

The Salt Lake Seagulls

By Mel "Buck" Bashore

On a windy September Sunday in 1946, more than 6,000 curious spectators were seated in the grandstands and bleachers at the Utah State Fairgrounds awaiting the kickoff of a startling new sports development in Utah. Throughout 1946, the sports pages of Salt Lake City's three major newspapers had reported the formative efforts of a group of local businessmen to field a professional football team.

The dust-whipped field conditions were initially not enough to restrain the anticipation of the eager fans. All players on both teams were introduced. Messages of welcome and wishes for success were expressed by Governor Herbert B. Maw, league president J. Rufus Klawans, and team president Frank L. Christensen. Christensen, a bona fide University of Utah All-American and Detroit Lions back from 1934-37, booted an oversize mock football to officially launch the Salt Lake Seagulls football team.

The ball split open to release a flock of live seagulls. Years later, Seagull quarterback Dee Chipman wryly observed that the dazed birds "neglected to fly" – a "desultory reaction (that) may have been a portent of the future."

The story of Utah's only venture into pro football began with a meeting of 15 businessmen in the Salt Lake City Chamber of Commerce Building on Dec. 3, 1945. Although news reports and memories of these early organizing efforts by the participants are vague, efforts were set in motion at this meeting to secure a franchise in the Pacific Coast Football League. The PCFL was established in 1940 as a West Coast counterpart to the NFL in the East. There were other minor leagues and professional leagues in existence, but during the war years it was recognized as the second-best football league in the country.

The backers of the team appointed a committee to solicit funds and set a goal of raising \$25,000. An estimated \$17,000 was the minimum needed to put a team on the field for the first game, but \$25,000 would enable them to buy the best talent and equipment.

On Jan. 14, 1946, a meeting was held at the Newhouse Hotel to solicit pledges of financial support. Temporary officers were selected for the informal organization and prices were set for the purchase of stock. It was decided that \$500 minimum and \$3,000 maximum at \$5 per share would be the terms for buying stock.

On Feb. 4, about 20 stockholders attended a meeting at the Ambassador Athletic Club to select delegates to attend the PCFL meetings in San Francisco. Three were chosen: Frank Christensen, City Parks Commissioner Fred Tedesco, and Don E. Galbreath, a local fight promoter. These three attended the PCFL meetings Feb. 9-10 in an attempt to secure a franchise for Salt Lake. They met unexpected opposition in trying to convince the league moguls that Utah "had something to offer them." But after much discussion, Salt Lake was awarded a franchise in the league.

They paid \$5,000 to the league for the right to take over the defunct San Jose Mustangs franchise. San Jose had been the only PCFL team to lose money in 1945. Salt Lake's delegates expressed confidence that they could draw spectators. The added costs that would be incurred in traveling to Salt Lake were a serious concern for the other teams, so a system was devised to prorate total expenses of all clubs.

Three other new teams expanded the league to nine teams. It was split into a Northern Division consisting of the Oakland Giants, Sacramento Nuggets, San Francisco Clippers, Tacoma Indians and Salt Lake Seagulls. The Southern Division comprised the Hawaiian Warriors, Hollywood Bears, Los Angeles Bulldogs and San Diego Bombers. Rosters were limited to 25 players. The league also ruled that all games were to be played on Sundays.

Although newspapers don't mention his presence, Roland Sleater, appointed a director of the Seagulls, recalled attending the PCFL meeting. He remembered the discussions this way: The Hawaii team, concerned about extra travel, voiced the strongest objections to Salt Lake's entry into the league. Salt Lake received support from San Francisco and Los Angeles. Both of those teams were more interested in joining the NFL than in trying to improve the PCFL. They didn't object to Salt Lake's entry into the PCFL "because they needed opponents."

THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 14, No. 2 (1992)

The team delegates returned to Salt Lake, receiving congratulations and commendations from local sports columnists. The newspapers mentioned that football players were invited to get in touch with the pro grid backers. At a meeting held Feb. 20, officers were elected to head the corporate team: Frank Christensen, president; Don Galbreath, vice president; Ernest F. Mariani, secretary-treasurer; and Fred Tedesco, Roland G. Sleater, Horace H. Fisher and R. Blaine Packard, directors.

