelton, Buf	10-164
Bacon, Day	8-141

As you might expect, 1920 stats are the most incomplete of all. Still, we can tell that Al Mahrt of Dayton had quite a year throwing the ball, with 28 completions (that's the first number) for better than 21 yards a pop. The preponderance of Dayton players among the receiving leaders – Dutch Thiele, Dave Reese and Frank Bacon – also reflects the Triangles' dominance in the air.

By the way, you'll notice that I'm ranking passers and receivers by total yards, not completions or receptions. I think that's a better measure of effectiveness.

The rushing leader, Dutch Sternaman, is one of those who benefit from Neft's work, at least in my mind. I always had the idea that Stemaman wasn't especially good, but it's clear now that he was a top-notch runner and kicker – not just a guy who happened to be handy when George Halas needed a partner to buy the Staleys.

Interestingly enough, though Neft has compiled complete stats for Rock Island this season, nobody from the Independents made any of the lists here. If I'd carried it a bit further, though, three Islanders – Fred Chicken, Eddie Novak and Sid Nichols – would have been fourth, fifth and sixth in rushing.

<b>1921 Passing</b>	<b>No-Yds</b>
King, Akr	33-533
Mahrt, Day	29-452
Lambeau, GB	18-365

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Boynton, Roc-Was	13-332
Conzelman, RI	<b>21-324</b>

<b>Rushing</b>	<b>Yds</b>
Pollard, Akr	265
Cramer, Akr	253
Novak, RI	<b>225</b>
Sternaman, Dec	206

<b>Receiving</b>	<b>No-Yds</b>
Bierce, Akr	15-285
Wenig, RI	<b>13-242</b>
Hughitt, Buf	16-173

The 1921 leaders changed dramatically with the publication of Neft's hardback edition last fall. Several new play-by-play accounts of Akron games added enough yardage to push Fritz Pollard, Carl Cramer and Rip King to the top of their respective categories. (Scotty Bierce had already been the receiving leader.) It's a fitting tribute to Akron's outstanding teams of 1920 and '21.

Pollard, in particular, deserves notice for his achievements as one of the best backs in the game for those years, not to mention his role as co-coach of the 1920 champs, which makes him the first black head coach in NFL/APFA history – by a slim margin of 70 years or so.

<b>1922 Passing</b>	<b>No-Yds</b>
Conzelman, RI-Mil	35-474
Lambeau, GB	25-454
Smyth, Can	15-317
King, Akr	14-288

<b>Rushing</b>	<b>Yds</b>
Conzelman, RI-Mil	400
Gillo, Rac	390
Elliott, Rac	365
Gavin, RI-Buf	276

<b>Receiving</b>	<b>No-Yds</b>
Chamberlin, Can	10-258
Mathys, GB	11-236
Voss, RI	10-204
Urban, Buf	8-203

According to official NFL statistics, no one has ever led in rushing and passing yardage in the same season. Based on partial stats, though, Jimmy Conzelman turned the trick in 1922. However, if we really had complete stats, it's likely that he wouldn't lead in either category.

Conzelman played in 10 games – seven with Rock Island, three with Milwaukee – and we have complete stats for eight of those. By comparison, Hank Gillo of Racine played in 11 games, and only three are complete. The odds are that Gillo's "hidden" rushing yardage would be more than enough to make up that 10-yard deficit, just as Curly Lambeau's six incomplete games probably hide enough passing yardage to move him past Conzelman.

League leader or not, Conzelman is another who benefits from Neft's statistical work. If you always thought he was in the Hall of Fame mainly for his coaching, you'll change your mind after looking at his stats from the '20s.

This was a good year for future Hall of Famers, with Conzelman, Lambeau and Guy Chamberlin at the top of the charts; but my favorite player from 1922 is Hank Gillo. In 1920 and '21, playing a total of only four games with a crummy Hammond team, he did virtually nothing. Then he joined Racine, a new NFL team, and began a three-year run as one of the league's best players. From 1922-24 he finished first, fifth and fourth in scoring, but Racine dropped out of the league in 1925 and Gillo's career ended with two more years of virtual inactivity. Still, for three years he was one of the NFL's best.

