

THE BULLDOGS: L.A. HITS THE BIG TIME

By Bob Gill

Back in the summer of 1936 no one in Los Angeles could have expected much from Harry Myers.

Recently hired by Professional Sports Enterprises, Inc., a subsidiary of the local American Legion, Myers hoped to put together a pro football team that could compete with N.F.L. clubs, with the ultimate goal being a franchise for Los Angeles in that league. In fact, representatives of the city had already talked with N.F.L. officials. As a result they had been granted a vague but temporarily satisfying "probationary franchise" in the big league.

But all that was just talk. It remained for general manager Myers, armed with a reported \$10,000 in payroll money, to put a real team on the field.

And the track record of pro football in Los Angeles was not good.

A professional league had operated in California as early as 1926, but it lasted only one season. In 1926 and 1927 several teams from the A.F.L. and the N.F.L. played a second season in California against each other and against local teams. Then in 1934 there had been the Pacific Coast Pro Football League, composed of six teams clustered around Los Angeles and San Francisco -- again a one-season affair. For 1935 the four L.A.-based teams from that league tried again in the American Legion Pro Football League, but with the same results: The league folded shortly after the season ended.

So it wouldn't have been surprising if those pro football aficionados left in Los Angeles had given up and moved on to greener pastures elsewhere.

Instead, the American Legion seemed to take heart from its first venture into the football wars. It decided to make an even more ambitious effort for 1936.

And that's where Harry Myers came in.

First of all, any top-notch football team needs a good coach. So Myers went out and got one: Elmer "Gus" Henderson, from the University of Tulsa. Then the two of them set about assembling enough quality players to make the team -- soon christened the "Los Angeles Bulldogs" -- a credible outfit.

Several of the players they eventually signed had N.F.L. experience; some, like lineman Ray Richards, a veteran of championship teams with the Bears, and end Ike Frankian, likewise with the Giants, had quite a bit of it. Backs Roy Berry, Frank Greene and Hal Wickersham, plus lineman Homer Reynolds, had played for Henderson at Tulsa. And many of the others had played at various West Coast schools.

The search for players was made more difficult by the surprising fact -- considering the failure of the 1934 and 1935 leagues -- that there were two other new pro teams in California that year. Up in Salinas, a club called the Packers had hired N.F.L. veteran Ed Storm as player-coach; and right in L.A., Hollywood mogul Vic McLagen had organized the Hollywood Stars, led by Nate Barrager, former all-N.F.L. center. These teams opened the season before the Bulldogs, and on October 4 met each other at Salinas. The Stars took a 20-14 decision from the Packers.

The Bulldogs' opener was scheduled for October 18, with the Salinas club visiting. But rain made Gilmore Stadium, the team's home field, unplayable that afternoon, and so the game was postponed until later that season.

A week later, on October 25, the Bulldogs played their first game, taking on their crosstown rivals the Stars for the city championship. Despite coming into the game with a 3-0 record, the Stars proved no match for Henderson's crew, who piled up five touchdowns in a 36-0 rout before 7,000 curious fans. Gil Lefebvre, who still holds the N.F.L. record for longest punt return (98 yards), took one back for 70 against Hollywood, though he failed to score.

That game, incidentally, signaled the end for the Stars, who came out of it clearly second-best in the city. They played one more game, losing to Salinas, before packing it in for the season.

The Bulldogs, however, were far from through. After a week's layoff, they took on the Antioch American Legion team on November 8 and ran up a 40-7 victory. Berry and Ed "Crazy Legs" Stark both scored on 43-yard runs.

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Stark, a broken-field runner from Oklahoma Baptist, quickly proved himself the team's real breakaway threat. At one point in the season he was averaging more than eight yards per carry. Of all the Bulldogs' heroes in that first season, Stark more than anyone else caught the fancy of fans and reporters alike.

The following week, with the Philadelphia Eagles in town for Los Angeles' first taste of N.F.L. competition, and 9,500 on hand for the occasion, Stark went five yards around end for the game's first score. Then in the fourth quarter, after Eggs Manske had taken a pass from Dave Smukler to tie the game, Gordon Gore booted a 44-yard field goal to give L.A. a 10-7 win and send the crowd home happy.

That game should have been a boost to attendance, but the next two games failed to draw as well as expected. Attendance may have been affected by the fact that both games were played on Saturdays to avoid conflicts with highly publicized college games. On November 21, only 6,000 turned out to watch the locals demolish the Pittsburgh Pirates, N.F.L. Eastern Division leaders, 27-7. Willie Smith, formerly of the New York Giants, provided the game's biggest thrill with a 61-yard punt return for the final score. The gun sounded with the Bulldogs, behind the line-smashing of Dan Barnhart, on the Pittsburgh 1.

Another small crowd showed up to see the Salinas Packers the following Saturday, but the 5,500 in attendance were rewarded with an outstanding game. Gore's two TD receptions and Greene's field goal had L.A. in the lead after three quarters, but then Storm's passing brought the Packers back. His 35-yard toss to Jens Bugge in the waning moments of the game made the Bulldogs losers for the first time, 21-17.

In the long run that loss proved profitable to both teams as the Packer-Bulldog rivalry resulted in several hefty paydays over the next two years.

More immediate encouragement came as the crowds picked up with the return of Sunday football, beginning with a turnout of 15,000 to see the locals rout the Rock Island Tigers of the Northwest League 49-0 on December 6.

Another 15,000 came out the next Sunday to see the Bulldogs squeak out a 13-10 win over the Chicago Cardinals. Bill Waller scored on a pass from Greene early, before the Cards came back on a pass from George Grosvenor to Bill Smith and a field goal by Smith. Then in the third period Barnhart drove over from the one-yard line to give L.A. the win, and a perfect 3-0 record against N.F.L. teams.

That record looked even better a week later, when Stark's short run and a Greene-to-Gore pass gave the Bulldogs a 13-0 lead in the fourth quarter against the Brooklyn Dodgers. But the Dodgers came back. A pass from Phil Sarboe to Jeff Barrett made it 13-6, and Tony Kaska's one-yard plunge ending another drive salvaged a 13-13 tie for the visitors.

Henderson's men were no doubt disappointed to lose their perfect record against the big leaguers, but the game did bring out an important point: The Bulldogs still needed a top-flight passer. Greene was adequate, but not in the same class as Sarboe, who completed ten of 16 passes in saving his team from defeat.

Finding a new passer, however, was a project for next year. For the moment Los Angeles was gearing up for a rematch with the Salinas Packers, scheduled for December 27. When the weather again refused to cooperate, the game was moved back to January 3.

