

**Vol. 29,  
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*Tony* **LATONE**

## PFRA-ternizing

*Last month we received this sad news from Glenda, wife of Bob Braunwart, one of the original founders of PFRA.*

Robert Braunwart passed away on October 14 at the age of 59 in Los Angeles. He had been living in Oaxaca, Mexico, for 15 years prior to returning to the US for medical treatment in 2006. His death from a rare form of melanoma followed a long and unsuccessful battle with a Blue Shield HMO, whose doctors refused to authorize treatment by a melanoma specialist. A profit-driven HMO system and incompetent oncologists denied Robert a chance to fight his disease. Authorization denials and deliberate delaying tactics by the HMO group resulted in his dying without receiving the treatment recommended by two melanoma specialists in second opinions.



Robert grew up in Moses Lake, Washington, and attended Reed College as a National Merit Scholar before transferring to the University of Washington. During his life, Robert worked as an administrative assistant, editor, small business owner, and online math tutor, but his major interests and activities centered on political activities and a variety of personal projects, ranging from cofounding the Professional Football

Researchers Association to contributing hundreds of articles to Wikipedia, primarily on the viceroys of New Spain. While living in Oaxaca, Robert took an active interest in helping children from needy families continue their education through friendship, encouragement, tutoring, and financial assistance.

Throughout his life, Robert had a major influence on the people close to him by encouraging intellectual development and political awareness. He urged people to become informed and involved and to keep up the fight for a better, more just world. Robert will be missed by those he left behind in many ways, but he will continue to live in their memories as an inspiration to fight complacency and make a difference.

Robert is survived by his mother, Dorothy; his wife, Glenda Gartman; his daughter, Monica Gartman; his stepson, Sam Taylor, Jr; four granddaughters, Tia, Jordan, Amber and Sadie; and three brothers, Kurt, Eric, and Tod. He was preceded in death by his first wife, Carol Bays, and his son, Kevin. Memorial services will be held later in Seattle. Robert would have wanted any gifts in his memory to be given to environmental protection organizations or the American Civil Liberties Union.

## THE COFFIN CORNER

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**DON'T FORGET TO RENEW FOR 2008.**

# RED EQUALS GREEN

## THE UNUSUAL 1925 SEASON

By Bob Carroll

In Joe Carr's Master Plan, the National Football League would rid itself of lesser municipalities like Evansville, Hammond, Green Bay, even his own Columbus, and play exclusively in the nation's largest cities. He'd gained a Philadelphia team in 1924 (although Frankford actually played in a suburb). Chicago had the Bears and Cardinals. Cleveland was the league champ. It was time to get serious about New York.

The situation had improved in Gotham. A new law on the books made it legal to play pro football on Sundays. Carr approached promoter Billy Gibson, who'd had a stake in the 1921 Brickley Giants. Gibson wasn't interested in going it alone, but he knew someone who was, and he sent Carr to see Tim Mara, a New York bookmaker. Bookmaking was a legal and honorable profession at the time, so that was no problem. Neither was the money; Mara was a very successful bookmaker. The problem was that Mara knew as much about football as he knew about Tierra del Fuego.

Nevertheless, as Mara said, "An exclusive franchise to ANYTHING in New York is certainly worth \$500."

Actually, he said something like that. Historians have haggled ever since over whether he said "worth \$500" -- the price of a franchise in 1925 -- or "worth \$2,500" -- the franchise plus the guarantee. The argument is pointless. Mara knew what it was going to cost him. What appealed to him was the exclusivity. That's what he paid for, and that was what he would go to the wall for during the next couple of years.

To ease Tim Mara's transition into a football magnate, Billy Gibson came aboard for a while until Mara bought him out a few years later. To run his new New York Giants, Mara hired as club president Dr. Harry A. March, who was supposed to know everything about football since he had ministered to the hurts of the old Canton Bulldogs back in 1905-06. This is the same man whose

book, Pro Football: Its "Ups" and "Downs", published in 1934, did so much to mislead future historians about the history of the game.

Another new team of significance joined the NFL in 1925, the Pottsville Maroons from the Pennsylvania coal fields. The Maroons (with Wilbur Henry in the lineup) had been a strong independent in '24 and figured to win some games in '25. Their main appeal to the other NFL owners, however, was their close proximity to Philadelphia. NFL teams planned to get two games in for the same traveling expenses by playing in Frankford on Saturday and moving up to Pottsville for a Sunday game.

Still another northeastern team, the Providence Steam Roller, came into the league in 1925. The Rollers had played independently since 1915 and were better prepared for the NFL than any team in Boston, a city Carr might have preferred.

Carr also brought Detroit back into the league under the management of Jimmy Conzelman. Although it was never stated officially, Conzelman apparently got a free ride on the guarantee fee and did not even have to put up the \$500 franchise fee.

Something similar was done about Canton. The home of the original Bulldogs was not on Carr's "must" list, but it had sentimental support as well as some very vocal fans. A new team was set up to be run by some of the old Bulldog players. Wilbur Henry and Harry Robb came back from Pennsylvania, and Sam Deutsch let "Link" Lyman and a couple of others out of Cleveland. The result was that the 1925 season saw two "Bulldogs" teams in the NFL, one in Canton and one in Cleveland, neither strong enough to contend for the title. It might have been different if either had retained Guy Chamberlin, the coach with the golden touch, but he had been hired to lead the Yellow Jackets of Frankford.

**THE TITLE RACE**

Later events dwarfed individual achievements by some veteran pros in 1925. For example ...

September 26: Frankford's Ernie Hamer scored four touchdowns in a 27-7 victory over Buffalo at Philadelphia. Three of the TD's came on short runs from scrimmage, but the fourth was on a 75-yard return of an intercepted pass.

September 27: Phil White of Kansas City booted a 50-yard placement for the only points in a 3-0 win at Duluth.

October 11: "Paddy" Driscoll collected four field goals -- one reported as 50 yards -- to lift the Cardinals to a 19-9 victory over Columbus at Chicago. George Rohleder of the Tigers kicked three field goals for his team's points.

Also October 11: "Cy" Wentworth of Providence returned a kickoff 92 yards for a touchdown, as the Steam Roller humbled the visiting New York Giants, 14-0.

October 18; At Chicago, Driscoll broke away for an 80-yard TD run from scrimmage to seal a 20-7 Cardinal victory over Kansas City.

October 31: Tackle "Bull" Behman of the Yellow Jackets scored touchdowns on a blocked punt and an intercepted pass to help Frankford top Columbus 19-0 at Philadelphia.

November 22: The Steam Roller's Tony Golembeski returned a fumble 96 yards for a TD against Frankford, as Providence pleased its home fans with a 20-7 win.

November 26: All-NFL End Charlie Berry of Pottsville scored 25 points as the Maroons shut out Green Bay, 31-0, at Minersville Park.

November 29: The Maroons' "Hoot" Flanagan took a pass interception 90 yards for one of the touchdowns in Pottsville's 49-0 thrashing of the Yellow Jackets.

The 1925 title race was the best yet. Conzelman mounted a serious challenge from Detroit with a team long on defense. The Panthers, this year's Detroit cats, shut out eight of their 12 opponents. Guy Chamberlin, in charge at Frankford, had the Yellow Jackets in the race until late November

when the strain of playing two games every weekend did them in.

Both Chicago teams contended until the Bears got sidetracked with a more important issue. By December the surprising Cardinals had only one loss and it looked like "Paddy" Driscoll's weekly Herculean efforts might finally pay off in a championship for Chris O'Brien. All they had to do was get past the guys from the coal country, Pottsville.

The Maroons featured end Charlie Berry, a former All-America at Lafayette and future major league player and umpire. They'd built a line out of "Duke" Osborn, the erstwhile Canton Bulldog guard, and the Stein brothers, Russ who'd earned All-America credit as a Pitt tackle and Herb who'd gained similar plaudits as a W. & J. center. The backfield had one "name" player in Walter French, who'd starred for Army, but the main ground gainers were relative unknowns, "Barney" Wentz and Tony Latone. Wentz, out of Penn State, was a fullback with breakaway speed. Latone, who'd never seen the inside of a college classroom, proved one of the most irresistible line smashers in pro history.

Latone went to work in the mines at age 11 when his father died. He developed tremendous leg strength from pushing coal shuttle cars up slopes. Football, which he began playing with local semi-pro teams, was his way out of the mines.

Understandably, Tony lacked sophistication. He always took his pay in cash, which was not unusual among players at the time, but his teammates were shocked when they found his wallet lying on the bench one day at practice. All his money was in it. They urged him to get a checking account. Tony didn't quite trust or understand checks, but he finally gave in to peer pressure. A week later, his mates found his checkbook on the bench. All the checks were already signed!