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<b>1923 Passing</b>	<b>No-Yds</b>
Armstrong, RI	75-778
Lambeau, GB	43-752
Conzelman, Mil	48-690
Winters, Col	32-595
Smyth, Can	27-594
Barr, Rac	35-496

<b>Rushing</b>	<b>Yds</b>
Grigg, Can	439
Lambeau, GB	416
Smyth, Can	398
Robb, Can	389
Driscoll, Chic	367

<b>Receiving</b>	<b>No-Yds</b>
Mathys, GB	33-494
Chamberlin, Can	13-340
Tebell, Col	20-306
Kuehi, RI	27-257

The Canton Bulldogs repeated as undefeated champions in 1923, and a glance at the statistical leaders helps to explain how they did it. Tex Grigg, Lou Smyth and Harry Robb hold down three of the top five spots among the rushers, and Ben Jones isn't far behind, with a confirmed total of 335 yards. Smyth also shows up among the passing leaders, and coach Guy Chamberlin ranks second among receivers.

Another highlight of 1923 is the emergence of the passing game. Assuming that Racine's Shorty Barr picked up another four yards among his four incomplete games, at least seven players passed for more than 500 yards. And that hadn't happened before.

Among the prolific passers is another of my favorite players from the '20s, Lin "Sonny" Winters of Columbus. He played 18 games in two seasons, and we have complete records for only three of them; but even his partial records show that he was an outstanding passer. On top of that, in Winters' two years Columbus went 9-8-1, scoring 210 points for an average of 11-1 per game. Compare that to the team's record for 1920-22 and '25-26, *without* Winters: 2-36-0 (that's not a misprint!), 132 points, 3.5 per game. Now *that's* an impact player.

Another player to note is Green Bay's Charlie Mathys, whose 33 receptions for 494 yards constitute by far the best season yet for any pass-catcher, overshadowing Rock Island's Waddy Kuehl, who caught 27 passes for half as much yardage, and Gus Tebell of Columbus, who benefited from Winters' pass-throwing expertise.

In the interest of fairness, I should point out that Jimmy Conzelman probably would lead the league in passing this season if we had all the figures. He's not that far behind Johnny Armstrong and Curly Lambeau as it is, and their totals are complete, while he has nine incomplete games. Another Hall of Famer, Paddy Driscoll, has to be content with fifth among the rushing leaders, but he had the added distinction of leading the league in scoring with a record 78 points.

<b>1924 Passing</b>	<b>No-Yds</b>
Lambeau, GB	<b>75-1094</b>
Dunn, Mil	51- 874
Winters, Col	30- 616
Workman, Cle	17- 462
Boynton, Roc.Buf	26- 430
Hamer, Fra	22- 423

<b>Rushing</b>	<b>Yds</b>
Hamer, Fra	789
Haws, Fra	503
Way, Fra	471
Lambeau, GB	<b>457</b>
Gillo, Rac	429

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<b>Receiving</b>	<b>No-Yds</b>
Mathys, GB	<b>30-579</b>
Swanson, Mil	18-384
Voss, GB	<b>17-337</b>
Rapp, Col	11-316

Another record-breaking year, with Curly Lambeau posting the first documented 1,000-yard season for an NFL passer, Tex Hamer of Frankford shattering all rushing marks (12 touchdowns in addition to his yardage), and Charlie Mathys setting a record for receiving yardage that wasn't beaten until Don Hutson did it in 1936.

The new Frankford team benefited from the fact that Philadelphia papers printed much more complete accounts (though not play-by-plays) than those in most cities – thus Hamer, for instance, is credited with 638 yards in only his *incomplete* games. That gives the Yellowjackets an edge in the rushing stats, but it's clear they were outstanding anyway.

And speaking of rushing leaders, note that Lambeau, known mainly as a passer (and of course a coach), makes his second appearance on that list. Another second-timer (on the passing list) is Benny Boynton, a great college star who basically played only two seasons in the NFL, 1921 and '24. Playing for Rochester and Buffalo, he leaves a very incomplete record, but a real good one.

