

# “A” is for Amateur

## The Amateur Condition of Football in the U.S.: 1890

By PFRA Research

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Officially, professional football began on a cold November day in 1892 when the best player in the world risked his pristine amateur status by playing a single game at Pittsburgh for what most pro footballers today would consider "walking-around money." That he was REALLY the "first" is about as likely as an attack of modesty in Buddy Ryan. Only the most trusting would believe that no one before our Pittsburgh pro had ever been paid to play football, but his case differs from all the rumored and whispered "others" in diverse parts of the country -- or in Pittsburgh, for that matter -- because it was not only suspected at the time but proved nearly 70 years later. And, lacking the unearthing of a pre-1892 canceled check, our Pittsburgh man will do nicely as the starting point for professional football's glorious and sometime inglorious story.

It almost didn't come off anyway. His opponents of the day took one look at him and left the field. Had it not been for the rhetorical skills of the man who'd coaxed the young superstar to Pittsburgh and for the common sense of all others directly involved, we might have to split hairs between the "first pro" and the "first pro player." Fortunately for linearity of narrative, the game was played, the star played in it, and the significant money changed hands.

However, the events which caused this epochal event began two years earlier.

### The World of 1890

Most of us who don't know any better -- and that surely is most of us -- imagine the era immediately preceding our hectic Twentieth Century as a time of relaxed gentility, opulent expression, and enlightened reason. The REAL good old days! It was, we think, a near-Camelot -- suffused in pink sweetness and soft amber light, free of all those annoying realities that make our modern lives something less than paradise-on-earth. But, social historians and lesser mortals who've taken the trouble to find out know full well the period called "The Gay Nineties" was not wall-to-wall joy. At best, it was a mixed bag.

True, no awful specter of The Bomb loomed sinisterly over the Victorian world, threatening to eradicate our tiny spot of human civilization with a casual push of a button. AIDS meant "helpers," and the ozone layer sounded like a new hen. On the other hand, science in those good ol' days impotently wrung its hands while typhoid, tuberculosis, polio, and other such bugs annually pruned the population. Life expectancy lurked somewhere under 50. Life quality graded lower. Imagine a summer in New York without air conditioning! Imagine no frozen orange juice!

Pollution hung heavy in 1890 air, and not just in steel-making cities like Pittsburgh, where smoke and grime generally made it

impossible to see the far side of the Monongahela River. Even in relatively smoke-free towns, the unpaved streets -- literally piled with evidence that the horse was man's major means of transportation -- could be crossed only with meticulous care of step and iron olfactories.

If you had enough money, of course, you could hire someone to cross the street for you. Well, some things never change.

Schools had no busing controversies then. They had precious little of anything. Students shared books, pencils, seats, body lice, and various skin maladies in "the little red school house." Many teachers had not even graduated from high school. Discipline spared neither the rod nor the child, and a "hot lunch" meant a kid put his brown bag on the coal stove when he arrived at school. He was lucky if he had something to put in the bag.

Those imperfections were of no consequence to an estimated 603,000 American children between the ages of ten and fourteen who were enrolled in no school except that well-known Academy of Hard Knocks. They were out working twelve or fourteen hours each day. It kept them out of trouble, said conventional wisdom. It also kept them out of sunshine, clean air, and childhood. Additionally, child laborers had a distressing habit of catching parts of themselves in their machines. Many Americans reached the age of twenty without being able to count their years on their fingers and toes, either for lack of education or for lack of digits. The U.S. illiteracy rate topped 13 percent. And that wasn't "functional illiteracy" either. 13 percent couldn't read "stop."

The remaining 87 percent might peruse Jacob Riis' newly published *How the Other Half Lives*, a far nicer way to learn about slums and ghettos than to visit them. Even nicer was to avoid the subject altogether and read one of the sentimental bestsellers of the day.

