

# Troy AIKMAN

Aikman, Troy Kenneth      Quarterback      6-4, 219      Class of 2006  
College: Oklahoma, UCLA  
Born November 21, 1966, in West Covina, California.

Cowboys' first-round draft pick (1st player overall), 1989 ... Led team to three Super Bowl wins .. Winningest starting quarterback of any decade with 90 of 94 career wins occurring in 1990s ... Held or tied 47 Dallas passing records ... Posted 13 regular season and four playoff 300-yard passing games ... Named to six Pro Bowls, All-Pro 1993, All-NFC Second Team 1994, 1995.

## AIKMAN'S PASSING RECORD

<u>Year</u>	<u>TM</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>Att</u>	<u>Com</u>	<u>Pct</u>	<u>Yds</u>	<u>Y/A</u>	<u>TD</u>	<u>Int</u>	<u>Rate</u>
1989	Dal	11	293	155	52.9	1749	6.0	9	18	55.7
1990	Dal	15	399	226	56.6	2579	6.5	11	18	66.6
1991	Dal	12	363	237	65.3	2754	7.6	11	10	86.7
1992	Dal	16	473	302	63.8	3445	7.3	23	14	89.5
1993	Dal	14	392	271	69.1	3100	7.9	15	6	99.0
1994	Dal	14	361	233	64.5	2676	7.4	13	12	84.9
1995	Dal	16	432	280	64.8	3304	7.6	16	7	93.6
1996	Dal	15	465	296	63.7	3126	6.7	12	13	80.1
1997	Dal	16	518	292	56.4	3283	6.3	19	12	78.0
1998	Dal	11	315	187	59.4	2330	7.4	12	5	88.5
1999	Dal	14	442	263	59.5	2964	6.7	17	12	81.1
2000	Dal	11	262	156	59.5	1632	6.2	7	14	64.3
12 Years		165	4715	2898	61.5	32942	7.0	165	141	81.6

Quarterback Troy Aikman finished his collegiate career as the third rated passer in NCAA history. An All-America at UCLA, Aikman joined the Dallas Cowboys as the first overall pick in the 1989 NFL Draft. He became the first Dallas rookie quarterback to start a season opener since Roger Staubach in 1969. Although he showed great promise and threw for a rookie-record 379 yards in a game against the Phoenix Cardinals, the team finished 1-15. As the young quarterback improved, however, so too did the Cowboys' record. In 1990, Aikman completed 226 of 399 passes for 2,579 yards and 11 touchdowns - the team finished 7-9. The following year he completed an NFC-best 65.3 percent of his passes, and the Cowboys improved to 11-5 and advanced to the second round of the playoffs.

In 1992, in just his 52nd game, Aikman reached the 10,000-yard passing mark, and his 302 completions were second most in team history. That season also marked the end of Dallas' odyssey from worst to first. With their high-powered offense and stingy defense, the 13-3 Cowboys swept through the 1992 NFL playoffs, scoring a combined total of 116 points in three games including a 52-17 victory over the Buffalo Bills in Super Bowl XXVII. Aikman's 22 of 30 for 273 yards passing and four touchdowns earned him Super Bowl MVP honors.

Over the next three seasons, the Cowboys enjoyed three consecutive 12-4 records and victories in Super Bowls XXVIII and XXX. Aikman, wide receiver Michael Irvin, and running back Emmitt Smith delivered an offensive attack

## **THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 28, No. 4 (2006)**

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that opponents found nearly impossible to contain. When defenses focused on Irvin and/or Smith, Aikman would find tight end Jay Novacek or wide receiver Alvin Harper. In the 1994 NFC Divisional Playoff Game against the Green Bay Packers, Aikman completed 23 of 30 passes for 337 yards. Irvin, Novacek, and Harper, each had more than 100 yards receiving. Aikman's 94-yard touchdown pass to Harper was the longest play from scrimmage in NFL post-season history at the time.

With 90 wins in the 1990s, Aikman became the winningest starting quarterback of any decade in NFL history. Unfortunately, during his final two seasons, injuries began to take a toll on the Dallas quarterback and the team's winning ways. Finally, after the 2000 season, the Cowboys' six-time Pro Bowl selection announced his retirement from football. His career statistics include 32,942 yards and 165 touchdowns for a passer rating of 81.6.