Among the newcomers to this year's list, probably the most significant player is Milwaukee's Red Dunn, later the quarterback on Green Bay's three-time champs of 1929-31. It's likely that Dunn also topped 1,000 yards passing in 1924, but eight incomplete games make it impossible to say for sure. Besides catching at least 18 passes, Dunn's teammate Evar Swanson was also quite a baseball player, batting .303 in a five-year major league career that began in the late '20s.

<b>1925 Passing</b>	<b>No-Yds</b>
Stockton, Fra	44-886
Ernst, Pot	<b>61-714</b>
Lambeau, GB	<b>47-711</b>
McBride, NY	33-650

<b>Rushing</b>	<b>Yds</b>
Wentz, Pot	<b>656</b>
Latone, Pot	<b>593</b>
Flanagan, Pot	<b>525</b>
Basing, GB	<b>430</b>
Hamer, Fra	400

<b>Receiving</b>	<b>No-Yds</b>
Berry, Pot	<b>33-364</b>
Bomar, NY	19-352
Noble, Cle	13-321
Crowther, Fra	17-303

Red Grange's NFL debut got most of the ink in 1925, but another group of newcomers, the Pottsville Maroons, dominate the "leader board," particularly in rushing. They were a very good team, the newspaper in Pottsville printed detailed stats, and the result was that Barney Wentz, Tony Latone and Hoot Flanagan topped the league's rushers. To be accurate, only 11 of Pottsville's 12 games are complete, but Wentz, Latone and Flanagan had eight, 12 and eight carries, respectively, in the "missing" game – enough to consider it a complete season for our purposes.

The same caveat applies to Jack Ernst's passing totals and Charlie Berry's receiving figures. Ernst completed three passes in the incomplete game; Berry caught two. In addition to his pass-catching, he also led the league in scoring with 74 points. (In case you're wondering, Pottsville's later difficulties with the NFL office shouldn't disqualify individual Maroons from statistical consideration.)

In passing, Hust Stockton of Frankford almost certainly topped 1,000 yards, since his record includes seven incomplete games. Another newcomer to the passing leaders is Jack McBride of the New York Giants, one of the better all-around players of the era. We'll see him again; but Lynn Bomar, his

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teammate, is making his only appearance among the receiving leaders.

<b>1926 Passing</b>	<b>No-Yds</b>
Nevers, Dul	66-885
Stockton, Fra	36-819
Driscoll, ChiB	30-815
Ernst, Pot	<b>65-129</b>
Kendrick, Buf	38-695

<b>Rushing</b>	<b>Yds</b>
Wentz, Pot	<b>727</b>
Latone, Pot	<b>578</b>
Haines, NY	511
Nevers, Dul	496
Hamer, Fra	433
Senn, ChiB	427

<b>Receiving</b>	<b>No-Yds</b>
Berry, Pot	<b>29-330</b>
Lewellen, GB	<b>21-299</b>
Flaherty, GB	<b>11-270</b>
Thomas, Bkn	10-265
Moran, Fra	13-255

Red Grange deserted in 1926 to start his own league, but the NFL picked up a star of almost equal magnitude when the Duluth Eskimos signed Ernie Nevers. Nevers made his presence felt immediately, placing among the rushing leaders and outdistancing everyone in passing yardage.

Barney Wentz, Tony Latone, Charlie Berry and Jack Ernst put Pottsville at or near the top in all three categories again. And two Frankford stars, Tex Hamer and Hust Stockton, repeated among the rushing and passing leaders, respectively.

Two of the top passers are something of a surprise. One, Paddy Driscoll, is better known as a runner and kicker. But in 1926 he took to the air and became one of the league's best in that department, while also setting a record with 86 points. The other, Jim Kendrick of Buffalo, played for nine teams in six years without leaving much of a mark. But this year his aerial fireworks helped a team that had finished 1-6-2 in 1925 improve to a 4-4-2 mark. A year later, with Kendrick gone, Buffalo fell back to 0-5-0, scoring only eight points all season.

Also noteworthy are Verne Lewellen, Green Bay's superb punter, who showed his all-around ability by placing among the receiving leaders, and the Giants' versatile Hinkey Haines, who piled up more than 500 yards rushing despite having complete totals for only one game.