On a brighter note, William James' *Principles of Psychology* and the collected poems of Emily Dickinson were both published in 1890. America was fast developing an intellectual and literary reputation in the world. Mark Twain was an American. So was Henry James, although he didn't like to admit it.

He was the exception. Most Americans were chock full of pride in the amazing progress of their young nation and overflowing with confidence in its future. From thirteen struggling colonies, the United States had -- in little more than a century -- stretched into a colossus that spanned the continent "from sea to shining sea." The census bureau made it official in 1890 by proclaiming the "end" of the Western Frontier at the same time it announced the population

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now bulged at an impressive 62,947,714. For the first time, the U.S. surpassed Great Britain in pig-iron production. There were those who urged Uncle Sam to surpass John Bull in empire.

Indoor plumbing was becoming common, at least in eastern cities. So were electric lights. On August 6, 1890, convicted murderer William Kemmler had the honor of being the first person ever executed by electricity. That same year, the "Indian Problem" -- defined as scalplings and such -- was solved by the assassination of Sitting Bull and the Battle of Wounded Knee in which the gallant U.S. cavalry somehow managed to defeat an overwhelming force of old men, women, children, and a few braves. In 1889, Roper patented the steam automobile, and some people were even suggesting the possibility of flying through the air. No doubt THAT was a bit farfetched, but Whitcomb L. Judson invented the zipper and patented it in 1891.

Amid all this gee-whiz progress, small wonder that most Americans who didn't live in Mr. Riis' "other half" could gloss over any remaining unpleasantnesses as simply temporary annoyances to be solved soon by American Know-How. Today, the zipper! Tomorrow ...?

## A Long, Long Trail A'Winding

In August of 1890, a thirtyish actress named Zoe Gayton, or for professional purposes sometimes Zoreka Gaytoni Lopeazaro, walked out of San Francisco with the avowed intention of continuing on foot all the way to New York City. By doing so within 226 days, she could win a wager of \$2,000 and perhaps another \$10,000 or so in side bets. Pedestrianism was a major sport in the 1890s, although Miss Gayton, a.k.a. Lopeazaro, seems to have carried it to an extreme.

Over hill and over dale, Miss Gayton kept to her dusty trail, averaging 18 miles a day, rain or shine. At one point, she went three days without food. At another, \$70 was pilfered from beneath her pillow while she slept. The bloomers she began in were soon in tatters and she changed to an ordinary skirt, which proved "very inconvenient when the wind was blowing."

In March, 213 days out and with nearly two weeks to spare, she marched into New York City, ready and willing to collect her money. Getting back to San Francisco would pose no problem, she announced confidently. She would use her hard earned cash to form a theatrical troupe and tour all the way.

## The Sports Scene

The close of the American Civil War left thousands of restless young men with no more battles to work off their simmering energies. Industrialization brought a demand for spectator entertainments as millions of workers sought to take their minds off the boredom of their daily labors. Improved transportation made it possible to assemble multitudes for an afternoon's pleasure. Certain leaders -- Teddy Roosevelt was one -- championed the vigorous life as a remedy for too much Victorianism. Not surprisingly, sports of all sorts blossomed in the United States.

Newspapers began devoting columns and then whole pages to celebrating the latest athletic accomplishments. There was plenty to write about in 1890.

Track star John H. Owens ran the first sub-ten second 100- yard dash in a meet at Washington, D.C.

Oliver S. Campbell became the youngest ever to win the U.S. Tennis Singles at 19 years, six months, and nine days.

At San Francisco, Danny Needham and Patsy Kerrigan fought 100 rounds to a draw in six hours and 39 minutes.

Boating was popular. William Caffrey was tops in the single scull. Yale beat Harvard in their annual regatta for the fifth straight year. The first U.S. public golf course opened in Newport.

The first rodeo -- called a "cowboy tournament" -- was held in Denver.

A horse named Riley, ridden by a jockey named Murphy, won the Kentucky Derby in 2:45, the second slowest time ever.

The U.S. Polo Association was founded.