Then a conflict developed with an odd football game between a Southern California high school all-star team and a team of all-stars from Japan, of all places. So, rather than risk another costly shift to Saturday, both clubs agreed to cancel the date altogether.

There was no such problem on January 10, when 10,000 made it to Gilmore Stadium to watch the Bulldogs take on the famous Chicago Bears. The teams fought it out evenly for most of the game but a blocked punt in the second quarter gave the Bears the break they needed. Johnny Sisk drove in from two yards out for a 7-0 win.

Despite losing their first game to an N.F.L. club, Henderson's men couldn't have been discouraged by their performance against one of the top teams in the league. But a week later, against the newly-crowned champion Green Bay Packers, the Bulldogs were blown off the field. The big boys from Wisconsin ran over, under, around and through them in a 49-0 debacle before 10,000 witnesses.

The Bulldogs had lost Stark early in the game with the Bears, and he may have made a difference that day. But against the Packers a whole backfield of Starks couldn't have helped much.

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However, despite the embarrassing finish to the season, it had been a thorough success for Harry Myers and his team. Attendance for the ten games, all played at home, had averaged 9,400 -- over 12,000 for the last five games. And the Bulldogs, with a 3-2-1 record against the N.F.L., had proved they could compete on that level. After all, the Packers weren't exactly an ordinary team, in any league.

With the season's end, the question of what the N.F.L. would do about that "probationary franchise" became a hot topic in Los Angeles. But there the Bulldogs met with another disappointment.

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The terms of the original agreement had never been clearly defined, but it seems clear that the league, needing a tenth team to fill out the circuit, and aware of the untapped population on the West Coast, had invited Los Angeles to field a team, agreed to send several clubs for trial games, and then.... Well, don't call us, we'll call you.

And in the end the N.F.L. must have decided, not at all unreasonably, that the Bulldogs' strong showing at the gate and on the field was not enough to offset the exorbitant travel costs that a West Coast entry would have inflicted on the league as a whole. As a result, the cherished "probationary franchise" was ultimately revoked. Instead, the league admitted the Cleveland Rams as the tenth team.

As members of the American Football League (a second major league of that period) in 1936, the Rams had contended for the title. But with their departure the A.F.L. suddenly had an opening -- one which the Los Angeles management was very willing to fill. And so the Bulldogs joined the A.F.L., on the rebound, so to speak.

The club's 1937 roster showed few significant changes from the one that finished the previous season, with the most notable addition being Al Nichelini, former Chicago Cardinal back. Possibly the most important development involved former U.S.C. tailback Bill Howard. A member of the club in 1936, he had played little; but for 1937, with the departure of Greene, he would become the team's ace passer, as Henderson opened up the offense in anticipation of a tough A.F.L. schedule.

As it turned out, he needn't have bothered.

From the start, the Bulldogs completely dominated the league, sweeping five games (plus two exhibitions) on their eastern tour, then returning home for four more easy wins to complete a perfect 9-0 season. End Bill Moore, tackle Harry Fields, guard Pete Mehringer, and backs Gore Nichelini were named to the all-A.F.L. team. Howard, somehow omitted, nevertheless led the league with five rushing TDs and eight TD passes, including four in one game against the Boston Shamrocks, 1936 A.F.L. champs. Stark turned in another outstanding season as well, the highlight being a 95- yard return of a missed field goal against the Rochester Tigers.

Another player whose season began on a promising note was back Bob "Poi" Miller, a Hawaiian with no college experience who had made the team as a "walk-on" in 1936. During the Bulldogs' eastern swing Miller's playing time increased dramatically, and Henderson called him the most improved player on the squad. But only a few days after the team's return to Los Angeles Miller was fatally injured in an automobile accident, and died November 10 at the age of 24.

Despite that grim reminder of life's harsher realities, the season went on.

Since the A.F.L. was an "outlaw league", there was no chance for games with N.F.L. clubs. Thus the Bulldogs' toughest opposition this year may have come from the Salinas Packers. Last year's rivals had improved themselves in the off-season. In 1937 they played three games against A.F.L. teams other than the Bulldogs. They won all three, including a 41-0 rout of Boston.

The first L.A.-Salinas game, also the Bulldogs' home opener, was played on November 7 before 15,000 fans. They watched the home team dominate the visitors in a 13-0 win. Nichelini and Howard contributed scoring runs.

The rematch came on December 5 in Salinas, and this time the Bulldogs barely escaped with their winning streak intact.

After the Packers scored early on a fumble recovery, Los Angeles put together a 20-yard scoring run by Stark, a Howard-to-Nichelini pass, and Gore's 40-yard field goal for a 17-7 lead. Salinas came back on Arleigh Williams' short plunge, but couldn't get any closer, as the Bulldogs hung on for a 17-14 decision.

That game proved so exciting that another was quickly arranged for Los Angeles on December 19. Another crowd of 15,000 watched Salinas take an early lead on Williams'

field goal, but then the Bulldog attack got going. Stark ran for one score, Moore caught two TD passes, and L.A. walked off with a 21-3 victory.

The final two games that season were unusual affairs, pitting the Bulldogs against a makeshift team called the "Coast All-Stars." Coached by Hal Pennington (Cincinnati A.F.L.) and Jim Mooney (New York A.F.L.), the All-Stars were made up of several A.F.L. and N.F.L. players, most of whom had played at West Coast colleges. Their roster include Hal Pangle, Harry Mattos, and Max Padlow, as well as N.F.L. all-star Ernie Smith of Green Bay.

Meanwhile with the N.F.L. season over, the Bulldogs strengthened themselves with the addition of Chicago Cardinal star Bill Smith. A year earlier he had joined the team for the last two games under similar circumstances, along with teammate Phil Sarboe; but Sarboe had been such a disappointment that only Smith had been invited back.

The first game with the All-Stars was played December 26 in a driving rain, before a crowd the L.A. Times reported as "500 (that's right, Mr. Printer)." It nearly resulted in disaster. Trailing 3-0 as a result of Ernie Smith's field goal, the Bulldogs needed Ike Frankian's blocked punt and subsequent TD return in the game's waning moments to pull out a 7-3 win.

The All-Stars claimed that the L.A. victory had been a fluke, so everybody agreed to come back a week later and repeat the performance under better conditions -- with the added incentive, of course, of a larger crowd and larger paychecks.

Once again Ernie Smith gave the All-Stars the early lead with a field goal, but then Davie Davis of U.S.C., who had joined the Bulldogs in midseason, tossed two scoring passes to Bill Smith. They gave the home team a lead that held up throughout, the game ending 13-10. This time the All-Stars seemed content with the result, but that may have had something to do with the improved attendance: 14,000.