<b>1927 Passing</b>	<b>No-Yds</b>
Friedman, Cle	96-1721
Nevers, Dul	<b>89-1362</b>
Wilson, Pro	51- 782
Mercer, Fra	53- 762
Kirkleski, Pot	<b>42- 730</b>
McBride, NYG	34- 610

<b>Rushing</b>	<b>Yds</b>
Rogers, Fra	508
Driscoll, ChiS	437
Oden, Pro	407
Mercer, Fra	368
McBride, NYG	350
Kirkleski, Pot	<b>350</b>
Senn, ChiB	349

<b>Receiving</b>	<b>No-Yds</b>
Rogers, Fra	38-541
Conzelman, Pro	34-478

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Blood, Dul	21-371
Kenneally, Pot	<b>19-308</b>
C.Rooney, Dul	19-299
Lewellen, GB-NYY	17-299

The New York Giants won the 1927 championship, largely on the strength of a tremendous defense that yielded only 20 points in 13 games. But the offense wasn't bad either, scoring 197 points, second-best in the league. The attack was led by Jack McBride, who had a fine all-around year, placing among the leaders in rushing and passing yardage again while leading the league in scoring.

The NFL's most high-powered offense belonged to newly formed Cleveland Bulldogs, in the person of Michigan All-American Benny Friedman, without a doubt the greatest passer the football world had ever seen. The incomplete yardage total from his rookie year was enough to stand as a league record until 1942. Friedman's efforts obscured another terrific passing season by Ernie Nevers, who easily topped the previous yardage record set by Curly Lambeau in 1924. Many of his passes went to wingback Johnny Blood, making the first of many appearances among the receiving leaders, and Cobb Rooney, making his first and only.

Providence also contributed to the league's most explosive passing season yet, with new star Wildcat Wilson throwing and veteran player-coach Jimmy Conzelman catching almost enough passes to add a receiving title to his earlier rushing and passing crowns. Two newcomers, Frankford's Ken Mercer and Pottsville's Frank Kirkleski, picked up lots of yardage in the air and on the ground. And Paddy Driscoll and Bill Senn of the Bears made encore appearances among the rushing leaders.

But the season's outstanding all-around player was Frankford's Charley Rogers, a 1926 All-American from the University of Pennsylvania who led the NFL in rushing *and* receiving yardage, which nobody else has ever done. Let's go over his numbers carefully, because they're rather hard to believe.

First of all, the Yellowjackets played 18 games, which would tend to give Rogers an edge over players from other teams; but his rushing record shows 13 complete games, and five others for which there's no information at all. His receiving record is almost the same – 12 complete games and six complete washouts. So his league-leading totals are based on a pretty representative number of games.

And there's more: In nine complete games, Rogers ran back 41 punts for 564 yards; in nine incomplete games he added three more for 56. Thus his *incomplete* figures give him more than 1,600 all-purpose yards, which would be a hell of a total today for a 16-game schedule. He also picked off seven passes, second-best in the league. And admit it – you'd never heard of him before, had you?

<b>1928 Passing</b>	<b>No-Yds</b>
Friedman, Det	57-1140
Wilson, Pro	55- 906
Kelly, NYY	35- 778
Dunn, GB	<b>45- 700</b>

<b>Rushing</b>	<b>Yds</b>
Friedman, Det	564
Diehl, Fra	561
Latone, Pot	490
Rogers, Fra	437
Wilson, Pro	412

<b>Receiving</b>	<b>No-Yds</b>
Kotal, GB	<b>28-508</b>
Welch, NYY	17-379
Oden, Pro	19-349

Benny Friedman not only equaled his incredible rookie season, he improved on it – by repeating as the passing leader and adding the rushing title this time around. Unlike Jimmy Conzelman's double title of 1921, which probably wouldn't hold up if we had all the stats, this one is a pretty good bet. Friedman's rushing totals represent three complete games, seven partials; Wally Diehl's show nine complete, five

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partial; Tony Latone, nine complete and just one partial. Friedman completed an unprecedented triple crown by leading the league in scoring with 55 points.