Of all the sports, baseball was king. And baseball "cranks" had more opportunities to see major leaguers in action than ever before. Too many! The year was a disaster for the National Pastime. Various excesses, excuses, abuses, and ruses by the team owners finally drove the players into forming their own baseball league. 1890 saw three major leagues vying for the fans' loyalties and dollars. The fifteen-year-old National League and the nine-year-old American Association had tradition and organization. The Players League had most of the stars.

Although there were three pennant winners, there were an even dozen second-division teams. Pittsburgh's National League club went 23-113 and finished 66 1/2 games behind pennant-winning Brooklyn. Small wonder they used some sharp practices the next year in acquiring a new second baseman, thereby earning the nickname Pirates.

Another second baseman, 24-year-old Bill Hallman, jumped to the Players League and brought suit against his old club, the Philadelphia Phillies. He charged that the reserve clause -- a section in the standard player's contract which bound him to resign with the club each year -- was a violation of his human rights. Not so, declared the court; Mr. Hallman and his fellow baseballers had sold themselves to their clubs for life.

By mid-season, most baseball fans were disgusted by all the infighting, charges, and suits. They began staying home in droves. Everybody in baseball lost money. The Players League collapsed after its only season. The crippled American Association struggled along for two more years and then went under. The National League survived, but it was years in getting back to normal.

Albert G. Spalding, sporting goods czar and owner of the Chicago N.L. club summed it up: "Not in the twenty years' history of professional club organizations was there recorded such an exceptional season of financial disaster and general demoralization as characterized the professional season of 1890."

With major league manpower spread thin over three leagues, some teams had to scrape the barrel's bottom. That may have been why

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the Cleveland Players League club chose to send 16-year-old lefthander William McGill to the mound on May 8 to face Buffalo. Surprisingly, the youngster won, 14-5, and went on to pitch in the major leagues until his retirement at the ripe old age of 23.

## A Newer Game

The fans' disenchantment with baseball in 1890 may have whetted their appetites for the football season, at least in the East. The autumn sport didn't approach baseball in popularity across the country, but then, it hadn't been around as long. If one counts from the soccer game played at Princeton and Rutgers in 1869 (which the N.C.A.A. insists on calling "the first intercollegiate football game"), football was 21-years-old in 1890. It was 16, counting from the soccer-rugby hybrid played by Harvard and Canada's McGill University in 1874. But AMERICAN football, with its system of downs and numerical scoring, was only seven-years-old.

Newspapers still tended to confuse the American version with soccer (or association football) or more often with rugby. As a matter of fact, many writers used the terms "football" and "rugby" interchangeably. Both American football and rugby, as well as soccer, were played on American fields, and the similarities outweighed the differences.

The ball used in American football was a rugby type, almost round. Kicking was emphasized, particularly dropkicking because of the shape of the ball. A goal from the field scored five points, while a touchdown was worth only four. If a goal was kicked after a touchdown, two points were added to the score -- the original two-point conversion. Safeties also counted two points, as they do now. The field was 110 yards long by 53 1/3 yards wide. The reason for the odd width goes back to an 1881 rule change. At that time, the field was reduced from 140 yards long and 70 yards wide. However, the dimensions were given in feet, 420 and 210. Because they were taking 20 percent off the length, the rulemakers chose a width to the round number of feet that would lop about 20 percent off the distance from sideline to sideline, making the new field 330 feet (from goal line to goal line) by 160 feet. Apparently no one cared that 160 feet changed into yards is the curious 53 1/3. The strange width proved quite satisfactory and was retained when the length of the playing field went down to a hundred yards in 1912. The goal posts on the goal lines had to be at least 20 feet high.

The system of downs -- the brainchild of Walter Camp and the most obvious difference between American football and rugby -- also differed from today's rule. In 1890, a team had only three downs in which to gain five yards or to lose ten before it had to give up the ball. Until Camp came up with this gimmick in 1882, a team could sit on the ball for a whole game, playing for a tie. So long as the team didn't fumble, there wasn't much an opponent could do but yell nasty names. Camp's system of downs kept American football from dying of boredom.