For the season the Bulldogs had won 16 games overall, losing none, scoring 345 points to their opponents' 116. Clearly they were the best team in the country outside the N.F.L. -- and probably better than a few of those clubs. But how could they prove it? As members of an outlaw league, they couldn't get games with N.F.L. teams, although it appeared they were just too good for everybody else.

The Bulldogs' problems were solved to an extent in early 1938, when the A.F.L. folded -- no doubt in part because the Los Angeles team had made such a shambles of the 1937 race. So the Bulldogs were champions without a league.

That wasn't all bad, though, because it did mean that they were eligible once again to play N.F.L. teams. And, as they were becoming rather well-known around the country, several of the big-league clubs were glad to oblige.

Over the summer there was more football news in L.A. -- and this time it didn't involve the Bulldogs.

In August Paul Schissler, former N.F.L. coach with Brooklyn and the Chicago Cards, announced that he was reforming the Hollywood Stars. At the same time he set about organizing another California professional league. Soon the Salinas Packers and three other teams had joined, but the Bulldogs opted to continue with their plans to operate independently that fall.

That decision virtually assured the California Pro Football League's failure, since the Los Angeles club was universally acknowledged to be the best in the West. Its absence made the league seem a "second-line" operation, though it did feature some good football, most notably from the Stars.

In fact, early on Schissler and his team often stole the spotlight from the established Bulldogs, as when they persuaded Ernie Smith to spend the season in his hometown rather than return to wind-swept Green Bay.

For their part, the Bulldogs achieved a major coup when they signed Ray Peterson of the University of San Francisco to augment their already powerful backfield. Peterson, an outstanding runner and passer, had played with Salinas in 1937, and his absence hurt the Packers. Even so, they still managed to field a strong club in 1938, but not so formidable as their earlier entries.

The Packers' decline was demonstrated clearly in the Bulldogs' opener on September 14. Eight thousand fans showed up to watch the home team rout the invaders from the north 34-0.

After that the Bulldogs left on their eastern tour, which began with a pair of Tuesday night games in Charleston, W. Va. against the Chicago Bears and Cardinals. In the first game the Bulldogs held the lead late in the fourth quarter by virtue of a short run by Gore,

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a field goal by Butch Beatty, and a safety. But Ray Buivid returned a punt 90 yards for a score with less than two minutes to play to give the Bears a 14-12 win.

Two weeks later the Cardinals came into town. Again Gore provided the first score, this time on a 33-yard run. The Cards tied it up, then took the lead on a pass from Dwight Sloan to Gaynell Tinsley. But in the final period Peterson ended a drive with a two-yard plunge to get L.A. within one point, and Gore's second conversion made it 14-14. That's how the game ended shortly thereafter.

Five days later the Bulldogs were in Cincinnati to play the Bengals, another survivor from the 1937 A.F.L. now playing as an independent team. The Cincinnati club had already beaten the Bears and the Pittsburgh Pirates, and they surprised L.A. with a 3-0 whitewash. Phil Martinovich's 37-yard field goal accounted for the only scoring.

At that point Henderson's team owned a 1-2-1 record, which certainly didn't look good back home in L.A. There the Stars had just opened the California League season with a win over the Fresno Crushers. Of course the Bulldogs had played a tough schedule, but every town loves a winner and L.A. was no exception.

So before returning home the club stopped off in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Henderson's old stomping ground, to play a Wednesday night game with a hastily assembled team dubbed the "Oklahoma All-Stars." The result was an easy 33-0 win for the Bulldogs, and it gave them something positive to take back to Los Angeles with them on the train.

The most interesting development during the team's stay in Oklahoma was the arrest and incarceration of Ed Stark in the nearby town of McAlester for nonsupport. Agreeing to keep up with \$50 monthly payments to his estranged wife and two-year-old son, Stark was released after a night in jail in time to participate in the rout of the "All-Stars" and make the trip home with the team.

The Bulldogs arrived in Los Angeles just in time to watch their new rivals from Hollywood thrash the Salinas Packers 37-21 on Sunday, October 23. For the Packers, it was a clear demonstration that they were contenders for the Bulldogs' crown of West Coast supremacy.

And a week later the Cincinnati Bengals were coming to town for a rematch.

Things may not have looked too bright for Henderson and his team just then, but actually the fun was just beginning.

In the Bengals game, Gore opened the scoring, as usual, this time with a 65-yard run from scrimmage, the longest by a Bulldog to date. Cincinnati came back on a pass from Pat Howlett to Alton Owen and a Martinovich field goal for a 10-7 lead. Gore toted an interception back for another score, but Ed Warwick threw 50 yards to Connie Mack Berry, and the Bulldogs trailed again.

Then, midway through the second quarter, Ike Frankian scooped up a Cincinnati fumble and returned it for a score to give the lead back to L.A. And just before half time Peterson broke loose for an 89-yard touchdown run, breaking the record Gore had set little more than one quarter before. The Bulldogs went to the locker room with a 27-17 lead after the most exciting half of football ever seen at Gilmore Stadium.

But as it turned out, the excitement was over.

In the third quarter Howard, Gore and Peterson all scored on short runs while the Bengals were having trouble getting out of their own territory. After a scoreless final period the Bulldogs walked away with a convincing 48-17 victory -- strong evidence that Cincinnati's earlier win had been a fluke.

The following Sunday brought another challenge: the first meeting between the Bulldogs and the undefeated Hollywood Stars. And when the Stars jumped out to a 10-0 lead in the first quarter on an Ernie Smith field goal and a pass from Chuck Cheshire to John Robinson, it may have appeared that there was a new powerhouse in town.

However, that soon proved to be wishful thinking on the part of the Stars and their fans. Before long Peterson had thrown for two scores, Stark had thrown for one, and Gore had scored twice, as the Bulldogs piled up five unanswered touchdowns to win 34-10.

With the city championship decided, at least for the moment, Henderson's club traveled to Colorado Springs, Colorado for an Armistice Day game with Whizzer White and the Pittsburgh Pirates. Ray Clemons, usually a guard, took a 56-yard scoring pass from Peterson and Gore booted a 44-yard field goal to highlight a fairly easy 17-6 L.A. win.

White, back in the state where he had played his college ball, managed 65 yards rushing on ten attempts, including a fumble, and completed six of 27 passes for 79 yards,

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with three intercepted. In addition, he caught two passes for 49 yards and averaged 43 yards on four punts.

But even the naturally partisan Colorado Springs Gazette had to admit the next day that Gore was "clearly the outstanding back on the field."