**THE CHAMPIONSHIP GAME THAT WASN'T**

Chicago newspapers trumpeted the December 6 meeting between the Cardinals and the Maroons at Comiskey Park as "for the championship," ignoring the fact that the season would still have two weeks to go after the game. No doubt they were encouraged in this by Chris O'Brien whose ledgers were as red as his team's jerseys. A larger crowd would turn out for a "championship

game." After all, it seemed like only a white lie; the winner of the contest would undoubtedly end up in front on December 20 when the season ended. At least, everyone assumed that's how it would be.

The Maroons handled the Cardinals with surprising ease. Pottsville quarterback Jack Ernst ran a second quarter punt back to the Cardinal five, and Barney Wentz bulled over for a touchdown. Then Walter French reeled off a matched set of 30-yard runs, the second for another Maroon TD. The Cardinals passed for a touchdown just before halftime, but the Maroons throttled them in the second half. French had several more long runs and Wentz plunged for his second touchdown.

Cued by the pre-game publicity, many newspapers around the country stated flatly that the Maroons had won the championship with their 21-7 victory. Those headlines proved as premature as "Dewey Defeats Truman."

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF SEEING RED

The winner of the championship race was not uppermost in the minds of most pro football fans as 1925 drew to its close. The hottest color wasn't Maroon or Cardinal; it was Red, as in Grange.

In his third season of racing across football fields for the University of Illinois, Harold "Red" Grange had achieved the same mythic stature as "Babe" Ruth, Jack Dempsey, and a very few other sports heroes of the the 1920's. Certainly, he was the most idolized football player. For many, he WAS football.

His deeds at Illinois were the stuff of legends. He made his varsity debut at Illinois in 1923 with a three-touchdown, 208-yard performance against Nebraska. He had a 92-yard run against Northwestern and a 60-yarder against Chicago. His junior year was even better. Against Michigan in 1924, he took the opening kickoff back 95 yards for a TD and ran for three more scores of 67, 56, and 44 yards within the first twelve minutes of the game. He zinged Iowa for 94 and 80 yards, Chicago for 94. He was a sureshot third-time All-America in 1925, but he cemented it with a brilliant, three touchdown performance against Penn. In addition to his marvelous talent for transporting footballs, he was the classic American hero: a handsome, modest, soft-spoken

young man from a working class background. He'd delivered ice from a horse-drawn wagon to help pay his way through college.

But as the 1925 season wore on, fans began to face the prospect that their hero would turn pro. Most football fans were college football fans. Pro football to many was anathema. Rumors multiplied. One had Grange touring with Notre Dame's Four Horseman. Another had him signing with Mara's New York Giants. The Chicago Bears. These were the Front Page days of newspaper "scoops" when Get It First often outranked Get It Right. Grange and anyone else who might have inside information was deluged with reporters. Had he received money yet? How much?

The man who'd tabbed Grange "The Galloping Ghost," Warren Brown of the Chicago Tribune had it almost right. The redhead, he said, had signed with a theater owner named C.C. (Charley) Pyle. Brown cautioned: "People who know C.C. Pyle claim the initials stand for Cash and Carry. Mr. Grange is hereby forewarned." Grange hadn't signed with anyone. He had, however, agreed to let Pyle represent him and shook hands on it. For Grange, a handshake was as good as a signed contract. Despite Pyle's rapacious reputation, Grange always claimed: "Charley was as honest as the day is long. I got every cent I ever had coming to me ... and I got most of them because of him."

In Myron Cope's The Game That Was, Grange discussed C.C. Pyle:

Charley Pyle was about forty-four years old when I met him. He was the most dapper man I have ever seen. He went to the barbershop every day of his life. He had a little moustache that he'd have trimmed, and he would have a manicure and he'd have his hair trimmed up a little, and every day he would get a rubdown. He was the greatest clotheshorse you ever saw. All his clothes were tailor-made. His suits cost a hundred or two hundred dollars, which was a lot of money in the 1920s. He wore a derby and spats and carried a cane, and believe me, he was a handsome guy. The greatest ladies' man that ever lived. The girls loved him.

Money was of no consequence to Charley. I would say that at the time I met

him, he had made pretty near a million dollars and lost it.

Meanwhile, as Illinois' season approached its end, Grange was besieged with appeals to remain an amateur. Or, if he'd already signed a contract, do the honorable thing and back out of it. Fans sent letters and telegrams. Newspapers editorialized. The Chicago News said, "He is a living legend now. Why sully it?" Michigan's coach, Fielding "Hurry Up" Yost told reporters, "I'd be glad to see Grange do anything else except play professional football." Indeed, Grange had book, movie and vaudeville offers that would have paid him well.

Grange's Illinois coach, Bob Zuppke, told him, "Football just isn't a game to be played for money."

"You get paid for coaching, Zup. Why should it be wrong for me to get paid for playing?"

Westbrook Pegler of the Chicago Tribune made his reputation with opinions oft' dipped in acid. This time, he was the voice of reason: "To be an imitation writer or a fake movie actor would surely be less virtuous than becoming a real football player."

Grange completed his college career by gaining 192 yards against Ohio State at Columbus on the Saturday before Thanksgiving. After the game, he told reporters: "I intend to sign an agreement to play for the Chicago Bears. I have nothing to say right now."

He took a train to Chicago where Pyle had already worked out the agreement with Bear co-owners, George Halas and "Dutch" Sternaman. Grange had never met Halas or Sternaman before. On Sunday, he sat on the Chicago bench in street clothes and watched the Bears trounce Green Bay, 21-0. At halftime, 3,000 fans stormed the field to get close to Grange and the police were called. The next morning, the contract was signed.

Harry McNamara explained what Grange had agreed to in the Chicago Examiner:

Mr. Charles Pyle has done the very best he could to keep Harold ('Red') Grange busy during the interval between Thursday [November 26] and December 13. ('Red') and his supporting cast, the Chicago Bears, will be asked to do

something that probably has never been attempted by an individual player or team previously.

Pyle has succeeded in scheduling a total of 10 games in 18 days, which is a pretty fair achievement for a young manager. While going about the country playing the schedule Pyle has mapped out and 'getting the money while the getting is good,' Grange and his team will travel approximately 3,000 miles around the East....

There are rumors than another, longer tour will follow.

Grange and Pyle reportedly received 50% of the tour receipts. The other Bear players were paid their regular game rate of \$100-\$200.

They opened at Wrigley Field in Chicago against the Cardinals on Thanksgiving Day. Chris O'Brien could have had a percentage of the attendance, but he decided not to risk a loss and took his normal visitor's guarantee instead. 20,000 tickets went on sale on Wednesday, more than had ever been sold for a pro football game in Chicago. They were gone in three hours. A snowstorm hit Chicago on Thursday. No matter. By game time, 36,000 -- the largest crowd ever to see a pro football game anywhere -- packed Wrigley Field to see Grange.

The Cardinals held Grange to only 36 yards, and "Paddy" Driscoll kept him from any long punt returns by kicking away from him. At one point, Driscoll, the most popular player ever in Chicago, heard the crowd booing and remarked that it was a shame the crowd had turned against Grange. "They're booing you," he was told. The final score was 0-0.

It was still snowing Sunday, but 28,000 turned out at Wrigley to watch Grange against Columbus. This time he ran for 140 yards and passed for a touchdown as the Bears won. On Wednesday, the Grange-Bears played a pick-up team in St. Louis before only 8,000 as the snow continued and the temperature dropped to 12 degrees. On Saturday, a rainstorm hit Philadelphia, but 35,000 came out to watch Grange score both touchdowns in a 14-0 win over Frankford.

After a night train to New York, the Grange-Bears took the field at the Polo Grounds for their fifth game in ten days. The Bears won 19-7, with Grange scoring the final TD on a pass

interception, but the game score wasn't important. The huge crowd was -- 65,000 paid and perhaps 8,000 gate crashers! Tim Mara's Giants had been running at a loss. The Grange game put them in the black for the season. Grange's personal share for the tour went up to \$50,000. Yet even the money figures paled in significance to the interest aroused. Among the watchers were 125 reporters. Only five years earlier in Chicago, Halas had begged newspapers to cover Staley games and often had to write game accounts himself just to get them on the sports page. More than any event up to that time, the crowd in New York made pro football an important sport.

### GHOST SEEKERS

In the long view, Grange's arrival on the scene changed pro football forever. More immediately, it changed the 1925 NFL championship race. On the same day the Grange-Bears played in New York -- December 6 -- the Maroons and Cardinals played their "championship game" in Chicago. That the Maroon win seemed to kayo Chris O'Brien's title hopes was not cataclysmic to the Cardinal owner. He'd never come very close before. Much more disastrous was his ill-conceived decision to take the guarantee instead of a percentage for the Thanksgiving Day game with the Bears and Grange. As a consequence, his near-championship team was still losing money.

O'Brien reasoned he could snatch solvency from the jaws of bankruptcy by convincing the Bears and Grange to play one more game with his Cardinals. The last day of the season, December 20, when Grange's present tour would be completed, would make an ideal date. However, he needed a gimmick -- something to convince Halas, Sternaman, Pyle, and Grange that another meeting with his Cardinals was fiscally desirable. The perfect device would be to have his team in first place. And he knew how to accomplish that. George Halas had shown him how.

