



THE

# COFFIN CORNER

★★★  
32-PAGE  
ISSUE!

The Official Magazine of the Professional Football Researchers Association

## *CHARLEY BROCK and the Hall of Very Good*

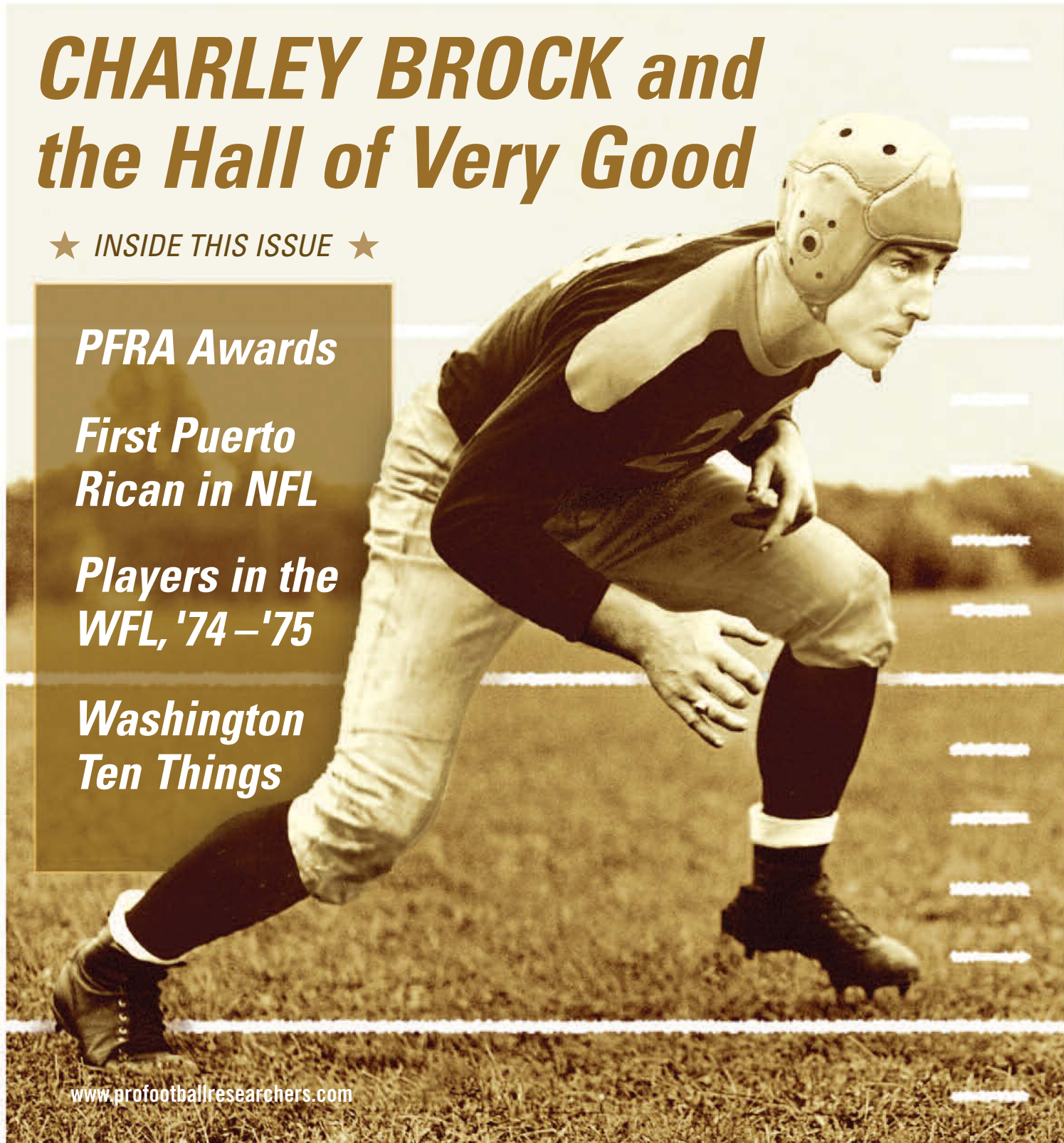
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Ten Things*



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Front cover: Center, halfback and fullback Charley Brock (Green Bay Packers)

## TEAM FUMBLES



In the previous issue of *The Coffin Corner* (Volume 48, Number 1) we had a couple of unforced errors.

The first typo was not changing last year's membership dues in the masthead on page 2. As everyone should know by now, PFRA membership increased five dollars across the board after many years.

The second infraction occurred in the photo caption on page 24. The caption stated that the 1971 Chiefs-Jets game was played on November 11 but, as was pointed out by the ever-vigilant Tim Triner, the game was actually played four days earlier on November 7.

If you spot a mistake in any article, regardless of how small it is, please contact us and let us know at this email address: [gregtranter12@gmail.com](mailto:gregtranter12@gmail.com)

# THE COFFIN CORNER

*The Official Magazine of the  
Professional Football Researchers Association*

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The Professional Football Researchers Association (PFRA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving professional football history. Formed in 1979, the PFRA is incorporated in the state of Connecticut and has 501(c)(3) status as an educational organization with the Internal Revenue Service.

## State of the PFRA

Lee Elder, Executive Director

The PFRA's budget for 2026 shows that our Association is financially stable. Our plans for 2026 show that we are moving forward with plans for new enterprises. We also need to energize our members.

As of the third week of February, 2026, the PFRA had 491 members. That membership was spread across 11 nations. The vast majority (461 members) is in the United States and we have members in forty-five states and the District of Columbia. Our membership usually increases during the year and, with that in mind, our membership growth has been fairly steady. Our 2025 convention in Minnesota attracted 64 attendees from three nations. Convention attendance has consistently increased over the last decade. The PFRA Instagram account shows 159 followers. Our X (formerly Twitter) account has 2,093 followers and our two Facebook pages total 3,554 followers.

The PFRA is not without challenges in early 2026. The voting for the 2025 Hall of Very Good (HoVG) class had low member activity. The Hall of Very Good Committee, chaired by Matthew Keddie, does an outstanding job, but the HoVG ballots attracted far fewer votes (67) than just one year earlier (170). No organization functions well without an active membership.

My personal goal for 2026 is to convince members to return to voting for each Hall of Very Good class. I'd like to see us return to 170 votes for the Class of 2026 and reach 200 votes the following year. All paid members can vote for the HoVG; this is one of the great benefits of being a member.

The PFRA needs more members to join committees. Most committees are fully staffed but some are not. If you are interested in joining any of our committees, or if you'd like to start a new one, please contact PFRA President George Bozeka at his email address: [sundaygolfer48@aol.com](mailto:sundaygolfer48@aol.com).

The most explosive growth we have seen since

this time last year involves the number of submissions under consideration for use in *The Coffin Corner*. The Board of Directors voted last year to expand the magazine's page count in order to include more submissions and their footnotes. Managing Editor Greg Tranter, who is also the PFRA's Assistant Executive Director, reports to the Board every month and the increase in contributions has been rewarding. *The Coffin Corner* represents us as a research-based organization and submissions now include sources.

As mentioned, *The Coffin Corner* itself has grown. After an extended period of consideration, the Board increased the size of *TCC* to 32 pages. In order to pay for the expected increase in postage and mailing costs, the Board increased the annual dues for the first time in more than a decade. The increase of \$5 at all membership levels went into effect for this year.

One of the most member-driven projects the PFRA has is the "Great Teams in Pro Football History" book series. Our recently published *The 1964 Buffalo Bills: Profiles of the AFL Champions* is the fourth book in the series. The Bills book attracted contributions from 42 researchers. PFRA President George Bozeka edits the Great Teams series and had already made two Buffalo-area appearances about the Bills book as of this writing. The fifth book in the series, covering the 1976 Oakland Raiders, is now in the editing phase. Keep your eyes open for the call for topics for the sixth book.

In February of this year, the Board began working on establishing a presence on the popular social media platform YouTube. Watch this column, PFRA-ternizing, and our website when we begin calling for content.

In short, our association is on good financial footing. We continue to gain new members. Our organizational goal, the continued research into the history of the game, has been served on several dif-

# PFRA-ternizing

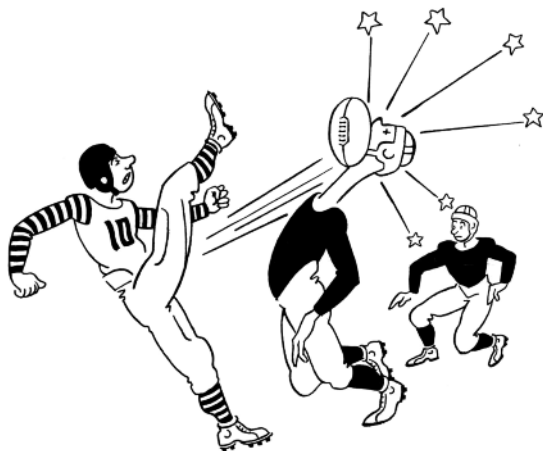
ferent fronts, and our profile within the football world has never been higher. Still, with all of that said, we would benefit from more committee participation by our members.

## 2026 Reminders

The 2026 Hall of Very Good nominations period will open on March 1, 2026, and close on April 15, 2026. PFRA members in good standing with the organization and who have paid their dues for 2026 are eligible to nominate up to five former players and/or coaches. Players and coaches who last appeared in 2000 and earlier are eligible and *cannot* be a member of the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Please send your nominations to Matthew Keddie at [sluggermatt15@yahoo.com](mailto:sluggermatt15@yahoo.com).

Reminder to all members...if you have not renewed your PFRA membership for 2026 this will be your last issue of *The Coffin Corner*. You can renew here: <https://profootballresearchers.com/join.html> A new digital-only opt-out level is now available to all members.

**Don't take it on the chin.  
Send your renewal in—NOW!**



Don't forget to renew your membership—  
don't delay, go to the website today!

<https://profootballresearchers.com/join.html>



## The 2025 PFRA AWARD WINNERS

The PFRA's Ralph Hay Award is awarded for lifetime achievement in pro football research and historiography. The 2025 recipient of this award is **Mark Speck**. Mark has been researching pro football for over 35 years and his particular area of research has been on the World Football League. He has contributed his time and efforts to several football encyclopedias as well as the official WFL website. Mark was also the co-author of *The World Football League Encyclopedia* with Tod Maher. His book on the 1974 Florida Blazers of the WFL entitled "...and a dollar short" won the 2011 Nelson Ross Award.

Speaking of, the PFRA's Nelson Ross Award is awarded annually for outstanding recent achievement in pro football research and historiography. The 2025 recipients of this award are **John Steffenhagen** and **Jeffrey Miller** for their book *Leo Lyons, the Rochester Jeffersons and the Birth of the NFL*. John's grandfather was a founding figure of the NFL and attended the league's first organizational meeting. This biography and history highlight Lyons' major contributions to football—including early integration efforts, creating one of the first team logos, introducing football trading cards, and helping redesign the modern football with Wilson Sporting Goods.

The PFRA's Bob Carroll Memorial Writing Award is awarded to the best *Coffin Corner* article of the year as determined by the editors. The 2025 recipient of this award is **Ben Carpenter** for his article "A Short History of Fourth Down Decision-Making" (Volume 47, Number 3). This award is sponsored by St. Johann Press and Ben will receive a \$100 check from St. Johann, as well as a one-year extension to his membership.

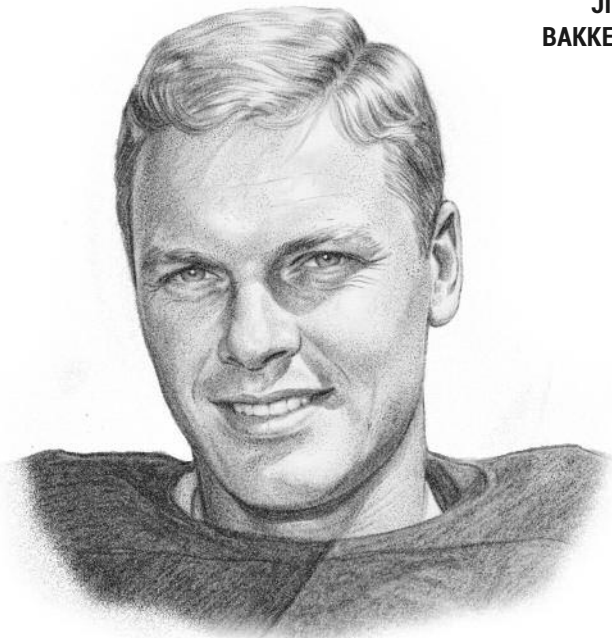
The PFRA's Jack Clary Award recognizes members who have served behind the scenes and whose efforts are invaluable to the PFRA. The 2025 recipient of this award is **Mark Ford** for his many years of outstanding service to the PFRA as both President and Executive Director along with his editing work for *The Coffin Corner*.

Congratulations to all the PFRA award winners!

# HALL OF VERY GOOD

## *Class of 2025*

**JIM  
BAKKEN**



### **JIM BAKKEN**

POSITION: Kicker

TEAM: St. Louis Cardinals (1962–1978)

**S**elected by the Los Angeles Rams in the seventh round of the 1962 NFL Draft, Jim Bakken was placed on waivers during training camp and claimed by the St. Louis Cardinals, with whom he became one of the great placekickers in pro football history.

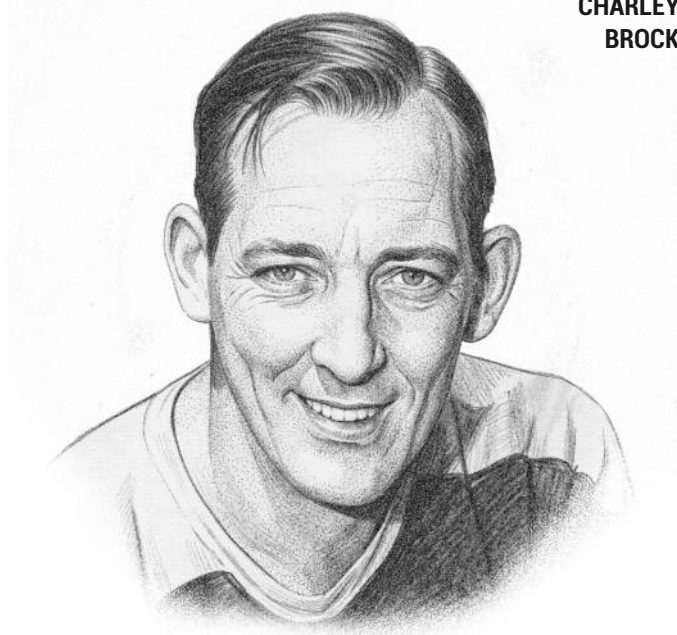
The Cardinals franchise all-time leading scorer, Bakken also held the team record for career games played until 2019. At the time of his retirement, his 234 (236 including playoffs) consecutive games played streak was the third-most in NFL history. Bakken was a four-time Pro Bowl selection and two-time, first-team All-Pro. He was twice named the *Football Digest* NFL Kicker of the Year. In 1976, he was voted by his Cardinals teammates as team MVP, the Newspaper Enterprise Association's (NEA) Third Down Trophy, and also was chosen to the 1960s NFL All-Decade Team and the 1970s NFL All-Decade team.

Bakken led the NFL in field goals made in 1964 and in 1965 he led the NFL in field goal percentage. He

shared the Cardinals punting duties in 1965 and 1966 as well. In 1967 Bakken led the NFL in field goals made, field goal percentage and points scored. Most memorable, in a 28–14 win over the Pittsburgh Steelers, Bakken set the NFL record for field goals made with seven. The record was tied 22 years later in 1989 and in total stood for an incredible 40 years until it was broken in 2007.