-- Courtesy of The Pro Football Hall of Fame

# Harry CARSON

Harold Donald Carson                      Linebacker                      6-2, 237                      Class of 2006

College: South Carolina State

Born November 26, 1953, in Florence, SC.

1976-1988 New York Giants Pro Career: 13 seasons, 173 games

Drafted: 4th round (105th overall) in 1976 by New York

Giants' fourth-round draft pick, 1976 draft ... Became Giants' starting middle linebacker halfway through rookie season ... Earned All-Rookie honors ... Led Giants defenders in tackles five seasons. . ,Ferocious run stopper. .. Had 14 career fumble recoveries .. ,Selected to nine Pro Bowls, including seven straight (1982-1988) .. . All-Pro (first-team) 1981, 1984; Second-team All-Pro five times .. ,All-NFC five times.

**Career Statistics:** Interceptions: 11-212, 0; Receiving: 1-13, 1 TD;  
Kickoff Returns: 1-5; Fumble Recovery for TD: 1

## All-League Teams

All-Pro: 1981 (PW), 1984 (SN)

All-Pro Second Team: 1978 (AP), 1982 (AP), 1984 (NEA), 1985 (AP, NEA), 1986 (AP, NEA)

All-NFC: 1978 (PW), 1979 (UPI, SN, PW), 1981 (UPI, PW), 1982 (UPI), 1986 (UPI, PW)

All-NFC Second Team: 1978 (UPI), 1985 (UPI)

## Pro Bowls

(9) -1979\*,1980,1982,1983,1984,1985,1986,1987,1988 \*Did not play

A defensive end in college, Harry Carson never missed a game in four seasons at South Carolina State. Selected by the New York Giants in the fourth round of the 1976 NFL Draft, he was immediately moved to the linebacker position in the pros. Carson won the starting middle linebacker position halfway through that rookie season and went on to be named to the All-NFL Rookie Team,

An emotional player, Carson led by example both on and off the field He led all Giants defenders in tackles five seasons and was named to the Pro Bowl nine times, including seven straight from 1982 through 1988, His best single-game performance came in 1982 in a Monday night game versus the Green Bay Packers in which he racked up 20 solo tackles and five assists. He accumulated 14 opponents' fumble recoveries during his career.

Carson, as an inside linebacker, was a ferocious run stopper, Known for his "all-out" style of play, he attacked onrushing blockers head on in his pursuit of the ball carrier. Later in his career when he was joined by outside linebackers Lawrence Taylor and Carl Banks, there was no better linebacker trio in the NFL. Like Taylor, he was extremely difficult to defense in blitzing situations and he had the speed and agility to be an effective pursuit player, even when the play was directed away from his area of responsibility .

In 1986, Carson finished second in total tackles for the Giants with 118 in the regular season and 23 in the playoffs. He recorded the ninth of his 11 career interceptions, had two quarterback sacks, two fumble recoveries, and two forced fumbles, as the Giants went on to defeat the Denver Broncos in Super Bowl XXI.

Although he was a very consistent player, Carson seemed to produce top performances in key games. That was the case in New York's Super Bowl season. His interception and 12 solo tackles against the Washington Redskins on December 7 virtually assured the Giants of the NFC East title. It was also Carson who made the "big play" on the Giants' first-half goal line stand against the Broncos in the Super Bowl, when he stuffed Gerald Willhite for no gain.

In addition to his nine Pro Bowl appearances, Carson was named first- or second-team All-Pro six times and first- or second-team AIJ-NFC six times

-- Courtesy of The Pro Football Hall of Fame

# John MADDEN

Madden, John Earl      Head Coach      Class of 2006  
 College: San Mateo Junior College, California Polytechnic  
 Born April 10, 1936 in Austin, Minnesota.