Just as Halas had outflanked Buffalo in 1921 and tried to outmaneuver Cleveland in '24, O'Brien set out to schedule extra games to move his percentage ahead of Pottsville's. The tactic hadn't worked for Halas the year before because of the early closing date for the season, but O'Brien had two weeks to go before the official end of the '25 race on December 20.

He quickly arranged two games for the next week -- on Thursday against Milwaukee and on Saturday against Hammond. Both teams had disbanded for the year. Milwaukee, owned by Chicagoan Ambrose McGuirk, had trouble getting a lineup together, and O'Brien, sensing a mismatch, didn't even charge attendance to the scattered few who turned up for the Thursday morning game. The Cardinals laughed through a 59-0 farce. Paddy Driscoll didn't bother to play. On Saturday, the Cards whipped a more respectable Hammond crew, 13-0.

As ugly as the Cardinals-Milwaukee game was, it had a greater bearing on NFL history than a thousand close ones. Ambrose McGuirk, the Milwaukee owner, lived in Chicago which put him at a disadvantage in getting his team back together to play the Cardinals. Art Folz, a Cardinal sub, gave him a hand by producing four willing bodies to stuff into Milwaukee jerseys. The only problem was that all four were students at a local Chicago high school.

A few weeks later, when Joe Carr learned high school players had been used, he told reporters the game would be stricken from the record. That was his intention, but the owners became embroiled in more important matters at the next league meeting and never got around to acting on the game. It's still on the books.

However, Carr's other actions took. He fined Chris O'Brien \$1,000 for letting his team play a game against high schoolers even if, as O'Brien claimed, he was unaware of their status. Art Folz was banned from the NFL for life. Ambrose McGuirk was ordered to sell his team within 90 days.

By the summer of 1926, facing the challenge of the American Football League, Carr and the league were in a more charitable mood. The fine against O'Brien was rescinded -- \$1,000 would have put him out of business. Folz's lifetime suspension was also dropped, apparently to keep him from joining the new league. He chose not to play football for anyone. McGuirk had by then sold his team to a group that included erstwhile Chicago Bear halfback Johnny "Red" Bryan.

Ironically, the two games that O'Brien had scheduled only to inflate his team's winning percentage turned out to be unnecessary because of events that took place in the east on the same day the Cards beat Hammond.

### **POTTSVILLE AND THE IRISH**

Next to "Red" Grange, the most recognizable name in 1925 football was Notre Dame. And of all the Fighting Irish, the most fabulous entity was "The Four Horseman," the phenomenal backfield that had led Notre Dame to an undefeated season and Rose Bowl victory in 1924.

In mid-November, an enterprising promoter arranged for an all-star team of Notre Dame graduates, including all four "Horsemen," to play the top eastern pro team at Philadelphia's Shibe Park on December 12. Although most observers expected the top team in the east to be Guy Chamberlin's Frankford Yellow Jackets, the Pottsville Maroons were still in the running, so the teams agreed that the one with the better record in December would oppose the Irish stars. On November 28, Frankford lost a tough game to Green Bay. The next day they went to Pottsville's Minersville Park and were blitzed, 49-0. That, followed by Pottsville's win against the Cardinals the next week, put the Maroons in line to meet the Notre Dame All-Stars.

Games against non-league opponents had to be cleared by Joe Carr. The Pottsville owner later said he'd telephoned the league office and got permission, but he didn't talk to Carr, who was in the hospital. The first Carr heard of the game was when he received a protest from the Frankford team that Pottsville planned to play a game in Philadelphia, the Jackets' franchised territory. The Jackets were obviously being spoiled. They'd expected to play the potentially lucrative game against the All-Stars, and when they lost their chance, they'd decided to block Pottsville. To shore up their protest, Frankford quickly scheduled a game with Cleveland on the 12th opposite the Notre Dame Stars-Pottsville game.

Carr may not have thought Frankford's protest was very neighborly, but it was certainly valid. If Pottsville could play in Shibe Park on its own volition, there was nothing to stop the Chicago Bears from playing in Yankee Stadium. Three times during the week he ordered Pottsville not to play or they would be suspended. The Pottsville owner, Dr. J.G. Striegel, balanced all the money he hoped to make from a game with the Four Horseman against his league membership and voted Irish.

On Saturday, December 12, Pottsville defeated the Notre Dame All-Stars, 9-6, on a Charlie Berry field goal before a disappointing crowd of only 8,000, about the same as the Yellow Jackets drew at Frankford Stadium against Cleveland. Right after the game, Dr. Striegel received a telegram from Joe Carr instructing him that the Maroons had been fined \$500, suspended from all NFL rights and privileges, and had their franchise forfeited to the league. The Maroons were not allowed to play a game scheduled at Providence the next day. Frankford went instead. There were still eight days to go in the season, but Pottsville was no longer eligible to win the title. Since no other team was in a position to catch the Cardinals, the race was over.

### **THE POTTSVILLE VERSION**

In the 1930's, Pottsville newspaperman Walter Farquhar began writing about the "stolen championship of 1925." With a cavalier disregard for dates and facts, he told the story this way: The Pottsville-Cardinal game on December 6 was OFFICIALLY for the championship. Pottsville RECEIVED PERMISSION to play the Notre Dame All-Stars, the regular season being OVER. AFTER Pottsville defeated the Notre Dame All-Stars, Frankford protested even though the Yellow Jackets had DISBANDED. Joe Carr upheld the TOTALLY WORTHLESS protest. To "fix up" the standings, JOE CARR ORDERED Chris O'Brien to play TWO ILLEGAL games AFTER the season's end, then counted them in the Cardinals' record to move them ahead of Pottsville in the standings.

Although not one of these statements was accurate, Farquhar was widely believed. In the next decades, several articles authored by well-known sports writers appeared in national publications retelling Farquhar's version of the "stolen championship." A gaggle of longtime Pottsville residents "remembered" the events just the way Farquhar told it. In 1962, some of those residents petitioned the NFL to "correct" the 1925 standings and award Pottsville the title. The petition was rejected.

In 1981, a committee under the leadership of Joseph Horrigan, Historian of the Pro Football Hall of Fame, investigated the Pottsville claim, using league minutes and 1925 newspaper accounts from other league cities. The committee's published judgment was that Pottsville's claims had no merit. In 1986-87, Doug

Costello, editor of the Pottsville Republican, took a further look, using the same material as the earlier committee plus a great number of additional contemporary sources. His conclusion, which he courageously published in the Republican, supported the findings of the Horrigan Committee.

As various parts of the original Farquar fantasy have been refuted, the Pottsville loyalists have adjusted their story. Recently, they've asked for a co-championship with the Cardinals. To its credit the NFL continues to stand with historical truth.

### **O'BRIEN'S PLOT IS ALL FOR NAUGHT**

Although Chris O'Brien had his championship, he did not have what he had really wanted -- another game with the Grange-Bears. During the same week that Carr had been telegraphing Pottsville, the Grange tour began to stumble. The redhead and the rest of the Bears were bone tired when they played a non-league team in Washington on Tuesday.

While in Washington, Grange and Halas were taken to meet the President by Illinois Senator William Brown McKinley. Unlike many later Presidents, Calvin Coolidge was not a sports fan.

Senator McKinley: "Mr. President, this is Mr. Red Grange and Mr. George Halas with the Chicago Bears."

Coolidge: "Glad to meet you young gentlemen. I always did like animal acts."

The Grange-Bears took an overnight train to Boston where they lost to the Providence Steam Roller on Wednesday. Grange gained only 18 yards and was booed by the crowd of 25,000. Ford Frick, the newsman who later became baseball commissioner, was accompanying the expedition. He wrote: "The strain of this tour is starting to show on Grange. He is tremendously human, in his quiet, shy way, and just a little bit nervous and bored by the laudations which suddenly have come his way. And the pace has begun to tell. Deep lines showed about Red's face today ...."

On Thursday, the game was in Pittsburgh against a team of locals. Grange was kicked in the arm, tore a muscle, and a bloodclot began to form. By Saturday, he couldn't play at all in a game in Detroit. More than 20,000 fans requested

refunds, and only 6,000 watched the game. He played only a few minutes on Sunday -- and that against his doctor's advice -- as the tour ended at home to Chicago against the Giants. The crowd of 18,000 cheered him anyway, but the exhausted Bears lost their fourth straight.

Grange and the Bears, it was announced, would take eight days off to rest and heal their wounds before leaving on another tour that would take them to Florida and California. Pyle and Grange had made \$150,000 with more to come.