Inducted into the University of Wisconsin Athletic Hall of Fame in 2001, Bakken is also a member of the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame and the St. Louis Sports Hall of Fame. The annual trophy for the best kicker in the Big Ten Conference, the “Bakken-Andersen Kicker of the Year” was co-named in his honor.

**CHARLEY  
BROCK**



### **CHARLEY BROCK**

POSITIONS: Center, Halfback, Fullback

TEAM: Green Bay Packers (1939–47)

**C**harley Brock (born March 15, 1916) was a standout two-way player for the Green Bay Packers during the late 1930s and 1940s and was voted to the NFL 1940s All-Decade team.

A multi-sport star at Kramer High School in Columbus, Nebraska, where he earned 16 varsity letters, Brock excelled at the University of Nebraska, earning three All-Big Six Conference honors and first-team All-America recognition in 1937 as a center. Drafted by the Packers

in the third round (24th overall) of the 1939 NFL Draft, Brock quickly became a key contributor. In his rookie season, he helped Green Bay win the NFL championship, intercepting eight passes—including three against Sammy Baugh—and recording two more in the title game against the New York Giants. He played center on offense, anchoring the line in Curly Lambeau's Notre Dame Box system, while excelling at linebacker on defense, where he was known as a “ball thief” for his interception prowess.

Over nine seasons (1939–47), Brock appeared in 92 games, recording 20 official interceptions (plus eight more unofficial in 1939 before the statistics were tracked), with 230 return yards and four defensive scores. He earned three Pro Bowl selections (1939, 1940, 1942), first-team All-Pro honors in 1940 (*Collyer's*), 1945 (consensus), 1946 (*Pro Football Illustrated*) and was second team All-Pro in 1943 (consensus) and 1944 (UPI). Brock served as team captain in 1944, when the Packers won a second NFL title while he was with the club. Coach Curly Lambeau praised him as the best center in football, even over Hall of Famer Bulldog Turner, calling him aggressive, untiring, and unmatched at intercepting passes.

Brock retired in 1948 due to wear and tear and coached briefly with the Packers in 1949 before moving to college roles. Inducted into the Green Bay Packers Hall of Fame in 1973, he remained involved in the community until his death on May 25, 1987, in Green Bay.

## GEORGE CHRISTENSEN

POSITION: Tackle

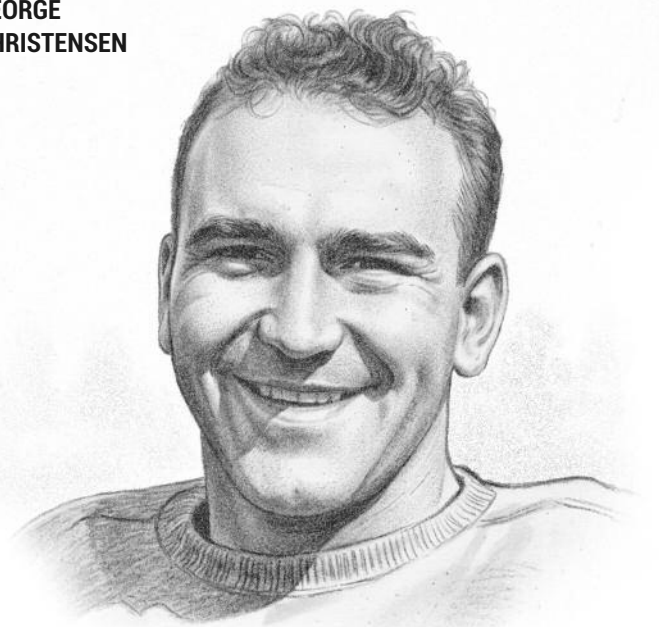
TEAM: Portsmouth Spartans/Detroit Lions (1931–38)

**G**eorge Christensen was an elite tackle in the 1930s, excelling on offense, defense and special teams in the era of the two-way player. Born and raised in the Pacific Northwest, Christensen attended the University of Oregon, where he was named second-team All-Pacific Coast Conference in 1930.

In 1931, Christensen joined Patsy Clark's Portsmouth Spartans and for the next eight seasons, he earned All-Pro honors six times (four times as first-team and twice as second-team). Christensen was large and fast, measuring 6' 2" and 238 pounds, garnering him nicknames such as “Big Chris” and “Tarzan.”

Linemen are often judged by team accomplishments and in that regard Christensen's teams excelled.

## GEORGE CHRISTENSEN



In 1934, the Lions set a record by opening the season with an incredible seven straight shut-out victories, a record that still stands today. During that stretch no opponent penetrated Detroit's 20-yard line. Throughout the entire 1934 season, the Lions allowed only 59 points. Christensen's role in the Lions' running game was paramount as well. In 1936, Detroit set the single season team offensive rushing record with 2,885 yards in 12 games; a record that stood for 36 years (broken by the 1972 Miami Dolphins in a 14-game season).

Christensen was also considered one of the best punt blockers of his era. He recovered a blocked punt for a touchdown in the 1935 Championship game versus the New York Giants, which the Lions won, 26–7. Christensen was named to the NFL's 1930s All-Decade Team. He was also the Lions' team captain and the team's unofficial line coach. Former teammate and Hall of Famer Dutch Clark said about Christensen, “he was as good a tackle as I ever saw on a pro team.”

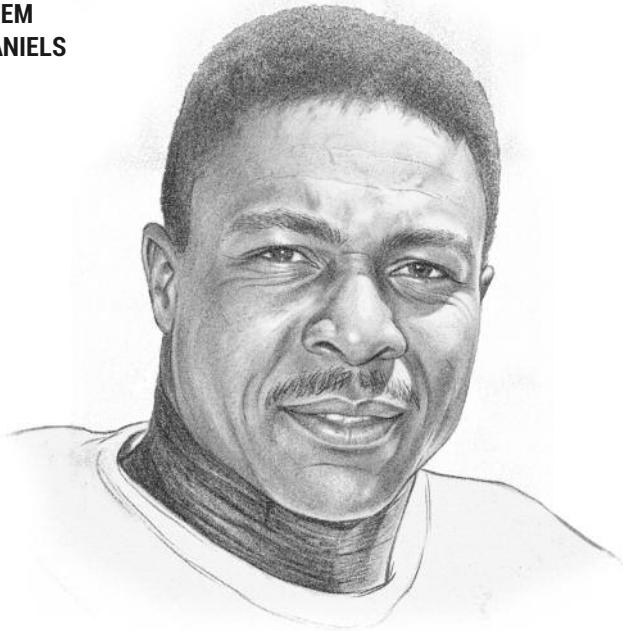
## CLEM DANIELS

POSITION: Halfback

TEAMS: Dallas Texans (1960), Oakland Raiders (1961–67), San Francisco 49ers (1968)

**C**lem Daniels is fully credentialed for Hall of Very Good honors. He was named to the AFL's All-Time team, won the AFL MVP award in 1963 and was the recipient of a glowing review by Pro Football Hall of

**CLEM DANIELS**



Fame contributor Ron Wolf. Wolf, a well-respected “personnel director,” said of Daniels, “He was, without a doubt, the best halfback in the AFL during his time.” Wolf also cited Daniel’s all-around athletic ability: “He ran a 4.6 40-yard dash in full football gear! Amazing for a guy his size (6’ 2”, 210 pounds) and he was a threat as a receiver, also.”

Daniels, born on July 9, 1937, grew up in McKinney, Texas, and matriculated at Prairie View A&M University on a football scholarship. He was an All-Southwest Conference selection as a sophomore and junior and led the team to an NAIA National Championship as a senior. Clem went undrafted by the AFL and the NFL, but was signed as a free agent by the Dallas Texans of the AFL. He played defense as a rookie, since star Abner Haynes was the main cog to the Texans’ offense.

He was then traded to the Oakland Raiders for the 1961 season and blossomed into a true star for the next six seasons, winning the 1963 AFL MVP award that highlighted his stay in the East Bay. He was the AFL rushing leader that year with 1,099 yards.

Daniels finished his Raiders career as their all-time leading rusher at 5,138 yards. His mark stood for a decade, eclipsed by Mark van Eeghen, Marcus Allen and Josh Jacobs, since. He also added 3,314 receiving yards, Daniels’s pro total-yardage was 9,052.

A true leader, Daniels helped lead an effort to move the 1964 AFL All-Star Game out of segregated New Orleans to Houston, where it was eventually played. Daniels suffered a broken leg mid-season in 1967, and finished his career in 1968 with the 49ers.

**CHRIS HINTON**

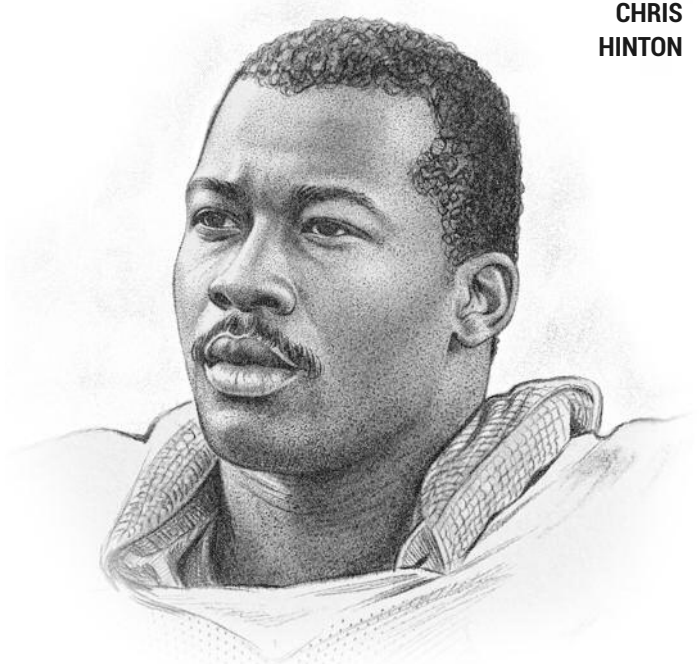
POSITION: Offensive Tackle

TEAMS: Baltimore/Indianapolis Colts (1983–1989), Atlanta Falcons (1990–93), Minnesota Vikings (1994–95)

**C**hris Hinton may always be known as the guy traded for John Elway. He said, “I used to always be kidded by guys on the Colts, ‘We could’ve had Elway instead of you.’ And I’d say, ‘Yeah, but you wouldn’t have had anybody to block for him.’” Hinton used the motivation to become arguably the most versatile and talented offensive lineman in NFL history, earning Pro Bowl honors at three different positions: left guard (1983), left tackle (1985–89) and right tackle (1991). Drafted fourth overall in the 1983 NFL Draft out of Northwestern, where he was a first-team All-Big Ten Conference selection and first-team All-American choice in 1982, Hinton was traded from Denver to Baltimore.

In seven seasons with the Colts, the team endured just two winning seasons. Hinton may have been the team’s best player, earning six trips to the Pro Bowl (1983, 1985–89). He was also a two-time second-team All-Pro choice by the Associated Press and the NEA (1985, 1989). In 1990, he was traded to the Falcons for the first overall pick in the 1990 NFL Draft. Hinton continued to provide stability along the offensive line, with the Falcons ranking as a Top 10 passing offense each season from 1990–93. Hinton returned to the Pro Bowl for a seventh

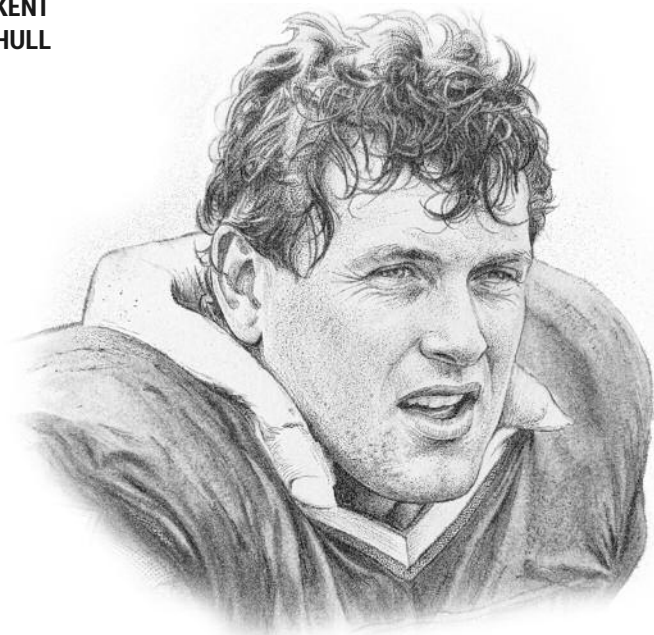
**CHRIS HINTON**



time in 1991 and earned a first-team All-Pro selection by the Associated Press in 1993. He played his final two seasons with the Minnesota Vikings in 1994 and 1995, finishing his career with 177 games played.

Hinton was voted to the NFL All-Rookie Team by the Pro Football Writers of America in 1983 and was inducted into the Indianapolis Colts Ring of Honor in 2001.

## KENT HULL



## KENT HULL

POSITION: Center

TEAM: Buffalo Bills (1986–96)

**M**uch like a ship's hull, center Kent Hull was the foundation for the offense, no matter where he played. For three seasons (1983–85) with the New Jersey Generals of the USFL, Hull anchored the run blocking for running back Herschel Walker, who ran for 5,562 yards during that span, including the single-season USFL record of 2,411 rushing yards in 1985. In 1986, Hull joined the Buffalo Bills, where he teamed with guard Jim Richter and tackle Will Wolford to form a formidable, yet stable offensive line. Under new head coach Marv Levy, in just three seasons, the Bills were an annual Top-Five scoring offense, led by future Hall of Famers Jim Kelly, Thurman Thomas and Andre Reed. Buffalo went on to earn six consecutive playoff appearances, four straight AFC East Division titles and a record four consecutive

trips to the Super Bowl.

Hull played in 121 consecutive games from 1986–93 and earned three straight trips to the Pro Bowl (1988–90). He was also twice named a second-team All-Pro by the Associated Press and a consensus first-team All-Pro selection in 1990. Hull's most memorable game may have been the 1995 wild card game against the Miami Dolphins. The Bills ran for 341 yards, with Hull dominating the Miami defensive front, including tackles Tim Bowens and Chuck Klingbeil. Buffalo raced out to a 27–0 lead, never looking back as they defeated Don Shula in his final playoff game.

Hull was inducted into the Greater Buffalo Sports Hall of Fame in 1997. He earned the Ralph C. Wilson Distinguished Service Award in 2001, was enshrined on the Buffalo Bills Wall of Fame in 2002 and was named to the Buffalo Bills 50th Anniversary Team in 2009.

## GREG LLOYD

POSITION: Linebacker

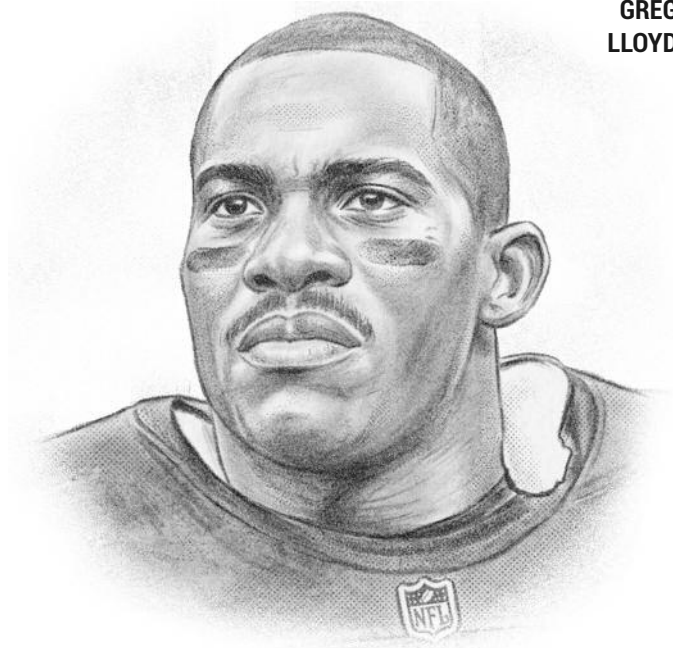
TEAMS: Pittsburgh Steelers (1987–97),  
Carolina Panthers (1998)

**O**ne of the most feared and versatile linebackers of the 1990s, Greg Lloyd earned five Pro Bowl selections (1991–95) and was named a consensus first-team All-Pro three straight years (1993–95). Over 11 seasons with the Steelers (1987–97) and one with the Panthers, he recorded 64.5 sacks, 35 forced fumbles, 16 fumble recoveries, 11 interceptions and just under 750 tackles (per NFL gamebooks), while playing in the post-season five times, including two AFC Championship game appearances and one Super Bowl.