Incorporation papers for the Salt Lake City Football Corporation were filed a week later. Some changes were made in the officers. Galbreath was tendered a contract to be a co-coach and assistant manager of the team, so Lewis Squires replaced him as vice president. Tedesco was offered the other coaching position and the job of general manager. Although still undecided about accepting the coaching offer at the time of the incorporation, he was replaced as a director by Glen W. Arnett. Within a week, after deciding that the job wouldn't interfere with his civic duties, Tedesco accepted the coach/general manager offer.

Galbreath had been head coach of the Salt Lake Army Air Base service football team in 1943, but Tedesco had no previous coaching experience. However, Galbreath could not come to terms on his contract, and the coaching duties fell to Tedesco alone.

Now the work of establishing a functional organization was begun in earnest. The stadium at the fairgrounds was secured as a playing site. Prospective players were contacted and several signed contracts. PCFL president Klawans visited Salt Lake City in early April to confer with club officials and make inspections. He granted final approval to the franchise, commenting that the "setup" in Salt Lake was "as good as any in the league." In his opinion, Salt Lake would "make a very fine addition to the league."

The fairgrounds stadium had been used primarily as a rodeo arena. Klawans discussed plans for sodding the field, improving the loudspeaker system, installing a modern scoreboard, and providing press and radio facilities. Team officials told him they expected to be able to seat 15,000 spectators with the addition of temporary bleachers they intended to build.

After Klawans' visit, work began on preparing the stadium for football. Tedesco hired Lou Nestman, a utility man with the City Parks Department, to put in grass and a sprinkling system, and to maintain the field. Nestman worked at the stadium in the evenings. The grass was in by late May. Officials of the "Days of '47" rodeo approached the football team about the possibility of the bleachers being completed in advance of the football season. The football team was under no obligation to build the bleachers until fall, but agreed to push that work ahead so the rodeo could benefit from the additional seating capacity.

In the latter part of May, work began on these bleachers for the north, east and west sides of the playing field. Tedesco used Parks Department employees and city-purchased lumber for the job. In mid-July, one of the Parks Department workers refused to continue working on the bleacher project because "he sensed the wrongfulness of such employment." Others on the project also felt uncomfortable about their work. Several went to David O. McKay, second counselor in the First Presidency of the Mormon Church and an influential community leader, to voice their feelings. Upon hearing these allegations, he requested a meeting with the city commissioners and the mayor to bring the matter to their attention.

On July 30, the commissioners, the mayor and the city attorney met in McKay's office to hear the charges against Tedesco, detailed in a five-page report. After presenting his allegations, McKay withdrew from his office, leaving the others to continue in an executive session. They determined that Tedesco would issue his own statement and the city would "explore" the charges.

With this turn of events, news about Salt Lake's pro football team began appearing on the front pages as well as the sports pages.

In a press conference the next day, Tedesco admitted using city employees, materials and equipment in building the bleachers. However, he contended that neither he nor the football corporation acted with any thought of "cheating" the city. He testified that he had discussed the matter of the corporation repaying the city with Streets Commissioner John B. Matheson and City Auditor Louis E. Holley at least ten days before the "bleacher incident" became a public issue. On Aug. 1 Tedesco filed a detailed report giving an accounting of the bleacher project, and presented a check to the city for \$885.81. This covered costs for 935 man-hours of labor, plus materials and equipment.

This payment and explanation failed to appease the critics and to clear Tedesco's name from the taint of wrongdoing. Questions of malfeasance in office were being studied by the city attorney, and newspaper editorials called for a complete and impartial investigation.

THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 14, No. 2 (1992)

Tedesco made a plea to the commissioners to determine whether he had done anything wrong and whether his report was accurate. He asserted that it had been common practice for city employees, materials and equipment to be used to assist church, civic and fraternal enterprises and activities. Newspaper editorials began calling for the establishment of a clear-cut policy on the use of city employees and materials. Frank Christensen defended Tedesco's actions in constructing the bleachers, insisting that the football corporation didn't stand to profit financially from the rush construction job.