### **WINNERS AND LOSERS**

Halas and Sternaman were in the chips. Mara and several other owners had made money. Even the weary regular Bear players had earned extra money as spear carriers. One historian has written that tackle Ed Healey's magnificent performance on the tours was what eventually gained him a place in the Pro Football Hall of Fame, although this seems an exaggeration. Healey was a regular member of the mythical all-pro teams throughout his career.

In a larger sense, Joe Carr had been the biggest winner of all in 1925. He had a solid New York team in his league. Because of Grange, the NFL had become a presence on the nation's sports pages, and pro football became less disreputable when the Redhead didn't grow horns. He'd handled the Pottville challenge with dispatch, strengthening the all the league's franchises by protecting Frankford's.

The season's losers were Pottsville, which had lost a championship they thought they'd won and a franchise they thought they owned, and Chris O'Brien, who'd won a championship but lost the one game he most needed.

As if the championship race of 1925 wasn't confused already, Chris O'Brien added one more twist. At the league meeting, just as the owners were about to vote the championship to the Cardinals, O'Brien announced (through an intermediary) that he could not accept a title his team hadn't won on the field. Whether he meant Pottsville deserved the championship, referred to his "lost" Grange game, or possibly felt guilty about the Milwaukee game was never made clear. But in the confusion, the league apparently never got around to actually voting any team the championship. The technicality really was meaningless. The Cardinals were champs under

the best-percentage rules set up by the league, and league standings for 1925, however flawed, have always listed the Cards on top. Furthermore, O'Brien could refuse to accept a trophy but not the title. Today's Cardinals, now in Phoenix after 28 years in St. Louis, consider the 1925 bunch as their first championship team.

Grange rested his arm until December 19, when the Bears entrained for Florida to begin the second tour. The injury was reported to have cost him, Pyle, and the Bears \$75,000. The second tour, which began on Christmas Day in Coral Gables, Florida, and ended on January 31 in Seattle, Washington, was comparatively leisurely, with most of the games played back-to-back on weekends.

Among the various "All-Star" opponents was Ernie Nevers, the Stanford All-America fullback, who reportedly signed with Jacksonville promoters for \$50,000 ("Nevers Does `Grange,' headlined one paper. George "Wildcat" Wilson, Washington's All-America halfback., opposed the Grange-Bears on the West Coast.

**1925 NFL STANDINGS**

Team	W	L	T	PCT.	PTS-	OPP
Chicago Cardinals	11	2	1	.846	230-	65
*Pottsville Maroons	10	2	0	.833	270-	45
Detroit Panthers	8	2	2	.800	129-	39
New York Giants	8	4	0	.667	122-	67
Akron Pros	4	2	2	.667	65-	51
Frankford Yellow Jackets	13	7	0	.650	190-	169
Chicago Bears	9	5	3	.643	158-	96
Rock Island Independents	5	3	3	.625	99-	58
Green Bay Packers	8	5	0	.615	151-	110
Providence Steam Roller	6	5	1	.545	111-	101
Canton Bulldogs	4	4	0	.500	50-	73
Cleveland Bulldogs	5	8	1	.385	75-	135
Kansas City Cowboys	2	5	1	.286	65-	97
Hammond Pros	1	4	0	.200	23-	87
Buffalo Bisons	1	6	2	.143	33-	113
Duluth Kelleys	0	3	0	.000	6-	25
Rochester Jeffersons	0	6	1	.000	26-	111
Milwaukee Badgers	0	6	0	.000	7-	191
Dayton Triangles	0	7	1	.000	3-	84
Columbus Tigers	0	9	0	.000	28-	124

\* - Suspended from league, Dec. 12.

**THE GRANGE TOURS**

**THE FIRST TOUR, November 26 to December 13**

DAY	DATE	AT	OPPONENT	SCORE	ATT.**
Thu	N-26	H	*Chicago Cardinals	0- 0	39,000

Sun	N-29	H	*Columbus Tigers	14-13	28,000
Wed	D- 2	A	St. Louis	39- 6	8,000
Sat	D- 5	A	*Frankford Y-Jackets	14- 0	23,000
Sun	D- 6	A	*New York Giants	19- 7	68,000
Tue	D- 8	A	Washington	19- 0	7,000
Wed	D- 9	A	*Prov. Steam Roller (at Boston)	6- 9	15,000
Thu	D-10	A	Pittsburgh	0-24	6,000
Sat	D-12	A	*Detroit Panthers	0-21	5,000
Sun	D-13	H	*New York Giants	0- 9	18,000

\* - Game counted in official NFL standings

**THE SECOND TOUR, December 25 to January 31**

DAY	DATE	AT	OPPONENT	SCORE	ATT.**
Fri	D-25	A	Florida Collegians (at Coral Gables, FL)	7- 3	8,200
Fri	J- 1	A	Tampa Cardinals	17- 3	8,000
Sat	J- 2	A	Jacksonville Stars	19- 6	6,700
Sun	J-10	A	New Orleans Stars	14- 0	6,000
Sat	J-16	A	Los Angeles Tigers	17- 7	70,000
Sun	J-17	A	California All-Stars (at San Diego, CA)	14- 0	10,000
Sun	J-24	A	San Francisco Tigers	9-14	23,000
Sat	J-30	A	Portland All-Stars	60- 3	6,500
Sun	J-31	A	Northwest All-Stars (at Seattle, WA)	34- 0	5,000

# - Total attendance for final four games reported as 65,000.

\*\* - Attendance figures taken from newspaper accounts differ greatly and are often inflated. The figures here are from the Pro Football Archives.

**ADDENDUM**

Apparently, in an effort to hype its publication of *The Breaker Boys*, ESPN's version of the Pottsville story, the sports network set up a website where readers could add their names to a petition asking the NFL to overturn a decision made 82 years ago. Since most of the readers probably had little knowledge of the story except what ESPN had deigned to tell them, the number of names quickly mounted. No doubt there were a number of signees named Mike Hunt, Dick Hertz, and I. P. Daley, and one wonders how many names they could have gotten to urge overturning the result of Super Bowl V.

The last time the NFL changed one of its championships as a result of a petition was – uh – we'll get back to you on that..



# THE REDHEAD



# Monte Clark

By Roger Gordon

Originally published in the Orange and Brown Report

When Monte Clark injured his neck in 1961 while playing defensive tackle for the San Francisco 49ers, gloomy thoughts ran through his head.

“I hit some guy head on,” he remembers, “and it didn’t feel right when it happened. I knew something was wrong.”

Clark ruptured a disc.

“I didn’t think I was going to be able to play anymore,” he said.

After the season, he was traded to the Dallas Cowboys.

“I said to the 49ers when they traded me, ‘You know as well as I do the first time I hit someone, I’m gonna be in the hospital again.’”

Doctors didn’t tell Clark he should play. They didn’t tell him he shouldn’t, either. So he toughed it out because he loved playing the game.

“I was nervous playing with the injury,” he says, “but I wanted to continue to play, so I just learned to gut it up. I learned to live with it and played another eight years. Every play I thought could be my last.”

The injury persists to this day for Clark, who had spent three years in San Francisco after being drafted in the fourth round by the 49ers in 1959 out of the University of Southern California. He spent just one season in Dallas, where the Cowboys switched Clark to offensive tackle, a position he had played sparingly in the Bay, due to the injury.

“Basically,” he recalls, “they thought I’d be able to control how I’m hitting (on offense). But the irony of it is, I was a head-butter, and that was how I had to survive. I couldn’t go change my style because my neck was hurtin’.”

The Cowboys traded Clark to the Cleveland Browns for fellow offensive lineman Jim Ray Smith in 1963. Clark was aware of the Browns’ storied tradition – somewhat.

“Not as much as I became aware later,” he says.

It was a case of culture shock for Clark.

“The Cowboys were only three years in existence,” he says. “We won more games my first season with the Browns than the Cowboys had won in their entire existence.”

Upon arriving at Hiram College in the summer of 1963 for his initial training camp with the Browns, Clark felt he needed to prove himself to his new teammates. His thoughts at the time: “Alright, here I am, I’m comin’ to a new team, they don’t know me, I don’t know them, and they *have* to be wonderin’, ‘Who is this guy Monte Clark we got? Is he gonna help us? What’s he gonna do? Is he a guy we can count on? Is he a winner?’” Those were the questions Clark wanted to answer – on the field of play.

And he did.

Clark was a solid player for the Browns for seven seasons through 1969, starting every game in which he wasn’t injured. The highlight of his seven seasons on the lakefront was, of course, the 1964 NFL

Championship Game upset of the Baltimore Colts.

“That team had more maturity and quality people on it than any group of guys I’d ever seen,” Clark recalls. “We also had excellent coaching.”

Clark believes to this day that the massive snowstorm in Green Bay for the next year’s NFL title game denied the Browns a repeat.

“I think we lost that one on the bus,” he says. “When we woke up that morning, we were way out in Appleton and there was a lot of snow and traffic. So we got to the stadium late, real late. The game was about to start when we got there, so it was kind of a panic. Everything was off, out of whack.”

