

## Super Teams League

By Raymond Lee

As I discussed in past issues of Coffin Corner, I've always had a fascination for pitting champions of past era of each other and discussing what might happen. Computer simulations seemed to me to be the closest thing to reality to this. One of most interesting is doing these simulations in football. I did some of the statistical research for one computer football game and found some of their interpretations of data very lacking. Because of these errors, strange things happened, like the 1971 Cowboys beating the unbeaten 1972 Dolphins 20 times without a loss or tie.

Because of discussions I had with some of the people in the game company, they included things they used to lack like:

1. Yards per pass on defense
2. Sack percentage on offense and defense
3. Scramble percentage and rush average for quarterbacks
4. Keeping a more true to life ratio of runs to pass
5. Fumble percentage on offense and defense

With these improvements I found the new game much more true to life. The 1971 Cowboys were finally beatable and strong teams as the 1962 Packers and 1972 Dolphins were no longer pushovers.

Because of the improvements in statistical data and a way for the computer to play an entire 16 game season in 15 to 60 minutes, I thought it might be fun to play ten 16 game seasons with the greatest teams of all time and have the computer give the over all results. To keep everything equal, I had the computer generate a new schedule each year. This way one team wouldn't play an easy schedule every year or a tough schedule each year.

What teams did I pick and how many? It had to be an even number of teams so each team could play one of the others each week.

I finally decided to choose teams after 1950 since more data was available after that time. After some study I chose the following:

1. 1950 Cleveland Browns
2. 1951 Los Angeles Rams
3. 1953 Detroit Lions
4. 1962 Green Bay Packers
5. 1971 Dallas Cowboys
6. 1972 Miami Dolphins
7. 1975 Pittsburgh Steelers
8. 1976 Oakland Raiders
9. 1977 Dallas Cowboys
10. 1969 Kansas City Chiefs
11. 1985 Chicago Bears
12. 1968 New York Jets
13. 1990 New York Giants
14. 1989 San Francisco 49ers

My last choice was between the 1968 Jets and the 1958 Colts. One had to be eliminated since I needed an even number of teams. I played 32 games between the 68 Jets and 58 Colts and the Jets won 17 lost 12 and tied 3.

Before starting the simulation I figured the '50 Browns, '62 Packers, '72 Dolphins, '75 Steelers, and '89 49ers to be the favorites, with possible dark horses in the '85 Bears and '69 Chiefs. I had the computer play each game in ideal weather conditions and injuries and fatigue were taken into account. This would take into account the total depth of a team's roster. Here are the standings season by season and final composite standings:

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## Season 1

	<u>W-L</u>	<u>Points for – Points against</u>
1. 1950 Browns	13-3-0	364-187
2. 1972 Dolphins	11-5-0	311-213
3. 1969 Chiefs	10-6-0	261-213
4. 1989 49ers	10-6-0	376-359
5. 1962 Packers	8-7-1	337-278
6. 1975 Steelers	8-7-1	337-278
7. 1976 Raiders	8-8-0	303-297
8. 1952 Lions	7-7-2	255-284
9. 1951 Rams	8-8-0	316-360
10. 1971 Cowboys	7-8-1	214-314
11. 1990 Giants	6-10-0	271-298
12. 1977 Cowboys	4-12-0	236-311
13. 1985 Bears	5-10-1	239-318
14. 1968 Jets	4-12-0	209-354
Total Points:		4027 Offense 4027 Defense

## Season 2

	<u>W-L</u>	<u>Points for – Points against</u>
1. 1950 Browns	12-4-0	294-259
2. 1972 Dolphins	12-4-0	307-203
3. 1985 Bears	10-5-1	278-248
4. 1962 Packers	10-6-0	377-282
5. 1951 Rams	9-7-0	326-297
6. 1968 Jets	9-7-0	328-318
7. 1989 49ers	9-7-0	337-348
8. 1969 Chiefs	8-7-1	305-206
9. 1971 Cowboys	7-9-0	291-328
10. 1975 Steelers	7-9-0	291-328
11. 1976 Raiders	5-11-0	260-340
12. 1977 Cowboys	5-11-0	245-330
13. 1952 Lions	5-11-0	233-357
14. 1990 Giants	3-13-0	261-394
Total Points:		4237 Offense 4237 Defense

## Season 3

	<u>W-L</u>	<u>Points for – Points against</u>
1. 1962 Packers	12-4-0	371-203
2. 1972 Dolphins	11-4-1	360-235
3. 1989 49ers	9-6-1	406-314
4. 1950 Browns	9-7-0	296-261
5. 1975 Steelers	9-7-0	294-290
6. 1985 Bears	8-7-1	291-261
7. 1976 Raiders	8-8-0	288-305
8. 1971 Cowboys	8-8-0	278-317
9. 1990 Giants	8-8-0	283-364
10. 1969 Chiefs	6-10-0	250-298
11. 1952 Lions	6-10-0	246-308
12. 1951 Rams	5-10-1	271-381
13. 1977 Cowboys	5-10-1	242-275
14. 1968 Jets	5-11-1	245-309
Total Points:		4121 Offense 4121 Defense