A game was divided into two 45-minute halves with a fifteen-minute intermission. This may seem like an eternity on the field to modern players, but time was stopped only for scores, injuries, and arguments. Actual playing time was far less than today. Teams could use up a minute and sometimes two between plays. If the ball went out of bounds or a player was tackled near the sideline, the next play began right there snug, against the line; hash marks

were more than forty years in the future. Teams had to use a precious play just to get the ball back toward the center of the field. The huddle would not be thought of until 1896 (and not widely used until years later). The quarterback called signals at the line in 1890, making every play an audible. When first used in 1882, signals were secret key words. For example, "Watch it now, FLOYD!" might mean a run off tackle. By 1890, numbers were in general use.

Arguments were an important part of strategy. A clever captain, seeing his team winded by their endeavors, could always pick some wrangle with the officials and give his boys a five or ten-minute breather. With the slow play and interminable arguments, games often stretched into the gathering autumn dusk. The referee was empowered to call a game when he believed it had become too dark to play.

During the '80s, most players wore stiff canvas outfits that laced up the front, completely encasing the athlete. These were called "smocks" after the reputed, though probably fictitious, inventor, one Ledlou P. Smock of Princeton. By 1890, fashion conscious teams were switching to soft felt "moleskin" trousers and turtleneck sweaters.

Pads of any kind were rare, and helmets were in the future. The Yale team somewhat compensated for this in 1890 by appearing crowned by extra long hair, a kind of natural headgear. The idea soon spread, and throughout the '90s football players could be recognized on campuses by their shoulder-length locks. The protection offered by long hair was questionable, but it certainly added a new dimension to tackling.

Another padding "breakthrough" occurred in 1890 when Princeton's captain, Edgar A. Poe (a reputed descendant of the poet), showed up for the Yale game wearing a nose guard, a piece of molded rubber covering the Poe proboscis. After much discussion over the novel device, he was allowed to play with a protected beak. By 1898, some schools were equipping every player with a nose guard, usually with mouthpiece attached.

Play was brutal, but substitution was rare because a player who left the game was out for good. The famous Yale team of 1888 went through thirteen games with eleven players and one sub.

In 1888, the low tackle was legalized. The unfortunate result of the change was it tended to make play more brutal and dull. Until then, teams used plenty of "open play," stressing laterals and backward passes (there was no forward passing allowed, of course) to the halfbacks who were set out wide like modern wingbacks. However, once it became legal to cut a man down at the knees -- often causing a lateral to sail untouched past his outstretched fingers -- teams moved the halfbacks in behind the line and concentrated on power instead of trickery.

No rule yet insisted that any particular number of men be on the line of scrimmage or that anyone be at a stop when the ball was snapped. Inevitably, teams found their way to mass and momentum plays -- such as the "flying wedge" -- wherein players were moved into the backfield to surround the ball carrier and everyone was at full gallop when the play started. Amos Alonzo Stagg took the first steps in this direction with his "ends back"

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formation at Springfield in 1890. Pretty soon there was a "tackles back" and a "guards back" and so on. By 1892, the flying wedge had arrived.

## DEE-fense!

A standard opening play in the late 1880s was the "V-trick," forerunner of the flying wedge. On the kickoff, players surrounded the ball carrier in a rough V-formation, locked arms, and churned forward, trampling anyone who got in their way. The play invariably produced a long gain. But, when undefeated Princeton tried it against equally undefeated Yale in 1888, the Tigers got a surprise. A freshman Eli guard named William Walter Heffelfinger, but better known as "Pudge," ran straight to the point of the V. At the last split-second, he leaped into the air, cleared the astonished blockers, and landed his two-hundred-plus pounds squarely on top of the Princeton ball carrier. Splat! Yale went on to win 10-0.