Lloyd excelled at Fort Valley State University, where he earned NAIA All-American honors. The Steelers selected him in the sixth round (150th overall) of the 1987 NFL Draft.

Lloyd quickly became an elite pass rusher and run stopper and fine pass-defending linebacker—the complete package. He was known for his explosive speed, bone-crushing tackles, and relentless motor. He anchored the “Blitzburgh” defense and served as a prototypical rush linebacker in the 3-4 base defense. In 1991 and 1992, he often lined up as a defensive end in passing situations. Starting in 1993, his role grew even more versatile: in dime packages, he frequently played

**GREG  
LLOYD**



the lone linebacker position, and in nickel sets, he was one of the two linebackers.

In 1994, he posted a career-high 10 sacks, forced five fumbles, and finished third in AP Defensive Player of the Year voting. The following season, he placed second in the voting for the award. A fierce competitor and vocal leader, he was also tough. Lloyd played through major injuries, including a torn ACL that sidelined him for nearly the entire 1996 season, yet returned to play two more seasons in the NFL before an arthritic knee ended his career.

Inducted into the Steelers Hall of Fame in 2012 and the Black College Football Hall of Fame in 2015, Greg Lloyd remains a beloved symbol of the 1990s chapter of Pittsburgh Steelers history.

## **WILBER MARSHALL**

POSITION: Linebacker

TEAMS: Chicago Bears (1984–87),  
Washington Redskins (1988–92), Houston Oilers (1993),  
Arizona Cardinals (1994), New York Jets (1995)

**W**ilber Marshall first attracted national attention with three first-team All-Southeastern Conference (1981–83) and two consensus All-American seasons (1982–83) at the University of Florida. Selected 11th overall in the 1984 NFL Draft by the Chicago Bears, Marshall became one of the best defensive players on two Super Bowl championship teams: first with Chicago

in 1985 and then with Washington in 1991.

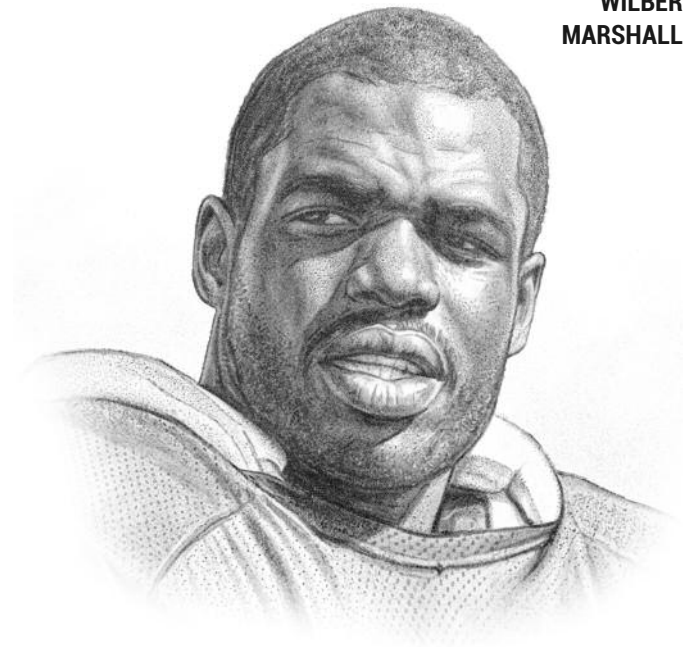
Those teams ranked first and second in total defense, respectively. In the 1985 NFC Championship Game against the Los Angeles Rams, Marshall made the play of the game when Bears defensive end Richard Dent sacked Rams quarterback Dieter Brock and Marshall picked up the ensuing fumble and returning it 52-yards for a touch-down. Over the next two seasons, he followed up with two Pro Bowl selections (1986–87) and his first, first-team All-Pro selection in 1986. As a result, Marshall set a new contract record after the 1987 season, going from Chicago to Washington on a guaranteed, no-trade deal that made him the highest paid defender in NFL history (\$6 million for five years).

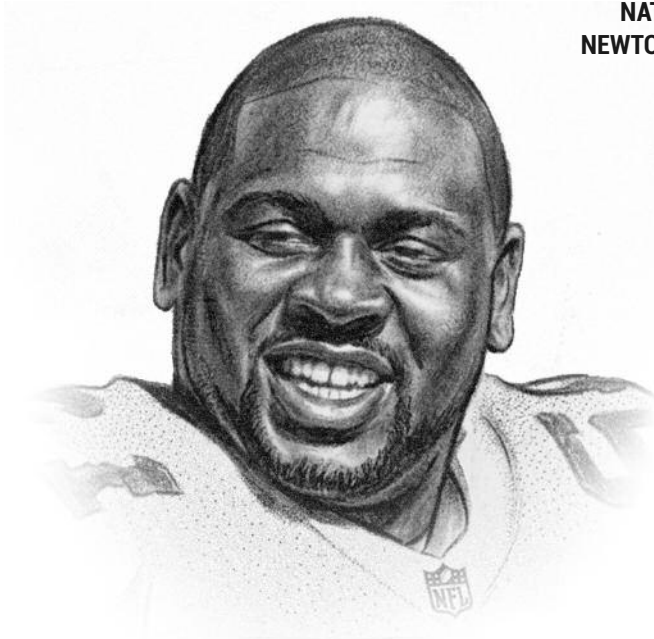
During his five seasons in Washington, Marshall experienced further success. In addition to winning Super Bowl XXVI, he was selected a first-team All-Pro for the 1992 season and returned to the Pro Bowl that year.

Marshall is a member of the University of Florida Ring of Honor, the College Football Hall of Fame and was named the Gators' Defensive Player of the Century by the *Gainesville Sun* in 1999. He has been voted one of the "100 Greatest Bears of All Time" and one of the "80 Greatest Redskins."

Marshall's NFL career totals include: 45 sacks, 23 interceptions, 22 forced fumbles, 16 fumbles recovered and four defensive touchdowns. He is one of only three linebackers in NFL history to record 45 sacks and 20 interceptions.

**WILBER  
MARSHALL**





**NATE  
NEWTON**

## **NATE NEWTON**

**POSITION:** Guard

**TEAMS:** Tampa Bay Bandits (1984–85),  
Dallas Cowboys (1986–98), Carolina Panthers (1999)

**S**tanding 6' 3" and roughly 318 pounds, Nate Newton earned the nickname “the Kitchen” because he was larger than William Perry, who was dubbed “the Refrigerator.” Newton’s massive size allowed him to routinely bulldoze the game’s best defenders into the defensive backfield. As a member of the Dallas Cowboys, Newton joined Erik Williams, Mark Tuinei, Mark Stepnoski, John Gesek and Kevin Gogan to form “The Great Wall of Dallas,” arguably one of the greatest offensive lines in history. From 1992–95, anchored by Newton’s play, the Cowboys ranked in the Top-Five in rushing offense each season.

Running back Emmitt Smith led the NFL in rushing three times (1992, 1993, 1995), and his 5.3 yards per rush (1993) led the NFL. Newton’s play was also paramount in pass protection for quarterback Troy Aikman. He was a Pro Bowl caliber quarterback each season from 1991–96 and won double-digit games five times (1992–96). Dallas also fielded three Super Bowl-winning teams, including back-to-back championships in 1992 and 1993. Newton earned six trips (1992–96, 1998) to the Pro Bowl, which is third in team history and was named a consensus first-team All-Pro choice in 1994 and 1995.

He finished his career with the Carolina Panthers in

1999, playing in 198 career games. Prior to playing with Dallas, Newton spent two seasons (1983–84) in the USFL with the Tampa Bay Bandits. He was named to the All-Time USFL Team. In 1994, Newton was inducted to the Florida A&M University Sports Hall of Fame and in 2022, selected for induction to the Black College Football Hall of Fame.

## **MIKE STRATTON**

**POSITIONS:** Linebacker

**TEAMS:** Buffalo Bills (1962–71), San Diego Chargers (1972)

**T**he Bills selected Mike Stratton in the 13th round of the 1962 AFL Draft. Stratton possessed great speed and instincts and quickly developed into one of the premier outside linebackers in the game.

As a rookie, he found his niche after a series of injuries befell the Bills’ linebacking corps during training camp. In 1963, he helped lead Buffalo to its first playoff appearance and was selected to play in his first AFL All-Star Game. He intercepted six passes despite missing the first two games with an ankle injury. Stratton’s defining moment came the following season, when his tackle of Keith Lincoln, forever after known as “The Hit Heard ‘Round the World,” propelled the Bills to victory in the 1964 AFL Championship Game. With Stratton leading the way, the Bills’ formidable defense set a pro football record (that still stands) by not allowing a rushing touch-



**MIKE  
STRATTON**

down for 17 consecutive games between 1964 and 1965 (16 regular season and one playoff) and carried the team to a second straight AFL title in '65.

In 11 seasons with the Bills, Stratton was selected First Team All-AFL three times, played in six AFL All-Star games (1963–68) and three championship games, winning two. He recorded 18 interceptions and was part of a linebacking corps (along with left linebacker John Tracey and middle linebacker Harry Jacobs) that started 62 consecutive games—a professional football record. He was the last remaining link to the Bills' AFL glory years when he was traded to the Chargers after the 1972 season.

Stratton was named to the All-Time AFL Team as an outside linebacker (second squad) by the Pro Football Hall of Fame Selection Committee in 1970. He has since been enshrined on the Bills' Wall of Fame (1994), the Greater Buffalo Sports Hall of Fame (2005), and was named to the Bills' 50th Anniversary Team (2009).

**The Hall of Very Good biographies were written by Jim Campbell, Matthew Keddie, Jeff Miller, Matt Reaser, Jay Thomas and John Turney. The photo-illustrations are by Mark Durr.**

## HALL OF VERY GOOD CLASS OF 2026 DEADLINE



**Please send your list  
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**Matthew Keddie  
300 South Tulane Avenue  
Apt. 5211  
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**Or email him at:  
sluggermatt15@yahoo.com**

### Deadline for nominations is April 15, 2026

Below are the vote totals for the 20 finalists for the 2025 Class of the Hall of Very Good (**BOLD CAPS** are the inductees). There were 67 ballots received in all. The cutoff for inclusion in this class was 37 votes.

<b>WILBER MARSHALL</b> .....	52	Peggy Parratt.....	36
<b>KENT HULL</b> .....	45	Ray Donaldson.....	36
<b>JIM BAKKEN</b> .....	44	Les Bingaman.....	34
<b>CHRIS HINTON</b> .....	44	Ward Cuff.....	26
<b>GREG LLOYD</b> .....	44	Joe Kopcha.....	26
<b>GEORGE CHRISTENSEN</b> .....	41	Bob Shiring.....	21
<b>CLEM DANIELS</b> .....	41	Red Dunn .....	18
<b>NATE NEWTON</b> .....	41	Hermann Kerkhoff .....	17
<b>MIKE STRATTON</b> .....	38	Alyn Beals.....	16
<b>CHARLIE BROCK</b> .....	37	Jack McBride.....	13

# DAN ROSADO

## *The First Puerto Rican to Start in the NFL*

San Diego Chargers center  
Dan Rosado (66)



LOS ANGELES CHARGERS

### **Mary Rosado**

**T**he story of Dan Rosado, starting center for the San Diego Chargers in the late 1980s, is an interesting one in NFL history. Not only is he one of only a few Puerto Ricans to have been a starter for an NFL team, he did it years after his last college game, taking a cut in pay from a blue-collar job. When Rosado made it from a tryout camp to the USFL's Houston Gamblers in 1985, Jim Carley of the *Houston Post* wrote, "Rosado's story makes Cinderella look like a loser. He was an underdeveloped 20-year-old when he left Northern Illinois five years ago and the pros paid little attention. He went to work for 7-Up bottling and worked up to sales manager. But he never forgot his desire to play pro football."<sup>1</sup>

### ***A Historic First***

When Dan Rosado took the field for the San Diego Chargers on October 9, 1988, he carried not only the weight of the offensive line but the joy of family and the pride of an island. That afternoon, Rosado snapped the ball from center at Jack Murphy Stadium in San Diego against the New Orleans Saints—his first regular-season start as the first Puerto Rican player to start in the NFL. Rosado had been a starter for the Chargers as one of the many "replacement players" during the NFL strike on October 4, 1987, facing the Bengals in Cincinnati, but most of the replacements had been sent home after the three-week strike. Rosado was called back to the Chargers the following season, and, unlike most of the temporary players of 1987, he became a starter for 1988. In 16 games in '88 and '89, he started in all but one, 15 times.

Whether Rosado was the first “Puertorriqueño” to start depends on how the word is defined. What is clear is that he was the first whose mother and father had both been born and raised in Puerto Rico. On the other hand, Ron Rivera, son of a Puerto Rican father and a Mexican mother, had started as a linebacker for the Chicago Bears on October 26, 1986, against the Detroit Lions and had gone on to nine seasons playing for them, with 56 starts in 137 games, followed by a coaching career that would lead to being the head coach of the Carolina Panthers from 2011 to 2019, and four more from 2020 to 2023 (during which the team had three different names as the Redskins to the “Washington Football Team” to the Commanders).

It’s true that there haven’t been many Puerto Ricans in the NFL, even though nine million Americans identify themselves as Puertorriqueño—roughly three million living in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and six million on the United States mainland. Only three—offensive lineman Ken Amato, who played 125 games (though none as a starter) for the Tennessee Oilers from 2003 to 2011, Tony Holloway, who played a replacement game for the Kansas City Chiefs in 1987, and center Federico Maranges, who was on the Seahawks practice squad in 2025—were born on the island. Other well-known players with Puerto Rican roots have been defensive end Robert Quinn with 169 games (142 as a starter), primarily for the Rams but also for four other teams from 2011 to 2022; offensive lineman Jon Feliciano with 113 games (61 as a starter) from 2015 to 2023 for the Raiders, Bills, Giants and 49ers; and Giants’ wide receiver Victor Cruz who was in 70 NFL games (53 as a starter) from 2010 to 2016. In 2025, there were only two NFL players of Puerto Rican heritage, Texans’ kick returner and receiver Braxton Berrios and the aforementioned Federico Maranges, on the Seahawks practice squad.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, there have been more than 300 Major League Baseball players born in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and hundreds more of Puerto Rican heritage.<sup>3</sup> As Rosado told the *Los Angeles Times*, “I was too big for baseball,” adding that when he pursued football instead, “My dad didn’t like the idea. Baseball is the big sport in Puerto Rico.”

As for his start in an NFL game on October 9, 1988, “That day meant everything,” Rosado recalls. “I wasn’t just playing football. I was representing my family, my heritage, and every kid from Puerto Rico who ever

dreamed of belonging.”

### ***Early Life and Puerto Rican Roots***

Controlled chaos is a term often used to describe Latin families; the Rosado household was the definition of Latin. Bold personalities, non-stop activity, unceasing noise, and sibling competitiveness all describe the everyday life of the nine members of Dan Rosado’s family. These elements, coupled with aromas of Puerto Rican cooking, the never-ending presence of long-term visiting relatives from the Island, and the sounds of Spanish, English, and Spanglish throughout the house, depict the Puerto Rican childhood of Dan Rosado.