## 1969-1978 Oakland Raiders

Regular season record: 103-32-7 ... Post-season record: 9-7 . . . Overall record: 112-39-7 ... His .759 winning percentage during regular season ranks as highest ever among coaches with 100 career victories . . . One of youngest head coaches in history when Raiders hired him in 1969 at age 32 . . . AFL Coach of the Year, 1969 ... Under Madden, Oakland never suffered losing record . . . Led Raiders to Super Bowl XI . . . Team won 17 straight games between 1976-1977 seasons, one short of NFL record at time.

Regular Season					Post Season			Overall
Team	Year	W	L	T	PCT.	Postseason	W L Division	
Oakland Raiders	1969	12	1	1	.923	1 1	1st - AFL West	
Oakland Raiders	1970	8	4	2	.667	1 1	1st - AFC West	
Oakland Raiders	1971	8	4	2	.667		2nd - AFC West	
Oakland Raiders	1972	10	3	1	.750	0 1	1st - AFC West	
Oakland Raiders	1973	9	4	1	.679	1 1	1st - AFC West	
Oakland Raiders	1974	12	2	0	.857	1 1	1st - AFC West	
Oakland Raiders	1975	11	3	0	.786	1 1	1st - AFC West	
Oakland Raiders	1976	13	1	0	.929	3 0	1st - AFC West	
Oakland Raiders	1977	11	3	0	.786	1 1	2nd - AFC West	
Oakland Raiders	1978	9	7	0	.563		2nd - AFC West	
Career Total		103	32	7	.759	9 7		112 39 7 .739

Coaching background: Assistant Coach with Allan Hancock College, 1960-1961; Head Coach with Allan Hancock College, 1962-1963; Assistant Coach with San Diego State, 1964-1966; Assistant Coach with Oakland Raiders, 1967-1968

John Madden began his pro football coaching career in 1967 as the Oakland Raiders' linebackers coach. After two seasons, he was elevated to head coach. At 32 years of age when he was hired, he became the youngest head coach in the American Football League. In his first year at the Raiders' helm, Madden earned American Football League Coach of the Year honors as he led the team to a 12-1-1 record and an AFL Western Division title.

Madden coached the Raiders for 10 seasons, posting a regular season record of 103 wins, 32 losses and 7 ties. During that time, he guided the team to seven Western Division titles, including five in a row from 1972 to 1976. Under Madden's guidance, Oakland never experienced a losing season. Madden's Raiders made eight playoff appearances, including a 37-31 six-quarter AFC Divisional Playoff win over the Baltimore Colts in 1977. Perennial winners, the team never finished with fewer than 8 wins in the then-14 game season (8-4-2 in 1970, 1971).

Six times in 10 seasons, Oakland recorded 10 or more victories. In 1976, the coach guided his team to a near-perfect 13-1 record to win the AFC Western Division. The success continued in the postseason with wins over New England in the divisional playoff game and a commanding 24-7 victory over the Pittsburgh Steelers in the AFC Championship Game. Madden and the Raiders capped the 1976 season with a 32-14 win over the Minnesota Vikings in Super Bowl XI. Between the 1976 and 1977 seasons, the Raiders won 17 consecutive games, one short of the then-NFL record for consecutive wins.

Madden's .759 regular season winning percentage ranks as highest ever among coaches with 100 career victories. Only Hall of Fame coaches George Halas and Curly Lambeau had reached 100 career wins at an earlier age.

Before coaching in Oakland, Madden was the defensive coordinator at San Diego State, from 1964-1966, where the Aztecs were ranked first among small colleges with a 26-4 record. From 1960-1963 he coached at Hancock Junior College in Santa Maria, California. Madden started on both offense and defense as a player for California Polytechnic College at San Luis Obispo in 1957 and 1958, and was voted to the All-Conference team. The Philadelphia Eagles selected him as a future choice in the 21st round of the 1958 NFL Draft, but a knee injury in his rookie season prematurely ended his playing career.

-- Courtesy of The Pro Football Hall of Fame

# Warren MOON

*Harold Warren Moon*      Quarterback      6-3, 212      Class of 2006  
 West Los Angeles Junior College; Washington  
 Born November 18, 1956 in Los Angeles, CA.