In fact, 1938 represented something of a coming-out for Gore. He had always taken a back seat in the public's eyes to Stark, whose broken-field running made him the crowd's favorite. Suddenly, though, it was Gore breaking away for the long gainers, scoring two and three times a game. The fans didn't fail to recognize that he had emerged as the team's best player -- not an easy feat, considering the competition.

Two days later, on November 13, the Bulldogs took on White again. This time the Whizzer ran wild, gaining over 100 yards and scoring on a short run to lead Pittsburgh to a 14-14 tie before 18,500 in Gilmore Stadium. Actually, the Pirates led 14-7 in the fourth quarter, before Hal Wickersham broke through the line for a 13-yard scoring run and Gore booted the conversion that tied the score. Peterson had scored the other L.A. touchdown on a short plunge in the opening period.

For a change, Gore did nothing spectacular in the game. But he still made headlines when Detroit Lions' owner Dick Richards came into the Bulldogs' locker room afterward and offered him a contract, reportedly for "\$100 more a game than the Bulldogs [were] paying." The story had a happy ending for Los Angeles' fans when Gore announced the next day that he had turned down the Lions' offer.

A week later the Cleveland Rams invaded Los Angeles. The Rams scored on the game's first play, when the Bulldogs fumbled the opening kickoff and George Cherundolo went over on the recovery. From then on it was all Los Angeles, though: Howard threw to Moore for two scores, Peterson threw to Gore for another, and Elvin Hutchinson reeled off a 34-yard scoring run as the Bulldogs routed the Rams 28-7.

For the next game, Henderson and his team traveled up the coast to San Francisco for a rematch with Salinas. A dismal crowd of only 750 turned out at Kezar Stadium, but they were treated to an outstanding game. Tex Edens got things started for the Packers with a field goal, then dove over for a touchdown and booted the conversion for a 10-0 lead before the second quarter had expired.

Then, just before the half ended, the Bulldogs pulled off a trick play. Howard passed to Moore, who lateraled to Hutchinson, and the latter went all the way. The whole play covered 66 yards. After Hal Pangle, recently arrived from the Chicago Cardinals, converted, the Bulldogs left the field at half time trailing 10-7.

That score hadn't changed when L.A. took possession on its own 26 with only three minutes left to play in the game. But Howard completed five straight passes from that point. The last went eight yards to Moore for the score that gave the Bulldogs their first lead at 14-10.

With little time left, Joe Vigna took to the air for Salinas and quickly moved his club downfield. But Pangle picked off his final pass in the end zone with only seconds remaining. The Bulldogs had escaped with a narrow victory in what may have been the best game in the history of the Los Angeles-Salinas rivalry.

The San Francisco press agreed with that assessment, as both the *Chronicle* and the *Examiner* sports pages chastised local fans for staying away from the excitement. Their readers paid little attention, though. Not until the Forty-Niners arrived in 1946 did San Francisco really develop a taste for pro football.

But back in Los Angeles things were different. When the Bulldogs scheduled another Salinas game there the following Sunday, 12,000 turned out expecting an equally thrilling contest. Unfortunately, all they saw was a convincing demonstration of the Bulldogs' superiority, as the home team built up a 41-0 lead before the Packers tallied a couple of meaningless touchdowns in the fourth quarter of a 47-14 rout.

If the previous week's game had been the highlight of the rivalry between the two clubs, its follow-up was probably the low point, even more so than the 34-0 debacle back in September, when the Packers hadn't been together long enough to put up a better fight.

Of course, assuming that those who attended the game were Bulldog fans, there was plenty for them to be excited about. Most notable were the performances of Howard, who equaled his own Bulldog record with four TD passes, and Hutchinson, who ran 67 yards for one score and caught passes from Howard for two one. One covered 41 yards, the other 64.

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That game may have signaled the end of the rivalry with the Packers, but fans in Los Angeles were still clamoring for a rematch with the Hollywood Stars, and the Bulldogs obliged them a week later.

Once again Hollywood took the early lead, this time on a 20-yard run by Bunny McCormick, an ex-Notre Damer who had begun the season with the Bulldogs. But Peterson tossed a short scoring pass to Stark to tie the score, and then Howard threw to Moore to put the Bulldogs in front. After that it was Gore's show. He ran 60 yards for one score and 59 for another, to offset Nick Pappas' one-yard plunge for Hollywood and give L.A. a well-deserved 27-14 win.

With three victories over Salinas, two over the Stars (who beat the Packers twice themselves), a favorable split with Cincinnati, and a 2-1-2 record against N.F.L. teams, the Bulldogs sought a new challenge for their final game on December 18. They settled on the Louisville Tanks. The Tanks were winners of three consecutive championships in the Midwest/American Football League (which had changed its name in 1938 with the demise of the 1937 A.F.L.), and 17-7 winners over the Bengals a few weeks earlier.

The match-up looked promising on paper, but it rained that weekend and the game was played on a very muddy field. Only 4,000 fans were in attendance. The poor footing should have slowed the Bulldogs, who relied heavily on speed and deception, but it seems to affect the Tanks more -- or maybe that was just the pressure put on them by the home team. Gore went 51 yards for the first score, Peterson tossed to Frankian for another, and a blocked punt resulted in a safety for a 16-0 Bulldog win.

The Tanks went home with nothing to show for the cross-country excursion but a laundry bag full of muddy uniforms and a hefty travel bill to boot.

In retrospect, 1938 was probably the high-water mark for the Los Angeles Bulldogs. Their season record of 10-2-2 did not match their undefeated 1937 season, but then there were no N.F.L. teams on that 1937 schedule. With Howard and Peterson in the backfield, the club boasted two excellent passers for the first time in its history. Gore had blossomed into a first-class ballcarrier and scorer (totaling 96 points in 14 games).

At this point in their history, there is little doubt that the Bulldogs were capable of competing on equal footing with most teams in the N.F.L.

The league gave its tacit endorsement of this view in January 1939, when it allowed three Bulldogs -- Gore, Moore, and Pete Mehringer -- to play with the N.F.L. all-star team that took on the champion New York Giants in the first "Pro Bowl." Ernie Smith also went as a representative of Los Angeles's pro football interest. In fact he was a starter for the all-square squad, which was coached by Ray Flaherty and Gus Henderson.

Sure, the league wanted to drum up support for its new venture by allowing local stars -- the game was played in Los Angeles -- to take the field with its own. But the fact remains that second-rate players could not have been allowed to jeopardize the N.F.L.'s still-shaky public image at that point. The Bulldog players who participated were judged adequate to compete with the N.F.L.'s best, in a game that was more than just another exhibition.

And that, as they say, is the name of that tune.