Another rushing-passing standout was Wildcat Wilson, who had his best season and led Providence to the championship. And Charley Rogers didn't quite match his superb 1927 season, but he racked up good rushing yardage and added 43 punt returns for 528 yards -- giving him the *two* best recorded punt-return totals before 1950.

Speaking of punts, a special tip of the hat to the Packers' Verne Lewellen. Though he appears at various times among the rushing, passing and receiving leaders, punting was actually Lewellen's best talent. And nobody could touch him there. In 1928 he punted 136 times (no kidding!) and averaged 41.1 yards a kick. Since the league average back then was 35 or 36 yards, Lewellen was gaining four or five yards on each exchange of kicks -- which adds up to about 700 or 800 yards that season.

The receiving leaders this year are interesting, especially Green Bay's Eddie Kotal, who became only the third documented player to top 500 yards in a season and also found time to intercept a record 10 passes. He's followed by Gibby Welch of the New York Yankees, who also finishes second to Kotal in interceptions, with eight. Versatile Curly Oden of Providence ranks third, the same position he held among the league's *rushers* in 1927.

<b>1929 Passing</b>	<b>No-Yds</b>
Friedman, NY	84-1677
Kelly, Fra	43- 677
Nevers, ChiC	36- 641
Lewellen, GB	<b>21- 501</b>
Wilson, Pro	30- 500
Mercer, Fra	35- 479
Dunn, GB	<b>34- 479</b>

<b>Rushing</b>	<b>Yds</b>
Grange, ChiB	<b>552</b>
Diehl, Fra	538
Strong, SI	<b>527</b>
Friedman, NY	407
Blood, GB	<b>406</b>
Lewellen, GB	<b>405</b>
Molenda, GB	<b>401</b>

<b>Receiving</b>	<b>No-Yds</b>
Flaherty, NY	18-449
Dilweg, GB	<b>25-429</b>
Sedbrook, NY	19-394
Kostos, Fra	20-344
Welch, Pro	15-334
Kotal, GB	<b>20-297</b>

Red Grange always said that after he hurt his knee in 1927 he was "just another back." But the figures indicate otherwise. After sitting out a year to let his injury heal, Grange returned to amass a league-leading 552 yards rushing in 1929. That's a bit misleading, though, because if the true totals were known, Frankford's Wally Diehl would easily pick up enough yardage in his six incomplete games to give him the lead. In fact, there's a good chance that Benny Friedman, now starring for the Giants, would also move past Grange into second place. Still, it's clear that Grange was no ordinary back, his own claims to the contrary notwithstanding.

On the other hand, nobody ever said Ken Strong was an ordinary back, and he lived up to his All-America clippings by piling up the rushing yards in his debut with the Staten Island Stapletons. And with the return of scoring leader Ernie Nevers (85 points), back in the NFL with the Chicago Cardinals after following Grange into an abortive retirement in 1928, the league added three all-time greats in one season -- not a bad haul.

Once again, though, the outstanding player was probably Benny Friedman, who amassed an astonishing 20 touchdowns and 1,677 yards through the air while leading the Giants to a 13-1-1 record. The main

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beneficiaries of his matchless passing were Ray Flaherty and Len Sedbrook, both of whom rank high among the receiving leaders.

But even Friedman's brilliance wasn't enough to stop the Packers from rolling to their first championship. As these stats show, Green Bay's strength lay in its balance: three of the top rushers, two of the top passers, two of the top receivers. Throw in another great season by punter Verne Lewellen and terrific line play from Cal Hubbard, Mike Michalske and Lavern Dilweg (who also managed to catch 25 passes), and you've got all the ingredients for an undefeated season.

After the Packers and Giants, Frankford had the league's best team in 1929, with Diehl, Ken Mercer, Wild Bill Kelly and Tony Kostos all among the leaders – the second appearance for all but Kostos.