Following several days of investigation, the City Commission concluded that Tedesco had acted with "poor judgment," but declined to take any disciplinary action.

David McKay immediately issued a public statement taking the commissioners to task for their failure to assume responsibility in the bleacher affair. A *Deseret News* editorial blasted the commissioners for their "inane" report, labeling it one of the most "wishy-washy, spineless stands" ever taken by the commission. In the minds of many, Tedesco's name was not cleared and the political ethics of city officials were suspect.

Thereafter, public interest was deflected from Tedesco to a broader spectrum of moral and ethical affairs in the city and state. The bleacher incident quickly receded into the background, thus enabling the football corporation to get about the business of fielding a team, albeit with a minor blemish on its record before the first game had even been played.

To spark community interest and identification with the yet-unnamed team, a public contest was held in June to select a name. One hundred different names were submitted, but fully a third of those responding suggested that the team be called the Seagulls. A committee of radio disc jockeys, sportswriters and team officials accepted the public's choice and named the team the Salt Lake Seagulls.

Although there was an abundance of available, talented football players to choose from after the end of the war, the creation of the All-America Football Conference in 1946, with West Coast teams in Los Angeles (the Dons) and San Francisco (the 49ers), made it difficult to obtain high-caliber players in the PCFL. The competition for players with the NFL and the AAFC relegated the PCFL to clearly minor-league status for the first time since the league's inception in 1940. It was really not an opportune time for Salt Lake to try to field a pro football team.

However, while many of the existing PCFL teams lost star players to the NFL and the AAFC, Salt Lake was able to attract a number of local players with NFL experience who wanted to return to Utah. The team could offer comparable salaries or other incentives to make such a move attractive.

Players with NFL experience who signed for the 1946 season included guard/kicker Glen "Lefty" Sorenson (1943-45 Green Bay Packers), lineman Garth Chamberlain (1945 Pittsburgh Steelers), end Wayne Clark (1944 Detroit Lions), end Paul McDonough (1938 Pittsburgh, 1939-41 Cleveland Rams), and halfback Aldo "Honey" Richins (1935 Detroit Lions). A number of other players that they signed had prior PCFL experience, including tackle Floyd "Alice" Spendlove (1942 San Diego Bombers), end Joe "Pop" Byrnes (1944 Seattle Bombers, 1945 Hollywood Rangers), and again, Wayne Clark (1941 Hollywood Bears, 1942-43 San Diego Bombers, 1945 Los Angeles Bulldogs).

The bulk of the players had Utah high school, college or university backgrounds. Only a few were from colleges outside Utah, but some of them had family in the state.

Players were acquired in various ways to fill the roster. Tedesco contacted Aldo Richins, a teammate of his at the University of Utah in the 1930s, and asked him to play. Richins was 36 years old and felt that he was too old. Tedesco wanted him to serve as a player/coach, but Richins was too busy running a frozen foods plant in Ogden to take a dual role. He told Tedesco that if they'd put another old Ute teammate, Sid Kramer, on the roster, he'd give it a try as a player. He signed a contract for \$125 a game, \$25 less than he had received with the Detroit Lions a decade earlier.

Richins and Kramer reported late to the training camp on the baseball field at White's Park in mid-August. Despite being much older than the other players in camp and getting a late start in training, Richins beat everyone in a race. He had kept in condition by playing baseball and basketball in the industrial leagues. Kramer, not aware of Richins' advance playing terms, thought he was just tagging along to get in a workout. But he soon left, surprised at being offered a contract.

Most of the players on the 1946 team received invitations to try out or were signed outright to contracts. A lot of uninvited walk-ons who tried out for the team didn't make the roster cut because they weren't in condition to play the 60 minutes of offense and defense that the pro game required.

THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 14, No. 2 (1992)

Players couldn't be real heavy and expect to play a 60-minute game. As a result, they didn't bulk up by lifting weights in this pre-specialist and pre-platoon era. Most of the player weights that were printed in the newspapers and game programs were inflated as a psychological tactic to scare the opposing team.