Clearly, young Mr. Heffelfinger was a player to be watched.

## The Big Four

College football was spreading westward by 1890. Washington and Jefferson, Ohio State, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, and a dozen or so other schools fielded their first varsities that year. Notre Dame began in 1887; Southern California in 1888.

But quality football -- first rate football -- IMPORTANT football -- was the exclusive preserve of four schools: Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and a school that was just coming up to football par with the first three, Pennsylvania. It was not sectional chauvinism at work when 129 out of 132 All-America berths between 1889 and 1900 were filled by players from those four schools. The best players were really there.

The college football championship each year depended on the results of games among the Big Four. In 1890, they had a combined mark of 41-0-1 against all other opponents. Yale lost their big game to Harvard 6-12, and then turned around and blasted Princeton 32-0. Both Princeton and Yale beat Penn. By avoiding games with Princeton and Penn and then slipping past Yale, Harvard won the year's football crown. In eleven games, they scored 555 points to their opponents' 12.

There were good reasons for the Big Four's football dominance.

In the first place, the Big Four had almost single-handedly invented the game during the last quarter of the 19th Century. The rules committees were made up of representatives of these schools almost exclusively. Nearly every new strategy on offense or new idea on defense began at New Haven, Cambridge, Princeton, or Philadelphia. Invariably, they played a game two or three years advanced over that played by anyone else. While the Big Four were V-tricking and guards-backing all over the field, some of their opponents were still trying to remember which way to run when someone handed them the ball.

Secondly, the success of their football teams in the '80s led naturally to more success in the '90s. A winning team was highly visible and brought alumni back to the alma mater in larger and larger herds each autumn. Of course, many loyal fans never had seen the inside of a college classroom, but they lent their cheers in urging dear old Whatever U. on to victory, right along with the guys

in the right ties. All the publicity attendant to victory influenced many young athletes in their choices of colleges. Pudge Heffelfinger, for one, came to New Haven from Minneapolis because of Yale's football fame.

Third, all four schools had large enrollments from which to draw their varsities. True, they were not the only big schools in the country, but they all had larger student bodies and more students with large bodies than such as Amherst, Wesleyan, or Rutgers, to name only three of the lambs that were annually slaughtered. While a single athlete at Wesleyan might be the equal of any one athlete at Yale, it was unlikely that eleven good men could be found at Middleton to match the best eleven mustered at New Haven.

And, finally, the coaching was better at the Big Four. In the '80s, most of the coaching was handled by the team captains, veteran undergraduates. Nevertheless, a few old grads always seemed to be available to show the new boys how it should be done. By 1890, three of the Big Four had official coaches: E.O. Wagonhurst at Penn, George A. Stewart and George C. Adams at Harvard, and the incomparable Walter Camp at Yale.

This combination of talent, enthusiasm, tradition, and knowledge led to victory after victory for the Big Four.

## All-America

As noted earlier, Walter Camp usually gets the credit (or blame) for inventing the All-America Team, but the mythical honor-eleven is one thing the "Father of American Football" did not sire. A gentleman named Caspar W. Whitney came up with the idea while writing for a small magazine called *This Week's Sport* in 1889. Whitney was a friend of Camp and may well have asked his advice on selections, but he was an authority on his own and published the first A.A. team under his own by-line.

In 1890, again for *This Week's Sport*, and from 1891 through 1896 for *Harper's Weekly*, Whitney continued to make his popular annual selections. Camp didn't get into the All-America business until 1897, when Whitney was off on a world sports tour. During the season, Sir Walter sat in for Whitney at *Harper's* when it came time to immortalize another eleven athletes.

The next year, Whitney was back at *Harper's* and later he made selections for *Outing Magazine*. However, once Camp had made the plunge he liked the A.A. waters, for he began selecting teams for *Collier's* and continued to do so until his death in 1925. Camp's reputation was so great that fans soon forgot all about Caspar Whitney. Eventually, people began to assume that Camp had created the idea, just as many people think Henry Ford invented the automobile. Whether intentionally or not, Camp fostered the mistake by publishing Whitney's 1889-96 selections alongside his own later ones. Unfortunately, he neglected to include Whitney's name.