That Packers game happened to be the great Jim Brown’s last. Clark says it was a joy to block for someone with Brown’s talents and that he is the finest running back of all time.

“When the (offensive) line was installing the plays for the week,” Clark remembers, “Fritz Heisler, our (line) coach, used to say, ‘Alright now, the runner wants us to do this, and the runner wants us to do that,’ and nobody ever asked who he was speaking of. Everyone knew.”

Clark played in two more NFL title games, in 1968 and 1969. The Browns lost both, to the Colts and Vikings, respectively, both times denying them a Super Bowl berth. Those title-game defeats do not detract from the fondness with which Clark looks back on his Browns career.

“We were in the playoffs so many times when I was with Cleveland I lost count,” he says. “We had one of the better teams, and we won a heck of a lot of games.”

After his playing days, Clark was an assistant coach for the Miami Dolphins during their heyday from 1970-75 before becoming the 49ers’ head coach in 1976. The ‘Niners were stumbling and in the midst of a period the produced just one winning season in eight years – and that one season happened to be Clark’s 8-6 mark in ‘76.

After a year away from the game, Clark became the Detroit Lions’ head coach in 1978, a position he held for seven seasons. He directed the Lions to their first winning season in eight years in 1980 and to playoff berths in 1982 and 1983, the

second of which resulted in an unforgettable one-point defeat to his old team, the 49ers, in Candlestick Park when Lions kicker Eddie Murray barely missed a 43-yard field goal attempt as time expired. Prior to the kick, Clark prayed hard, hands hugging one another.

“When I’m asked about that I always say, ‘Oh, the prayer was answered, but the answer was ‘no,’” he says. “(49ers head coach) Bill Walsh told me after the game that he was over on the sideline thinking about what he was going to say to his team about the loss.”

After leaving the Lions, Clark returned to the assistant coaching ranks, in Miami again, at Stanford University under Walsh and at the University of California. He was pro personnel director for the Dolphins in a third stint in South Florida and also worked in radio for the University of Michigan and Michigan State University.

These days, the 70-year-old Clark is a consultant for the Lions, a position he has held for nearly a decade. He resides in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, just outside of Detroit, with his wife Charlotte. The couple will celebrate their Golden Anniversary in August. The Clarks have three sons, the oldest of whom, Bryan, played for the Cincinnati Bengals briefly, and eight grandchildren. In his spare time, Monte enjoys golfing and traveling. He also was an assistant coach under Shula for the East in the East-West Shrine Game in Houston on January 20.

Clark, a Browns fan to this day, will never forget his time spent on the lakefront. The fans, he declares, were the best there were.

“Those people,” he says, “were the most knowledgeable fans in America, and it was standing-room, 80,000 every week. I remember we won one on the road once, and there were like 20,000 people out at the airport when we came back.

“I’ve always been very proud of the organization. We considered ourselves the New York Yankees of football, and I just think the attitude, and the things I learned there, were responsible for a lot of my success in coaching. And I’ll always be grateful for such a fantastic, incredible group of guys.”

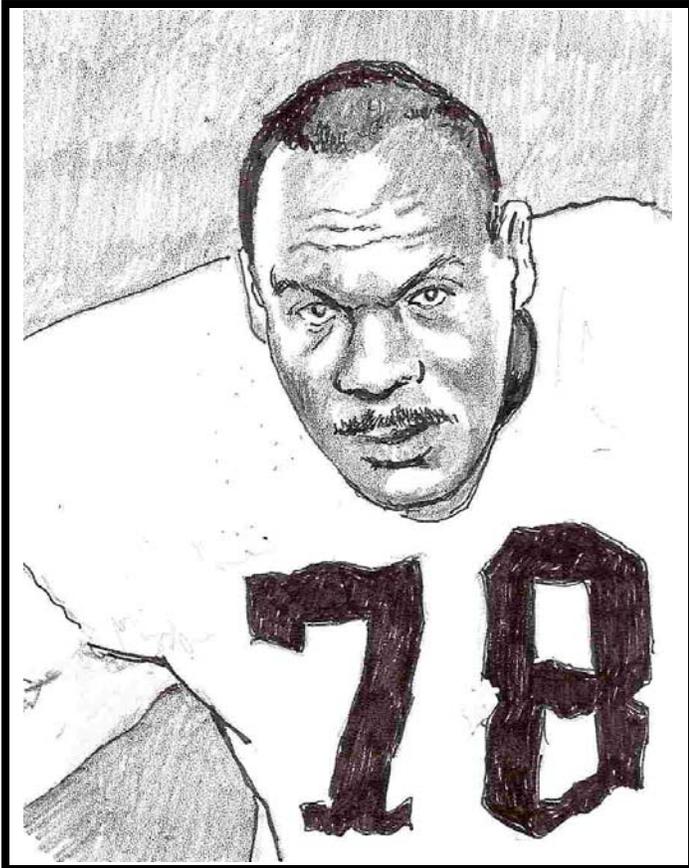
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# JOHN BAKER

**Former Steelers lineman known for famous photograph**

**June 30, 1935-Oct. 31, 2007**

By Chuck Finder, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Thursday, November 01, 2007



John Baker Jr. was recognized around his hometown of Raleigh, N.C., as the trail-blazing sheriff, but he was better known in sports as the Steeler who delivered the jarring hit that left quarterback Y.A. Tittle battered and bloodied in a famous Pittsburgh Post-Gazette photograph.

Mr. Baker died yesterday at his home in Raleigh of a lengthy undisclosed illness. He was 72.

Mr. Baker, nicknamed "Big John" for his 6-foot-7, 279-pound frame and possessed of a booming voice to match, spent 11 NFL seasons with the Los Angeles Rams, Philadelphia Eagles, Steelers and Detroit Lions from 1958 to 1968.

A photograph of a mustachioed No. 78, who played defensive end for the club from 1963 to 1967, graces the Steelers' all-time roster pages in this year's media guide.

Yet he was mostly acclaimed for that one freeze-frame in pro-football history. It was Sept. 20, 1964, at Pitt Stadium when Mr. Baker rushed through the New York Giants line and got to Mr. Tittle in the end zone just as the quarterback was passing.

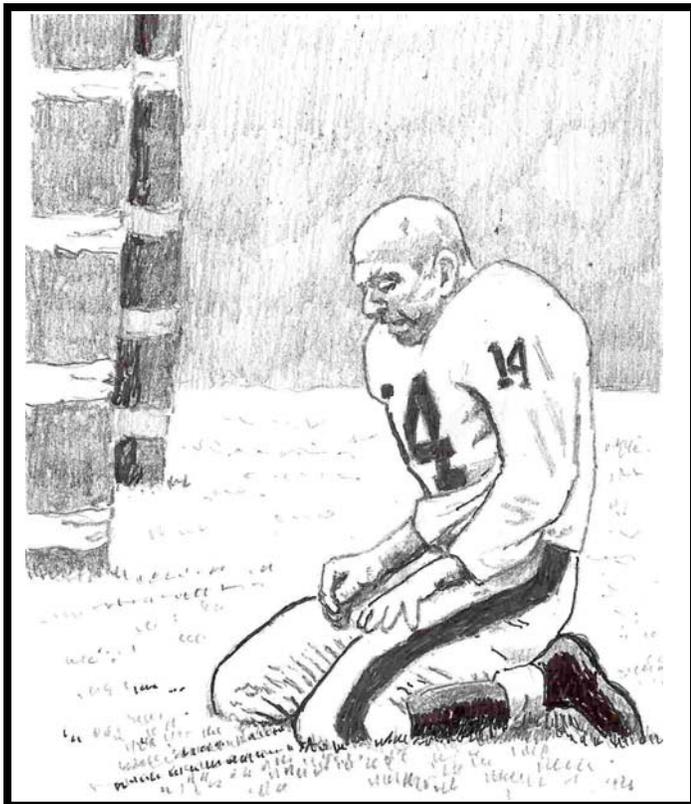
Fellow lineman Chuck Hinton intercepted the ball and returned it eight yards for the winning touchdown. Mr. Tittle, suffering from a concussion and bruised ribs, knelt in the end zone, helmetless and groggy, when Post-Gazette photographer Morris Berman captured the image. The photo didn't run in the newspaper at the time, but later won a national award, a place in the Pro Football Hall of Fame and consideration as a seminal piece of American sports photography.

That became Mr. Tittle's last game, too, as he soon retired.

"He's famous for that picture," former Steelers running back and assistant coach Dick Hoak said yesterday. "He hit him in the end zone ... knocked his helmet off.

"John was a pretty intelligent guy; he was a great player. But his big thing was rushing the passer. He was a big, tall guy who could get his hands up, and it was tough to see over him."

Mr. Baker was born in the Oberlin section of Raleigh. He graduated from Ligon High School and then from North Carolina Central University in 1958. He was drafted by the Los Angeles Rams in the fifth round in the 1958 draft. Though defensive statistics were sketchy in those days, before



sacks were counted, he retired from Detroit in 1968 with two career interceptions.