Players weren't paid for training camp or practices. They had to be on the roster and suit up for a scheduled game in order to receive their contracted salaries. Of the sixteen players I interviewed, salaries ranged from \$60 to \$250 per game. It's possible that salaries for some of those with NFL experience were higher. Players were told not to divulge their salaries to each other. The reason for this became evident in 1947, during the team's second season. As quarterback Huck Adelt recalled:

"Tedesco told me that no one was being paid more than I, and he told each player the same thing. This caused a lot of problems when the truth came out. Not that it mattered so much about the money, but Tedesco had not been honest with us."

During the first season, players' feelings about Tedesco were divided. Most of them liked him as a person, but they generally questioned his ability to coach. Laurie Moss, a center on the 1946 team, remembered him as "a very likable guy," but halfback Cliff Hoopiaina succinctly stated that Tedesco "didn't know from nothin'! (He) didn't know about coachin' pro." Kent White agreed, remarking that Tedesco "didn't really have the capabilities as a pro coach. He wasn't that skilled. 'Feets' didn't have the charisma to mold a team."

(According to family lore, Tedesco got the nickname "Feets" in high school in Salt Lake City, when he had to wear his older brother's shoes to school because his mother had taken his own shoes to be repaired. His sibling's shoes were so large that it "took two steps in the big shoes to get them to move one step.")

Although a few of the players regarded Tedesco as a competent coach, the consensus was that, despite being a great guy personally, he wasn't ready for pro coaching. By the end of the second season, which was fraught with serious financial difficulties, even Tedesco's general popularity among the players took a steep nosedive. As Huck Adelt noted in regard to the salary issue, even his integrity was called into question at that point.

The training camp and practices were held in the evenings because most of the players had full-time jobs during the day. During the first year of the team, practices were generally held in the outfield of the baseball diamond at White's Park, directly south of the State Fairgrounds. Gordon Lee, a tall end out of BYU, remembered it as more like "an alfalfa field." Tackle O'Dean Hess recalled that the dressing room at the practice field was "kind of pathetic." It was nothing more than a shed in which the players could change clothes. There were no showers. Jack Littlefair remembered it as little more than a converted "cow barn." During the second season they practiced at several locations, including Fairmount Park, Derks Field, and a park a few blocks south of Derks.

During the preseason in 1946, Clark Romney, a tackle, lost 25 pounds and Andy Katsanevas, an end, pared down from 240 pounds to 195. After this conditioning period, they began contact scrimmaging and outlining plays. Paul McDonough, the big 29-year-old end with the most NFL experience, was named assistant coach. In the estimation of most of the players, he became the *real* coach.

For those players without pro experience, the lack of discipline in practices came as a shock. Katsanevas remembered that the younger guys "would work their butts off" while the old pros would lie around. Hess, a co-captain on the old Fort Douglas MPs service team, was used to discipline. He said it felt like the team "wasn't under anybody's authority. It was not a disciplined situation." Often the younger players, with all their enthusiasm, naivete and unbridled desire to impress, had to be tutored in the professional way of playing football: In practice, a Granite High School grad, lineman Ray Silcox, became too enthusiastic in tackling. Tackle George Worthen recalled that they called a "hit" on him and everybody piled on him when he came through the line.

Although newspapers reported that Tedesco was installing a "deceptive and revolutionary" system, such ballyhoo must have been written to confuse the opposition or to bring curious fans through the turnstiles. In truth, the team was running the outdated single wing, albeit with a miniscule wrinkle here and there. Huck Adelt, the first T-formation quarterback at Utah in 1941 and a backup to Frankie Albert on the powerful 1942 St. Mary's Pre-Flight Air Devils, was surprised when he joined the Seagulls and "saw their unimaginative offense." He explained the situation:

"Tedesco and Paul McDonough had been out of football for over 10 years when they were asked to coach the team. They were running the old single wing ... I tried to change the formation so that it was

THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 14, No. 2 (1992)

more 'explosive,' quick hitting and more passing. The coaches finally let me get behind the center at times as in the 'T,' but we still had an unbalanced line with the wing back in motion. Believe me, we were the only team in the country with such a set-up."

