

The First Pro Bowl Game

by Fred R. Crawford

The game was conceived by George P. Marshall, the Washington Redskins owner, and sponsored by the Los Angeles Times Charities. Pitting the league champion New York Giants against a collection of the NFL's finest and five members from two independent Pacific coast teams was a novel idea. Played on January 15, 1939, in old Wrigley Field, a baseball park, before a crowd of an estimated 20,000 fans (30,000 had been expected but with poor weather conditions attendance was low).

The game was typical of football in the 1930's, punting on third down, scoring teams receiving the following kickoff, and a few breaks deciding the outcome of the game. The teams struggled between the 30-yard lines for most of the first quarter. Early in the second quarter Giant fullback John (Bull) Karcis intercepted a Cecil Isbell pass on the All-Star 35-yard line and returned it to the All-Star 13. Two running plays and an incomplete pass forced the Giants into settling for a 19-yard field goal by Len Barnum. Giants 3 All-Stars 0.

Late in the second quarter the All-Stars started a drive from their own 35 yard line with Ed Goddard running and passing along with John Drake's running, the All-Stars worked the ball to the Giants 19 yard line. Three plays failed to gain yardage and Ernie Smith kicked a 25-yard field goal with 29 seconds left in the half. Giants 3 All-Stars 3.

In the third quarter following four changes in possession the All-Stars had the ball on their own 20-yard line. Baugh passed 9 yards to Schwartz, Baugh passed to Cardwell who caught the ball behind two Giant defenders at the Giant 35 and outran the defense for a 71 yard touchdown. Joe Stydahar added the extra point. Giants 3 All-Stars 10.

Taking the ensuing All-Star kickoff the Giants moved the length of the field with a combination of runs and passes to score with the final 22 yards coming on a pass from Danowski to Gelatka. Cuff made the extra point. Giants 10 All-Stars 10.

The All Stars received the kickoff and moved steadily downfield to the Giants 12-yard line where the attack bogged down. Ernie Smith's 25-yard field goal was partially blocked and sailed wide.

Late in the fourth quarter the Giants were forced to punt from their own 43-yard line. Ed Goddard fumbled the punt and the Giants recovered on the All-Star 19-yard line. The Giants moved to the All-Star 11 from where Cuff kicked an 18-yard field goal. Giants 12 All-Stars 10.

The All-Stars were unable to move the ball following the kickoff and punted to the Giants who ran out the clock. Final score Giants 13 All-Stars 10.

Thus began the Pro Bowl Extravaganza.

Individual Statistics

Rushing

Giants			All Stars		
	Att	Yds		Att	Yds
Soar	15	39	Drake	10	56
Leemans	12	18	Hinkle	8	17
Richards	8	15	Isbell	6	50
Barnum	3	7	Baugh	3	3
Karcis	2	3	Goddard	3	9
Danowski	1	1	Caldwell	2	-2
Cuff	1	1	Gore	2	-6
Shaffer	1	5			

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Passing

	Att	Co	Yds	TD	Int		Att	Co	Yds	TD	Int
Danowski	16	9	94	1	1	Baugh	10	4	86	1	1
Leemans	1	0	0	0	0	Goddard	6	4	29	0	0
Barnum	1	0	0	0	1	Isbell	7	1	7	0	2

Pass Receiving

	Cgt	Yds	TD		Cgt	Yds	TD
Richards	3	39	0	Moore	1	7	0
Soar	2	15	0	Gore	1	9	0
Burnett	1	14	0	Cardwell	2	76	1
Gelata	1	22	1	Carter	1	9	0
Bernard	1	6	0	Tinsley	1	1	0
Shaffer	1	-2	0	Drake	1	6	0
				Schwartz	1	9	0
				McChesney	1	5	0

Interceptions

	No	Yds		No	Yds	
Danowski	1	0		Tinsley	1	24
Soar	0	18	(lateral from Danowski)	Stu Smith	1	0
Burnett	1	0				
Karcis	1	22				

Punting

	No	Yds		No	Yds	
Danowski	4	125		Baugh	6	235
Gildea	3	123				

Punt Returns

	No	Yds		No	Yds	
Soar	1	12		Baugh	6	235
Leemans	1	12				

Kickoff Returns

	No	Yds		No	Yds	
Leemans	1	18		Hinkle	1	22
Burnett	1	20		Gore	1	24
				Drake	1	28

New York Giants

All Stars

Hap Barnard	E	Sam Baugh	HB	Redskins
Len Barnum	HB	Del Bjork	T	Bears
Dale Burnett	HB	Lloyd Cardwell	HB	Lions
Frank Cope	T	Joe Carter	E	Eagles
Ward Cuff	HB	Phil Dougherty	C	Cardinals
Ed Danowski	FB	John Drake	FB	Rams
Nelo Falaschi	QB	Byron Gentry	G	Steelers
Stan Galazin	C	Ed. Goddard	QB	Rams
Chuck Gelatka	E	Gordon Gore	HB	Los Angeles Bulldogs
John Gildea	QB	Owen Hanson	HB	Hollywood Stars
Jack Haden	T	Clarke Hinkle	FB	Packers
Mel Hein	C	Cecil Isbell	QB	Packers
Jim Lee Howell	E	Frank Kinard	T	Dodgers
Larry Johnson	C	Russ Letlow	G	Packers
John Karcis	FB	Bob McChesney	E	Redskins
Tuffy Leemans	HB	Pete Mehringer	G	Los Angeles Bulldogs
Kayo Lunday	G	Bill Moore	E	Los Angeles Bulldogs
Ox Parry	T	Ernie Pickert	QB	Redskins
Jim Poole	E	Bill Radovich	G	Lions
Kink Richards	HB	Perry Schwartz	E	Dodgers
Leland Shaffer	QB	Ernie Smith	T	Hollywood Stars

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Hank Soar	HB	Stu Smith	QB	Steelers
Orville Tuttle	G	Joe Stydahar	T	Bears
Tarzan White	G	Gaynell Tinsley	E	Cardinals
Ed Widseth	T	John Wiatrak	C	Rams
Hugh Wolfe	FB			