In NFL off-seasons, he worked as a youth counselor with the Raleigh police.

After retiring from pro football, he was the first black person appointed to the state Parole Board in North Carolina, where he served for eight years until he was elected sheriff in 1978, becoming the first black to hold that county office. He served Wake County for 24 years and, after former highway patrolman and friend Donnie Harrison beat him in the 2002 election and again in 2006, was still addressed as "Sheriff Baker" around Raleigh.

"He was a big man with a big heart. He had a tremendously big heart," Mr. Harrison said. "He really liked to reach out to the youth. He remembered back to his pro playing days, he wanted the youth to have something to hold onto. He would say, 'Look where I've been. You can do the same thing. You have to get out and work. And stay out of trouble.' "

"He was a giant, literally, as a public servant and community leader," North Carolina Gov. Mike Easley said in a statement.

Among other community work, Mr. Baker helped to raise \$27,000 in scholarship funds and founded the Sheriff John Baker Charter School for jailed offenders to continue their education.

His late father was Raleigh's first black police officer. They were inducted into the city's Hall of Fame last month, but Mr. Baker was too sick to attend after suffering a stroke earlier in the year.

Funeral arrangements are pending.

Staff writers Ed Bouchette and Bob Dvorchak and The Associated Press contributed to this report.

<b>JOHN BAKER</b>	<b>DE-DT-OT</b>
Baker, John Haywood Jr. (Big John)	6-6, 279
North Carolina Central	
HS: Washington [Raleigh, NC]; Ligon [Raleigh, NC]	
B: 6 / 10 / 1935, Raleigh, NC	
Drafted: 1958 Round 5 LARm	
1958 LARm 12	1962 Phi 7
1959 LARm 12	1963 Pit 14
1960 LARm 12	1964 Pit 14
1961 LARm 13	1965 Pit 14
	1966 Pit 7
	1967 Pit 13
	1968 Det 13
	Games 131

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# Pearce Johnson Interview

## Providence, June 13, 1988

By John Carroll

*In 1988, while preparing his book about Fritz Pollard, John Carroll interviewed PFRA member Pearce Johnson, the treasurer for the 1928 NFL champion Providence Steam Roller.*

**JC:** The coaching. What was the coach's role like in those days?

**PJ:** The difference between then and now is that then the coach could not coach from the sidelines. Not at all. He had to sit in one place. So really the captain really called the game. When he was out there he called the signals and ran the team. There was no signal calling from the coach. That was the really big difference.

**JC:** The coach could not roam the sidelines.

**PJ:** Yes, they could not roam the sidelines.

**JC:** I imagine it would help if you were a George Halas, that is if you were a playing coach. You might have got away with something.

**PJ:** There were intriguing ways of getting through to the qb what plays to call. The league tried to stop any information going from the coach to the quarterback because what they were doing was sending in a man to replace somebody and the referee was supposed to watch and see if the incoming player in anyway approached the quarterback. And there would be a penalty if he saw them talking.

**JC:** The coach had a more limited role then.

**PJ:** That's right.

**JC:** What did members of the Steam Roller make say from 1925 to the late twenties on the average?

**PJ:** You got your boys in 1925 for \$50, \$60, and \$75 a game. Then by the time we quit in about 1931 the top was in the \$500 class.

**JC:** Were there formal practices?

**PJ:** There were formal practices every day. Because one of the boys, Jack Cronin, was a coach at La Salle Academy. They practiced every morning, an hour and a half, two hours. But they did go every day. Except the Monday after the game.

**JC:** Didn't the players hold other jobs?

**PJ:** A lot of them besides Jack were local coaches. Most of them did not have a job. In this house here I had seven of them. My mother became a real mother to them.

**JC:** Were most of these players in that period local New England people or did you get them from all over?

**PJ:** All over the country. I think Jack, Jack's brother, and Curly Oden were the only three from around here.

**JC:** How did you get your players? There was no draft or anything. Did people just know people?

**PJ:** I was writing schoolboy sports for the Providence Journal and I concocted the idea of the Steam Roller. That was my idea solely. Mr. Coppin the sporting editor and the assistant and I were the only three people in the department. And I was only part-time after school. So I got the idea of having the Steam Roller team. And they went for it.

**JC:** I was asking about a draft, how you got these people to come in.

**PJ:** The Journal sent its copy of the Journal to all the other newspapers in the country. Then in turn the others sent a copy of their paper to the Journal. Each morning when we received them, they were put them into a stack. And every night I would go into that room and read the principal

papers where the big colleges were and make specific notes of the players and what they were doing. And a recap came at the end of the season when they picked all-conference, all-state, etc. This is where we got out players.

**JC:** So you were the 'chief scout and recruiter.

**PJ:** Yes. That was our scouting procedure.

**JC:** And then you just called these people up and asked if they wanted to play.

**PJ:** Yes.

**JC:** How about gate receipts?

**PJ:** They had very good gate receipts. They made money in the beginning. There is no question. But when the Depression came in the early 1930s that hurt badly.

**JC:** Now the Steam Roller played their games at the Roller Skating Rink?

**PJ:** No, in 1925 at the corner of Kingsley Ave. across from Nicholson Field they had a park. The American Soccer League wanted to put a franchise in there. So Mr. Laudati, one of the Steam Roller owners, built the stadium for the soccer with the idea that we would play football there too. That was before 1925, in 1923. Then in 1925, Laudati had the idea of building a Cycledrome. In the shape of an oval with 10,000 seats above a track on an incline. The lead cycle was called a pacer and on the rear wheel they had a roller. And the bicyclist would come up and hit that roller. And he was in an air pocket, and they would race around the half mile oval. That was the way in which the cycledrome was used. At the same time he had the idea of putting football in there. It was 8 and ten thousand every game.

**JC:** How much were the seats?

**PJ:** They were a dollar and a dollar and fifty cents.

**JC:** So that would cover your payroll pretty good.

**PJ:** Yes. We made a lot of money.

**JC:** That kind of information is hard to get at.

**PC:** Financially, the Depression was not the real

reason for having to quit. The real reason was the city of Providence condemned the Cycledrome. Then there was no place to play. The Cycledrome wasn't kept up. There were no dressing rooms you had to dress at the hotel. The home team could dress at the Cycledrome.

**JC:** Before 1925, the Steam Roller was playing in the New England League?

**PJ:** In 1916, we started. There was no league. We were never semi-pro. We paid. Entering the NFL was our first league.

**JC:** In the beginning did you ever get into problems of having to recruit college players who were still in college, like the NFL?

**PJ:** We did it. Everybody did it. Our first year, our last game we were playing Apponaug A.A. Then we were playing at Melrose's Park on Longfellow St. When we got out to the game, we didn't know what they had done, and they didn't know what we had done. There was an awful lot of money bet on the game. So we went out and hired 7 of the Syracuse players. Our captain was a former Syracuse man. Tufts and Syracuse were playing in Boston. That was there last game. Our own boys didn't know it. We held them in the clubhouse. Apponaug came in with 7 Tufts players. So we let everything go until the starting whistle and then the referee had to be let in on it. Before he actually blew the whistle we let the Syracuse players come out of the clubhouse and replaced the boys who were lined up.

**JC:** Was that still a practice by the mid-1920s and late 20s?

**PJ:** You couldn't do it in the league. No. Some tried it. George Halas tried it. He got fined. Green Bay lost its franchise. They had three Notre Dame boys.

**PJ:** Prior to the formation of the League, it goes back extensively.

**JC:** The gambling. You can't find much on that.

**PJ:** There hasn't been anything on gambling in the NFL. O, I'm sorry, two boys, Filchok and Hapes.

**JC:** Not a gambling scandal, but the betting on the games.

**PJ:** Our betting was up until we went into the League, but that was it.

**JC:** You mean the players betting.

**PJ:** I don't ever know of the players betting. Outside bookies were doing it.

**JC:** How about in the stands, was there a lot of betting?

**PJ:** Yes, there was a lot of betting. Before the League. I never saw it during the League.

**JC:** How do you account for that?

**PJ:** I think they came in with those weekly football cards. Back with Fritz Pollard in the early 1920s with Massillon, Canton, Akron, gee, those teams were bitter enemies. There was a lot of betting.

**JC:** Did players try to supplement their income by betting on their team?

**PJ:** I don't think so. I never saw it. O, the fans bet. They would look for the fans coming with the visiting team. Then there was betting. No question about it.

**JC:** How about the race issue. When Fritz came to Prov. you said that there wasn't much of a problem. It wasn't long after that in 1933 something happened, no more black players. Fritz intimated that maybe George Halas or Preston Marshall had something to do with it.

**PJ:** Preston Marshall would not hire a black. Definitely. It took him a long time after blacks came back in the 40s to do it.