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Of course, there had to be a letdown sometime for the Bulldogs, and it came in 1939. Detroit owner Richards, not discouraged by his earlier failure to sign Gore, renewed the effort in the off-season. This time he succeeded. At about the same time, he also persuaded Henderson to relinquish the coaching reins in L.A. in favor of the Lions' job. Along with Gore, the coach brought three other players with him: Moore, Clemons and center John Wiatrak.

Those losses were bound to hurt the Bulldogs, but new owner and general manager Jerry Corcoran went confidently ahead with plans for the coming season. He named veteran Ike Frankian to replace Henderson as player-coach and secured a franchise for Los Angeles in the American Football League. A top-notch minor league with teams in several major cities, the A.F.L. offered the prospect of strong competition, the Bulldogs' win over the 1938 champion Louisville team notwithstanding.

With experience in football management dating back to the early days of the N.F.L., Corcoran didn't hesitate to replenish the Bulldogs' roster. He presented Frankian with two new backfield speedsters in Harold Brill and Red Elder, and a quality kicker in George Karamatic, late of the Washington Redskins. With Bill Howard gone, Ray

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Peterson would handle most of the passing, with help from Hal Pangle. And with the return of speedy Elvin Hutchinson, the team expected once again to have a potent attack.

They got a chance to find out just how potent on September 4, when the Redskins came to town for a Monday night game in front of 12,000 sweaty fans. The results were discouraging. Los Angeles took an early lead when Keith Ranspot returned a fumble for a score, but the Bulldogs never mustered any offense of their own, and after that it was all Washington in a 21-6 L.A. loss.

Still, the defense had managed to hold the Redskins to 21 points. With a little fine-tuning of the offense, it looked as though the Bulldogs might have another team to be reckoned with. And Tilly Manton, acquired shortly afterward from Washington, combined with Karamatic to give the club two strong kickers, along with the other potential offensive weapons.

After a couple more weeks of practice, the team left town late in September on its annual eastern swing. They opened in Des Moines, where the local Comets, two-time champions of the Northwest League, were no match for Frankian's retooled offense in a 36-6 Bulldog win. Jimmy Jones, another new back from U.S.C., scored on L.A. touchdown on a 71-yard run. The only Des Moines score came on a 55-yard scamper by Bobby Vandever, the Comets' best back, and worthy of special note because he was black.

Next stop for the Bulldogs was Columbus. There they opened their A.F.L. season against the Bullies, a new team representing that city. Once again, the L.A. offense sputtered, and Sam Busich of Columbus returned a Bulldog fumble 73 yards for the only score in a 7-0 upset. That left Los Angeles 1-2 overall, 0-1 in league play.

Things picked up after that, though, as the club visited Cincinnati the following Tuesday night and piled up a 16-0 lead. They held on for their first A.F.L. win, 16-12, despite two late Bengal scores.

Five days later Frankian's crew moved into St. Louis for an encounter with the Gunners, losers to Louisville in the 1938 championship game. This one was no contest, as Brill broke away early in the second half for a 64-yard touchdown run, only to have Elder top that moments later with an 88-yard jaunt. Meanwhile the defense was holding St. Louis scoreless, despite the presence of star passer Tommy Thompson. Final score: Bulldogs 24, Gunners 0.

With their league record improved to 2-1, the Bulldogs returned to Los Angeles and took a couple of weeks off in the process. They returned to action November 12 at Gilmore Stadium against a team called the "Oakland All-Stars." Coached by Ed Storm, the All-Stars were a remodeled version of the now-defunct Salinas Packers, who had packed it in after their disappointing 1938 season. Unfortunately for them, the change of name and locality didn't make any difference on the field, and the Bulldogs rolled to an easy 28-7 win. Brill reeled off another 64-yard touchdown run, while Elder returned an interception 100 yards for another score.

Still, something of the old spark was lacking. The Times noted that the team seemed "not nearly as polished as last year's eleven," and the attendance -- only 7,000 -- indicated that others had suspected the same thing.

That didn't mean, however, that the Bulldogs could no longer present an outstanding afternoon of football for the dedicated fan. For example, next to visit Los Angeles were the Columbus Bullies, A.F.L. leaders, riding the crest of a nine-game winning streak since an opening loss to St. Louis. A crowd of 9,000 turned out to watch the league's two strongest clubs in a rematch of the Bulldogs' only loss of the season.

Columbus struck first on a 64-yard pass from Bob Davis to Busich. But Los Angeles came back to take the lead on a short run by Hutchinson and a pass from Peterson to Beatty. Then Gordon Reupke's 20-yard run tied it at 14-all, but two field goals by Manton, of 48 and 37 yards, gave the Bulldogs a hard-earned 20-14 victory.

Later that week, on Thanksgiving Day, Frankian's club moved closer to the top with a 65-0 rout of the Dayton Bombers in a game described by the local papers as a travesty. Peterson threw a club-record five touchdown passes, three of them to Hutchinson, as the Bombers put up little more than token resistance.

That game left Los Angeles (4-1, .800) only percentage points behind Columbus (9-2, .818) for the league lead. A third game between the two clubs was quickly arranged for December 3 in Portland, Oregon, of all places. There a disappointing crowd of 6,172 saw the Bulldogs enter the fourth quarter trailing 17-16, despite Hutchinson's 94-yard

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kickoff return. But the Bulldogs went on to win on another late field goal by Manton, 19-17.

With the Bulldogs now in possession of first place, the two teams moved back to Los Angeles for a final contest. Despite the high stakes, only 7,000 showed up to watch the struggle -- but they saw a memorable game.

L.A. got off on top when Pangle hit Brill for a 60-yard touchdown. After a Davis-to-Nelson Peterson pass tied it for Columbus, the Bulldogs scored twice more to take a 21-7 lead into the final quarter. Then the Bullies, led by Joe Williams, who threw for one score and ran for another, came back to tie the game with little time left. L.A. drove back down the field, only to have Davis intercept a long pass intended for Hutchinson near the goal line. But his momentum carried him into the end zone, where Hutchinson downed him in his tracks for a disputed safety. That gave the Bulldogs as 23-21 win.

One more A.F.L. game remained, the Gunners coming to town on December 17. With the league title already clinched, the Bulldogs romped to a 56-14 decision over St. Louis, despite two scoring passes from Thompson.

Thus the Bulldogs completed the season with a 7-1 record in league play, finishing ahead of Columbus, at 9-4. In fact, Cincinnati managed to sneak into second place on percentage points with a 6-2 record, leaving the Bullies in third after three losses to close out the season.

That's the way it seems, anyway. But at the league meeting January 7 in Cincinnati the A.F.L. somehow named Columbus its 1939 champion, with a 9-2 record!