<b>1930 Passing</b>	<b>No-Yds</b>
Friedman, NY	71-1246
Dunn, GB	<b>43- 825</b>
Wycoff, SI	41- 689
Lewellen, GB	28- 497
Nevers, ChiC	25- 447

<b>Rushing</b>	<b>Yds</b>
Bennett, Por	<b>744</b>
Joesting, Fra-Min	656
Lumpkin, Por	562
Glassgow, Por	478
Grange, ChiB	470
Strong, SI	469
McClain, Pot	466
Molenda, GB	459

<b>Receiving</b>	<b>No-Yds</b>
Blood, GB	<b>26-491</b>
Campbell, NY	17-377
Dilweg, GB	<b>16-291</b>
Strong, SI	13-266

The Packers didn't go undefeated in 1930, but they still managed to edge the potent Giants for a second straight title. The winning formula hadn't changed much: strong running from fullback Bo Molenda, sharp passing from Red Dunn, skilled receiving from Johnny Blood and Lavern Dilweg, a terrific line, and the all-around play of Verne Lewellen, punter, runner (just off the "leader board") and – for the second year in a row – passer extraordinaire.

(A note about the Green Bay totals for this year: Stats aren't complete for one Packers game. But Dunn's passing figures are boldfaced because his record shows nine completions for that game, six above his average, so he may be missing nothing more than a few incompletions, which don't concern us. Likewise, Blood shows four receptions for that game; Dilweg didn't play. But Lewellen shows no completions in the "partial" game, and Molenda only a single yard rushing; so their totals in those categories are considered incomplete.)

Benny Friedman's incomparable passing again led the Giants, with Glenn Campbell (the New York end, not the "Wichita Lineman") taking up some of the receiving slack for the temporarily retired Ray Flaherty. But most of the leaders come from the also-rans. Portsmouth, for instance, has four of the top rushers – Chuck Bennett, Father Lumpkin, Bill Glassgow and Chief McClain. Having complete totals for all but one of their games doesn't hurt the Spartans' contingent any, but their stats are too good to be lightly dismissed.

Still, it looks like Bennett wouldn't survive as rushing leader if we had all the stats. That honor would go to Herb Joesting, another forgotten name today, but a drawing card in 1929 as a two-time All-American from Minnesota. Joesting started out with the Minneapolis Redjackets, but when the Frankford Yellowjackets hit the skids in midseason, he – along with several turncoats from both teams – started playing Saturday games with Frankford, then Sunday games with Minneapolis. (Yes, this was a bit irregular, but it was

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approved, or at least tolerated, by the league.) Playing a full slate of nine games with Minneapolis, plus five more with Frankford, Joesting piled up 656 yards despite incomplete stats from six of those games. It was his only season of consequence, but it was a big one.

As for the other leaders, it's the usual lineup of Hall of Famers – Red "Ordinary Back" Grange and Ken Strong among the rushers, Ernie Nevers among the passers, Strong again among the receivers – plus Doug Wycoff, Strong's backfield mate with Staten Island, trailing only Friedman and Dunn in passing yardage.

<b>1931 Passing</b>	<b>No-Yds</b>
Friedman, NY	42-729
Presnell, Por	<b>37-651</b>
Nevers, ChiC	40-649
Shelley, Pro	32-586

<b>Rushing</b>	<b>Yds</b>
Grange, ChiB	599
Presnell, Por	<b>518</b>
Clark, Por	<b>430</b>
Molenda, GB	<b>425</b>
Nevers, ChiC	411

<b>Receiving</b>	<b>No-Yds</b>
Blood, GB	<b>22-490</b>
Flaherty, NY	9-281
McKalip, Por	<b>12-266</b>
Rose, Pro	15-252

For the second time in three years, the stats show Red Grange leading all rushers. This time his position seems more solid – if we had complete stats for everybody, his only real threat would probably come from Ernie Nevers, who has five incomplete games to Grange's one.

Second-place Portsmouth probably had the league's best *pair* of backs in Glenn Presnell and Dutch Clark. Both rank high among the rushers, and Presnell sparkled as a passer, too. But they couldn't quite push the Spartans past the Packers, who captured their third title. Some cogs in the Green Bay machine were slowing down, but fullback Bo Molenda placed among the rushing leaders for the third year in a row and Johnny Blood set a record with 11 touchdown catches to go with his league-leading 490 receiving yards.