1984-93 Houston Oilers, 1994-96 Minnesota Vikings, 1997-98 Seattle Seahawks, 1999-2000  
 Kansas City Chiefs

Began pro career with CFL's Edmonton Eskimos, winning five straight Grey Cups . . . Signed  
 with NFL's Houston Oilers, 1984 . . . Completed 3,988 of 6,823 passes for 49,325 yards, 291  
 touchdowns, 233 interceptions in 17-season NFL career. . . . Nine 3,000yard passing seasons  
 was third in league history . . . Named to nine Pro Bowls . . . Had four 4,000-yard passing  
 seasons. All-Pro, 1990 . . . First or second team All-AFC 1988, 1989, 1990 ..

Year Tm	Gm	ATT	Com	Pct	Yds	Y/A	TD	IN	Rate
1984 Hou	16	450	259	57.6	3338	7.42	12	14	76.9
1985 Hou	14	377	200	53.1	2709	7.19	15	19	68.5
1986 Hou	15	488	256	52.5	3489	7.15	13	26	62.3
1987 Hou	12	368	184	50.0	2806	7.63	21	18	74.2
1988 Hou	11	294	160	54.4	2327	7.91	17	8	88.4
1989 Hou	16	464	280	60.3	3631	7.83	23	14	88.9
1990 Hou	15	584	362	62.0	4689	8.03	33	13	96.8
1991 Hou	16	655	404	61.7	4690	7.16	23	21	81.7
1992 Hou	11	346	224	64.7	2521	7.29	18	12	89.3
1993 Hou	15	520	303	58.3	3485	6.70	21	21	75.2
1994 Min	15	601	371	61.7	4264	7.09	18	19	79.9
1995 Min	16	606	377	62.2	4228	6.98	33	14	91.5
1996 Min	8	247	134	54.3	1610	6.52	7	9	68.7
1997 Sea	15	528	313	59.3	3678	6.97	25	16	83.7
1998 Sea	10	258	145	56.2	1632	6.33	11	8	76.6
1999 KC	1	3	1	33.3	20	6.67	0	0	57.6
2000 KC	2	34	15	44.1	208	6.12	1	1	61.9
17 Yrs	208	6823	3988	58.4	49325	7.23	291	233	80.9

Prior to the 1978 NFL Draft, some NFL scouts suggested that since University of Washington  
 quarterback' Warren Moon had played in a rollout rather than a drop-back passing offense, he  
 would be a mid-round pick. Others speculated that since only one African American  
 quarterback, James Harris, had achieved any measurable success in the NFL, Moon would  
 have to play some other position. Regardless of which misguided reason motivated NFL scouts,  
 Moon remained confident of his abilities and opted to sign with the Edmonton Eskimos of the  
 Canadian Football League. He went on to lead the Eskimos to an unprecedented five  
 consecutive Grey Cup victories.

Eventually, Moon returned to the United States to play for the Houston Oilers in 1984. He racked up nearly 50,000 passing yards in 17 NFL seasons. Moon set a new club record with 3,338 yards passing in his first year with the Houston, a mark he would break four more times. In 1986, when the Oilers installed the run-and-shoot offense, Moon's quarterback skills finally became apparent to all. The wide-open offense showcased Moon's strong arm, running skills, and big-playability.

In 1990, Moon led the league with 4,689 passing yards. He also led the league in attempts (584), completions (362), and touchdowns (33), and tied Dan Marino's record with nine 300-yard games in a season. The following year, he again led the league in passing yards 4,690. At the same time, he joined Hall of Fame quarterbacks Dan Marino and Dan Fouts as the only quarterbacks to post back-to-back 4,000-yard seasons. Moon also established new NFL records that season with 655 attempts and 404 completions .

Moon was traded to the Minnesota Vikings before the 1994 season. In his debut season he passed for 4,264 yards and led the team to the playoffs. In his second season in Minnesota, he again passed for more than 4,200 yards. Moon moved on to the Seattle Seahawks as a free agent in 1997 where the veteran star set franchise records for completions (313) and yards passing (3,678) and earned his ninth Pro Bowl selection. Injuries limited his play in 1998. In 1999, Moon joined the Kansas City Chiefs and spent two seasons as a backup there before retiring.