How they managed to come up with that one is anyone's guess, but here's a plausible explanation:

Several A.F.L. teams had financial trouble that year, including Louisville, St. Louis, and even Columbus. And although the original schedule called for games through December 17, by the end of November only four teams were still playing. The league may have decided at some later date to declare all games after November 30 invalid, thus leaving the Bulldogs at 4-1, the Bullies at 9-2.

That does seem plausible, but the standings as they were released at the league meeting also list Cincinnati in second place at 6-2. That means that the Bengals' December 3 game with St. Louis was counted in the official records. But that also means that the L.A.-Columbus game of the same date ought to count as well, and again the Bulldogs wind up in first place.

Well then, could an A.F.L. rule have prevented any two teams from playing more than two official league games with each other in a season? That doesn't work out either, because Columbus had played and won three games with Louisville, and if we apply that ruling the Bullies' pre-November 30 record is only 8-2.

All right.... Was the December 3 game disallowed because it was played in Portland, and not in a league city? Wrong again. The Cincinnati-St. Louis game of the same date was played in Kansas City -- and that game counted.

A final possibility is that the A.F.L. could have based its standings not on percentage, but on games won -- something like the C.F.L. and the National Hockey League do today. That's a good theory, since in 1936 and 1937, when it was known as the Midwest Football League, the circuit had done just that, awarding two points for each victory and one for a tie.

In fact, that system may still have been in effect as late as 1938; but it was not in effect in 1939. The official standings, published weekly in several league cities, consistently listed the Bulldogs, for example, in second place when their 2-1 record would have put them near the bottom of the league on a points-per-win basis.

No, the fact remains that all of these possible explanations don't hold water. A simpler problem may have caused the mess. Nineteen thirty-nine was the first season after which the league office had to award the championship at all. In the three previous seasons the title had been decided in playoff games, which left nothing to be decided at league meetings. So the mistake in 1939 -- and mistake it most certainly was -- may have resulted from nothing more complicated than inexperience.

Even if we accept that dubious idea, why didn't someone suggest that one of those last two L.A.-Columbus games be considered a championship playoff? No one would have argued the point, since those were clearly the league's two best teams, and recognized as such in the other A.F.L. cities.

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From this vantage point, then, it seems clear beyond any doubt that the Los Angeles Bulldogs were in fact A.F.L. champions in 1939, published results to the contrary notwithstanding.

With that out of the way, let's remember too that by January of 1940, when the league announced its erroneous decision, it probably didn't matter very much to anybody who had won the title. Such was the state of pro football in those days.

Title or no title, though, the Bulldogs weren't through for the season. On December 24 they scheduled a game with a hastily organized team dubbed the "Hollywood All-Stars." This club was not to be confused with the Hollywood Stars of 1938, even though several of the same players, as well as coach Paul Schissler, participated. Also on hand for the All-Stars was Ed Goddard of the Cleveland Rams, who threw for his team's only score. Overall, the lack of practice doomed the All-Stars from the start, and the Bulldogs romped to a 42-7 win before a crowd of only 5,000.

That brought the average attendance for the last six home games, following the opener with the Redskins, to barely above 7,000, a drastic drop from the previous two and a half years. Clearly, something was missing, and Corcoran went looking for the answer.

He didn't need to look far.

Right in Los Angeles lived one of the greatest football players in the country, a college All-America selection with a tremendous local following, who yet had no future with the pros. That player was Kenny Washington of U.C.L.A., and the problem, of course, was his color: The N.F.L. didn't permit blacks on the field.

Out on the West Coast, though, things were apparently less color-oriented -- or maybe Corcoran and his players were just better businessmen. Anyway, it was a good bet that a team featuring Washington would be a great draw against the Bulldogs, and virtually before the stands had emptied after the game with the Hollywood All-Stars, Corcoran had arranged just such an attraction for the following Sunday, December 31.

Kenny Washington's All-Stars, as the makeshift team was known, bore a strong resemblance to the previous week's "all-star" squad. The only notable additions were Washington, his U.C.L.A. teammate Woody Strode, and co-coaches Bill Howard and Ed Storm.

As a result, the game with the Bulldogs was another one-sided affair, but Washington's presence made it interesting. He scored his team's only touchdown, an 18-yard run in the second quarter that tied the game at 6-6. But the Bulldogs finally asserted themselves and pulled away for a 22-6 win.

Corcoran was the real winner, however, as a crowd of 15,000 turned out to see the local hero make his pro debut.

A little easy arithmetic made it clear that Washington had accounted for something like 8,000 fans that Sunday. That line of thinking led Corcoran and Paul Schissler, still in town but without a team to coach since the end of the 1938 season, into serious discussions about the formation of a California-based league for 1940. The Bulldogs and a team led by Washington and Schissler were expected to be the headliners.

* * *

Before long Schissler had his team, along with a new name: the Hollywood Bears. Other teams soon appeared in Oakland, San Diego and Phoenix -- the latter featuring old L.A. favorite Ed Stark as player-coach.

Certainly, the idea of a West Coast league was a practical one for the Bulldogs, who despite their successes in the East annually ran up very large travel bills. Soon Corcoran withdrew his team from the A.F.L., to the disappointment of no one in that organization -- travel costs work both ways, after all. For the next nine years, the Los Angeles Bulldogs played their football in the Pacific Coast Professional Football League.

Though they did manage to win two P.C.P.F.L. titles, in 1940 and 1946, the Bulldogs were never again the overwhelming success they had been in their early years. But that didn't seem to matter very much in the '40's, anyway, since the survival of the league took precedence over the fortunes of any individual team. And make no mistake about it: The P.C.P.F.L. was a success.

Still, it is impossible to ignore the excitement of those early years, when the Bulldogs were the last of a now-extinct breed: the last independent team capable of beating N.F.L. clubs with some regularity.

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If their 5-3-3 record against the N.F.L. in 1936 and 1938 isn't proof enough of their ability, remember that the league did recognize them in other ways: the "probationary franchise"; the use of L.A. players in the first pro bowl; the sometimes successful attempts to sign Bulldogs players -- and, for that matter, the coach.

If, somehow, that "probationary franchise" had materialized into something more tangible, there is little doubt that from 1936 to 1938 the L.A. Bulldogs would have been competitive in the N.F.L. -- not battling for the championship, to be sure, but not struggling to escape the cellar, either.

They were that good.

* * *

Ed. note -- Further information on some teams and leagues of this era can be found in the following publications:

Braunwart, Bob, "All Those A.F.L.'s: N.F.L. Competitors, 1935-41," Coffin Corner, April 1979.

Bob Gill, "Early Southern Football," PFRA Annual, 1982.