John Mooney recalled that the Seagulls only had plays that went to the right; they had none that went to the left. Gordon Lee simply described the Seagull offense as "a single wing attack with T-formation people." As he explained it, a team needed powerful backs to run the single wing, but the Seagulls had only small, lightweight backs. They "had a (powerful) line to run the single wing, but not the backs." Almost all the former pro players were on the line.

The weakness of the Seagulls' offense was confirmed in the record of their inaugural season: two wins, five losses and a tie. On a more hopeful note, both wins came in home games, and in most of their losses they were competitive and not outclassed. The team finished tied for third in its division; a few Seagulls were named to the all-league team, with some others accorded honorable mention.

Despite the anemic record, the players had fun, and those few fans who attended the games and followed the team in the sports pages enjoyed an experience that was new to Salt Lake. As often happens with fledgling pro sports franchises, attendance figures were inflated for the press. Before the season got under way, Jerry Jones, wealthy owner of the Rainbow Rendezvous dance establishment, offered to buy the team. The stockholders turned down his offer, believing that they would be able to field a successful and profitable team. Roland Sleater judged that turning down Jones' offer was one of their biggest mistakes. He remains convinced "that for any franchise to work it must have a principal owner and not just a lot of equal shareholders."

Tee Branca, a golf pro and team stockholder, recalled that he voted against accepting Jones' offer because he thought the franchise was going to be a big moneymaker and they were "all going to become rich with it." On the contrary, he spent every Thursday, Friday and Saturday before home games trying to peddle tickets around town. It was discouraging work in a city where almost everyone spent Sundays going to church.

Although the grandstand and bleachers at the fairgrounds were never filled to capacity, the facilities had been adequately prepared. Large molds of all the PCFL teams' insignias were cast and installed on the upper roof line of the grandstand to give it a festive air. The turf, although patchy and hard to make a quick turn on, was deemed by some players to be as good as that found in other PCFL stadiums. However, the grass infield retained the strong stench of manure, a legacy of years of service as a rodeo arena.

John Mooney recalled that the press facilities and the area for statisticians were poorly located. He worked as a statistician for the first game, but he couldn't really see what was happening because he was sitting at ground level.

Apparently it was also difficult for the coaches on the sidelines to see what was happening, according to Huck Adelt:

"I made up plays in the huddle, especially pass patterns for the man in motion and the ends. I do not think the coaches knew what was going on half the time. At least the players were having fun."

Kent White noted that Tedesco didn't encourage the kind of play that would interest the fans. He referred to things like biting an opponent's leg, although he did mention that Stan Plichta, a second-team all-league selection at guard, used the cast on his arm "like a club."

Even if there wasn't much in the way of dirty play, the action was often rough enough to put players out of commission. Oakland Giants guard Anthony "Hawk" Falkenstein recalled that in a game at Salt Lake he had his "nose caved in" and had to have it repaired later on. After three broken noses, doctors told Seagull quarterback Roy Evans he shouldn't play again. He sat out for a while, but when "Gallop in" Gay Adelt was knocked out of a game, Evans borrowed Garth Chamberlain's helmet and entered the fray. Chamberlain's helmet sported a face guard, something that only a few centers and tackles had on their helmets. Most players at this time disdained the use of a face guard, considering it a sign of weakness to wear one. However, Evans wondered why he hadn't worn the face guard on his silver and blue plastic Seagull helmet before. He had been concerned that it might restrict his visibility, but was pleased to find that he had an unimpeded view of the field.

In 1946 the team flew to away games in Sacramento, Hollywood, Tacoma and San Diego. They chartered DC-3 Army transports and National Guard planes. The airplanes didn't have seats, so they sat

THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 14, No. 2 (1992)

on packed parachutes. Aldo Richins was of the opinion that the team "didn't have enough money to do it right."

On their first trip, to Sacramento, a big crowd of fans came out to the airport to send them off. A flock of hundreds of seagulls was released to send the team off to play the Nuggets in gala style.