Rosado was born on July 6, 1959, in Lawton, Oklahoma, where his father was stationed at the U.S. Army base at Fort Sill. He was number five in a line of seven Rosado kids. His parents, were native to the island of Puerto Rico. Pedro Jesús Rosado-González was from Bayamón and Carmen Ilia Rosado-Avilés was from Corozal. Pedro boxed and played baseball as a young man and later served as a sergeant in the U. S. Army at Fort Buchanan in San Juan; he married Carmen, a headstrong hairdresser and seamstress with a non-stop list of new ideas and projects for the young couple.

Their first two children were born on the island, and then Pedro was transferred to the mainland and Fort Sill. New geography, new weather, and a new American culture brought challenges to everyday life but the young family was determined. They settled into life in the U. S.; the next five of their children, Dan included, were born on the army base and the Rosado kids were raised as a military family. Participation in the family restaurant business was not optional; outside interests in sports, theater, music, and beauty pageants were secondary to family commitments.

Summers were spent back in Puerto Rico with aunts and uncles. Rosado appreciates the Puerto Rican family culture of giving when there was little to give. “When we were there, we didn’t have much but we had everything.”

Rosado’s siblings, four sisters and two brothers, were a self-contained social community. “As the brown kids in white and black army social clubs, we didn’t fit in. My parents’ heavy Hispanic accent and pink-painted restaurant set us aside from the group and we were referred to as “spics.” As a young teen, those words stung but also served as fuel for Rosado’s determination to prove himself.

### ***High School, College, and the Road Ahead***

Rosado found football in high school because, “it was the only sport where I could hit someone.” The sport became his outlet—a place where he could answer back on the field with physicality. He liked existing in a place where toughness and teamwork mattered more than background or accent. Given that Rosado had started school when he was four (his mother convinced school administrators that this was how it was done in Puerto Rico), “My parents are Puerto Rican,” he told the *Houston Chronicle*. “They didn’t understand about American schools, so they enrolled me a year early. I think I was ahead of a lot of kids. I won’t say I was smart, just that I learned what I had to.”<sup>4</sup> So, he was a year or two younger and smaller than classmates but his determination, hard work, and desire to prove himself enabled him to compete with his peers through his high school years.

Rosado credits his high school coach, Jack Street, with helping him chase his dream of playing college football. “Coach Street believed in me,” he says. “He convinced college recruiters to take a look at a 195-pound, six-foot linebacker who played with heart, not just size.” Coach Street would tell college scouts, He’s only 16 — give him time; he’s still growing into those size-14 feet.” His encouragement led to visits with a few Division II schools in North Carolina—small chances that kept Rosado’s dream alive. But it was family that ultimately turned belief into reality. When his older sister heard of what he wanted to do, she didn’t hesitate. “She told me, ‘Come live with me in Chicago for the summer—you’ll work, you’ll train, and you’ll see what you’re capable of.’” Rosado took her up on it. Between shifts at work, he read goal-setting books his sister had given him and built a training plan. “She held me accountable every day,” he recalls. “I took a briefcase of sandwiches to work every day and went from 195 to 230 pounds that summer. Working out at the nearby training facility at Northwestern University in Chicago, made me a different athlete.”

The Northwestern coaches noticed too, but recommended nearby Harper Junior College for him to boost his grades and mature further. Rosado enrolled at Harper and adhered to a strict training program resulting in a standout season. “That was the turning point,” he says. “By the end of my first season, I weighed 250 pounds and knew football was my future.” Years later, he would be inducted to the National Junior College Athletic Association Hall of Fame.

That single season as a freshman playing junior college football was pivotal; Rosado was immediately recruited by Northern Illinois University (NIU) and jumped at the opportunity. He immersed himself in the team and the game and was immediately a starter on the offensive line. Rosado affectionately remembers being the “what’s wrong with this picture?” of the team; he was the only player from outside of the Chicago area and the only Hispanic name on the roster. The squad was welcoming to Rosado; he introduced his teammates to Latin dancing and even convinced coaches to roast a pig on the practice field to introduce the team to Puerto Rican cuisine. Rosado’s three years of Division I football sharpened his skills; he was a starter all three years and earned the John P. Culpepper Award for NIU’s Outstanding Offensive Lineman.

Even with his success at the college level, the pro scouts did not come knocking. As Bob Wolf of the *Los Angeles Times* described it in 1988, “When Rosado graduated from NIU in 1980 at the age of 20, the 28 NFL teams avoided him completely. Not only did they ignore him in the draft, none even gave him a look as a free agent.”<sup>5</sup> And so, Rosado paused (though he didn’t stop) chasing the NFL dream. He got married, earned a degree in business management at Lawton, Oklahoma’s Cameron University and stepped into the working world as a management trainee for Pepsi-Cola. In Texas he worked for five years and learned discipline of a different kind—budgets, business, deadlines, and goal-setting. Following one particular business seminar on measurable goals, Rosado found himself reflecting on the one dream he had left unfinished: pro football.

One Saturday night in 1984 in Houston, Rosado and his wife drove into the city and on the spur of the moment, bought tickets to a Houston Gamblers USFL game at the Astrodome. While Jim Kelly played his normal extraordinary game on the field, Rosado was focused from the stands on the strengths of the offensive line who pass-protected brilliantly for Kelly. By the final whistle, Rosado was convinced that he wanted to continue his dream and resume playing the game. “I can play at this level,” he told his wife. “I’m going to get back into the game.” He immediately started his plan of step-by-step goal setting to achieve the physical condition he needed.

For the next nine months, Rosado quietly rebuilt himself. He continued his day job, now at 7-Up in Houston, and began training his weaknesses in the hours he

wasn't on the clock at his management job. He decided to go all-out to chase the dream one last time. Rosado's day consisted of weightlifting before work, weightlifting after work, a quick dinner, and resistance running in the evening in the local high school parking lot. For resistance running, he would tie one end of a rope to his weight belt and the other to the front bumper of his 1978 International Scout and pull the vehicle while his wife sat inside and steered. One evening, after a disagreement with his wife, his run was exceptionally difficult and he was frustrated with the poor workout. She later admitted to having her foot on the brake as he struggled to pull the truck. "I learned to voice my opinions with better timing," Rosado smiles.

One by one, he checked off the fitness goals he had set and achieved. Finally, one Thursday morning, he spotted a notice in the *Houston Chronicle*: the USFL Houston Gamblers were holding an open tryout across town that Saturday morning in advance of the 1985 season. "I went out and bought low-budget cleats on Friday night," Rosado recalls, "and when I showed up Saturday, there were about 600 guys trying out." Rosado was shocked and briefly contemplated returning home, but figured he would regret forgoing the opportunity after all the work he had put in. At the end of the day, only two players of the 600 trying out were offered contracts—Rosado was one of them.

He credits that turning point to Bob Young, a former NFL offensive lineman who had become the Gamblers' offensive line coach. "Bob took me on as a project," Rosado says. "He believed I could learn to play at the pro level, and he was right. That changed my life."<sup>6</sup> Rosado became the starting right guard for the Gamblers. "I always knew I could play if I just got myself into shape. But I wanted to answer the question myself."<sup>7</sup>

In an article appearing in the *Houston Chronicle*, Tim Panaccio wrote, "Up at 5 a.m., arrive at the Pepsi-Cola plant by 6 and leave about 14 hours later. Today, Rosado is the Houston Gamblers' right guard. While many arm-chair quarterbacks can only dream about escaping their blue-collar jobs to play professional football, Dan Rosado is living out a fantasy."<sup>8</sup> At Pepsi, Rosado advanced from truck driver to plant operation manager before switching to 7-Up as a sales manager. He was living the dream. He added, "I could have made more money working for 7-Up."<sup>9</sup> His Gamblers contract was for \$30,000 a year, which, as reporter Bill McEwen put it, was "about

\$10,000 less than he did peddling soda pop."<sup>10</sup> For Rosado, the cut in pay to play in the USFL was not important. "On paper," he told Panaccio, "the decision came out 'No.' But I needed the chance to find out for myself whether I could do it."<sup>11</sup> As to going from sales manager to pro athlete, Rosado said it wasn't difficult because he was able to apply management principles to his new job. "'It's easy,' Rosado said. 'You take any problem and break it down to its simplest form. That's what we did at Pepsi. We used to call it the Swiss cheese effect. You plug the holes. That's what I'm doing here.'"<sup>12</sup>

The city of Houston loved their Gamblers and Rosado recollects the enthusiasm and support of the fans. "It was a tremendous feeling to be celebrated for the efforts of what we achieved and how we played together...the people of Houston related to us," says Rosado. He reminisces about the thrill of being on the field with his teammates for games, but also the comradery found on the practice field and in the weight room. "That group of guys pushed each other beyond the limits we all thought we had. It was a brotherhood I had never felt before."

Looking back, Rosado reflects on the irony of his journey. "The first time I played with guys my own age was when I played professionally." After being away from football for more than four and a half years, he was finally the same age as most of his pro teammates.

He had found success in 1985, but there would be no 1986 Gamblers season—the Houston team folded after its final game. Rosado was signed by the Arizona Outlaws and other Gamblers were signed by the New Jersey Generals for the USFL's plan to play in the autumn of 1986. But, as it turned out, there would be no 1986 USFL season. On July 29, just as NFL training camps were opening, the league won its antitrust suit against the league, but was only awarded \$3 in treble damages; without a significant financial settlement the USFL and its teams folded. All USFL players were released from their contracts on August 7 but Rosado was not done yet.

He signed his first NFL contract with the Miami Dolphins with just five days left in their training camp, and was released afterwards.<sup>13</sup> Days later, he signed again with Miami and spent the off-season training with his teammates. "I was the strongest I had ever been," he remembers, "I was ready for the next step of my dream." Ultimately, he was one of the final players to be released from the roster that year. Rosado was devastated but he also believed that his dream was not yet over.

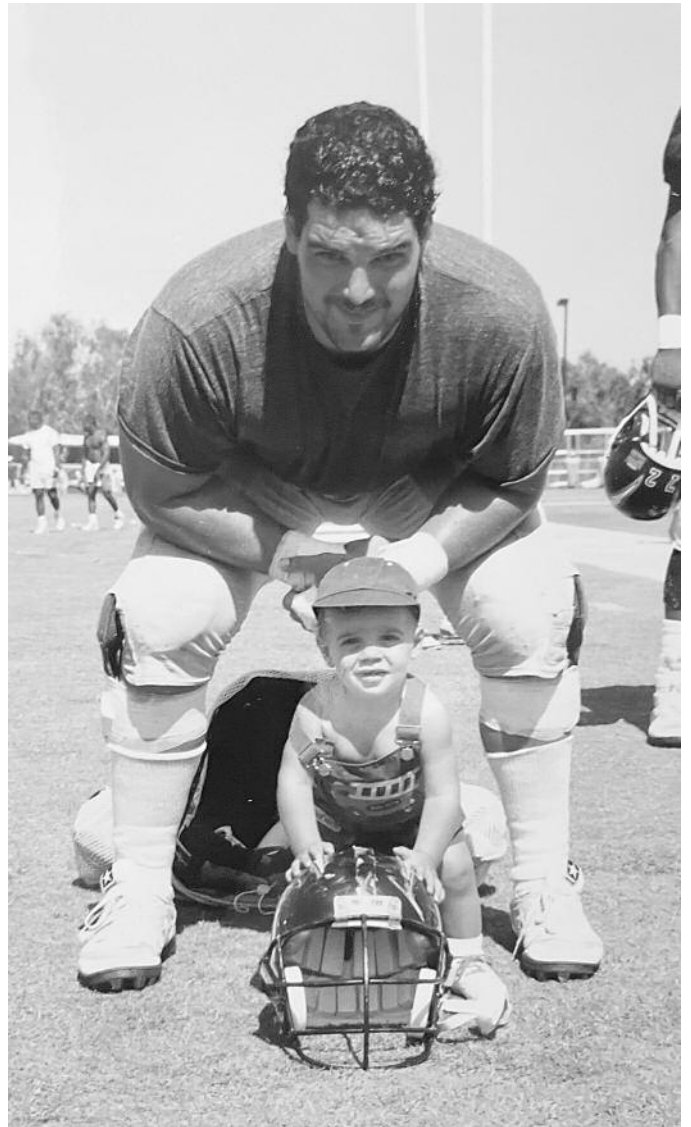
### ***Earning His Place—The NFL***

The 1987 season brought the NFL players' strike. Rosado received a call to play for the San Diego Chargers replacement team. It was not what he had pictured for himself for making it onto a roster and the decision to join was a tough one. "I remember sitting in my seat on the flight to San Diego thinking, 'what am I doing?' but I also knew I wasn't done yet." The plane landed in California and the stage was set for his next chapter of his dream of playing in the NFL.

America despised nearly every one of the strike teams and San Diego was no different. Inside the stadium, the team was a band of brothers, most playing with more heart than talent, united by the game, and each with a different motive for joining the roster. But outside of the stadium, the players faced public hostility and were mocked in the media. "We were the most hated bunch of guys in the country," Rosado laughed. He also recalls stepping off the team bus at the stadium one morning and being called a 'greasy spic' by one of the striking Charger players who was present to ridicule the replacements. It brought back old memories but also fueled his resolve. He made his first start on October 4 at Riverfront Stadium in Cincinnati, and though it was not what he had envisioned, he was playing in the NFL. Three games and three wins later when the strike ended, Rosado was signed to the full roster of the San Diego Chargers.<sup>14</sup> He played in one post-strike game in 1987 and continued on with the team for the 1988 season training camp.

That season, Rosado moved to the permanent center position of the Chargers offensive line. The same team member who had resorted to racial slurs during the strike, continued his insults on Puerto Ricans and their heritage; Rosado simply smiled and stated, "at the end of the day, we both lined up on the same field." That year he appeared in 12 games, starting 11 of them, with his first official start against regular NFL competition on October 9, 1988.<sup>15</sup> It was a matchup against the Saints, just 48 hours after the birth of his first son, Diego. "It was an emotional moment," Rosado says. "I'd earned the right to line up with NFL starters and to hear the national anthem thinking about my newborn son. I wasn't a replacement anymore."

When Rosado became the first player of full Puerto Rican descent to start in an NFL game, he didn't think of it as breaking ground. "I was just trying to make the



MARY ROSADO

**Rosado with his son, Diego, during a San Diego Chargers practice.**

team," he says. "It wasn't until years later that I realized the significance of what I'd done." Rosado credits his Puerto Rican upbringing as the source of fuel for his drive to achieve his dream. It defined challenges of being different in that generation. Today, it is the pride of the culture that stays with him. "Puerto Ricans are my people." For Rosado, the title carries gratitude rather than ego: "Being first is humbling because everything I accomplished stood on the shoulders of the Latino players before me. They kicked open the door, and I was lucky enough to walk through it."

Rosado takes pride in how the game has evolved since his time. "I love seeing all the Latin names on the backs of jerseys now," he says. "And the flags or heritage details on helmets and shoes—it means people can take pride

and show who they are.” When he played, those displays weren’t allowed. “I always wore a white pair of socks with the Puerto Rican flag embroidered on them,” he recalls. “The first game when the equipment manager saw them, he made sure I double-taped my uniform socks over them and warned me that if they ever showed, the league would fine me.” He laughs at the memory now, grateful that today’s players can wear their roots with pride. “Back then I had to hide my flag,” he says. “Now our players can wear it on their sleeves—and that makes me proud.”