## Season 4

	<u>W-L</u>	<u>Points for – Points against</u>
1. 1950 Browns	12-3-1	441-208
2. 1968 Jets	10-4-2	295-251

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	<u>W-L</u>	<u>Points for – Points against</u>
3. 1990 Giants	9-6-1	296-251
4. 1972 Dolphins	9-6-1	293-280
5. 1989 49ers	9-7-0	372-325
6. 1969 Chiefs	8-6-2	253-304
7. 1972 Cowboys	8-7-1	281-286
8. 1951 Rams	7-8-1	382-389
9. 1976 Raiders	7-9-0	289-338
10. 1962 Packers	6-10-0	346-321
11. 1977 Cowboys	6-10-0	253-278
12. 1975 Steelers	5-10-1	282-370
13. 1985 Bears	5-10-1	215-334
14. 1952 Lions	5-11-0	265-358
Total Points:		4263 Offense 4263 Defense

## Season 5

	<u>W-L</u>	<u>Points for – Points against</u>
1. 1962 Packers	11-4-1	318-195
2. 1971 Cowboys	10-3-3	335-217
3. 1989 49ers	10-5-1	424-307
4. 1969 Chiefs	10-5-1	297-274
5. 1950 Browns	9-7-0	346-228
6. 1985 Bears	9-7-0	321-387
7. 1951 Rams	7-8-1	362-387
8. 1972 Dolphins	7-9-0	314-347
9. 1968 Jets	7-9-0	264-303
10. 1977 Cowboys	6-8-2	242-287
11. 1990 Giants	6-9-1	242-299
12. 1975 Steelers	5-11-0	277-341
13. 1952 Lions	5-11-0	220-341
14. 1976 Raiders	5-11-0	217-339
Total Points:		4179 Offense 4179 Defense

## Season 6

	<u>W-L</u>	<u>Points for – Points against</u>
1. 1950 Browns	12-3-1	394-241
2. 1952 Lions	10-3-3	300-209
3. 1969 Chiefs	9-5-2	311-255
4. 1989 49ers	9-6-1	369-306
5. 1977 Cowboys	9-7-0	291-268
6. 1962 Packers	8-7-1	263-211
7. 1951 Rams	8-8-0	362-341
8. 1990 Giants	7-8-1	244-251
9. 1968 Jets	4-7-5	282-261
10. 1971 Cowboys	5-8-3	210-284
11. 1985 Bears	6-9-1	243-349
12. 1975 Steelers	6-10-0	240-333
13. 1972 Dolphins	5-10-1	246-300
14. 1976 Raiders	4-11-1	224-370
Total Points:		3979 Offense 3979 Defense

## Season 7

	<u>W-L</u>	<u>Points for – Points against</u>
1. 1950 Browns	11-4-1	374-208
2. 1989 49ers	11-5-0	376-318
3. 1975 Steelers	11-5-0	320-282
4. 1969 Chiefs	10-5-1	342-263
5. 1968 Jets	10-6-0	326-235

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	<u>W-L</u>	<u>Points for – Points against</u>
6. 1962 Packers	9-6-1	310-302
7. 1972 Dolphins	9-7-0	304-262
8. 1952 Lions	8-8-0	272-313
9. 1985 Bears	7-9-0	255-305
10. 1951 Rams	6-10-0	289-354
11. 1977 Cowboys	5-10-1	233-297
12. 1971 Cowboys	4-11-1	259-313
13. 1990 Giants	4-11-1	228-339
14. 1976 Raiders	3-11-2	243-340
Total Points:		4015 Offense 4015 Defense

### Season 8

	<u>W-L</u>	<u>Points for – Points against</u>
1. 1962 Packers	13-3-0	328-228
2. 1989 49ers	10-6-0	429-331
3. 1985 Bears	9-6-1	347-285
4. 1951 Rams	9-7-0	381-312
5. 1968 Jets	9-7-0	273-224
6. 1975 Steelers	9-7-0	265-245
7. 1950 Browns	8-7-1	258-259
8. 1972 Dolphins	8-8-0	296-290
9. 1952 Lions	8-8-0	283-305
10. 1977 Dallas	7-8-1	237-230
11. 1971 Dallas	7-9-0	266-268
12. 1969 Chiefs	7-9-0	224-269
13. 1976 Raiders	4-11-1	193-318
14. 1990 Giants	2-14-0	147-363
Total Points:		3927 Offense 3927 Defense

### Season 9

	<u>W-L</u>	<u>Points for – Points against</u>
1. 1975 Steelers	12-4-0	317-248
2. 1950 Browns	10-6-0	339-225
3. 1952 Lions	10-6-0	275-231
4. 1962 Packers	10-6-0	357-331
5. 1971 Dallas	9-6-1	316-262
6. 1990 Giants	9-7-0	282-283
7. 1972 Dolphins	9-7-0	244-246
8. 1951 Rams	7-9-0	330-307
9. 1977 Cowboys	7-9-0	250-239
10. 1969 Chiefs	6-8-2	293-305
11. 1989 49ers	6-9-1	308-322
12. 1968 Jets	5-10-1	236-311
13. 1976 Raiders	5-10-1	205-293
14. 1985 Bears	4-12-0	263-382
Total Points:		4015 Offense 4015 Defense