For the record, Whitney's 1889 team was made up as follows:

Ends - Amos Alonzo Stagg, Yale, and Arthur Cumnock, Harvard  
Tackles - Hector Cowan, Princeton, and Charles Gill, Yale

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Guards - Pudge Heffelfinger, Yale, and John Cranston, Harvard  
Center - William George, Princeton  
Quarterback - Edgar Allan Poe, Princeton  
Halfbacks - Roscoe Channing and Knowlton "Snake" Ames, Princeton  
Fullback - James Lee, Harvard

## The Athletic Clubs

In 1890, the Big Four lost only to each other. No other school team could touch them. Princeton was indeed held to a tie early in the season, but not by a school team. The Tigers' equal in that game was the Orange Athletic Club.

Athletic clubs made their appearance following the American Civil War. The first was the New York Athletic Club, organized in September of 1868 by three young New York athletes -- William B. Curtis, John C. Babcock, and Henry E. Buermeyer. Their primary interest was in track and field. Curtis, who owned the only pair of spiked shoes in the city, took the initiative and organized a feeble indoor meet at the Empire Skating Rink before the winter ended. In the spring, a more ambitious outdoor meet at Central Park was a success and the N.Y.A.C. was on its way.

The success of the New York Athletic Club led to the establishment of other clubs around the city and soon throughout the country. Among the more prestigious were the Detroit A.C. and the Olympic Club on the west coast.

According to sports historian J. Thomas Jable, the emergence of the athletic club "was one outcome of America's transformation from an agrarian to an urban-industrial society. Sprouting within the industrial city was a new aristocracy -- one built on capital, the *nouveau riche*. Its ranks produced such industrial and corporate giants as Andrew Carnegie, Henry Clay Frick, Charles Schwab, John D. Rockefeller, Cornelius Vanderbilt, and J. Pierpont Morgan. This social class also found itself with increased amounts of leisure time. With these newly acquired resources of wealth and leisure, the *nouveau riche* enjoyed sporting events and patronized athletic clubs."

Most clubs began by staging track and field events. Soon, however, they attracted gymnasts, boxers, wrestlers, baseballers and footballers. A well-run club often specialized in one sport but fielded teams and individuals in several others for the amusement of its members.

But enjoyment of sporting events was not the only reason the New Rich joined athletic clubs, Jable insists. They "had an ulterior motive." In fact, for many, the "athletic" in a club's name might just as well have been a different word beginning with A -- Ascent. Jable continues:

*This class of socially conscious businessmen strived to reach society's highest echelon, and club memberships were a stairway to the top. Athletic clubs were on the lowest rung of the social club ladder. Membership in them was generally the first step toward gaining admission in the more exclusive Union Leagues and University Clubs or the top-level Metropolitan Men's Clubs. Members of the latter tended to dominate the*

*economy and social life of their respective urban areas. Eager to join society's elite, the New Rich sought admission to the exclusive clubs.*

*All this emphasis on social rather than athletic accomplishment soon created a catch-22 among many clubs. The wealthiest and most prominent of the New Rich usually joined the clubs which had the most success on the athletic fields. But that kind of success also drew members who were of only moderate means and middling social status. To keep out these less desirable members, a club could raise its membership dues. Unfortunately, many a fine athlete was also frozen out, precipitating a fall in the club's athletic fortunes. And, at that point, some of the prominent members would begin to drift to other, more successful clubs.*

The clubs wrestled with this problem through the late 1880s. By 1890, several had found a solution involving the creation of a class of "special athletic memberships." These were members "sponsored" by the club because of their superior athletic prowess. They were allowed to use the club's facilities and, more important, compete under the club's name and with the club picking up their expenses, but they were not allowed to vote or hold office.