-- Courtesy of the Pro Football Hall of Fame

# Reggie WHITE

White, Reginald Howard  
Defensive End/Defensive Tackle  
College: Tennessee  
Born December 19, 1961 in Chattanooga, TN  
1985-1992 Philadelphia Eagles, 1993-1998 Green Bay Packers, 2000 Carolina Panthers

Class of 2006  
6-5, 291

Died December 26, 2004 at age of 43.

Selected fourth overall in 1984 NFL Supplemental Draft . . . Recorded more sacks (124) than games played (121) in eight seasons with Eagles . . . Became Packers' all-time sack leader with 68.5 ... Recorded 12 seasons with 10-plus sacks . . . NFL Defensive Player of the Year in 1987, 1998 . . . Elected to 13 straight Pro Bowls . . . Named All-Pro 13 of 15 seasons including 10 as first-team selection ...

Year	Team	G	No.
1985	Philadelphia	13	13
1986	Philadelphia	16	18
1987	Philadelphia	12	21
1988	Philadelphia	16	18
1989	Philadelphia	16	11
1990	Philadelphia	16	14
1991	Philadelphia	16	15
1992	Philadelphia	16	14
1993	Green Bay	16	13
1994	Green Bay	16	8
1995	Green Bay	15	12
1996	Green Bay	16	8.5
1997	Green Bay	16	11
1998	Green Bay	16	16
2000	Carolina	16	5.5
Career Total		232	198

Additional Career Statistics: Fumble Recoveries for TO: 2; Interceptions: 3-79

USFL Statistics: 1984-1985 Memphis Showboats Games: 34; Sacks: 23.5; Safety: 1; Fumble Recovery for TD: 1

Reggie White earned the nickname "The Minister of Defense" as a senior at Tennessee. The moniker surely had to do with something more than the fact that he became an ordained minister at the age of 17. That became instantly apparent when he began his pro football career.

White, who spent two seasons in the ill-fated United States Football League, made a memorable debut in the National Football League with the Philadelphia Eagles in Week 4 of the 1985 season. He collected 2.5 sacks, and deflected a pass that was intercepted and returned for touchdown. Despite the fact he played in only 13 games that season, White tied for the team lead with 13 sacks and was named the NFL's Defensive Rookie of the Year. The following season, White picked up 18 more sacks to earn his first of an astounding 13 straight Pro Bowl trips.

In 1987, White recorded one of the finest seasons ever posted by a defensive lineman. In the season debut against the Washington Redskins, he sacked quarterback Doug Williams, stripped the ball, and then picked it up and raced 70 yards for the first of his two career touchdowns. In just 12 games during the strikeshortened season White amassed 21 sacks to earn his first of two consecutive league sack titles.

In 1993, after recording 124 sacks in 121 games over eight seasons in Philadelphia, White became the first big name free agent to switch teams. He joined the Green Bay Packers and instantly helped turn the fortunes of the once-proud franchise.

The team steadily improved and, in 1996, returned to glory with White leading the NFL's topped ranked defense to playoff and Super Bowl victories. In Super Bowl XXXI he recorded a record three sacks.

Reggie played two more years in Green Bay. During that period he added 27 more sacks to his repertoire. After a one-year "retirement", White returned for a final season with the Carolina Panthers in 2000. White retired as the NFL's all-time sack leader with 198. He was named to the NFL's All-Decade Teams of the 1980 and 1990s, the 75th Anniversary Team, and was voted first-team All-Pro 10 times in his 15-year career.

-- Courtesy of The Pro Football Hall of Fame

# Rayfield WRIGHT

Wright, Larry Rayfield Tackle 6-6, 255 Class of 2006  
College: Fort Valley State  
High School: Fairmont (Griffin, GA)  
Born August 23,1945, in Griffin, GA 1967-1979 Dallas Cowboys

Cowboys' seventh round pick, 1967 NFL Draft . . . Earned permanent starting right tackle position, 1970 . . . Known as "Big Cat," earned first or second team All NFL honors six consecutive times (1971-1976) . . . Selected to play in Pro Bowl following each of those seasons . . . Started in six NFC championship games and played in five Super Bowls . . . Named to NFL's All Decade Team of the 1970s.