### Season 10

	<u>W-L</u>	<u>Points for – Points against</u>
1. 1975 Steelers	12-4-0	401-262
2. 1950 Browns	9-7-0	300-286
3. 1976 Oakland	9-7-0	250-258
4. 1962 Packers	8-7-1	354-270
5. 1952 Lions	8-7-1	297-271
6. 1989 49ers	8-8-0	324-315
7. 1968 Jets	8-8-0	252-288
8. 1990 Giants	7-7-2	252-288

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	W-L	Points for – Points against
9. 1977 Dallas	7-8-1	267-297
10. 1972 Dolphins	7-9-0	277-311
11. 1969 Chiefs	7-9-0	281-317
12. 1951 Rams	7-9-0	318-368
13. 1985 Bears	6-9-1	245-305
14. 1971 Cowboys	6-10-0	231-292
Total Points:		4065 Offense 4065 Defense

### Totals

Pct.			Games Behind	Pts. For	Pts. Against	
.669	1. 1950 Browns	105-51-4		3506	2392	+27.85
.609	2. 1962 Packers	95-60-5	9.5	3359	2617	+18.55
.581	3. 1989 49ers	91-65-4	14	3721	3245	+11.9
.559	4. 1972 Dolphins	88-69-3	17.5	2942	2673	+6.725
.534	5. 1975 Steelers	85-74-1	21.5	3024	2984	+1
.534	6. 1969 Chiefs	81-70-9	21.5	2817	2671	+3.65
.475	7. 1971 Cowboys	71-79-10	31	2685	2671	-4.875
.469	8. 1951 Rams	74-84-2	32	3337	3496	-3.975
.469	9. 1952 Lions	72-82-6	32	2946	2977	-8.275
.469	10. 1968 Jets	71-81-8	32	2777	2822	-1.125
.453	11. 1985 Bears	69-84-7	34.5	2697	3094	-9.925
.400	12. 1990 Giants	61-93-6	43	2506	3130	-15.6
.400	13. 1977 Cowboys	61-93-6	43	2505	2765	-6.5
.378	14. 1976 Raiders	58-97-5	46.5	<u>2472</u>	<u>3198</u>	-18.15
	Total Points:			40994	40994	

After the 10 seasons, the 1950 Browns emerge as the Champion of Champions (at least after 1950). They beat out the 1962 Packers, 1989 49ers and the 1972 Dolphins. I was surprised the 1975 Steelers didn't finish a little higher and the 1985 Bears were a major disappointment. The 1989 49ers scored the most points while the 1950 Browns had the best defense.

Even though the 1950 Browns seemed to win handily, the margin was less than 1 game per season over the 1962 Packers. Injuries and schedule may make a difference. It seems that a team with a 25% better defense than average and an average offense will win more often than a team with a 25% better offense and an average defense. I would guess the better defensive team can hold smaller leads better than other teams. In this simulation, the 1950 Browns had the better run and pass defense (though not by much) and a slightly worse offense on run and pass than the 1962 Packers. The Browns also had better special teams. There probably wouldn't be much difference if they played each other for 160 games. Overall the top five teams were relatively close in strength.

Actually if I was not just picking World Championship teams, I would have chosen the 1976 Steelers over the 1975 Steelers. Many of the Steelers of that era felt it was their best team. On paper they may be correct. If not for injuries to Harris and Bleier, the Steelers may have won 3 straight Super Bowls. Many teams who were not World Champions strength wise could have qualified for this simulation but it was not in my criteria.

The 1976 Raiders were an odd team. They won 13 and lost 1 but only had a point differential of plus 113. They won many close games over so-so competition in the early part of the season when they were racked by injuries. At the end of the year, they were healthy and a much stronger team that was around the 1976 Steelers' level. Despite these injuries, the 1976 Raiders would have an excellent record in any division in any year. However many of the close games they won in 1976 wouldn't be won against these all-time teams. This is a flaw in the system. But we're rating the overall strength of the team over the course of the season.

Incidentally, Bob Carroll's and Peter Palmer's formula in the [Hidden Game of Football](#) that a team has to score 40 more points than it gives up to get 1 additional win seems to hold up relatively well. For example, the 1950 Browns scored 114 more points than they gave up in 160 games. Using the formula,

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the 1950 Browns should have a little less than 108 wins (with a tie counting as  $\frac{1}{2}$  win) and they had 107 wins. The 1962 Packers should have a bit more than 97 wins and they came up with  $97\frac{1}{2}$  wins.

No one can tell what team is the best of all time. This simulation simply takes the statistics relative to the league and compares them to other teams and their strength relative to the league. Players are bigger, stronger and faster now but who is to say if players from the 1950 Browns or 1962 Packers born at the same time as the players now, with the same training, foods and conditioning wouldn't also be much stronger and faster too. Even without the training and advantages now, somehow I think players like Johnny Unitas and Jim Brown might do pretty well nowadays. We'll never know but it's fun to have the computer play it out and argue about the results. I'd appreciate any comments on this and your opinions on the final results.