### ***His Post-NFL Career***

After his playing days, Rosado returned to the business world—this time with the same intensity he once brought to the line of scrimmage. He ran beverage operations and built winning management teams through leadership and culture, translating lessons from the huddle into the boardroom. Now an entrepreneur, Rosado applies that same drive across multiple ventures, including projects in construction materials and athlete empowerment.

Rosado, with his background in football and business management, was among several entrepreneurs who prepared for the NIL revolution in college sports. His newest mission is NIL4ALL™, a national organization helping college athletes—especially those from non-revenue sports, mid-major programs, and small colleges—benefit from their Name, Image, and Likeness opportunities. Rosado sees NIL4ALL™ as more than a business; it’s a mission. “When I played, there was no such thing as NIL,” he says. “Now we can give these athletes something I never had—control over their own story. It’s about showing them they don’t have to wait for the pros to be valued. My parents always taught me that every person has a story—if you’ll just listen. NIL4ALL™ gives athletes who aren’t the superstars a way to tell their story, share their journey, and turn it into meaningful opportunities.”

Rosado smiles when he thinks about how Puerto Rican culture keeps evolving—in music, sports, and family life. “A few years ago, we were on vacation, and my kids grabbed my phone to play some music from my playlist,” he laughs. “Next thing I know, they’re busting my chops for listening to Bad Bunny they couldn’t believe their old man had a rapper from Puerto Rico on his list.” It’s a lighthearted moment but one that captures

how much pride he takes in seeing Puerto Rican names everywhere—from the stage to the field. “Whether it’s an artist like Bad Bunny or a player with a flag on his helmet, I love seeing our people out there representing with confidence,” Rosado says. “It reminds me that every generation finds its own way to say who we are.”

Rosado hopes to bring the NFL to Puerto Rico one day, envisioning a preseason or all-star event featuring Latino players from around the world—a showcase of talent and pride for the island. “One day,” he says, “I’d love to see young Puerto Rican athletes and Latino players from every country competing on the same field, right there on the island—and maybe even a high-school version to give scouts and colleges a first look at our talent.” He adds, “I love seeing all the Latin names on the backs of jerseys now. And those little flags or heritage decals on helmets—it means people can show who they are.”

In addition to demonstrating that hard work can sometimes make a dream come true, despite the odds, Rosado takes pride in how the game has evolved since his time and the opportunities that Latin players have today. Rosado and the likes of Ron Rivera and others have helped show the way.

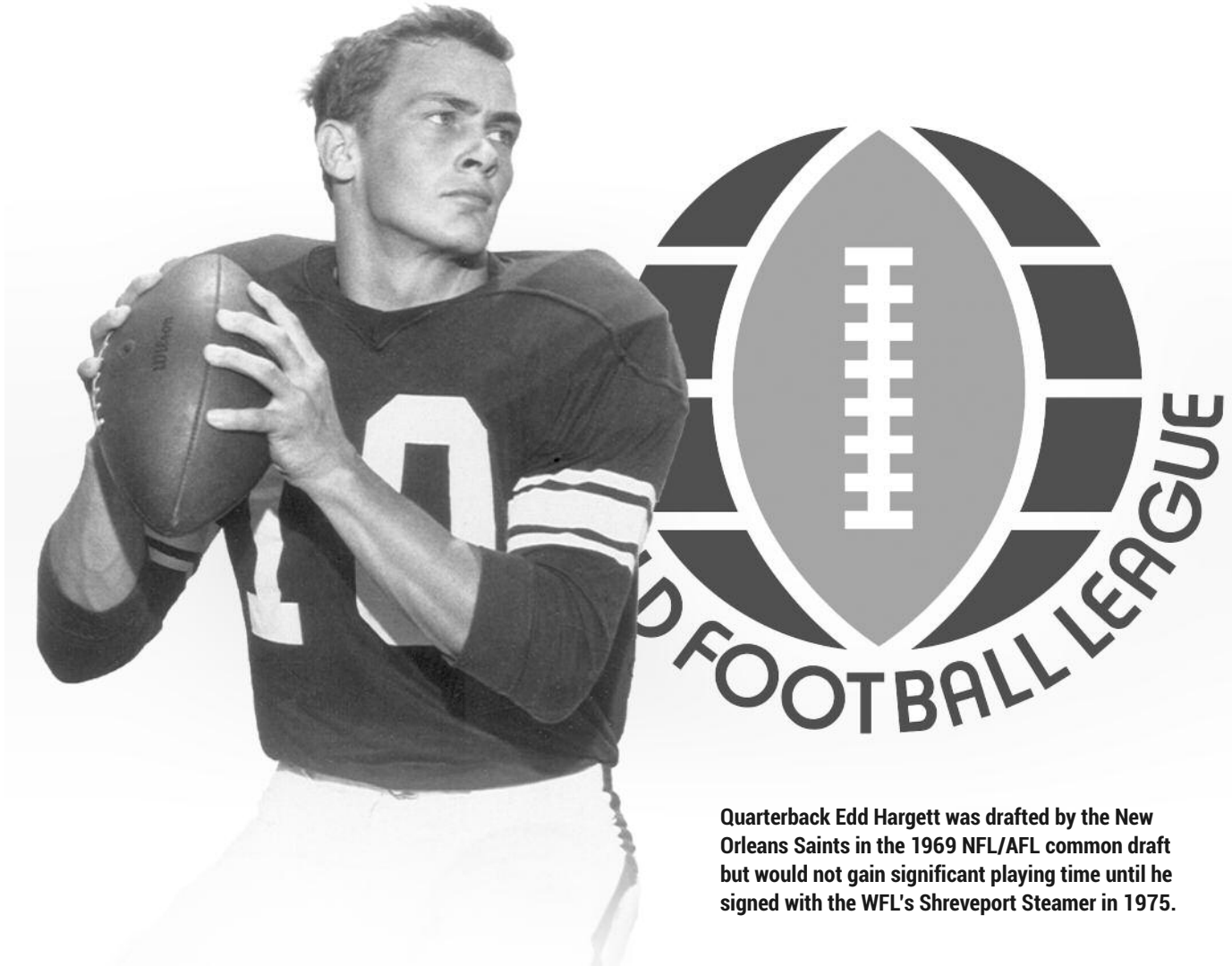
**MARY ROSADO** has been married to Dan Rosado for 44 years. She credits her husband with her love of the island and all things Puerto Rico.

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# The WFL, 1974–1975

## Youngsters and Vets Looking for One Last Chance



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY/WFL

**Quarterback Edd Hargett was drafted by the New Orleans Saints in the 1969 NFL/AFL common draft but would not gain significant playing time until he signed with the WFL's Shreveport Steamer in 1975.**

### Sean M. Miskimins

It had been barely half a decade since the AFL (American Football League) merged with the NFL. Gary L. Davidson, a businessman who had helped found the American Basketball Association (ABA) in 1967 and the World Hockey Association (WHA) in 1971 decided to try out his blueprint with a gridiron league, the World Football League (WFL).

As is often the case with ‘alternative’ leagues, the rosters were soon filled out with rookies and unheard of guys as well as NFL veterans who either desired a larger payday or a “last” paycheck. Others just wanted a chance

to “finally” get some playing time. What happened in the next one and a half seasons—the WFL didn’t finish out the 1975 season due to financial problems—was usually entertaining, especially on the offensive side of the ball. Many familiar names to NFL fans and football historians alike piled up a bevy of stats from their time in the World Football League.

Two quarterbacks who saw some newfound success in the WFL had both been on NFL rosters for a number of years. Edd Hargett had been in the NFL with the Saints from 1969 to 1973, backing up Billy Kilmer and then Archie Manning. His playing time had been scant. After being a backup for the Hawaiians in 1974, Hargett got a chance in

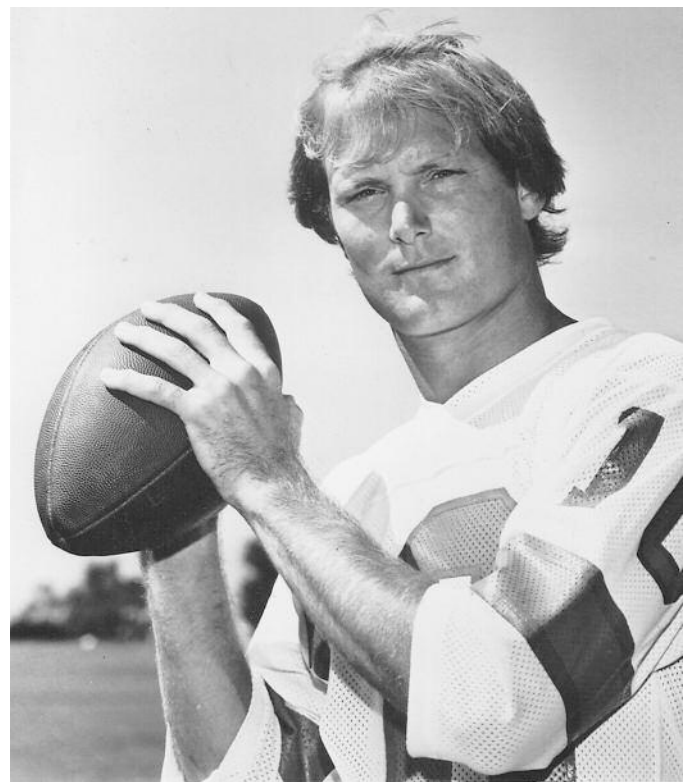
1975 to start for the WFL's Shreveport Steamer. He got to sling the ball around for the first time in his professional life. Hargett finished second in the WFL in pass attempts (288), completions (158), yards (2,100) and touchdown passes (15) and third in completion percentage (55%). Much like his time with the Saints, Hargett lost more than he won, going 5–9 with the Steamers. That was his football swan song, as he retired when the league folded in 1975.

Don Horn, like Hargett, had been backing up well-known NFL signal callers. Drafted by Green Bay in 1967, he held the clipboard behind the legendary Bart Starr for four years. He moved on, but his lone season as a starter (1971 in Denver) didn't go well. He threw just three touchdown passes while piling up 14 interceptions on a losing squad. Horn backed up in Denver and San Diego through 1974 before moving on to the Portland Thunder of the WFL in 1975. He was once again losing but his stats were his best as a pro. Horn finished second in the WFL in both completion percentage (58%) and total completions (158) and third in pass attempts (272) and yards (1,742). His yardage total for his one WFL season was roughly half of his career NFL total (3,400 yards). Horn also retired from football after the 1975 season. While Horn and Hargett had been "veterans" when they appeared in the WFL, there were plenty of much younger players who were appearing in the new league after having recently departed college campuses.

After a successful college career at Arizona State under Coach Frank Kush, the multi-talented Danny White showed up in Memphis after the Southmen took him in the 1974 WFL draft. As a pro rookie, White was unable to beat out veteran John Huarte, a Heisman Trophy winner from Notre Dame, and an AFL and NFL veteran who played from 1966 to 1972, for the job as starting quarterback for Memphis. Huarte showed skill in throwing 24 touchdown passes and averaging 15.7 yards per completion in 1974. White served Memphis as their backup quarterback and punter, where he averaged 41 yards per boot. Despite being the backup, White saw a fair number of snaps and threw 12 touchdown passes. Neither he nor Huarte were averse to putting the ball in harm's way as they combined for 25 interceptions (nine by White). In 1975, there was some more split time between the two, but that second year White got more time at quarterback than Huarte. The former Arizona State Sun Devil improved his completion percentage from 51% to 53% while also throwing 10 touchdown passes in the shortened 11-

game season compared to 12 in 20 games the previous year. His punting improved as well with a 45-yard average. When the WFL folded, White went to the NFL and the Dallas Cowboys, where he had plenty of time to "wait" behind Roger Staubach. Nonetheless, when he got his chance in 1980, he fared quite well, starting for nearly eight years for the Cowboys. He was a Pro Bowler in 1982 and went 5–5 as a playoff starter, as many wins as Len Dawson. White threw for 21,959 yards, 155 touchdowns and had a career passer rating of 81.7. White wasn't the only young signal caller from a western university to show promise in the WFL and later have NFL success. Pat Haden was another.

Haden had finished up quarterbacking the USC Trojans when he showed up for the local Southern California Sun after the 1975 WFL draft. Like White, Haden had to struggle to beat out other veteran quarterbacks, including Notre Dame and former Oakland Raider quarterback Daryle Lamonica. Haden proved to be 'the man' for the most part as he got the majority of the 1975 snaps for the Sun. He fared decently well for a young quarterback fresh from college. He threw for 1,400 yards and 11 touchdowns. Haden never had to move, staying in the Los Angeles and Anaheim area as he went from an East L. A. high school



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SUN

**Quarterback Pat Haden made the short trip directly from college at USC to the Southern California Sun of the WFL in 1975.**

(Bishop David) to USC to the Sun to the Rams. The Rams took him after the WFL called it quits and there he stayed through the 1981 NFL season. Haden was an NFL Pro Bowl quarterback in 1977 and part of the Rams' Super Bowl team (starting the first half of the season) in 1979. All in all, he threw for 9,296 NFL yards and 52 touchdowns.

Quarterback Randy Johnson had probably compiled more NFL stats (7,424 passing yards and 47 touchdowns) than any other quarterback who entered the WFL in 1974. The first quarterback in Atlanta Falcons history, he was the on and off starter there throughout the back half of the 1960s. By 1974, the 30-year-old gunslinger from Texas A & M-Kingsville had moved on from Atlanta and was largely in a backup role with the New York Giants. He signed on with the Hawaiians for the 1974 WFL season. Johnson didn't win the starter's job initially (Norris Weese did) but as the Hawaiians started the season 1-7, Johnson began to get more time and opportunities. He helped lead the team to an 8-4 finish and an overall 9-11 record, good enough to make the WFL playoffs. Coaches and players in the league voted him the first-team WFL quarterback after he threw for 1,368 yards and 11 touchdowns on a 54.6% completion rate. NFL general managers and coaches must have also been impressed, as the Redskins signed him for 1975. Johnson would also play in the NFL with the Packers in 1976 before retiring from football.

While Johnson showed he still had 'game,' ex-NFL veteran George Mira was excited to finally get his chance to show he could play. Drafted into the NFL out of the University of Miami in 1964, he had spent a decade in the NFL backing up the likes of Norm Snead, John Brodie, Billy Kilmer and Bob Griese. Mira had left the NFL after 1971 and played two years in the Canadian Football League (CFL). By the time he landed in the WFL in 1974, despite a long career, Mira didn't even have 150 NFL completions to his name. Much like the aging John Huarte in Memphis, Mira showed the Birmingham fans that he too could push the ball down the field. He finished second in the WFL in yards per completion in 1974 at 14.5. While he threw the ball downfield, his accuracy could be questioned. Mira only completed 49% of his passes and threw 17 touchdown passes but also had 15 interceptions. Nonetheless, the formula worked. The Americans came out of the gate 10-0 before finishing with a 15-5 record. After two tight playoff wins, Mira and the Birmingham Americans were the World League Champions when they won the World Bowl over the

Florida Blazers, 22-21. Mira was voted the game's MVP, despite completing only five passes for 90 yards. Perhaps for the first time in his professional life, Mira was marketable and "wanted." The Jacksonville Express signed him away from Birmingham for the 1975 WFL season. Jacksonville went 6-5, by the time the league folded, an improvement over the 4-10 Jacksonville Sharks from the year before. Mira's stats were very similar to those of the previous season. He completed 48% of his passes while throwing 12 touchdown passes and being intercepted 12 times. Still, 1975 saw a vast improvement in his yards per game passing, from 125 to 168. After the WFL went by the wayside, Mira returned to Canada in 1977 for one more year, retiring after the 1977 season.