Rayfield Wright, the Dallas Cowboys seventh round draft pick in the 1967 draft, was given little chance of making the team's final roster. But the Fort Valley (GA) State All-America demonstrated enough determination and raw athleticism that the coaching staff knew they somehow needed to work him into the lineup.

During his first three seasons the 6-6, 255-pound Wright was used as a tight end, defensive end, and offensive tackle. In 1969 when right tackle Ralph Neely was injured, Coach Tom Landry decided to insert Wright into the lineup. His first opponent was future Hall of Fame defensive end Deacon Jones. "The Deacon is big and strong and mean," Wright was cautioned by his line coach. "Well," said the confident Wright, "so am I."

Wright's performance against Jones was good enough that before training camp opened in 1970, Landry announced that Wright would be his starting right tackle. One season later he was named All-NFL. Known as "Big Cat," Wright earned first- or secondteam All-NFL honors six consecutive times (1971-1976). He was also selected to play in the Pro Bowl following each of those seasons.

Wright's performance during the 1975 season was particularly impressive. Coming off knee surgery, many questioned whether "Big Cat" would even play. Not only did he play, but he again notched All-NFL honors into his career belt. In postseason play he faced three legendary defensive ends - Hall of Famer Jack Youngblood, Pittsburgh Steelers L.C. Greenwood, and Minnesota Vikings Carl Eller - head on. Each time he rose to the occasion with exceptional play.

"He was truly outstanding," Youngblood summarized of Wright's play in the playoff game. As for his performance against Eller, longtime Cowboys offensive line coach Jim Myers proclaimed that Rayfield "played as well or even better in that game."

"An all-day fight with Rayfield Wright definitely is not my idea of a pleasant Sunday afternoon," Eller once offered. "I think he is pretty much of a composite of an all-pro tackle. He has size, strength, and quickness. The big thing in Rayfield's favor is that he has a lot of range. He moves

faster than most tackles. He's just difficult to play against."

Myers summarized Wright's overall career this way. "We tried to make a tight end out of Rayfield. Then we tried him on the defensive line. And then he made a great coach out of me."

**Wright's Career**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Team</b>	<b>Gm</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Team</b>	<b>Gm</b>
1967	Dallas	10	1974	Dallas	14
1968	Dallas	14	1975	Dallas	13
1969	Dallas	14	1976	Dallas	14
1970	Dallas	14	1977	Dallas	2
1971	Dallas	14	1978	Dallas	15
1972	Dallas	14	1979	Dallas	16
1973	Dallas	12	<u>13 Years</u>		<u>166</u>

--- Courtesy of The Pro Football Hall of Fame

## Art Rooney, Jr. - Director of Player Personnel! Vice-President: Part 2

*Pittsburgh Steelers (1964- 1986)  
An Interview by Tom Danvuk. July 19, 2002*

***Had the Steelers lost that coin toss (to draft Terry Bradshaw), your history might have been dramatically altered. What was Plan B?***

ARJ: That's an interesting question. 1970 wasn't a great year for overall talent in the draft, so there weren't a lot of other names that stood out for us. We looked at Mike Phipps of Purdue, another highly-rated quarterback. He ended up going early, but we didn't think Phipps would ever be a great pro. The guy who actually was picked second was a defensive tackle from Notre Dame named Mike McCoy. Chuck wasn't too high on him. I recall McCoy having back problems so we shied away. We thought a lot of a Penn Stater named Mike Reid, who ended up with the Bengals, but we didn't really need any more help on the defensive line.

Then there was Duane Thomas, a very talented running back from West Texas State, but he had some personality issues that we weren't willing to deal with. My guess is if we had lost the coin toss, we would've traded the number two pick and moved down. That's what the Bears did. They traded the pick to Green Bay.

***Let's talk about the Bradshaw-Noll dynamics that existed in the early '70s. Bradshaw has always proclaimed to be very bitter about the way Noll treated him during their years together in Pittsburgh. The aloofness, the lack of warmth, if that's the right word. Do you feel that Noll could have handled Bradshaw differently?***

ARJ: Think of the toughest professor you ever had in college. They have their own sense of humor, their own agenda, maybe a little eccentric. To get through the course you had to get into their groove. That's the way it was with Chuck Noll.

