

RED GRANGE IN CANADA

In November of 1926, the American Football League--Red Grange's rival to the NFL--invaded Canada by scheduling a game in Toronto. At that time Canadian football was even more different from the U.S. brand than it is today. For one thing, the forward pass had not yet been legalized.

The following story from the Tuesday, November 9, 1926, issue of the Hamilton *Spectator* was discovered and submitted by Stewart Brown of the present day *Spectator* sports department.

LARGE CROWD GREATLY ENTHUSED BY PRO STRUGGLE

Think More of Canada Game After Tilt
"Red" Grange's Yankees Winners, 28 to 0

No matter how wildly enthusiastic Americans are over their style of football, the American game will never find favor in Canada. That seemed to be the consensus of opinion following yesterday's exhibition at Toronto, where "Red" Grange's New York Yankees battled "Wildcat" Wilson's Pacific coast professionals, and scored a 28 to 0 victory.

About ten thousand fans turned out to compare the American brand of rugby with the Canadian game, and there appeared to be very little enthusiasm apart from the interest in the players and a little excitement stirred by good individual plays. The absence of kicking, and the narrow outlet for scoring proclivities of the teams, together with the forward passing and the general interference, made the game seem comparatively tame to the hard-boiled fans who like to see the pigskin sailing for points, an aerial duel up and down the field, extended end runs and solo field goals.

Grange Got Try

There was plenty of action in the game, and "Red" Grange provided a pretty piece of work when he broke loose through the line and shook off half a dozen would-be tacklers to sprint sixty yards for the Yankees' first touchdown. The "galloping ghost" also showed some nifty line plunging and defensive work, and he tossed a number of forward passes that were taken for granted as being good, although the receiver didn't always carry the play through. Several other members of the Yankees, notably Gerald Maloney, former Dartmouth star, "Bullet" Baker, former Southern California star, and Wesley Fry, an outstanding Iowa star of other days, fitted into the smooth-working Yankee machine well, and Bradshaw, the quarterback of the Wildcats, together with George Wilson himself and R. Morrison, showed up well for the Wildcats.

Passes Counted

Two of the Yankees' touchdowns were scored on forward passes, and Grange's run, and an intercepted pass accounted for the other two. The placement kick behind the line converted all four.

There was no arguing with the officials, and very few subs were used, both teams going almost all of the first half without a change. The Yankees didn't change their line-up at all. Kicking was seldom indulged in, as no points are allowed in the American game unless the kick is a bona fide field goal or kick from placement. The placement is made by one man taking the ball out and holding it on the ground in position for the kicker. The method of converting touchdowns by bringing the ball ten yards out and directly in front of the goal posts was another feature that looked too soft to the fans.

The line-plunging was fast and hard, and although the gains were mostly small ones, all these plays were well meant. The extensive interference didn't appear to help either team, except on rare occasions, due, probably, to the defensive skills of the teams. Then the feature of any player recovering a punt without being offside was confusing to the fans and took the thrill of kicks being run back, out of the game.

From the standpoint of curiosity and interest in a comparison, the game was a decided success, but from a propaganda standpoint it was a failure. It would take a long time for Canadian football fans to take to the pastime.

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In his accompanying letter, Mr. Brown points out that the story appeared on the third--and last--sports page. He adds: "It's interesting to note that a Canadian football game between the Hamilton Tigers and Balmy Beach of Toronto, played the same day at Varsity Stadium in Toronto, drew a 'handful' of fans. However, another sporting event in Toronto that Thanksgiving attracted 8,000. They watched the Bethlehem Steel soccer team from the U.S. defeat Toronto Ulsters 3-2 in an exhibition soccer match.