**JC:** Fritz also mentioned the Mara brothers. Fritz had that problem with Halas going back to 1920.

**JC:** Was there some kind of an agreement (about excluding blacks) in your estimation?

**PJ:** I don't know. Nobody knows. It would seem very odd to get twenty people for twenty teams to agree about something like that. I don't think it could be among the owners. It could be among a certain few of them. That's very possible.

**JC:** We presume the commissioner was not that powerful at that time to control those teams.

**PJ:** Right.

**JC:** That's why Fritz started the Brown Bomber team. Didn't your Steam Roller play against them at one time?

**PJ:** We played against them. We played at Cranston Stadium. That's where we were playing in that particular year. I remember they were damn late. They came in cars, from the Bronx or Harlem.

**JC:** Apparently, they had some pretty good players. Joe Lilliard for one.

**PJ:** Joe Lilliard. He played for the Chicago Cardinals. They were very late. They had car trouble.

**JC:** How do you suppose that game came to be?

**PJ:** We got them through an agent. In those days a team had agents. The agent would have five or six teams available for you.

**JC:** How did that work? Was there a certain split on the gate?

**PJ:** No. It was strictly a guarantee. If I had to make a guess I'd guess \$500 in those days depending on travel distance.

**JC:** How about the refereeing in the early 20s?

**PJ:** You had to hire your own referees.

**JC:** There were no league referees.

**PJ:** Not then. It came very quickly. They found out in the league that if you were going to have local referees you were going to have local decisions. Very shortly you got the referees assigned you by the league.

**JC:** In the beginning, there were a lot of home calls.

**PJ:** Yes. I think it was 1923 when they went to assigned referees. Just before we came in. They got referees out of Boston. That's where they came from for our home games.

**JC:** How about the formation?

**PJ:** Most teams used single-wing.

**JC:** I guess the Bears came in with the T.

**PJ:** Yes. They came in with the T.

**JC:** How about the passing?

**PJ:** No, it wasn't. The ball was not a passable ball. It was not. That was the principal problem. You couldn't pass the ball. It was a chunk. The ball's shape was changed for better passing.

**JC:** So most of it was straight ahead football.

**PJ:** Yes. Straight ahead. We did have in those days drop kicking. Now the indoor Arena football is trying to bring it back. A lot of drop kicking.

**JC:** Did a lot of teams kick on third down for field position?

**PJ:** Yes. A big factor.

**JC:** How many players did you carry when you were in the NFL?

**PJ:** When we first came in the rule was 18.

**JC:** Did you carry the maximum?

**PJ:** Yes. Then we had a funny rule. If you had anybody hurt you couldn't replace them. Once the season started. Now if you got down to 15, you could call in the president of the league and he had a floating team, the Minneapolis Marines, who were berthed in New York City. If you needed players, you got players from that team temporarily for one game.

**JC:** Were they officially in the NFL?

**PJ:** They were in the NFL. They didn't have a full schedule.

**JC:** They were like a road team.

**PJ:** They were strictly a road team.

**JC:** What about these road teams. Now Fritz played with the Hammond Pros.

**PJ:** They were a road team. They didn't play any home games. There were several of them like that.

**JC:** They didn't have any real chance of winning did they?

**PJ:** No.

**JC:** They were there to get a payday.

**PJ:** That's right. I doubt if they kept in condition. Number one. I doubt if they practiced very much. They were trying to make some money.

**JC:** There were others besides Hammond.

**PJ:** Louisville and Minneapolis.

**PJ:** We had an interesting event happen to us in relation to the players. We played the Philadelphia Yellowjackets, called Frankford. Our sporting editor wouldn't, when he listed the league standings would never, use Frankford. Who the hell ever heard of Frankford? He made it Philadelphia. They had a peculiar situation. They couldn't play on a Sunday because of the blue law. You had to play them on Saturday, but in your contract you had to play them the next day in your home city. So, we played them and they got five men hurt. So that's five off of 18, you only have 13 men left. So the president, Joe Carr, gave them five men off of Minneapolis. Now, they had five fresh men coming against you the next day. And you're not fresh.

**JC:** You played back to back.

**PJ:** You had to play back to back with Philadelphia. That was the only team. With Green Bay and Chicago being so far away from Phila., you couldn't do that. So Pottsville was in the league. So those teams played Pottsville the next day. So it couldn't happen in certain circumstances.

**JC:** What was the substitute rule? You couldn't just randomly substitute.

**PJ:** If a player went out in the first half he couldn't come back until the second half.

**JC:** How about the fields and the equipment?

**PJ:** The worst field was in Pottsville because it was filled with slag. From the coal mines.

**JC:** Did you play on grass?

**PJ:** Grass. All of them had grass.

**JC:** I remember Fritz said when he played semi-pro in Chicago they played on skinned surfaces.

**JC:** Were there any unusual fields? Yours was an unusual field.

**PJ:** Every seat was close to the game. The separation between the seats and track was the banking of the bicycle track itself. We nailed some seats to it. When we found out that we were selling out. We had no endzone. Because the goalposts were right on the edge of the oval on each end.

**JC:** Who drew the biggest when the Steam Roller was in the league in the 20s?

**PJ:** Philadelphia. They played in Franklin Field. We drew 1200 fans for a Los Angeles and a N.Y. Giant game.

**JC:** How about Chicago?

**PJ:** I never went to Chicago. I was working. Or Green Bay. Eight and ten thousand in Philadelphia.

**JC:** Let's talk about the equipment. Did about everybody wear a helmet by 1925?

**PJ:** There was no compulsory rule when we went in in 25. And two of our boys, Gus Sonnenberg and John Spellman would not wear helmets. I don't see what good they were, they were nothing but cloth with a little padding on the top.

**JC:** Did people wear helmets going back to 1916?

**PJ:** No, we didn't wear helmets. Nobody, when we first started. Somebody invented that cloth headgear and we did use that. The backfield men all wore nose guards, rubber. There was a holder at the bottom and you put it between your teeth.

**JC:** Everybody wore shoulder pads?

**PJ:** Yes, but again they were nothing but cloth covering.

**JC:** Would you say the game was rough. Rougher than today or not as rough?

**PJ:** It was not as rough as they are today. They are brutal now with those helmets.

**JC:** Some say that in the 20s it was a rougher game. Were there more injuries then because of the less padding.

**PJ:** A lot of neck and shoulder injuries. Not so much knees. Our coach got a twisted knee one year.

**JC:** I wonder why more neck and shoulder. Could it be less conditioning?

**PJ:** The hitting. Hitting with the heads and the less protection.

**JC:** So the equipment was a factor in that.

**PJ:** Yes.

**JC:** How about the substitution. I imagine a lot of people played the whole game.

**PJ:** Most of them played the whole game. You had to with 18 men.

**JC:** In the early days in the small fields, were there occasions when someone passed the hat? I imagine some of these fields weren't fenced in.

**PJ:** I read in these books a great deal about passing the hat prior to the league. But we never did it. We always charged from the very first game.

**JC:** Was there any of that putting in a ringer under a different name in the Steam Roller?

**PJ:** No. You couldn't do it. It was a thousand dollar fine. You lost your franchise. That was the worst of it. Green Bay lost the franchise for a time.

**JC:** What is your recollection of Fritz? The 1925 season.

**PJ:** I remember in 1925 the management wanted a local star to bring the people in. That's why they went after Fritz.

**JC:** You had several of them didn't you? Like, Oden. Two of the Four Horsemen: For that Boston game.

**PJ:** Two of the Four Horsemen. Miller and

Crowley. Those two and Pollard for that game. I can't remember any of the arrangements because I wasn't involved in bringing them. I sent you a letter that each got \$500.

**JC:** That was going to be a big payday.

**PJ:** Yes.

**JC:** Fritz mentioned once making \$1500 a game.

**PJ:** That's staggering.

**JC:** I was wondering if he played in those three games for \$1500?

**PJ:** That could be. I remember the \$500 figure that they wanted him to play for. But not \$1500.

**PJ:** I don't think he was worth \$1500. That's an awful lot. Not at that time.

**PJ:** He may have been right collectively.

**JC:** Of course at one time he coached and if you add up your coaching salary.

**PJ:** I wouldn't knock him down for saying it because he ought to know.

**JC:** Have I missed anything?

**PJ:** The racial breakthrough occurred because there were some great black players on the coast. And they took in the black players that couldn't play in the NFL. Finally somebody must have impressed on the NFL because they were drawing crowds and they were All-Americans most of them. So the league decided to let some of the teams after the league season go out there and play them. To see how the white boys got along with the black boys. And there was no problem. There never was a rule.

**JC:** The Brown Bomber team of Fritz's was to show that blacks and whites could play. So this must have been brought up. Somebody must have been complaining about it. Fritz must have known something about these complaints.