Bradshaw was a real southern kid that came up to Pittsburgh with all this raw talent. He had never been exposed to a guy like Noll, an intellectual guy who'd say "We're gonna do things the right way. We're gonna take care of the little things, which helps take care of the big things." I think Terry basically couldn't relate to him.

Then the whole thing started about Bradshaw not being an intelligent guy, and that really hurt him. I guess Chuck didn't do much to help that situation. But remember what I said about football intelligence? Noll, well into Terry's career, once told me, "This guy's not a dumbbell at all. He's smart enough to learn the plays, stuff like that. He's just a flighty guy." Noll wasn't being mean or cruel. He was commenting more on Terry's personality than his intelligence. But Bradshaw never looked beyond it and that wasn't going to change. He eventually became a zillionaire because of his personality.

My dad was concerned about Bradshaw in those early years. He'd take him home for dinner sometimes and say, "I'm an old guy now, Terry, but I've been around the great ones - Babe Ruth, Jack Dempsey, Billy Conn, Man O' War. You're right in there with those guys. You're like Man O' War. You're like Babe Ruth." But can you imagine having to tell Babe Ruth or Ty Cobb or Jimmy Brown that they were great? They already knew it! Well, Terry needed to hear that stuff, and he wasn't going to get it from Chuck Noll. What Chuck eventually gave him was stability. He didn't screw him up on the field. It really was like a father-son relationship in many ways.

***Do you recall a point when Bradshaw, in terms of his overall confidence, hit bottom?***

ARJ: It was probably back at the start of the '74 season. Chuck had given up on Terry a number of times, and he did again that year. Joe Gilliam was going to be Noll's man. Terry Hanratty was moved up to second and Terry was demoted to third-string. Noll was confident that Gilliam would develop. He had a great setup, a quick release and terrific vision. Babe Parelli once told me that out of the three, Gilliam had the best football mind.

After his demotion, the first thing Terry did was grow a beard, a long one. Then he started the old Johnny Unitas routine with us coming into the stadium early and throwing the ball to whomever was around. The grounds crew, office guys, the ball boys. "Just run as far as you can," he'd tell them, then he'd throw it and the ball would end up bouncing off their heads. Terry was out there working his ass off. He spent a lot of time talking to The Chief. He also turned to the Lord and started reading the Bible a lot. Then the breaks started to go his way, and the next stops were the championship and Hall of Fame. I really admired him and the way he worked himself out of that low point in his life.

***The 1971 draft produced a jackpot group of players, future stars like Dwight White, Jack Ham and Mike Wagner. Frank Lewis, a wide receiver from Grambling, was the Steelers top choice that year, the #8 selection overall. Was he the team's first preference, or were you eyeing players like JD Hill, Richard Harris, Joe Profit or John Riggins, all who were selected ahead of him?***

ARJ: We really liked Lewis. We were in desperate need of offensive weapons to give Bradshaw some help. Noll was all for the pick, too. Frank Lewis was poetry in motion, a beautiful athlete, but he was a very mild guy. Not flashy or aggressive, not like those other two guys in the Hall of Fame - Swann and Stallworth - that he played with. Lewis ended up being like a DH for us, making the big play whenever he got the chance. Frank made some great plays with us, but he never made an impact until we traded him to Buffalo.

I remember one time we were playing the Houston Oilers. Their coaches box was on the same floor as the press box. I'm sitting there and this guy comes rushing past me, yelling, "He's in the game! He's in the game!" Everybody looked around to see what the hell was going on. This guy was alerting the other Oilers coaches that Lewis was going in. They were scared to death of him. "Back those [secondary] guys up!" he yelled. "Get those bastards to drop back!"

***A big chunk of the Super Bowl foundation was claimed that year.***

ARJ: You know, everybody talks about the great draft of 1974, with all the Hall of Famers, but look at some of the other names we got in '71: Jack Ham, tackle Gerry Mullins, Dwight White, Ernie Holmes, Mike Wagner, Larry Brown. That draft gave us seven Super Bowl starters. It's a very underrated draft! But, of course, at the time we didn't know it would turn out that way. I'll tell you a funny story.