-----, "The End of the P.C.P.F.L.," Coffin Corner, April 1983.

-----, "P.C.P.F.L.: 1940-45," Coffin Corner, July 1982.

-----, "The St. Louis Gunners," PFRA Annual, 1983.

----- and Tod Maher, "The Unofficial 1940-1941 American Football League Guide." Canton, O.: PFRA, 1984.

Tod Maher and Bob Gill, "The Second American Football League Fact Book, 1936-1937." Canton, O.: PFRA, 1981.

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1936 Los Angeles Bulldogs (Independent)

Player	Pos	Hgt	Wgt	Age	College
Ben Alexander	C	6- 0	196		Notre Dame
Bob Allman	E	6- 1	200		Michigan State
Ed Aspatore	T	5-11	218		Marquette
Dan Barnhart	FB	6- 0	210	25	Centenary
Harry Benson	G	5-11	215	26	Western Maryland
Roy Berry	HB	5- 8	160		Tulsa
Art Brachmann	T	6- 0	205		Pacific
Alvie Coughlin	T	6- 3	230		U.S.C.
Jerry Donnell	FB-G	5-11	195	23	Oregon
Ike Frankian	E	5-11	205	29	St. Mary's
Gordon Gore	FB	6- 1	205	23	SW Oklahoma St.
Frank Greene	QB	6- 0	196	25	Tulsa
Bill Howard	QB-HB	5-11	170		U.S.C.
Foster Howell	T	6- 3	225		T.C.U.
Gil Lefebvre	HB	5- 6	157	26	none
Roy Lorenz	T	6- 1	218		Temple
Walt McDonald	C	5-10	225	24	Utah
Pete Mehringer	G	6- 2	212	26	Kansas
Bob Miller	HB	6- 0	187	23	none
Primo Miller	T	6- 2	220	20	Rice
Bill Moore	E	6- 1	185	24	North Carolina
Howard Morris	G	5-10	200		California
Red Oliver	HB	6- 0	202		T.C.U.
Alex Rado	HB	6- 1	195	25	New River State
Homer Reynolds	G	5-10	200	26	Tulsa
Ray Richards	G	6- 1	230	30	Nebraska
Phil Sarboe	QB	5-10	168	24	Washington State
George Sargent	C	6- 0	225	24	Loyola
Kermit Schmidt	E	6- 0	200		California A & M
Bill Smith	E	6- 1	198	24	Washington
Willis Smith	QB	5- 6	150	26	Idaho
Ed Stark	HB	5-11	170		Oklahoma Baptist
Bill Waller	E	6- 0	179	21	Illinois
Hal Wickersham	HB	5-11	198		Tulsa

Coach: Elmer "Gus" Henderson
Assistant: Ray Richards (line)

Oct 25	Su	H	36	Hollywood Stars	0	W	7000
Nov 8	Su	H	40	Antioch American Legion	7	W	5000
Nov 15	Su	H	10	Philadelphia Eagles	7	W	9500
Nov 21	Sa	H	27	Pittsburgh Pirates	7	W	6000
Nov 28	Sa	H	17	Salinas Packers	21	L	5500
Dec 6	Su	H	49	Rock Island Tigers	0	W	15000
Dec 13	Su	H	13	Chicago Cardinals	10	W	15000
Dec 20	Su	H	13	Brooklyn Dodgers	13	T	11000
Jan 10	Su	H	0	Chicago Bears	7	L	10000
Jan 17	Su	H	0	Green Bay Packers	49	L	10000

1936: 205 6-3-1 (all games) 121 94000

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1937 Los Angeles Bulldogs (A.F.L.)

Player	Pos	Hgt	Wgt	Age	College
Jim Austin	E	6- 2	200	24	St. Mary's
Dan Barnhart	FB	6- 0	210	26	Centenary
Homer Beatty	HB	6- 0	192		U.S.C.
Verdi Boyer	G	5-11	210	25	U.C.L.A.
Cal Clemens	HB	5-11	196	25	U.S.C.
Ray Clemons	G	6- 0	205	24	Central Okla. St.
Davie Davis	QB	5- 6	157		U.S.C.
Jerry Donnell	G-E	5-11	203	24	Oregon
Harry Fields	T	6- 1	245	25	Oregon State
Ike Frankian	E	5-11	205	30	St. Mary's
Byron Gentry	G	5-11	232	23	U.S.C.
Gordon Gore	FB	6- 1	215	24	SW Oklahoma St.
Bill Howard	HB-QB	5-10	185		U.S.C.
Bernie Hughes	C	6- 1	192	27	Oregon
Andy Karpus	QB	5-11	180	21	Detroit
Pete Mehringer	G	6- 2	210	27	Kansas
Bob Miller	QB-HB	6- 0	190	24	none
Bill Moore	E	6- 2	190	25	North Carolina
Al Nichelini	HB	6- 0	215	27	St. Mary's
Gail O'Brien	T	6- 1	235	25	Nebraska
Bert Pearson	C	6- 1	190	32	Kansas State
Ray Richards	T	6- 1	230	31	Nebraska
Steve Sinko	T	6- 2	235	26	Duquesne
Bill Smith	E	6- 1	198	25	Washington
Ed Stark	QB-HB	5-11	165		Oklahoma Baptist
Bill Waller	E	6- 2	190	22	Illinois
Hal Wickersham	QB-HB	5-11	196		Tulsa

Coach: Elmer "Gus" Henderson
Assistant: Ray Richards (line)

Sep 10	Fr	A	21	Pittsburgh Americans	0	W	5000
Sep 22	We	A	27	New York Yankees	6	W	2500
Oct 3	Su	A	20	Rochester Tigers	9	W	8000
Oct 13	We	A	14	Boston Shamrocks	0	W	2000
Oct 14	Th	A	13	*Providence Steam Roller	7	W*	1200
Oct 17	Su	A	28	*Bristol West Ends	7	W*	3000
Oct 24	Su	A	17	Cincinnati Bengals	7	W	8000
Nov 7	Su	H	13	*Salinas Packers	0	W*	15000
Nov 14	Su	H	48	Rochester Tigers	21	W	17000
Nov 21	Su	H	45	Boston Shamrocks	26	W	18000
Nov 25	Th	H	27	New York Yankees	0	W	15000
Dec 5	Su	A	17	*Salinas Packers	14	W*	2800
Dec 12	Su	H	14	Cincinnati Bengals	3	W	16000
Dec 19	Su	H	21	*Salinas Packers	3	W*	15000
Dec 26	Su	H	7	*Coast All-Stars	3	W*	500
Jan 2	Su	H	13	*Coast All-Stars	10	W*	14000