On road trips, the coaches tried to keep a tight reign on the players by scheduling light workouts and instituting an 11 o'clock curfew. The older players summarily ignored it and visited the bars and night spots. It was Sid Kramer's opinion that the late-night partying by the old pros may have been the cause of the 17-0 drubbing administered by the San Diego Bombers in the season's last game.

Partying and socializing weren't limited to away games or the fraternity of players. Aldo Richins' wife, Helen, recalled that a lot of the players and their wives would drive out to the Coon Chicken drive-in restaurant on 33rd South after a game, whether the team had won or lost. Although they lived in Ogden, the Richinses used to gather with other football players and their wives in Paul McDonough's downtown apartment for small parties. At first the team was regularly invited for steak and egg breakfasts and to preview game and practice films before home games at the Ambassador Athletic Club, of which Frank Christensen was president. But that welcome inexplicably wore out after a while.

The Embassy Club in the Newhouse Hotel was a regular after-practice and postgame hangout for the single players and the old pros, some of whom were real heavy drinkers. A number of the players fondly recalled a beautiful leggy lady by the name of "Edie" who was a "camp follower" of sorts. In modern parlance, she was a "groupie" who really liked football players and enjoyed a "good time."

O'Dean Hess, a player who also taught elementary school, remarked that the Seagull players were an "unusual group to bring together, (but they) made a pretty good team." The pro football lifestyle was exciting, fun, and "everybody wanted to be there."

The team had three more games scheduled after the San Diego game, but they were all canceled. One interesting cancellation was the home game against the San Francisco Clippers a week after the trip to San Diego. The Clippers notified the Seagull management that they were unable to fly out of San Francisco to make the game because the fog was so bad. John Mooney was in San Francisco at the time to report on another sporting event. Soon after the Clippers had sent word of the cancellation, Mooney happened to make a telephone call back to the *Tribune* office and learned of the "fog-bound" conditions.

"What fog?" he said.

Mooney could see all the way across the bay to Berkeley and it was clear as a bell. For whatever reason, it was apparent that the Clippers had simply declined to make the trip to Utah.

In 1947 the PCFL was able to muster only five teams: Los Angeles, San Francisco, Hawaii, Sacramento and Salt Lake. Competition with the NFL and AAFC for good players and fan interest had taken a heavy toll. The PCFL folded after the 1948 season, but in 1947 the Seagulls presented a second and final season of entertaining football for Salt Lake fans.

In early summer, arrangements were made to play home games at Derks Field. There was optimism that a new location closer to the city might boost attendance. Also, the grandstand seats at the fairgrounds were really too far from the playing field for the fans to get a good view of the action. In an effort to spark interest in the pro game, a preseason exhibition between the Chicago Rockets and the Brooklyn Dodgers of the AAFC was arranged for late summer in the University of Utah stadium. Elroy "Crazy Legs" Hirsch, "Hunchy" Hoernschmeyer, Bill Daley and Glenn Dobbs were among those who played.

A slate of four home and four away games was scheduled for the Seagulls. Back-to-back games were slated late in the season with the Hawaiian Warriors. Honolulu fielded a strong team and drew large crowds to its games. As a result, it was so financially attractive for teams to play them in Honolulu that the Warriors didn't play any games away from home. A scheduled two-week trip to Hawaii also proved to be an incentive for re-signing Seagull players for the 1947 season.

Many of the Seagulls' 1946 players returned to play in 1947, including almost all the starters. The addition of some new players, including Huck Adelt, may have even strengthened the squad somewhat.

THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 14, No. 2 (1992)

Thus the Seagulls entered the season with a fair measure of optimism that they would be more competitive. The owners were hopeful that a better team playing in the new Derks Field setting would bring in more fans at the gate. Nevertheless, attendance at the first few games was probably even lower than what they had averaged at the fairgrounds in 1946. After the home opener, a *Deseret News* editorial called it a mistake for the Seagulls to be playing Sunday games. Soon the financial situation became so dismal that Tedesco tore up his contract and coached without pay, and Roland Sleater served as business manager without receiving a salary.