There were more than just quarterbacks showing off their young talents in the WFL. Probably no star shone brighter than wide receiver Alfred Jenkins. He darn near dominated the passing scene in the WFL's inaugural 1974 season. Undrafted by any NFL team after he came out of Morris Brown University (in Georgia) in 1974, he signed with Birmingham and made a name for himself. He led the WFL in receiving with 1,326 yards and was second in touchdown catches with 12. Jenkins was voted first team All-WFL by the players and coaches and was signed after the season by the NFL's Atlanta Falcons. He quickly showed that the WFL wasn't the only place where he 'belonged.' Once Steve Bartkowski hit Atlanta a couple years after Jenkins, the Falcons of the early 1980s showed that their offense was not to be trifled with. Jenkins, right alongside running back William Andrews, helped pace that offense. Jenkins was in the Pro Bowl in both 1980 and 1981 (for the playoff-bound Falcons) and led all NFL wideouts in receiving yards in 1981. From 1975 to 1983 he played in 110 NFL games—starting every one of them. He finished his career with 360 catches, 40 touchdowns and 6,267 yards, a far cry for the guy who never got his name called on draft night.

The WFL was not just built on the backs of exciting young players. Aging veterans who had seen some good times in the NFL were also to be found in the "new" league. Whether they were there for "one more paycheck" or to prove to NFL general managers that they "still had something left" the stakes were different for the over-30 crowd. One such player who had been a known commodity in the NFL years before was running back Jim Nance.

Nance had starred at Syracuse University before entering the AFL in 1965. He was such a powerful "bowling



**Running back Jim Nance began his career with the Patriots before joining the WFL's Houston Texans/Shreveport Steamer in 1974.**

ball” runner that by 1966 he was the unanimous choice for AFL MVP after he rushed for 1,458 yards with the Boston Patriots. He stayed in the combined league after the AFL and NFL merged, all the way through 1973. Nance hadn't quite stuck with the early promise he had showed in Boston. Nonetheless he had amassed over 5,400 career rushing yards and a 4.0 yards per carry career average. Unhappy about playing another season with the Jets after having joined them in 1973, he opted for the WFL when they came calling. Nance landed down south with the Houston Texans (who soon became the Shreveport Steamer). In 1974 he played in all 20 games, rushing for 1,240 yards and eight touchdowns. The following year he played in all 12 of the Steamer's games in the shortened season. His 1975 totals were 767 yards rushing and seven touchdowns. By the time the league folded, the 33-year-old running back would finish as the WFL's all-time leading rusher with 2,007 yards in two seasons. He retired from football after the 1975 WFL season despite his recent successes. Truly, Nance did have something left in his tank. He wasn't the only one.

Of course, with any fledgling pro league, the stories and career arcs are not all about rebirth or young

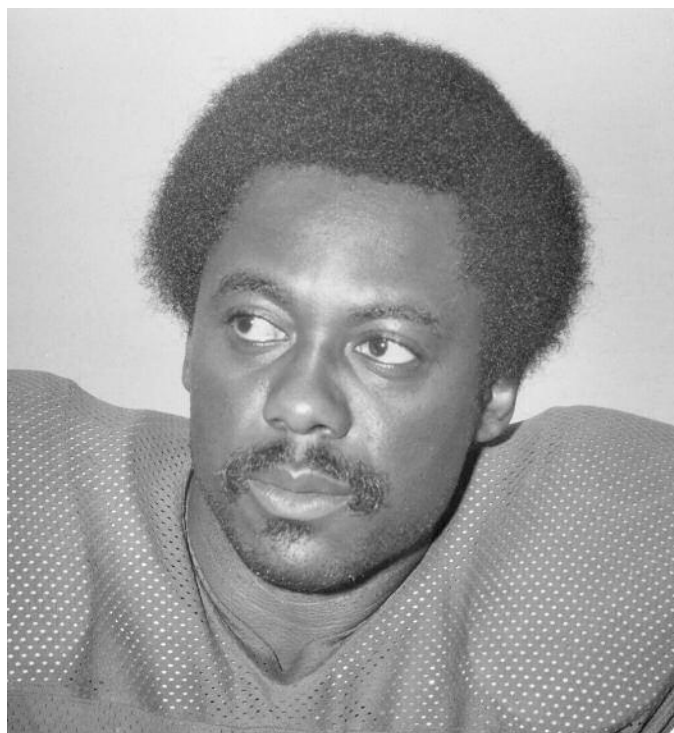
prospects taking flight. Take for example the ex-USC running back Anthony Davis. “AD,” as he was known, was a two-sport star at USC (baseball being his other talent). After being named the Pac-8 Conference's first team running back three years running from 1972 to 1974, he was also named first team All-American after his 1974 campaign for the men of Troy. Despite that, he wasn't picked until the second round of the NFL draft (by the Jets) and opted to chase the money being offered by the WFL for the 1975 season. (Major League Baseball's Minnesota Twins also picked him in their spring 1975 draft but they couldn't meet his contract demands.) Like his ex-USC teammate Pat Haden, Davis got to stay home too, and played for the Southern California Sun. His pro career started off quite promising. Davis led the WFL in scoring (133 points on 16 rushing touchdowns). He also rushed for 1,200 yards on just 239 carries—a gaudy average of 5.0 yards per carry. Despite his exploits, the Sun was only 7–5 when the league folded.

Davis then headed north, to Toronto and the CFL, where he became that league's first million-dollar player. He didn't live up to the billing. Davis rushed for only 417 yards and four touchdowns as he clashed with his coach. When the newly minted Tampa Bay Buccaneers snatched Davis up in the NFL's 1976 expansion draft, it seemed to be the escape plan he was waiting for. Not only was he trading snowy Toronto for sunny Florida, but Tampa Bay's coach was none other than AD's college coach John McKay. It seemed to be a nice match in Tampa. Davis's year in Canada also meant he missed the Bucs 0–14 opening year—a year in which their paltry offense didn't even average nine points per game. However, not everything was always sunny in Florida. Despite improving to 2–12 in 1977, the Bucs offense struggled even more, dipping from 8.9 points per game down to 7.4. This was reflected in Davis's run totals. He rushed 95 times for only 297 yards (a 3.1 average) and one touchdown. In 1978, having left Tampa Bay and coach McKay, he landed first in Houston and then back home with the L. A. Rams. Davis suffered injuries and only carried the ball three times for seven yards that year. He called it quits (although he briefly played for the USFL's L. A. Express five years later in 1983, rushing for 32 yards) from the game of football.

Other players from the WFL who achieved some level of success in the NFL, but not like they had in the World Football League, were wideout Ike Harris and running

back Cyril Pinder. In Pinder's case, injuries were often the culprit. Drafted into the NFL in 1968 out of Illinois, Pinder often found himself in a supporting role in Philadelphia. However, when he got an opportunity in 1970, he shined with the Eagles. He was the team's leading rusher with 657 yards. As he moved on to both the Bears and Cowboys in the early 1970s, knee injuries began to plague the former Illini back. His six-year NFL totals were 72 games played and 1,700 yards rushing. In 1974 he signed with the Chicago Fire of the WFL. It was like 1970 all over again. Pinder was healthy and ran well as he rushed for 925 yards and eight touchdowns and the Fire looked great out of the gate, winning seven of their first nine. However, as team injuries, and dwindling attendance caused their owner to question the league's president, Gary Davidson, things went south quickly—way south! The Fire lost their last 11 games to finish 7–13 and out of the playoffs. In one seven-week stretch during the streak, they were outscored 288–119 and their “D” gave up 41 points per game during that stretch. Pinder retired from football after 1975.

While bad knees had hurt Cyril Pinder's NFL production, teammates and opportunity may have been the downfall of Ike Harris. Harris joined the WFL out of Iowa State and shined in 1974 with the Southern California



CHICAGO BEARS

**Running back Cyril Pinder began his oft-injured football career in the NFL and played for several teams before he signed with the WFL's Chicago Fire in 1974.**

Sun. Harris hauled in 53 passes for 928 yards and that production was enough to garner NFL interest—especially that of Cardinals head coach Don Coryell. By 1975, Harris was in St. Louis with the Cardinals and the Air Coryell offense. Under Coryell's system, the ball got spread around with Pat Tilley, Terry Metcalf, Mel Gray and the like, but even with those excellent players, Harris still produced. Although he had just 15 catches in 1975, Harris soared to 52 (leading all Cardinals receivers) in 1976 and 40 in 1977. Even after he inked a free agent deal with the hapless Saints, he snagged 40 passes for New Orleans in 1978. However, as the 1970s were ending and the 1980s dawning, the Saints' ineptitude was worsening. Over his last three NFL seasons in the Crescent City, Harris caught only 64 combined passes, bringing his NFL total to 211 catches over a seven-year career. He retired after the 1981 season.

All in all, the WFL's one-and-a-half season existence was not short on big names and star power. Who can forget Memphis in 1974 when they inked the Dolphin's Jim Kiick, Larry Csonka and Paul Warfield to a combined \$3.5 million dollar contract to start playing in 1975. Csonka and Warfield were largely already Canton-bound when they agreed to this deal, and each returned to play a couple more NFL years after the 1975 WFL season. The end of the story, as with that of any pro football league, is to celebrate and acknowledge those that did achieve. All the men mentioned produced in the WFL's 1974–1975 seasons...regardless of what they had or had not done during their time in the NFL.

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# ◆ 2025 PLAYER DEATHS ◆

PLAYER	TEAM (LEAGUE)	DATE, LOCATION	AGE
Al Andrews	1970–71 Buffalo Bills	11/20, Snellville, GA	80
George Atkinson	1968–77 Oakland Raiders (AFL/NFL), 1979 Denver Broncos	10/27, Savannah, GA	78
Stew Barber	1961–69 Buffalo Bills (AFL)	6/11, Mount Pleasant, SC	85
Billy Ray Barnes	1957–61 Philadelphia Eagles, 1962–63 Washington Redskins, 1965–66 Minnesota Vikings	12/31, Landis, NC	90
Sebastian Barrie	1992 Green Bay Packers, 1994 Arizona Cardinals, 1995 San Diego Chargers	7/31, Gilbert, AZ	55
Mike Battle	1969–70 New York Jets (AFL/NFL)	3/6, Nellysford, VA	78
Dewey Bohling	1960–61 New York Titans (AFL), 1961 Buffalo Bills (AFL)	10/19, Albuquerque, NM	88
Marc Boutte	1976 New York Jets, 1976–78 Philadelphia Eagles, 1979 St. Louis Cardinals	3/2, Lake Charles, LA	55
Morris Bradshaw	1974–81 Oakland Raiders, 1982 New England Patriots	1/3, Alameda, CA	72
Bryan Braman	2011–13 Houston Texans, 2014–17 Philadelphia Eagles	7/17, Seattle, WA	38
Tom Brown	1964–68 Green Bay Packers, 1969 Washington Redskins	4/23, Salisbury, MD	84
Keith Browner	1984–86 Tampa Bay Buccaneers, 1987 San Francisco 49ers, 1987 Los Angeles Raiders, 1988 San Diego Chargers, 1990 Toronto Argonauts (CFL), 1994 Shreveport Pirates (CFL)	11/4, San Leandro, CA	63
Bob Brunet	1968, 1970–73, and 1975–77 Washington Redskins	6/26, Denham Springs, LA	78
Randy Burke	1978–81 Baltimore Colts	11/18	70
Bill Butler	1959 Green Bay Packers, 1960 Dallas Cowboys, 1961 Pittsburgh Steelers, 1962–64 Minnesota Vikings	11/28, De Pere, WI	88
Joe Carollo	1962–68 Los Angeles Rams, 1969–70 Philadelphia Eagles, 1971 Los Angeles Rams, 1972–73 Cleveland Browns	12/15, Carmichael, CA	85
Chick Cichowski	1957 Pittsburgh Steelers, 1958–59 Washington Redskins	3/24, Northbrook, IL	90
Earl Cochran, Jr.	2005–06 Amsterdam Admirals (NFLE), Houston Texans, 2009 California Redwoods (UFL)	10/31	44
Mike Collier	1975 Pittsburgh Steelers, 1977 and 1979 Buffalo Bills	2/16, Hagerstown, MD	71
Steve Corbett	1975 New England Patriots	10/30, Sudbury, MA	74
Bill Cottrell	1967–70 Detroit Lions, 1972 Denver Broncos	3/20, Solon, OH	80
Willis Crenshaw	1964–69 St. Louis Cardinals, 1970 Denver Broncos	10/21	84
Randy Crowder	1974–76 Miami Dolphins, 1978–80 Tampa Bay Buccaneers	5/21	72
Dan Darragh	1968–70 Buffalo Bills (AFL/NFL)	9/2, Sewickley, PA	78
Bill Demory	1973–74 New York Jets	2/14, Phoenix, AZ	74
Wayne DeSutter	1966 Buffalo Bills (AFL)	6/8, Columbus, OH	81
Bill Diamond	1963 Kansas City Chiefs (AFL)	12/20, Miami, FL	86
Marty Domres	1969–71 San Diego Chargers (AFL/NFL), 1972–75 Baltimore Colts, 1976 San Francisco 49ers, 1977 New York Jets	10/13, Baltimore, MD	78
Merrill Douglas	1958–60 Chicago Bears, 1961 Dallas Cowboys, 1962 Philadelphia Eagles	3/1, Sandy, UT	88
Kenny Easley (PFHOF)*	1981–87 Seattle Seahawks	11/14	66
Nick Eddy	1968–70 and 1972 Detroit Lions	12/31, Modesto, CA	81
Doug Eggers	1954–57 Baltimore Colts, 1958 Chicago Cardinals	6/3, Laurel, MD	94
Chuck Ehin	1983–87 San Diego Chargers	4/29, Naples, FL	63
Jim Fahnhorst	1984–90 San Francisco 49ers	9/17, Minnetonka, MN	66
Bill Ferrario	2002 Green Bay Packers	9/24, Wassau, WI	47
Bob Fisher	1980–81 Chicago Bears	2/14, Crown Point, IN	66
Ray Fisher	1959 Pittsburgh Steelers	4/4, Fairfield, IL	91
Jim Flanigan	1967–70 Green Bay Packers, 1971 New Orleans Saints	12/26, Iron River, MI	80
Paul Flatley	1963–67 Minnesota Vikings, 1968–70 Atlanta Falcons	3/15, Richmond, IN	84

