

ALL-PROS OF 1927

by John Hogrogian

I love all those old tales about the NFL organizational meeting in Canton, with everyone sitting on Hupmobile running boards, drinking buckets of beer, and creating big league pro football. I also respect the accomplishments of the 1933 NFL meetings, when the league fathers adopted divisional play and made rule changes which boosted offense to a new level. In my mind, though, the 1927 league meetings rank with these legends for massive significance. With a vision of a different sort of league, the NFL powers pressured the small fry such as Canton and Akron out of the circuit. The NFL went from a 22 team behemoth to a tight 12 team outfit. With a reduced number of teams, interested observers could see most of the league's players without spending a fortune on train fare. Some of these experts picked All-Pro teams at the end of the season.

One group of 18 experts participated in the annual All-Pro poll which appeared in the *Green Bay Press Gazette*. The voters included sports writers, game officials, and team managers.

first team

E- Lavern Dilweg, G.B.
E- Cal Hubbard, Giants
T- Gus Sonnenberg, Prov.
T- Ed Weir, Frankford
G- Mike Michalske, Yanks
G- Steve Owen, Giants
C- Clyde Smith, Cleve.
Q- Benny Friedman, Clev.
H- Verne Lewellen, G.B.
H- Paddy Driscoll, Bears
F- Ernie Nevers, Duluth

second team

E- Ed Lynch, Prov.
E- George Kenneally, Potts.
T- Century Milstead, Giants
T- Duke Slater, Cards
G- Al Graham, Dayton
G- Milt Rehnquist, Cleve.
C- George Trafton, Bears
Q- Hinkey Haines, Giants
H- Bill Senn, Bears
H- Ed Tryon, Yanks
F- Jack McBride, Giants

Sources: *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, December 16, 1927; *Milwaukee Sentinel*, December 16, 1927; *Providence Journal*, December 18, 1927.

The champion New York Giants put two men on the first team and three on the second. This poll was the fifth in the series which would continue through 1931 and which was discussed in the November 1982 issue of the *Coffin Corner*.

At least one sports writer published his own 1927 team. Wilfred Smith, an ex-NFL player, wrote for the *Chicago Tribune* sports staff. His selections appeared in the *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, but I couldn't find them in the *Tribune*.

E- Lavern Dilweg, G.B.	C- George Trafton, Chi B
E- Carl Bacchus, Cle	Q- Benny Friedman, Cle
T- Century Milstead, N.Y.G.	H- Verne Lewellen, G.B.
T- Joe Kozlowsky, Prov.	H- Paddy Driscoll, Chi B
G- Mike Michalske, N.Y.G.	F- Jack McBride, N.Y.G.
G- Jim McMillen, Chi B	

Source: *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, December 12, 1927.

His team is notable for the choice of Jack McBride over Ernie Nevers at fullback.

Also picking McBride at fullback was Jack Reardon, a game official who worked contests in New York. Reardon named McBride "the outstanding player of the NFL for the 1927 season."

E- Ray Flaherty, NYG	C- George Trafton, Chi B
E- Cal Hubbard, NYG	Q- Benny Friedman, Cle
T- Bub Weller, Chi C	H- Verne Lewellen, GB
T- Steve Owen, NYG	H- Ernie Nevers, Dul
G- Jack Fleischman, Prov	F- Jack McBride, NYG
G- Pud Connaughton, Fra	

Sources: *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, December 15, 1927 (A.P. story); *Chicago Herald-Examiner*, December 16, 1927 (A.P.)

THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 4, No. 12 (1982)

Despite his enthusiasm for McBride, Reardon still appreciated Nevers' talents enough to place him at halfback.

Two NFL coaches picked All-Pro teams for a local newspaper. Leroy Andrews made his selections for the *Cleveland Press*.

first team

E- Lavern Dilweg, GB
E- Chuck Corgan, NYG
T- Duke Slater, Chi C
T- Ed Healey, Chi B
G- Milt Rehnquist, Cle
G- Steve Owen, NYG
C- Clyde Smith, Cle
Q- Benny Friedman, Cle
H- Verne Lewellen, GB
H- Bill Senn, Chi B
F- Ernie Nevers, Chi C

second team

E- Chuck Kassel, Fra
E- Carl Bacchus, Cle
T- Gus Sonnenberg, Prov
T- Ed Weir, Fra
G- Mike Michalske, NYY
G- Rudy Comstock, Fra
C- George Trafton, Chi B
Q- Hinkey Haines, NYG
H- Curly Oden, Prov
H- Eddie Tryon, NYY
F- Jack McBride, NYG

Source: *Cleveland Press*, December 12, 1927.

Andrews put three of his own Cleveland players on his first team and one more on his second team. The Giants also placed four men in Andrews' top 22 players.

Also naming names was Ralph Scott, coach of the New York Yankees. He structured his selections uniquely, choosing a "power attack" team and a "clever attack" team.

Power Attack

E- Tillie Voss, Chi B
E- Cal Hubbard, NYG
T- Bub Weller, Chi C
T- Steve Owen, NYG
G- Hec Garvey, NYG
G- Jim McMillen, Chi B
C- George Trafton, Chi B
Q- Ben Jones, Chi C
H- Tony Latone, Pot
H- Wildcat Wilson, Prov
F- Barney Wentz, Pot

Clever Attack

E- Ray Flaherty, NYY
E- Lavern Dilweg, GB
T- Dick Stahlman, NYG
T- Link Lyman, Chi B
G- Mike Michalske, NYY
G- Al Nesser, NYG
C- Clyde Smith, Cle
Q- Benny Friedman, Cle
H- Red Grange, NYY
H- Hinkey Haines, NYG
F- Ernie Nevers, Dul

Source: *New York World*, December 15, 1927.

Scott's picks are particularly helpful in highlighting the styles of these pre-television stars. He picked six New York Giants, evenly split between the power and clever squads. He added three Yankees to the clever team, including injury-plagued Red Grange.

One final team came from a fan. The *New York Post* printed the selections of Daniel Webster Krulewitch, a Manhattan attorney who apparently followed pro football.

first team

E- Ray Flaherty, NYY
E- Hal Broda, Prov
T- Pete Henry, Pot
T- Dick Stahlman, NYG
G- Al Nesser, NYG
G- Jim McMillen, Chi B
C- Odom, Prov
Q- Benny Friedman, Cle
H- Paddy Driscoll, Chi B
H- Eddie Tryon, NYY
F- Jack McBride, NYG

second team

E- Cal Hubbard, NYG
E- Duke Hanny, Chi B
T- Ed Weir, Fra
T- Duke Slater, Chi B
G- Hec Garvey, NYG
G- Clem Neacy, Dul
C- Ernie Vick, Chi B
Q- Joe Sternaman, Chi B
H- Hinkey Haines, NYG
H- Wildcat Wilson, Prov
F- Ed Scharer, Pot

Source: *New York Post*, December 16, 1927.

THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 4, No. 12 (1982)

Unfortunately, some of Krulewitch's selections stretch his credibility to the breaking point. Nobody named Odom played center for Providence, and Hal Broda did not play for the Steam Roller. Clem Neacy was an end, not a guard, for Duluth. But if Krulewitch made some clinkers this year, he would return undaunted with his 1928 selections in the pages of the *Post*.

Looking at all the 1927 All-Pro teams, I find Benny Friedman and Jack McBride to be alluring figures. Friedman broke into the NFL to lead the league in passing and to be named to every All-Pro team printed above. McBride won the fullback honors on only three teams, but he was going up against Ernie Nevers, who was both very good and very famous. McBride led the NFL in scoring, ranked second in touchdown passes, and helped the Giants to their first championship.