

FRITZ POLLARD

Class of 2005

Courtesy of the Pro Football Hall of Fame

Fritz Pollard, an All-America halfback from Brown University was a pro football pioneer in more ways than one. The 5-9, 165-pound back, who led Brown to the Rose Bowl in 1915, turned pro in 1919, when he joined the Akron (OH) team following army service during World War I. In 1920, the Akron Pros joined the newly founded American Professional Football Association, later renamed the National Football League. That season, with Pollard leading the charge, the Pros went undefeated (8-0-3) to win the league's first crown.

As a member of the new league, Pollard immediately earned a place in pro football history as one of just two African Americans in the new league. In 1921 he earned another distinction becoming the first African American head coach in NFL history when the Pros named him co-coach of the team.

Contemporary accounts indicate that Pollard, an exciting elusive runner, was the most feared running back in the fledgling league. During his pro football career the two-time All-America played and sometimes coached for four different NFL teams, the Pros/Indians (1920-1/1925-26), the Milwaukee Badgers (1922), the Hammond Pros (1923, 1925), and the Providence Steam Roller (1925). Fritz also spent time in 1923 and 1924 playing for the Gilberton Cadamounts, a strong independent pro team in the Pennsylvania "Coal League."

FRITZ POLLARD	Back-Coach
Frederick Douglass Pollard	5-9, 165
College: Bates, Brown	
High School: Albert G. Lane Tech (Chicago, IL)	
Born: January 27, 1894, Chicago, Illinois	
Died: May 11, 1986, at Silver Spring, Maryland (92)	
Games Played:	
1919Akron* 4	1920Akron 11 1921Akron 12
1922Milwaukee 7	1923Hammond/Gilberton** 11
1924Gilberton** 7	1925Hammond/Akron/Providence 13
1926Akron4	Career Total6969
* Pre-NFL; ** Gilberton Cadamounts were an Independent pro team. Number of games played information is based on best available information.	
All-America halfback. . .A pro football pioneer. . .Began career in 1919 with Akron (OH) Pros. . .Helped Akron become NFL's first champion, 1920. . .One of just two African Americans in the NFL at time. . .NFL's first African American head coach, 1921. . . Exciting, elusive runner. .Played and sometimes coached four different teams in NFL career.	
Uniform Number: #1 (also wore #11 briefly during his career)	

In 1928, Pollard organized and coached the Chicago Black Hawks, an all-African American professional team based in the Windy City. Pollard's Black Hawks played against white teams around Chicago, but enjoyed their greatest success by scheduling exhibition games against West Coast teams during the winter months. From 1929 until 1932 when the Depression caused the team to fold, the Black Hawks had become one of the more popular teams on the West Coast.

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