PLAYER	TEAM (LEAGUE)	DATE, LOCATION	AGE
Garrett Ford, Sr.	1968 Denver Broncos (AFL)	12/14, Charlotte, NC	80
Bobby Franklin	1960–66 Cleveland Browns	5/13, Senatobia, MS	88
Derrick Gaffney	1978–84 and 1987 New York Jets	3/17, Jacksonville, FL	69
Dave Gallagher	1974 Chicago Bears, 1975–76 New York Giants, 1978–79 Detroit Lions	1/20, Columbus, IN	73
Eddie Garcia	1983–84 Green Bay Packers	6/5, Poygan, WI	66
Ron Gardin	1970–71 Baltimore Colts, 1971 New England Patriots	4/4, Phoenix, AZ	80
Robert Giblin	1975 New York Giants, 1977 St. Louis Cardinals	2/19, Port Neches, TX	72
Oliver Gibson	1995–98 Pittsburgh Steelers, 1999–2003 Cincinnati Bengals	6/29	53
Larry Glueck	1963–65 Chicago Bears	9/2, Falmouth, MA	84
Bruce Gossett	1964–69 Los Angeles Rams, 1970–74 San Francisco 49ers	1/28, New York, NY	80
Lamont Green	1999 Atlanta Falcons	7/14, Miami, FL	49
Ken Hall	1957–58 Edmonton Eskimos (CFL), 1959 Chicago Cardinals, 1960–61 Houston Oilers (AFL), 1961 St. Louis Cardinals	3/14	89
Don Hasselbeck	1977–83 New England Patriots, 1983 Los Angeles Raiders, 1984 Minnesota Vikings, 1985 New York Giants	4/14, Nashville, TN	70
Ralph Heck	1963–65 Philadelphia Eagles, 1966–68 Atlanta Falcons, 1969–71 New York Giants	5/25, Acworth, GA	83
Karl Henke	1968 New York Jets (AFL), 1969 Boston Patriots (AFL)	8/21, Oxnard, CA	80
Eddie Hill	1979–80 Los Angeles Rams, 1981–84 Miami Dolphins	2/23	67
Chuck Hinton	1968 New York Giants	6/21, Flowood, MS	82
Bob Holladay	1956 Los Angeles Rams, 1956–57 San Francisco 49ers	4/2, Natchitoches, LA	93
Billy Howton	1952–58 Green Bay Packers, 1959 Cleveland Browns, 1960–63 Dallas Cowboys	8/4, Houston, TX	95
John Huard	1967–69 Denver Broncos (AFL), 1971 New Orleans Saints, 1973 Montreal Alouettes (CFL), 1973–75 Toronto Argonauts (CFL)	1/29, South Portland, ME	80
Dick Jauron	1973–77 Detroit Lions, 1978–80 Cincinnati Bengals	2/8, Swampscott, MA	74
John Johnson	1963–68 Chicago Bears, 1969 New York Giants	2/20, Chicago, IL	83
Rudi Johnson	2001–07 Cincinnati Bengals, 2008 Detroit Lions	9/23, Miami, FL	45
Arthur Jones	2010–13 Baltimore Ravens, 2014 and 2016 Indianapolis Colts, 2017 Washington Redskins	10/3, Pompey, NY	39
Calvin Jones	1994–95 LA/Oakland Raiders, 1996 Green Bay Packers	1/22, Omaha, NE	54
Lee Roy Jordan	1963–76 Dallas Cowboys	8/30, Dallas, TX	84
Ernie Kellerman	1966–71 Cleveland Browns, 1972 Cincinnati Bengals, 1973 Buffalo Bills	2/5, Chagrin Falls, OH	81
Bob Kelley	1955–56 Philadelphia Eagles, 1957–58 Hamilton Tiger-Cats (CFL)	6/26, Salinas, CA	95
Steve Kiner	1970 Dallas Cowboys, 1971 and 1973 New England Patriots, 1974–78 Houston Oilers	4/24, Palm Harbor, FL	77
Marshawn Kneeland	2024–25 Dallas Cowboys	11/8, Frisco, TX	24
Bill Krisher	1958 Pittsburgh Steelers, 1960–61 Dallas Texans (AFL)	7/29, Dallas, TX	89
Rudy Kuechenberg	1965 Philadelphia Bulldogs (ConFL), 1967–69 Chicago Bears, 1970 Cleveland Browns, 1970 Green Bay Packers, 1971 Atlanta Falcons, 1974 Chicago Fire (WFL)	12/15, Cape Coral, FL	82
Myron Lapka	1980 New York Giants, 1982–83 Los Angeles Rams	10/13, Vancouver, WA	69
Dick Lasse	1958–59 Pittsburgh Steelers, 1960–61 Washington Redskins, 1962 New York Giants, 1963 Hamilton Tiger-Cats (CFL)	4/28, New Brighton, PA	89
Jerry Latin	1975–78 St. Louis Cardinals, 1978 Los Angeles Rams	2/19, Rockford, IL	71
D. D. Lewis	1968 and 1970–81 Dallas Cowboys	9/16, Plano, TX	79
Michael LeBlanc	1987 New England Patriots	12/16, Houston, TX	63
Bob Lingenfelter	1977 Cleveland Browns, 1978 Minnesota Vikings	1/29, Plainview, NE	70
Mark Lomas	1970–74 New York Jets	6/4, Brighton, CO	76
Bob Long	1964–67 Green Bay Packers, 1968 Atlanta Falcons, 1969 Washington Redskins, 1970 Los Angeles Rams	3/16, Brookfield, WI	82
Woodrow Lowe	1976–86 San Diego Chargers	11/6, Collierville, TN	71
Nick Mangold	2006–16 New York Jets	10/25, Madison, NJ	41

PLAYER	TEAM (LEAGUE)	DATE, LOCATION	AGE
Jim Marshall	1960 Cleveland Browns, 1961–79 Minnesota Vikings	6/3, Minneapolis, MN	87
Doug Martin	2012–17 Tampa Bay Buccaneers, 2018 Oakland Raiders	10/18, Oakland, CA	36
Pat Matson	1966–67 Denver Broncos (AFL), 1968–74 Cincinnati Bengals (AFL/NFL), 1975 Green Bay Packers	9/8, Cape Coral, FL	81
Al Matthews	1970–75 Green Bay Packers, 1976 Seattle Seahawks, 1977 San Francisco 49ers	3/8, Austin, TX	77
Jerry Mazzanti	1963 Philadelphia Eagles, 1966 Detroit Lions, 1967 Pittsburgh Steelers	1/18, Lake Village, AR	84
Don McCall	1967–68 New Orleans Saints, 1969 Pittsburgh Steelers, 1970 New Orleans Saints	1/17, Spring Hill, TN	80
John McCrumbly	1975 Buffalo Bills	10/29, Mansfield, TX	78
Rich McGeorge	1970–78 Green Bay Packers	12/20, Durham, NC	77
Ron McLean	1987 Denver Broncos, 1988 Kansas City Chiefs	4/14, St. Louis, MO	62
Steve McMichael (PFHOF)*	1980 New England Patriots, 1981–93 Chicago Bears, 1994 Green Bay Packers	4/23, Joliet, IL	67
Clifton McNeil	1964–67 Cleveland Browns, 1968–69 San Francisco 49ers, 1970–71 New York Giants, 1971–72 Washington Redskins, 1973 Houston Oilers	12/21, Mobile, AL	85
Warren McVea	1968 Cincinnati Bengals (AFL), 1969–71 and 1973 Kansas City Chiefs (AFL/NFL)	10/19, Los Angeles, CA	79
George Mira	1964–68 San Francisco 49ers, 1969 Philadelphia Eagles, 1971 Miami Dolphins, 1972–73 Montreal Alouettes (CFL), 1974 Birmingham Americans (WFL), 1975 Jacksonville Express (WFL), 1977 Toronto Argonauts (CFL)	12/9, Miami, FL	83
Charley Mitchell	1963–67 Denver Broncos (AFL), 1968 Buffalo Bills (AFL)	7/2, Seattle, WA	85
Don Morrison	1971–77 New Orleans Saints, 1978 Baltimore Colts, 1979 Detroit Lions	9/1, Wolfe City, TX	75
Greg Morton	1977 Buffalo Bills	1/23, Akron, OH	71
Andy Nelson	1957–63 Baltimore Colts, 1964 New York Giants	9/12, Glen Arm, MD	92
Pettis Norman	1962–70 Dallas Cowboys, 1971–73 San Diego Chargers	7/7, Dallas, TX	86
Frank Parker	1962–64 and 1966–67 Cleveland Browns, 1968 Pittsburgh Steelers, 1969 New York Giants	4/23, Plano, TX	85
Willie Parker	1967–70 Houston Oilers (AFL/NFL)	9/6, Bastrop, LA	80
Whitney Paul	1976–81 Kansas City Chiefs, 1982–85 New Orleans Saints	12/3, Houston, TX	72
Gerry Philbin	1964–72 New York Jets (AFL/NFL), 1973 Philadelphia Eagles	6/25, Jupiter, FL	83
John Pitts	1967–73 Buffalo Bills (AFL/NFL), 1973–75 Denver Broncos, 1975 Cleveland Browns	6/19, Braselton, GA	80
Bob Print	1967–68 San Diego Chargers (AFL)	9/28, Cleveland, OH	81
Joe Prokop	1985 Green Bay Packers, 1987 San Diego Chargers, 1988–90 New York Jets, 1991 San Francisco 49ers, 1992 Miami Dolphins, 1992 New York Giants	10/5	65
Don Oaks	1961–62 Philadelphia Eagles, 1963–68 Boston Patriots (AFL)	3/29, Roanoke, VA	86
Richard Osborne	1992–93 Los Angeles Rams, 1994–99 Washington Redskins	2/26, Bexar County, TX	71
Tom Rafferty	1976–89 Dallas Cowboys	6/5, Windsor, CO	70
Nick Rassas	1966, 1968 Atlanta Falcons	9/1, Salt Lake City, UT	81
Tommy Reamon	1974 Florida Blazers (WFL), 1975 Jacksonville Express (WFL), 1976 Kansas City Chiefs, 1977 Saskatchewan Roughriders (CFL)	5/22, Newport News, VA	73
Derreck Robinson	2005–06 San Diego Chargers, 2007 Miami Dolphins, 2009–10 Cleveland Browns	8/13, San Diego, CA	43
Lupe Sanchez	1986–88 Pittsburgh Steelers	4/28, Visalia, CA	63
Daryl Sanders	1963–66 Detroit Lions	10/5, Fort Myers, FL	84
Jim Schmedding	1968–70 San Diego Chargers (AFL/NFL)	2/15, Logan, UT	79
Gene Schroeder	1951–52 and 1954–57 Chicago Bears	1/29, St. John, IN	95

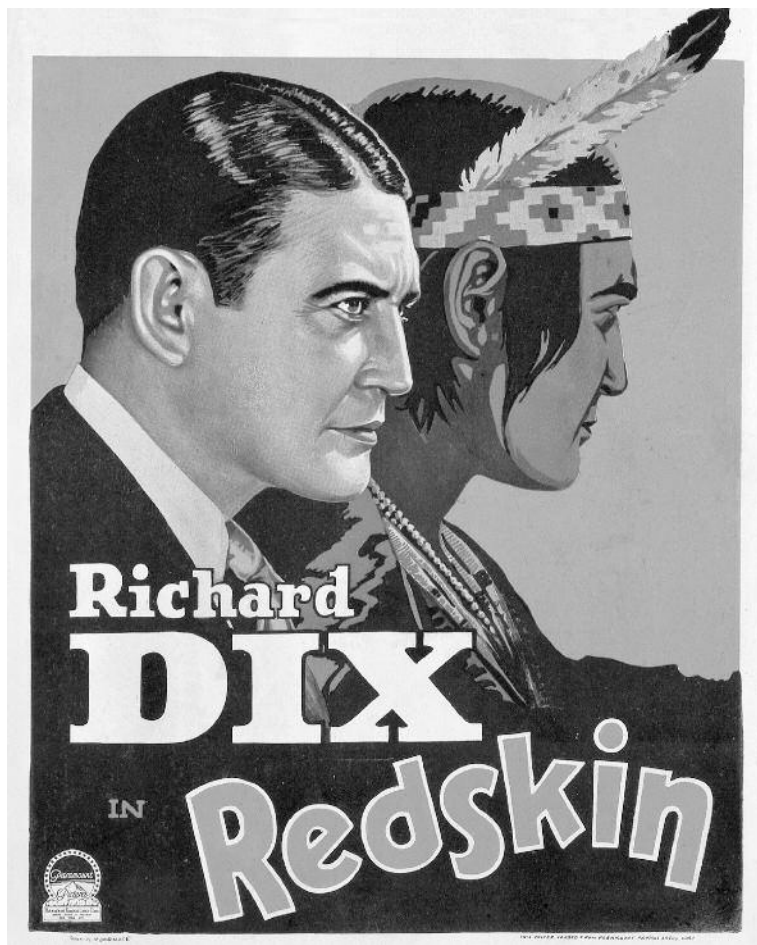
PLAYER	TEAM (LEAGUE)	DATE, LOCATION	AGE
Ray Seals	1986–87 Syracuse Express (EFL), 1988–90 Tampa Bay Buccaneers, 1990 Detroit Lions, 1990 Indianapolis Colts, 1991–93 Tampa Bay Buccaneers, 1994–96 Pittsburgh Steelers, 1997 Carolina Panthers	4/5, Tampa, FL	59
Luis Sharpe	1982–94 St. Louis/Phoenix/Arizona Cardinals	7/11, Michigan	65
Roger Shoals	1963–64 Cleveland Browns, 1965–70 Detroit Lions, 1971 Denver Broncos	6/30, Gladwyne, PA	86
Kenneth Sims	1982–89 New England Patriots	3/21, Waynesville, NC	65
Henry Sorrell	1967 Denver Broncos (AFL), 1968 Alabama Hawks (ConFL), 1969–70 Hamilton Tiger-Cats (CFL), 1971 BC Lions (CFL)	10/18, Talladega, AL	82
Len St. Jean	1964–73 Boston/New England Patriots (AFL/NFL)	5/26, Stoughton, MA	83
Jerry Stalcup	1960 Los Angeles Rams, 1961–62 Denver Broncos (AFL)	10/19, Rockford, IL	86
Stephen Starring	1983–87 New England Patriots, 1988 Detroit Lions, 1988 Tampa Bay Buccaneers	10/19, Orange, TX	64
Richard Stephens	1993 Los Angeles Raiders, 1995 Oakland Raiders	6/22, Cedar Hill, MO	60
Matt Stevens	1996 Buffalo Bills, 1997–98 Philadelphia Eagles, 1998–2000 Washington Redskins, 2000–01 New England Patriots, 2002–03 Houston Texans	3/20, Cary, NC	51
Tom Stolhandske	1953 Edmonton Eskimos (CFL), 1955 San Francisco 49ers	11/1, San Antonio, TX	94
Dan Sullivan	1962–72 Baltimore Colts	4/7, Haverhill, MA	85
John Tautolo	1982–83 New York Giants, 1987 Los Angeles Raiders	6/9, Moreno Valley, CA	66
Lionel Taylor	1959 Chicago Bears, 1960–66 Denver Broncos (AFL), 1967–68 Houston Oilers (AFL)	8/6, Rio Rancho, NM	89
Garth Thomas	1987 Seattle Seahawks	9/10, Bellevue, WA	61
Norris Thomas	1977–79 Miami Dolphins, 1980–84 Tampa Bay Buccaneers	3/7, Biloxi, MS	70
John Thornton	1991 Cleveland Browns	4/29, Montrose, MI	55
Ed Toner	1967–69 Boston Patriots (AFL)	8/28, Swampscott, MA	81
Bob Trumpy	1968–77 Cincinnati Bengals (AFL/NFL)	11/2, Glendale, OH	80
Navy Tuaiasosopo	1987 Los Angeles Rams	2/10, Phoenix, AZ	59
Gary Tucker	1968 Miami Dolphins (AFL)	2/4, Ooltewah, TN	79
Herschel Turner	1964–65 St. Louis Cardinals	1/18, Chesterfield, MO	82
Howard Twilley	1966–76 Miami Dolphins (AFL/NFL)	2/5, Dallas, TX	81
Olen Underwood	1965 New York Giants, 1966–70 Houston Oilers (AFL/NFL), 1971 Denver Broncos	2/28, Conroe, TX	82
John Vella	1972–77 and 1979 Oakland Raiders, 1980 Minnesota Vikings	4/1, Danville, CA	74
Tommy Vigorito	1981–83 and 1985 Miami Dolphins	5/13, Wayne, NJ	65
Dean Wells	1993–98 Seattle Seahawks, 1999–2001 Carolina Panthers	4/3, Louisville, KY	54
Clyde Werner	1970 and 1972–74 and 1976 Kansas City Chiefs	12/23	78
Bob White	1960 Houston Oilers (AFL)	5/7, Venice, FL	86
Ray White	1971–72 San Diego Chargers, 1975–76 St. Louis Cardinals	4/13, San Diego, CA	75
Paul Wiggins	1957–67 Cleveland Browns	12/12, Eden Prairie, MN	91
Erwin Williams	1969 Pittsburgh Steelers	8/30, Portsmouth, VA	78
Jerrold Williams	1989–92 Pittsburgh Steelers, 1993 San Diego Chargers, 1994 Kansas City Chiefs, 1996 Baltimore Ravens	11/7, Las Vegas, NV	58
Larry Williams	1986–88 Cleveland Browns, 1991 New Orleans Saints, 1992 New England Patriots	10/16, San Francisco, CA	62
Larry Willingham	1971–72 St. Louis Cardinals, 1974 Birmingham Americans (WFL), 1975 Birmingham Vulcans (WFL)	11/8, Birmingham, AL	76
Craig Wolfley	1980–89 Pittsburgh Steelers, 1990–91 Minnesota Vikings	3/10	66
Steve Wright	1964–67 Green Bay Packers, 1968–69 New York Giants, 1970 Washington Redskins, 1971 Chicago Bears, 1972 St. Louis Cardinals	6/1, Augusta, GA	82

PFHOF\* = Pro Football Hall of Fame  
AFL = American Football League  
CFL = Canadian Football League

ConFL = Continental Football League  
EFL = Empire Football League  
NFL = National Football League

NFLE = NFL Europe  
UFL = United Football League  
WFL = World Football League

◆ Thanks to Ken Crippen of the Football Learning Academy for his assistance in compiling this list. ◆



# Ten Things You Probably Don't Know About the Washington Redskins/Commanders

The 1929 film *Redskin* is the reason for one theory behind the controversial team name. The franchise has been known as the Braves, the Redskins, the Washington Football Team and the Commanders in its history since 1932.