Benny Friedman had left the Giants to become an assistant coach at Yale, but he returned midway through the season and still managed to lead in passing yardage for the fifth straight year. He was pushed this time by Nevers, playing brilliantly in his final season, and the unknown Deck Shelley, who found a home in the Providence backfield after arriving from Portsmouth early in the season.

A year later the NFL inaugurated the era of "official" statistics. By 1936 individual stats in rushing, receiving and passing had attained essentially the same degree of reliability that we expect today. Which means we'll never have to wonder how many yards Dan Marino would have if not for those seven missing games in 1989.

But even if the league had never gotten around to compiling accurate statistics, it wouldn't be that bad for us diehard fans. After all, we'd still have David Neft.

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Before we leave the unrecorded stats of the 1920s, let's look at interceptions. In this case, since the NFL didn't start counting interceptions until 1940, we'll cover 1920-34, which is as far as Neft's figures go. A few notes:

**1921:** Outside of Paddy Driscoll, who was really a tailback, Tommy Hughitt was the league's best quarterback for its first few years.

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**1923:** The presence of two centers, Conover and Guy, on this year's list shows the growing popularity of the roving defensive center. Conover's teammate, Smyth, also ranks among the rushing and passing leaders.

**1924:** Voss, an end, also caught 17 passes this year.

**1925:** Hamer, the 1924 rushing leader, edges Green Bay's Larson, another roving defensive center.

**1927:** In his only NFL season, Fry deprives the multitalented Rogers of a fourth crown to add to his league-leading totals in rushing, receiving and punt return yardage.

**1928:** Kotal's total is a record for the whole period. He and Welch also rank one-two in receiving yardage.

**1929:** Dilweg also caught 25 passes from his own team. He was among the best on either side of the line.

**1931:** Blood's six interceptions augment his league-leading totals of receptions, yardage and touchdowns.

**1933:** Unheralded wingback Pinckert edges three star backs plus Oehler, yet another roving defensive center.

**1934:** Presnell is the only one on this year's list, because Neft's figures show no one else with more than four.

<b>1920 Leaders</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>1928 Leaders</b>	<b>No.</b>
Frank McCormick, Akr	3	Eddie Kotal, GB	10
Dutch Sternaman, Dec	3	Gibby Welch, NYY	8
<b>1921 Leaders</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>1929 Leaders</b>	<b>No.</b>
Tommy Hughitt, Buf	4	Lavern Dilweg, GB	7
Elmer Oliphant, Buf	4	Wally Diehl, Fra	7
		Johnny Blood, GB	6
<b>1922 Leaders</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>1930 Leaders</b>	<b>No.</b>
Wooky Roberts, Can	6	Dale Burnett, NY	8
Guy Chamberlin, Can	5	Lavern Dilweg, GB	6
Norb Sacksteder, Can	5		
<b>1923 Leaders</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>1931 Leaders</b>	<b>No.</b>
Larry Conover, Can	6	Johnny Blood, GB	6
Lou Smyth, Can	6	Lavern Dilweg, GB	5
Charlie Guy, Cle	6	Joe Lintzenich, ChiB	5
Al Elliott, Rac	6	Oran Pape, Pro	5
<b>1924 Leaders</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>1932 Leaders</b>	<b>No.</b>
Tillie Voss, GB	8	Arnie Herber, GB	6
Curly Lambeau, GB	5	Johnny Blood, GB	6
Jimmy Conzelman, Mil	5	Dutch Clark, Por	6
<b>1925 Leaders</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>1933 Leaders</b>	<b>No.</b>
Tex Hamer, Fra	8	Ernie Pinckert, Bos	6
Ojay Larson, GB	7	Harry Newman, NY	5
		Ken Strong, NY	5
		Cap Oehler, Pit	5
		Glenn Presnell, Por	5
<b>1926 Leaders</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>1934 Leaders</b>	<b>No.</b>
Verne Lewellen, GB	9	Glenn Presnell, Det	9
Tex Hamer, Fra	7		
Ernie Nevers, Dul	7		
<b>1927 Leaders</b>	<b>No.</b>		
Wes Fry, NYY	8		
Charley Rogers, Fra	7		