The team's record after three games was two losses and a tie. Although one of the losses, at the hands of the Los Angeles Bulldogs, was by only three points, a newspaper article two days after that game frankly labeled the Seagulls a "hapless" team.

During a break in the schedule, the players were informed that the team was broke. In dejection, the officers and directors disassociated themselves from any further involvement and told Tedesco to handle everything himself. Tedesco told the players that he couldn't pay them for the home game against the Bulldogs that was scheduled for Oct. 26. He made them an offer that if they would forego getting paid for that game, they would eventually get their money out of the percentage of the gate from the two games in Hawaii. With few options and almost assured that they'd recoup their losses after the games in the islands, the players agreed to this arrangement.

At this point practices were being held only every other day, and soon they were discontinued altogether. The players just showed up to play on game day. Amazingly, they beat the Bulldogs 7-6 in the game for which their pay was being deferred.

(Cliff Hoopiaina claimed that the linemen were paid for the Bulldog game, but the backs were not. When I recounted Hoopiaina's version of the pay arrangement to end Gordon Lee, he said it was "pretty close." It was understandably difficult to get a consensus on the salary situation because of Tedesco's policy preventing players from divulging such information to each other.)

A few days later, a decision was made to cancel the remaining home game. But the stockholders raised some money to help pay for the players' transportation to San Francisco. They traveled by car, pooling money for gas, with a few of the players accompanied by their wives. Once the team got to San Francisco, the Honolulu team assumed all expenses from that point – room and board and airplane tickets on a DC-4 to Hawaii and back.

On the long flight to the islands, some Hawaiian businessmen made friends with the players. After they arrived in Hawaii, these businessmen wined and dined the players all during their stay. The Junior Chamber of Commerce took them sightseeing and hosted them at a sumptuous luau at the governor's house. The team held practices every day, but George Worthen recalled that, for the most part, they "practiced drinking beer."

Hawaii won both games against the Seagulls, the second by the lopsided score of 52-0. Some of the players believed that the partying and drinking may have played a big part in the losses, particularly the second game.

An alternative explanation lies in the results of a league investigation that was made public at the end of the season. Four of the Warriors were banned from the PCFL for life and eleven others were suspended indefinitely for gambling on their final game of the season against the Los Angeles Bulldogs. Although there was no mention that the banned players had bet on any other games, upon later reflection some incidents in the Salt Lake games seemed puzzling to Seagull players. Several noticed that there was wide-open betting going on in the stands. Huck Adelt reflected:

"A player that I knew while playing at St. Mary's met with the Seagulls (in a) team meeting and gave us some of the Warriors' plays ... I couldn't understand his actions; of course, later it became obvious -- gambling."

At this late date and without additional evidence, an explanation for the large point spread in the second Seagull-Warrior game can only be conjectured. At the end of the game, the Seagull players only wanted to forget the sorry debacle and pick up their pay envelopes – including the money owed them for the Bulldog game.

After cleaning out their lockers, the players lined up at the pay door to get their money from Tedesco. Gay Adelt was first in line. Not only had it been a rough game for him, but it came on the heels of a long night of drinking. He missed curfew on the night before the game and didn't get back to his bed in the

THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 14, No. 2 (1992)

Plantation Hotel until 4 a.m. on the day of the game. When Adelt saw that his envelope didn't include the promised back pay, he asked, "What about paying us for the Bulldog game?"

Tedesco replied, "I'll have to look at it."

Adelt started "cussing him up and down." Tedesco took a swing at him, and then Gay broke the half-door down and pummeled "Feets" to the locker room floor. He started thumping Tedesco's head up and down on the concrete before the players jumped in and pulled him off.

It was a brief fight, but Tedesco was a bloody mess.

After picking up their pay envelopes for the Hawaii games only, the players flew back home. Tedesco must have given the back pay business a closer look as promised, because he paid them a few days after they got home.

Even though they all got their money in the end, some players learned later that Tedesco didn't have to share any profits from the Hawaii games with the stockholders. The stockholders had told him that he could take all the risk on those games, and all the rewards. Attendance for the two games topped 28,000, and Tedesco received a guaranteed amount plus a percentage of the gate. Gordon Lee said the players "would have asked for more to play in Hawaii than their contracts stated" if they had known about the stockholders' arrangement with their coach.