**Mike Richman** \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. Origin of the Redskins Nickname.

There are three theories as to why George Preston Marshall, the founder and long-time owner of the franchise, chose the name Redskins. In 1932, its first season of existence, the team played in Boston and was known as the Braves. After the season, Major League Baseball's Boston Braves threatened to raise the rent for Marshall's use of Braves Field. He thus moved the team to Fenway Park, home of the Red Sox, and renamed it the Redskins, to suggest a kinship with the Red Sox. He also wanted to connect with a Native American theme similar to the Braves. Secondly, Marshall wanted to honor his new coach, William "Lone Star" Dietz, who identified as a part-blooded American Indian, although researchers have challenged Dietz's claim over the years. The third reason is that Marshall, who admired the courage and bravery of Native Americans, liked a 1929 silent movie called *Redskin*, which was sympathetic to the plight of Native Americans. Marshall's

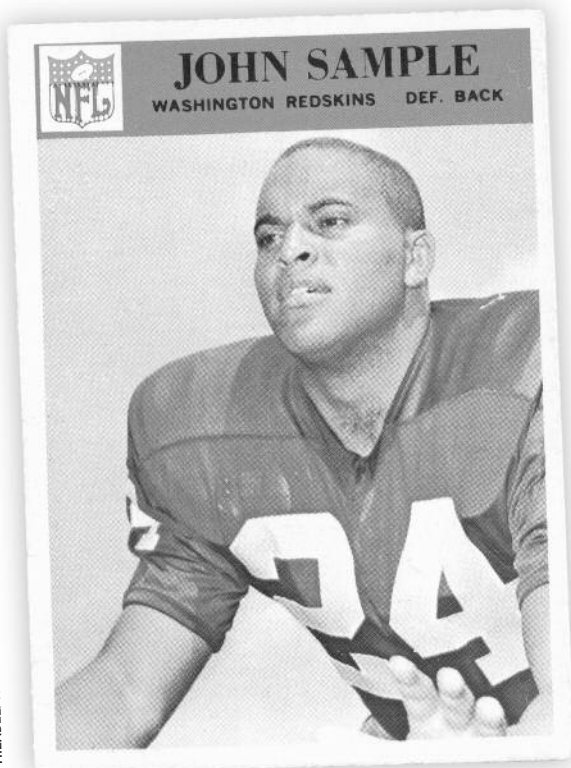
second wife, Corrine Griffith, was a silent film star, but she didn't appear in that movie.

## 2. The Marlboro Man.

Charlie Conerly, an Ole Miss quarterback drafted by Washington in 1945, was a "Marlboro Man," that rugged-looking cowboy used in ads by Marlboro cigarettes, after retiring from football in 1961. Conerly waited until 1948 to sign with the Redskins and was immediately traded to the Giants in what became one of the worst deals in Washington history. He had a solid 14-year career in New York, passing for two touchdowns in the Giants' 47-7 win over Chicago in the 1956 NFL championship game.

## 3. A Small but Famous Sample Size.

Defensive back Johnny Sample played for the Redskins (1963-65) in between stints with teams that captured the two most famous games in NFL history. He played for the Baltimore Colts in their 23-17 win over the



**Defensive back Johnny Sample began and ended his career for championship teams, just not for Washington.**

Giants in the 1958 NFL championship game, and for the Jets in their 16–7 upset of the Colts in Super Bowl III in January 1969. He intercepted a pass in Super Bowl III.

#### **4. QB Earns a Ph.D.**

Quarterback Frank Ryan, who wrapped up his 13-year career in Washington in 1969 and '70, earned a doctorate in the realities of higher mathematics at Rice University during his playing days.

#### **5. 'Dandy Don' Mocks the President.**

In a Redskins-Steelers telecast on November 5, 1973, ABC *Monday Night Football* sportscaster Don Meredith referred to Richard Nixon as “Tricky Dick,” the president’s less-than-flattering nickname from the ongoing Watergate scandal. Meredith, known for his outrageous comments in the broadcast booth, publicly apologized for the remark.

#### **6. They Called Him 'Stinky.'**

Guard Mark Schlereth, who played for Washington from 1989 to 1994, is believed to be the first native-born

Alaskan to play in the NFL. His teammates nicknamed him “Stinky” after stinkheads, an indigenous Alaskan delicacy made from rotting fish heads.

#### **7. Washington in Sack History.**

Hall of Fame defensive end and sack machine David “Deacon” Jones, best known as a member of the Los Angeles Rams’ “Fearsome Foursome” in the 1960s, claims to have coined the term “sack.” He played for the Redskins in 1974, the last season of his 14-year career. Fellow defensive end and first ballot Hall of Famer Bruce Smith, who played four seasons for Washington, broke the NFL sack record on December 7, 2003, with number 199 of his career total of 200. His victim was Giants quarterback Jesse Palmer, who starred in the reality TV series *The Bachelor* in the spring of 2004.

#### **8. Yankees Sportscaster in D. C.**

Mel Allen, one of the most celebrated sportscasters ever and the voice of the New York Yankees for a quarter



**Offensive lineman John Wilbur played for several teams in the NFL as well as the WFL's Hawaii Hawaiians, where he also coached and partly owned the short-lived team.**

century (1939–64), handled play-by-play on the Redskins' TV and radio networks in 1952 and 1953.

## 9. Washington Guard Goes Hawaiian.

John Wilbur, a Redskins guard from 1971 to 1974, was later a player, coach, and part owner of the World Football League's Hawaii Hawaiians—all at the same time.

## 10. Kilmer's Memorable Moments.

Billy Kilmer is best remembered as Washington's starting quarterback for most of the 1970s. But prior to that, he played a role in two of the most memorable moments in NFL history. In 1964, Kilmer was the 49ers' halfback who fumbled the ball that Vikings defensive end Jim Marshall scooped up and took 66 yards into the wrong end zone, giving the 49ers a safety. While playing quarterback for New Orleans in 1970, Kilmer completed a 17-yard pass in the final seconds to set up Tom Dempsey's record-setting 63-yard field goal that gave the Saints a 19–17 win over Detroit. "It was one of the best passes I ever threw in my career," Kilmer said of his completion to Al Dodd. "I hit it right on the money."

MIKE RICHMAN is the author of *The Redskins Encyclopedia*, the *Washington Redskins Football Vault*, *Joe Gibbs: An Enduring Legacy*, and *George Allen: A Football Life*. His web site is [www.mikerichmanjournalist.com](http://www.mikerichmanjournalist.com), and his email is [mike@mikerichmanjournalist.com](mailto:mike@mikerichmanjournalist.com).

### SOURCE

Richman, Michael, *The Redskins Encyclopedia*, Temple University Press, 2007.

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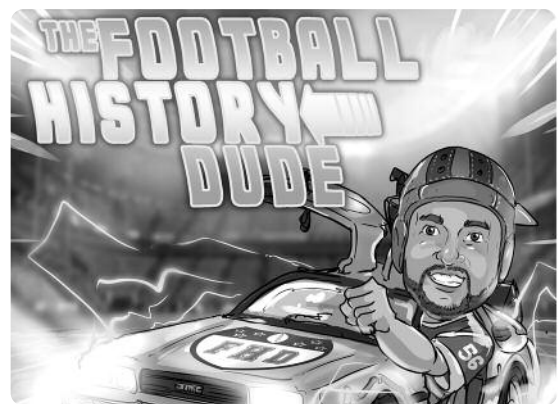
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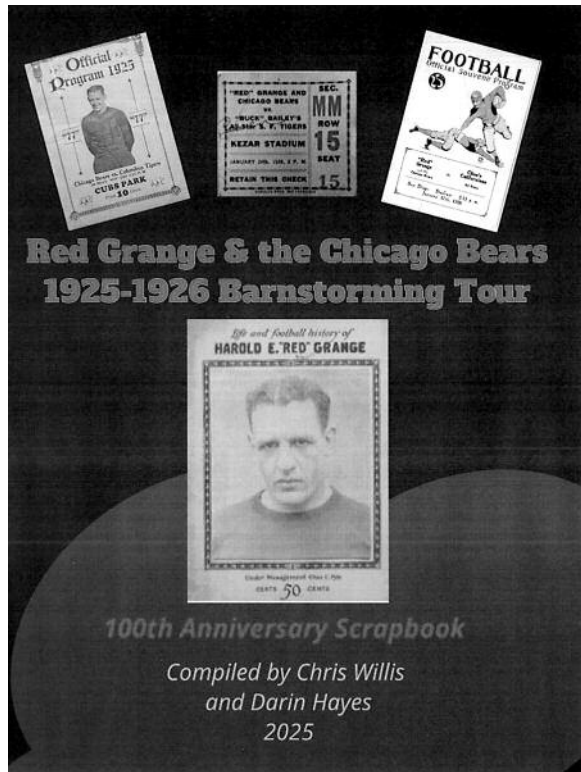


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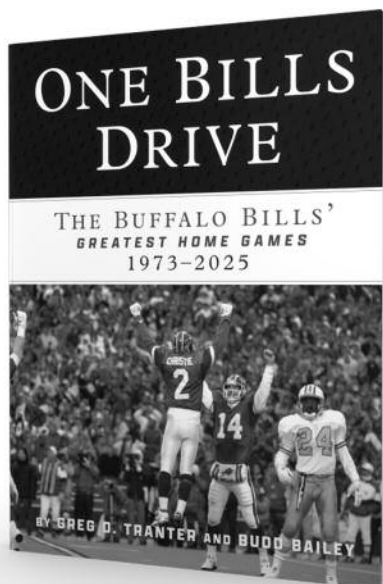
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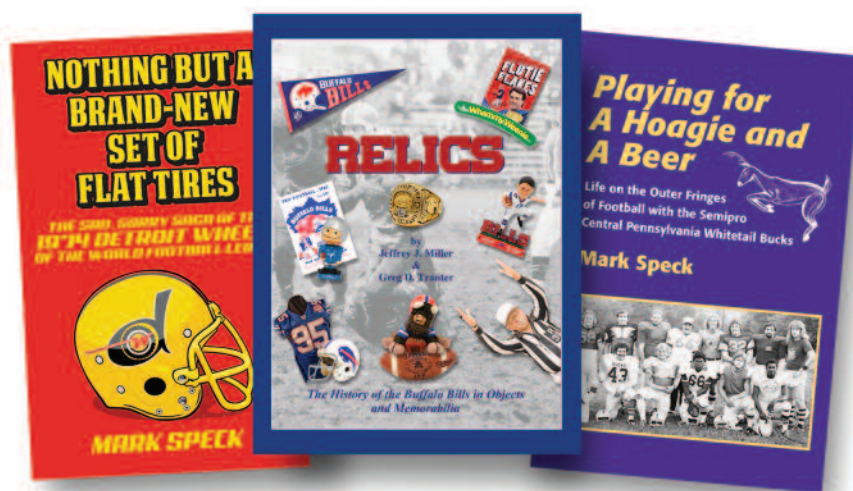
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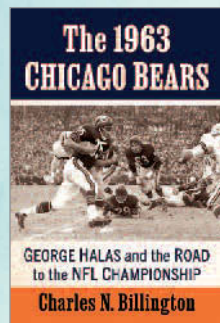
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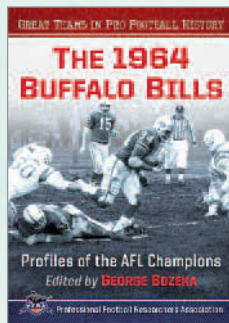
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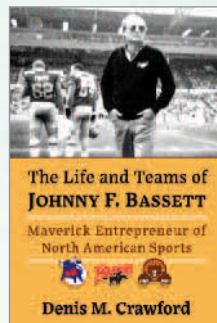
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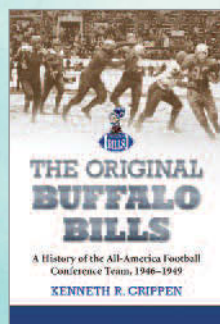
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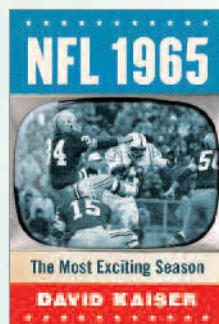
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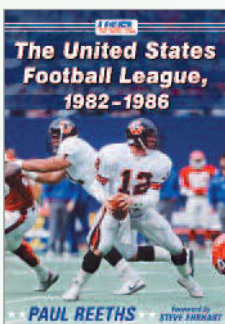
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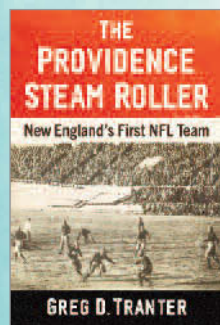
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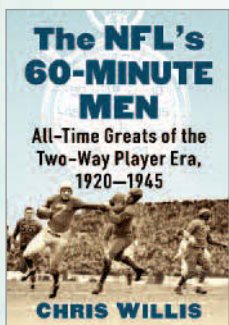
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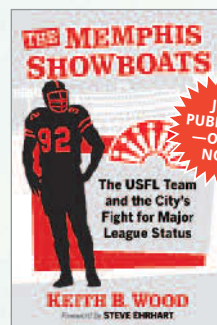
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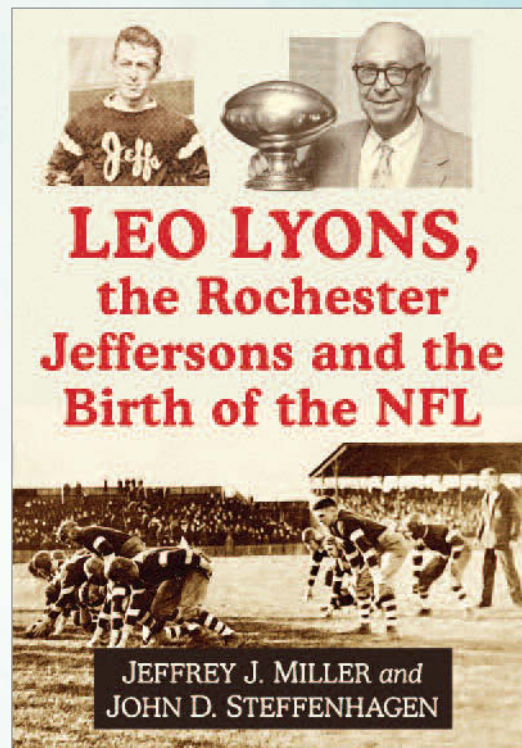
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