In other words, these "special members" were only the tiniest step away from being hired athletes. The final step was to sweeten the pot, to add a financial inducement. Many critics -- usually members of rival clubs -- charged that this final step had actually been taken by this or that club in securing the services of that or this athlete.

## Getting Around It

Undoubtedly, some of the charges were true, but most clubs went to great lengths to preserve at least the appearance of fielding amateurs.

In 1934, erstwhile New York Giants president, Dr. Harry March, published what he called "a light-hearted history of the post graduate game" in *Pro Football: Its "Ups" and "Downs"*. The book was meant as the first full-length history of pro football. Dr. March was lively, readable, opinionated, and often just plain wrong about a lot of things, but the following tale, except for the coda, has the ring of truth:

*In the transition period, during which it was nearly impossible to distinguish between professionals and amateurs, there were some interesting developments which it might be worth noting.*

*For example, in 1890-91, there were a number of athletic clubs in and about New York, composed of well-known college men who played on various teams without a THOUGHT of monetary consideration. These teams included the Manhattan Athletic Club, the Orange Athletic Club in Jersey, the Crescent Club in Brooklyn, the Staten Island Club, and the Knickerbocker, which was a descendant of the Manhattan.*

*Snake Ames, Phil King, Parke Davis, until his death early in June, 1934, chief statistician for the Intercollegiates (and our authority for this particular*

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*phase of the transition) and Furness -- all of Princeton -- played on these teams, as well as many Yale men, whom Mr. Davis courteously forgot. The boys played for only expenses and a "trophy" -- all strictly amateur.*

*Now, here is the catch. The day after the amateur was presented with the "trophy," which was usually a pretty fine gold watch, one who cared to follow him would find him threading his circuitous way to some well-known pawnbroker where the watch was placed in "hock," the usual sum received thereby being a "saw buck;" in plainer words, twenty smackers. Then the player -- still strictly amateur -- somehow ran across the man who managed these amateur games and SOLD him the pawn ticket for another twenty dollars. By some special sense of divination, second sightedness or mental telepathy, the promotor found himself urged toward the same pawn shop and under irresistable impulse, retrieved the pawned watch, paying therefore a small interest and twenty dollars. Then, after the next game, the player received as his "trophy" the same gold watch, which went through the same identical loaning experience.*

*It is said some of these watches became so enamored with the player owners that at last they refused to tick for anyone else, even the pawnbroker and promoter. One player was so moved by the plight of the timepiece that he actually kept the watch and still has it though it has long been still. But HE is still a "simon pure" amateur.*

In 1888, the Amateur Athletic Union was formed as a watchdog on professionalism. This super-organization absorbed the Intercollegiate Football Association, the Intercollegiate Association of Amateur Athletes of America, and also had as members a number of unaffiliated clubs and schools.

Football was not a notorious offender against the amateur code in 1888. There were, after all, only a few athletic clubs fielding teams and the colleges and universities had not yet found the profit to be made in winning teams. Most of the charges of professionalism came in track and field. A trackman could move easily from meet to meet, competing as an amateur in one place and a professional in another. The situation had proved more or less ungovernable to local and sectional organizations.

Baseball had been irretrievably "lost" to professionalism in the 1860s and now track seemed on the verge. But, by welding together most of the important amateur sports organizations in the country, the A.A.U. gained enormous power. A club or individual offending the amateur code could quite simply be put out of business if suspended by the A.A.U. Under this interdiction, competition with other A.A.U. members was forbidden, leaving the offender no arena in which to exhibit prowess.

At first, complaints against track and field competitors made up the major portion of the A.A.U.'s docket, but, as more football teams took the field under athletic club colors, these also came under scrutiny. The history of professional football during the 1890s is, to a large extent, a story of athletic clubs busily finding ways to both win and dodge the almighty wrath of the A.A.U.

The most significant dodging was done in western Pennsylvania.