

FRANK SENO: SIX IS SIGNIFICANT

By T.J. Troup

As an undrafted rookie in 1943 Frank Seno joined a team that had won 10 consecutive games the preceding season, including a victory over the Chicago Bears in the Championship game. The Washington Redskins featured a very talented offensive backfield that included "Anvil" Andy Farkas, Wilbur Moore, Bob Seymour, and tailback Sammy Bauah. Even so, Seno, who had starred for a sub-par George Washington University, was able to contribute in many ways as a rookie: receiving, returning kicks, intercepting passes, as well as at running back.

On November 21st, 1943, the undefeated Redskins hosted the equally undefeated Bears. Chicago had not lost a regular season game since November 2nd, 1941; a record of 23-0-1. The Bears had allowed only 2,545 yards rushing in their last 28 games -- 91 yards a game -- and no one ever "broke" a long run against the vaunted Bear defense. In defeating the Bears 21 to 7, Washington shocked the Bears that day by gaining 213 yards rushing as a team.

For the first time in many a season a running back broke loose against Chicago as Frank Seno scampered 52 yards on a spinner play to set up one of the touchdowns. Seno had started his NFL career on the right note, although the Bears gained revenge in the December title game.

During the 1944 season Seno continued to contribute to the Redskins; his interception was a key play during Washington's first victory of the season on October 15th against the Boston Yanks, and his 60-yard punt return -- the league's longest for th season -- helped defeat Brooklyn on October 22nd. Seno's accomplishments also included the longest kick-off return for the Redskins that season -- 37 yards.

In 1945 Frank Seno joined the Chicago Cardinals. They were a hapless outfit that scored only 98 points all season and won just one game. However, as always Frank was a man who contributed in all facets for his team, he finished 7th in the league in rushing. Against his former teammates the Redskins, had a 47-yard touchdown run on November 4th. Seno led the league in kick-off return yardage, and was in the top ten in punt returns.

The 1946 Cardinals were a team on the upswing, and on October 20 in the Polo Grounds against the contending Giants in one of the most thrilling contests of the year Frank Seno set an NFL record with his 105-yard kick-off return for a touchdown. His coast-to-coast return gave the Cardinals a shortlived 24 to 21 lead. For the season, Seno led the league in kick-off return average with a mark of 31.4, and again he was among the league leaders in punt return average with 10.4 a return.

Frank donned the green and gold of the Boston Yanks for 1947 and his record-setting achievement that year would go unheralded. So now 56 years later let's set the record straight.

For many years in the National Football League Record and Rules Manual, under the heading of most consecutive games intercepting a pass, the record was listed as 6 by Richard Lane and Will Sherman.

The first man to intercept in 6 consecutive games was Frank Seno in 1947.

On October 19th the winless Boston Yanks won their first game of the season 14-0 against the Giants; Seno caught an 11-yard touchdown pass, and intercepted two passes for 38 yards, on one his returns he went 30 yards -- his longest of the season. The next week against the Cardinals Frank again intercepted two passes. November 2nd in Boston against the contending Bears Seno tied the game at 7 with an 86-yard punt return for a touchdown (the longest of his career). Later he intercepted a pass to keep the Yanks in the game, but the Bears won with a 4th-quarter rally. Boston knocked the Rams out of the western division title race with a 27 to 16 win on November 9th and again Seno had intercepted. During the next two weeks in November against the eastern division champion Eagles, Frank intercepted again to run his interception total to 10 (he would tie Reagan of the Giants for the league lead) in 9 games. Seno also led thl NFL in punt return average with 17.8.

Before we go to his last full season in 1948 we should examine

what this man had accomplished. Seno was the all-time leader in kick-off return yardage with 1,706 yards in just 51 games. Seno had averaged 12.7 yards a punt return in his career, and had led the NFL in both punt return and kick-off return average, and had tied for the lead in interceptions in 1947. Plus he had contributed as both a runner and receiver when called upon. But most importantly, he established a record and would never be listed for this achievement (intercepting in 6 consecutive games).

Frank Seno proved to be more valuable on offense for the 1948 Boston Yanks as he finished second on the team in rushing and averaged 24.8 yards per catch as a receiver and he led the team in yards receiving. Seno caught a 22-yard touchdown pass from Leroy Zimmerman against the Steelers on October 17th (the first Yanks victory of the year), and on December 5th the Yanks upset the soon-to-be-champion Eagles 37 to 14, as Phil Slosburg hit Seno with a 68 yard touchdown pass.

Frank still played on defense and returned kicks but now teams were wary of him and his opportunities for interceptions lessened. Frank Seno returned to the Washington Redskins for 4 games during the 1949 season, but his career soon ended.

Frank Seno's legacy lives but he left us entirely too soon as he died in March of At the age of 53.

FRANK SENO

DB-HB-WB

Seno, John Frank

6-0, 191

George Washington

HS: Mendota Twp. [Mendota, IL]

B: 2 / 15 / 1921, Mendota, IL

D: 3 / 31 / 1974, Bellwood, IL (53)

1943 Was 10

1944 Was 10

1945 ChiC 9

1946 ChiC 11

1947 Bos 11

1948 Bos 12

1949 Was 4