Although the second and final season of Utah's only pro football team ended on an acrimonious note, more than four decades later the players recall those years with wistful fondness. Except for the few still-living players, Utah's memory of the Seagulls has mostly faded. Nonetheless, the Seagulls deserve to be remembered as filling a unique niche in Utah sports history – even if they were more colorful off the field than on it.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the slightly pared-down version of a paper Buck Bashore presented last summer at a meeting of the Utah Historical Society. An abridged version of it was submitted to the *Utah Historical Quarterly*.

1946 PCFL Standings

Northern Division

	W-L-T	Pct	PF	PA
Tacoma Indians	7-4-0	.636	202	141
San Francisco Clippers	6-4-0	.600	206	130
Salt Lake Seagulls	2-5-1	.286	81	137
Sacramento Nuggets	2-5-1	.286	67	201
Oakland Giants	1-5-0	.167	60	89

Southern Division

	W-L-T	Pct	PF	PA
Los Angeles Bulldogs	9-2-1	.818	318	185
Hawaiian Warriors	8-4-0	.667	236	179
Hollywood Bears	5-5-1	.500	187	196
San Diego Bombers	1-7-0	.125	65	164

1947 PCPL Standings

	W-L-T	Pct	PF	PA
Hawaiian Warriors	7-2-0	.778	267	121
Los Angeles Bulldogs	5-3-0	.625	165	126
San Francisco Clippers	4-4-0	.500	158	175
Salt Lake Seagulls	1-4-1	.200	48	130
Sacramento Nuggets	0-4-1	.000	75	161

SEAGULLS ROSTER, 1946-47

Player	Pos	College	Years
Gay Adelt	HB-QB	Utah	1946-47
Huck Adelt	QB	Utah	1947
Oris Beeny	QB	none	1946
Joe Byrnes	E	Oklahoma A&M	1946-47
Jimmy Caine	HB	Georgia; USF; Washington State	1947
Garth Chamberlain	T	BYU	1946-47
Dee Chipman	QB-HB	BYU	1946-47
Joe Churich	G-FB	Colorado	1946-47

THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 14, No. 2 (1992)

Wayne Clark	E	Utah	1946-47
Bill Davis	G	none	1946
Burt Davis	C	Utah	1946-47
Roy Evans	QB	BYU	1946-47
Earl Fullerton	T	California	1946
O'Dean Hess	T	BYU	1946-47
Claus Holtrup	HB		1946
Cliff Hoopiaina	HB	Utah State	1947
Bob Howard	HB	Utah	1947
Andy Katsanevas	E	Weber	1946
Sid Kramer	FB	Utah	1946
Elmer Leake	T		1947
Pudge Leatham	E	Utah	1947
Gordon Lee	E	BYU	1946-47
John Littlefair	FB	none	1946
Herman Longhurst	HB	BYU	1946
Frank Lujan	G	none	1946
Mike Masich	T	none	1946
Laurie Mauss	C	Utah	1946
Paul McDonough	E	Utah	1946-47
Reed Nalder	HB	Utah State	1946
Jack Okland	T	Utah	1946
Tom Pace	HB	Utah	1946
..Phipps	G	West	1947
Jim Pistorius	C	Utah	1946-47
Stan Plichta	G	Detroit Tech	1946-47
Aldo Richins	HB	Utah	1946
Gene Riska	G	BYU	1946
Clark Romney	T	none	1946
Ray Silcox	G	none	1946-47
Buff Slaton	HB	Altis (Okla.)	1946
Ken Soffe	FB	BYU	1946-47
Glen Sorenson	G	Utah State	1946-47
Floyd Spendlove	T	Utah	1946-47
Bill Sperry (Spud)	FB	Utah	1947
Charles Sudbury	E		1947
George Theos	E	none	1946-47
Hartley White	T		1947
Kent White	G	Utah	1946-47
George Worthen	T	Utah	1947