**JC:** You didn't have any training camps did you.

**PJ:** No. Nobody had any. We started a week before opening game.

## A SENSE OF PLACE

By Jim Campbell

Ray Mansfield, the Steelers ironman center of the 1960s and 1970s, was one of the NFL true raconteurs. He had so many stories and told them so well that his teammates nicknamed him "the Old Ranger," after a character on TV's "Death Valley Days."

Mansfield, who left us much too early at age 55 in 1996, had a true sense of history and what was important in the overall scheme of the NFL.

Like linebacker Andy Russell, his best friend and partner in various outdoors adventures, Mansfield suffered long and hard as the Steelers couldn't win for losing in those pre-Chuck Noll days. When the good times began to roll, he couldn't get enough of the attention and satisfaction of winning.

The first taste was in 1972 when the Steelers finally—after 40 years of futility—won a division title by defeating the Chargers on the West Coast in the final regular season game of that year. Since it was the first championship of any kind, it was a cause for celebration. Mansfield, ever the documentarian, turned to fellow center, young Jim Clack, and said, "Hey, kid, you wanna be famous? Follow me." As the final gun's report was still echoing, Mansfield and Clack picked up Chuck Noll and carried him off the field triumphantly. Sure enough, the picture of the two burly linemen and Noll was used over and over to symbolize Steelers victory—at least until the team started winning Super Bowls with regularity a little later in the Seventies.

But the real example of Mansfield's perspective of history is documented by NFL Films immediately after Franco Harris's "Immaculate Reception" later in the 1972 postseason.

Mansfield (he alternated quarters with Clack) and a sideline worker were standing watching the final seconds of the 1972 playoff game between the Raiders and Steelers tick away. The Steelers were up most of the day on two Roy Gerela field goals, 6-0. Late in the game Dwight White got dinged and had to come out for a play. Rookie defensive end Craig "Cope" Hanneman took his place. The Oregon State rookie got hooked inside on that play and young Kenny Stabler snaked his way to a touchdown. That and the subsequent PAT made it 7-6 Oakland. Hope was not lost, but it was well hidden.

Bradshaw and his receivers couldn't connect on three passes around midfield. One fourth down, another throw was made. The ball, Jack Tatum, and Frenchy Fuqua all arrived at the same time at the intersection of Destiny Drive & Immortality Avenue. The ball shot back toward the line of scrimmage. Franco plucked it off his shoetops and romped into the end zone and Steelers fans' hearts forever.

Mansfield and the sideliner exchanged incredulous looks. Then they both said, "I saw it, but I don't believe it!" Reality quickly set in for Mansfield. He said, "Hey, we better get down to the end zone and get in the pictures."

Somewhere in a dusty vault of NFL Films is footage of the Old Ranger, wrapped in his sideline cape, trundling down the sideline--pausing every few paces to look back to see where the cameras are. Mansfield excursion to glory isn't shown that often with Immaculate Reception footage, but when it is old Steelers chuckle to themselves.

# DICK MODZELEWSKI

By Roger Gordon

Originally published in the Orange & Brown Report

Just like loads of other ex-pro football players, Dick Modzelewski lives with physical pain today. That's what 14 years as a left defensive tackle in the National Football League will do. But, unlike most other ex-players, Modzelewski has a name – yes, a name – for his injuries.

"I call them my 'Jim Browns,'" he laughs.

Modzelewski was the great fullback's teammate in 1964-65 with the Cleveland Browns but played *against* him for several years prior to that as a member of the New York Giants.

"I tell people, 'I had a total knee replacement. That's because of Jim Brown,'" Modzelewski says. "I have two bad shoulders. That's Jim Brown. I had two back operations. That's from Jim Brown."

"Little Mo," whose older brother Ed was a Browns running back in the late 1950s, could win the "Understatement-of-the-Year Award" when he says, "It was better to play with [Brown] than against him.

"To this day, they can tell me all they want about all these backs they have now – [LaDainian] Tomlinson or anyone else – nobody compares to him. We were watching some game films one time, and Jim Brown is running the ball, and all you see is Giants, eight or nine of them, on top of this one person [Brown], moving. All of us were on him, grabbing him by the ankles, by the knees, anything we could possibly do."

After wallowing in losing atmospheres in Washington in 1953-54 and his hometown of Pittsburgh in 1955, Modzelewski, as part of a three-way trade with Detroit, wound up in New York in 1956. The ex-University of Maryland star was a member of one of the greatest defenses of all time in "The Big Apple" that included Hall of Famers Sam Huff and Andy Robustelli, not to mention Rosey Grier and Jim Katcavage.



Modzelewski spent eight seasons with the Giants, and played in six NFL Championship Games, with the lone victory coming in his very first year against the Chicago Bears. Two years later in the title game, Modzelewski and his defensive teammates were the victims of John Unitas' legendary drive in the first-ever sudden death overtime that gave the Baltimore Colts a 23-17 victory over the Giants in Yankee Stadium. The game is remembered by many as "The Greatest Game Ever."

Modzelewski and the Giants actually had to beat the Browns in consecutive weeks just to earn a spot in that '58 title game. First came the regular-season finale in Yankee Stadium in which a Giants win would force an Eastern Conference playoff between the two clubs the following week, again in New York. With time running out and the score 10-10 on the snow-covered field, Pat Summerall booted what was thought to be an impossible 49-yard field goal into the wind and

through the driving snow to give the Giants a 13-10 victory and a regular-season sweep of their rivals from the midwest.

“Pat had missed a field goal earlier in the game,” Modzelewski recalls. “This was an even longer one, and there was a blizzard coming down. When our coach, Jim Lee Howell, called for the field-goal team, we all said, ‘What the hell’s he talking about?’ And I swear to you, I can hear the thump from that kick to this day. Sports Illustrated had a two-page spread of the ball going in the snow with all the Browns and the Giants looking at the ball after [Summerall] kicked it. That was a hell of a picture.”

For Modzelewski and the Giants to advance to the NFL title game, they would have to defeat the Browns in the playoff game seven days later, meaning a victory over the Browns for the third time that season, not an easy task.

“I’ll never forget, Winston Cigarettes was running a commercial, saying it couldn’t be done,” Modzelewski remembers. “That was our theme, to beat the Browns three times in one year.”

Modzelewski and the Giants limited the great Jim Brown to just 18 yards rushing – and the Browns as a team to only 24 – as New York prevailed, 10-0.

After falling to the Bears in the 1963 NFL title game, the Giants cleaned house, including trading Modzelewski to the Browns. In Modzelewski’s very first year in Cleveland, the Browns won the NFL Championship by shocking the Baltimore Colts, 27-0, in the title contest. Modzelewski believes the key to the crown was head coach Blanton Collier.

“He was like a grandfather,” he says. “He didn’t yell that much, but you wanted to play for him real bad, you really did.”

Modzelewski and the Browns returned to the title game the next year but fell to the Packers in Green Bay. Modzelewski was replaced by young Walter Johnson in 1966, then called it quits. During the ’66 season, Modzelewski set a then-NFL record by playing in his 180<sup>th</sup> consecutive game.

After retiring, Modzelewski was a Browns scout for a short spell, then joined the coaching ranks.

He acted as defensive coordinator and/or defensive line coach for several teams, including the Browns, Giants, Bengals, Packers and Lions. He even got a chance to be a head coach – albeit for one game – when he replaced Forrest Gregg in the Browns’ 1977 season finale.

If there is one thing Modzelewski learned from his days as a defensive coach, it is that all – *all* – quarterbacks are only as good as their offensive lines. He cites an instance while he was the defensive coordinator in Green Bay as a perfect example.

“We’re playing Tampa Bay,” he recalls. “They’re quarterback is Steve Young. I start calling all the signals, I’m going to blitz the crap out of this guy. We sacked him, we chased him, we did everything ... he couldn’t do anything right.

“They trade him to San Francisco, he’s in the Hall of Fame.”

Since leaving the coaching ranks in 1989, the 76-year-old Modzelewski has enjoyed the simple life – that is, traveling, fishing and spending time with his wife of nearly 54 years, Dottie, their four children and seven grandchildren. Dick and Dottie reside in Willoughby.

Modzelewski pulls for the Browns to do well, of course, having once played for the team. He has an even bigger motive to cheer them on, though.

“I root for Romeo [Crennel] because, like me, he was a defensive coordinator at one time,” he says. “I’m rooting my butt off for him.”

---

**DICK MODZELEWSKI**

**DT**

Modzelewski, Richard Blair (Little Mo) 6-0, 250  
 Maryland HS: Har-Brack Union [Brackenridge, PA]  
B: 2 / 16 / 1931, West Natrona, PA  
 Drafted: 1953 Round 2 Was

1953 Was 12	1954 Was 12	1955 Pit 12
1956 NYG 12	1957 NYG 12	1958 NYG 12
1959 NYG 12	1960 NYG 12	1961 NYG 14
1962 NYG 14	1963 NYG 14	1964 Cle 14
1965 Cle 14	1966 Cle 14	

College Football HOF 1994;  
 Brother of Ed Modzelewski

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