1937: 344 16-0-0 (all games) 116 143000

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1938 Los Angeles Bulldogs (Independent)

Player	Pos	Hgt	Wgt	Age	College
Dan Barnhart	HB	6- 0	210	27	Centenary
Homer Beatty	E	6- 0	198		U.S.C.
Kay Bell	T	6- 2	215	23	Washington State
Verdi Boyer	G	5-10	196	26	U.C.L.A.
Ray Clemons	G	6- 0	205	25	Central Okla. St.
Jerry Donnell	E	5-11	195	25	Oregon
Red Elder	HB-FB	6- 1	190		Kansas State
Harry Fields	T	6- 1	245	26	Oregon State
Ike Frankian	E	5-11	205	31	St. Mary's
Gordon Gore	FB-HB	6- 1	200	25	SW Oklahoma St.
Bill Howard	QB	5-10	185		U.S.C.
Elvin Hutchinson	HB	5-11	190	25	Whittier
Bunny McCormick	HB	5- 7	165		Notre Dame
Amy McPherson	C	5-10	240	26	Nebraska
Pete Mehringer	G	6- 2	210	28	Kansas
Bill Moore	E	6- 0	195	26	North Carolina
Gail O'Brien	T	6- 1	235	26	Nebraska
Hal Pangle	FB	5-10	198	26	Oregon
Chuck Pavelko	HB-QB	5-10	198		Santa Clara
Ray Peterson	HB-FB-QB	6-0	190		U.S.F.
Ewell Phillips	G	6- 0	220	28	Oklahoma Baptist
Milt Pollack	T	6- 3	225		California
Keith Ranspot	E	6- 3	205	23	S.M.U.
Steve Sinko	T	6- 2	235	27	Duquesne
Ed Stark	QB	5-11	170		Oklahoma Baptist
Howard Tipton	G-C	5-10	190	27	U.S.C.
Johnny Wiatrak	C	6- 1	210	25	Washington
Hal Wickersham	HB	5-11	205		Tulsa

Coach: Elmer "Gus" Henderson

Assistant: Malcolm "Ike" Frankian (line)

Sep 14	We	H	34	Salinas Packers	0	W	8000
Sep 27	Tu	A	12	Chicago Bears (at Charleston, W.Va.)	14	L	8000
Oct 11	Tu	A	14	Chicago Cardinals (at Charleston, W.Va.)	14	T	6500
Oct 16	Su	A	0	Cincinnati Bengals	3	L	9000
Oct 19	We	A	33	Oklahoma All-Stars (at Tulsa)	0	W	1000
Oct 30	Su	H	48	Cincinnati Bengals	17	W	10000
Nov 6	Su	H	34	Hollywood Stars	10	W	10000
Nov 11	Fr	A	17	Pittsburgh Pirates (at Colorado Springs)	6	W	12500
Nov 13	Su	H	14	Pittsburgh Pirates	14	T	18500
Nov 20	Su	H	28	Cleveland Rams	7	W	14000
Nov 27	Su	A	14	Salinas Packers (at San Francisco)	10	W	750
Dec 4	Su	H	47	Salinas Packers	14	W	12000
Dec 11	Su	H	27	Hollywood Stars	14	W	
Dec 18	Su	H	16	Louisville Tanks	0	W	4000
1938:			338	10-2-2 (all games)	123		114000+

1939 Los Angeles Bulldogs (A.F.L.)

Player	Pos	Hgt	Wgt	Age	College
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Dan Barnhart	QB-HB	6- 0	210	28	Centenary
Homer Beatty	E	6- 0	198		U.S.C.
Kay Bell	T	6- 2	215	24	Washington State
Verdi Boyer	G	5-10	196	27	U.C.L.A.
Harold Brill	HB	5-10	175	25	Wichita State
Ollie Day	HB				U.S.C.
Jerry Dennerlein	T	6- 2	235	26	St. Mary's
Jerry Donnell	G	5-11	195	26	Oregon
Red Elder	HB-FB	6- 1	190		Kansas State
Zeke Everhart	FB				
Ike Frankian	E	5-11	205	32	St. Mary's
Gene Hodge	E				West Texas Tech
Elvin Hutchinson	HB-FM	5-11	195	26	Whittier
Jimmy Jones	HB				U.S.C.
Ernie Jorge	G		185		St. Mary's
George Karamatic	FB	5- 8	187	22	Gonzaga
Tilly Manton	HB-QB	5-11	188	27	T.C.U.
Archie McDonald	T				
Amy McPherson	C	5-10	240	27	Nebraska
Pete Mehringer	G	6- 2	210	29	Kansas
Butch Morse	E	6- 2	199	26	Oregon
Al Nichelini	HB	6- 0	215	29	St. Mary's
Gail O'Brien	T	6- 1	235	27	Nebraska
Hal Pangle	HB-FB	5-10	198	27	Oregon State
Chuck Pavelko	QB	5-10	198		Santa Clara
Bert Pearson	C	6- 1	190	34	Kansas State
Ray Peterson	HB-QB	6- 0	190		U.S.F.
Milt Pollack	T	6- 3	225		California
Keith Ranspot	E	6- 3	205	24	S.M.U.
Hank Rockwell	C	6- 4	231	22	Arizona State
Ralph Stanley	E				U.S.C.
Ed Stark	HB	5-11	170		Oklahoma Baptist
Howard Tipton	G	5-10	190	28	U.S.C.
Ray Wehba	E	6- 0	215	23	U.S.C.

Coach: Malcolm "Ike" Frankian
 Assistants: Ray Richards (line)
 Homer "Butch" Beatty (backs)

Sep 4	Mo	H	6	*Washington Redskins	21	L*	12000
Oct 1	Su	A	36	*Des Moines Comets	6	W*	2000
Oct 8	Su	A	0	Columbus Bullies	7	L	5564
Oct 17	Tu	A	16	Cincinnati Bengals	12	W	5500
Oct 22	Su	A	24	St. Louis Gunners	0	W	4500
Nov 12	Su	H	28	*Oakland All-Stars	7	W*	7000
Nov 19	Su	H	20	Columbus Bullies	14	W	9000
Nov 23	Th	H	65	Dayton Bombers	0	W	7500
Dec 3	Su	A	19	Columbus Bullies (at Portland, Ore.)	17	W	6172
Dec 10	Su	H	23	Columbus Bullies	21	W	7000
Dec 17	Su	H	56	St. Louis Gunners	14	W	7500
Dec 24	Su	H	42	*Hollywood All-Stars	7	W*	5000
Dec 31	Su	H	22	*Washington's All-Stars	6	W*	15000
1939:			357	11-2-0 (all games)	132		93800