

1921: A STAT LOOK

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The American Professional Football Association of 1921 was an interesting season when examining the importance of a team to score first to win a game. The statistical source for this study is from the Professional Football Research Association publication "Bulldogs on Sunday: 1921."

The league consisted of 21 teams which played a total of 66 games. The final standings for the 1921 season are listed below:

FINAL STANDINGS of 1921 SEASON

	W	L	T	Pct.	Pts For	P/G	Pts Agst	P/G
Chicago Staleys	9	1	1	.900	128	11.6	53	4.8
Buffalo All-Americans	9	1	2	.900	211	17.6	29	2.4
Akron Pros	8	3	1	.727	148	12.3	31	2.6
Canton Bulldogs	5	2	3	.714	106	10.6	55	5.5
Rock Isl. Independents	4	2	1	.667	65	9.3	30	4.3
Green Bay Packers	3	2	1	.600	70	11.7	55	7.9
Evansville C. Giants	3	2	0	.600	89	17.8	46	9.2
Dayton Triangles	4	4	1	.500	96	10.7	67	7.4
Chicago Cardinals	3	3	2	.500	54	6.8	53	6.6
Washington Senators	2	2	0	.500	21	5.3	28	7.0
Cleveland Tigers	3	5	0	.375	95	11.9	58	7.3
Rochester Jeffersons	2	4	0	.333	85	14.2	77	12.8
Hammond Pros	1	3	1	.250	17	3.4	45	9.0
Minneapolis Marines	1	3	0	.250	37	9.3	41	10.3
Cincinnati Celts	1	3	0	.250	14	3.5	117	29.3
Detroit Tigers	1	5	1	.167	19	2.7	109	15.6
Columbus Panhandles	1	8	0	.111	47	5.2	222	24.7
Tonawanda Kardex	0	1	0	.000	0	0.0	45	45.0
Louisville Brecks	0	2	0	.000	0	0.0	27	13.2
Muncie Fliers	0	2	0	.000	0	0.0	28	14.0
N.Y. Brickley's Giants	0	2	0	.000	0	0.0	72	36.0

The top four teams (Chicago Staleys, Buffalo All-Americans, Akron Pros, and Canton Bulldogs) won the most games when scoring first. Buffalo's 8 of 9 wins were by shutouts. The All-Americans even managed to win 2 of 3 games when their opponents scored first. All of the Akron Pros 8 wins were shutouts, but their opponents won all 3 of their games when they scored first. The Chicago Staleys won 6 of 7 games (4 by shutout) and also won the 2 games when their opponents crossed the goal line first. And all of the Canton Bulldogs' 4 of 5 wins were by shutouts, while their opponents had 2 shutout wins.

These four teams combined had shutout wins 87 percent of the time when scoring first in the first quarter. But more impressive, these same teams won every game when scoring first in either the second, third or fourth quarter.

See chart on next page:

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	Shutout				Shutout		
1st Qtr	Wins	Pct	2nd Qtr	Wins	Pct	Pct	
15	13	.870	8	8	1.000		

	Shutout				Shutout		
3rd Qtr	Wins	Pct	4th Qtr	Wins	Pct	Pct	
2	2	1.000	2	2	1.000		

All Shutout		
4 Qtrs	Wins	Pct
27	25	.930

	Shutout				Shutout		
1st Half	Wins	Pct	2nd Half	Wins	Pct	Pct	
23	21	.913	4	4	1.000		

The remaining seventeen teams in the league won by shutout 75 percent of the time when scoring first in the first half; and 100 percent of the time when scoring first in the second half.

All the teams (both the top four and remaining seventeen) that scored first in the first quarter won 81 percent of the time; 75 percent in the second quarter; and 100 percent in the third and fourth quarter. Also, when the home team scored first, the team won 91 percent of the time. And when the visiting team scored first, the team had a 63 percent winning percentage. See chart below:

Teams That Scored First/1st Qtr

Total	Won	Lost	Tie	Pct.
34	24	8	2	.750

Teams That Scored First/2nd Qtr

Total	Won	Lost	Tie	Pct.
16	12	3	1	.800

Teams That Scored First/3rd Qtr

Total	Won	Lost	Tie	Pct.
4	3	0	1	1.000

Teams That Scored First/4th Qtr

Total	Won	Lost	Tie	Pct.
4	4	0	0	1.000

Teams That Scored First/All Qtrs

Total	Won	Lost	Tie	Pct.
58	43	11	4	.796

Scored First/Home Team

Total	Won	Lost	Tie	Pct.
35	32	3	0	.914

Scored First/Visiting Team

Total	Won	Lost	Tie	Pct.
26	14	8	4	.636

Home and Visiting Team Ahead by Quarters:

						Pct	
1st Qtr/Team Ahead	Total	Won	Lost	Tie	Pct.	Shutout Wins	of Wins
Home	20	18	2	0	.900	11	.611
Visitors	14	8	4	2	.667	6	.750

						Pct	
Halftime/Team Ahead	Total	Won	Lost	Tie	Pct.	Shutout Wins	of Wins

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Home	29	28	1	0	.966	19	.679
Visitors	20	12	5	3	1.000	9	.750

3rd Qtr/Team Ahead					Shutout		Pct
	Total	Won	Lost	Tie	Pct.	Wins	Wins
Home	33	33	0	0	1.000	21	.636
Visitors	18	13	2	3	.867	10	.769

Certain players on each team helped their team to score first before their opponents scored first. These players became valuable members of the team since the teams that scored first in a game won 79 percent of the time.

The following players scored first in a game at least twice during the season for their team. The players' playing positions are in parenthesis: Akron's Carl "Curly" Cramer (FB), Fred "Fritz" Pollard (W), and Paul Sheets (B); Buffalo's Oscar "Ockie" Anderson (W), Henry "Heinie" Miller (E), and Cedric "Pat" Smith (FB); Chicago Cardinal's John "Paddy" Driscoll (QB); Chicago Staley's Ed "Dutch" Sternaman (HB) (Sternaman scored first in four games with the Staleys winning three of the four games), and Gaylord "Pete" Stinchcomb (QB/HB); Cleveland's Joe Guyon (RHB); Columbus' Emmett Ruh (W); Evansville's Frank Fausch (FW); Green Bay's Earl "Curly" Lambeau (OB); and Minneapolis' Ben Dvorak (RH).

Clearly, the ability to score first was the main ingredient for a team to have a successful season. The second ingredient was having a good defense in the second half. It was difficult for a team, whether ahead or behind, to score in the third and fourth quarter. If a team was winning at halftime, home or road games, the team would win 82 percent of the time.