After that draft was over, I was talking to Uppie Bell, who had become the GM of the Patriots. He was looking over the names of the players we had picked and was giving me his opinion on them. He started right at the top.

"Frank Lewis - you got a good player. I like the pick."

"Jack Ham? I don't know. He's not strong enough to play linebacker in the pros."

"Mullins - don't know much about him"

"Dwight White? Who's Dwight White?"

Overall his opinion was, "Who the hell are these guys?" Talk about feeling your heart sink. Here's a real good friend of mine, a very solid personnel guy, looking over my players and basically just shaking his head. At the time I thought, "Boy, I really screwed this one up."

***Let's talk about the Ham pick. '71 didn't offer a bumper crop of college linebackers, but the Steelers were thin at the position. The choice in the second round came down to Penn State's Ham or Phil Villapiano of Bowling Green. Why Ham?***

ARJ: Jack was our guy in the scouting department. We loved him, but the assistant coaches wanted Villapiano. I blew my cork over this one. "Ham is first-rounder, one of the top-rated players in the country, and you want us to take a guy who's no better than a second-rounder!?" The assistants were all good guys, but they were wrong on

this one. Villapiano was a great player. He played a lot of years, but he was no Jack Ham.

Ham and I still joke about this story. After the draft we brought all the kids in for a physical and a brief team indoctrination. We had them in a suite at the Pittsburgh Hilton. They were all big, solid kids. Strong-looking, athletic types. Then I heard this knock on the door of the suite and I went over to answer it. There was a guy standing there in blue slacks, a white golf shirt and a windbreaker. Very meekly he says, "Is this the Steeler room?" I said yeah. He said, "I'm looking for Mr. Rooney." I said, "That's me. Why? Do you have a message for me?" I was nice to him, maybe a little curt. I thought he was a bell boy. He said, "They told me to come up here." I said, "Why? Do you have a message?" He said, "I'm Jack Ham."

I couldn't believe it! I had no idea who he was! I scouted Ham a lot in college but I'd never seen him in the lockerroom or out of his uniform! He didn't have the great, athletic body by any means. This future Hall of Famer is standing right in front of me, and I thought he was delivering a message or bringing up the urine sample bottles.

The next day we had all the players down at Three Rivers for a brief workout. Ham was standing there in a pair of shorts, and he had no chest at all. No arms either. Skinny! But he had the legs of a man - big, athletic legs. Ham is an example of how Chuck Noll's weight-lifting program paid off. It built his upper body strength. He went from about 215 to 222, all muscle, and held it for most of his career.

***You've said before that Ham is one of your favorite players, a draft pick you've always been extremely proud of.***

ARJ: What a tremendous player. The whole league was impressed by the way Jack Ham played football, even the best players. One year Ham was playing in the Pro Bowl. Noll was the coach of the AFC team. One of our scouts, my cousin Tim Rooney, was in the elevator with a bunch of the AFC defensive players. Some of them were bitching about having to learn Noll's defensive scheme for the game. "That damn Noll! We can't play this kind of defense. It's impossible to do some of this stuff!"

One of the other players spoke up and said, "It'll work."

They piped back, "What do ya mean it'll work? How's it gonna work?"

He looked at them and simply said, "Ham."

They paused for a moment. "Yeah, it'll work ... "

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### **The Steelers' Future? They Looked Out and Saw Stars**

There are rows and rows of worn, beaten helmets on shelving in the basement of Pro Football's Hall of Fame. Here is John Henry Johnson's scarred headgear. An ancient Raiders helmet is without a number. It's badly scuffed, and the facemask says it was probably a lineman's. Maybe Shell or Upshaw, or Jim Otto. An angry, black mark likely indicates an attack from a Steeler. OJ Simpson's is there, too.

These helmets have many stories to tell. Legendary eyes peered out from behind their facemasks.

Nearby a collection of large books sits in a lonely corner.

Stacks of files in brown bindings piled hurriedly on top of each other. Some are water damaged. All of them are old.

These books also have tales to tell. They tell of days in hot, sweaty practice fields and nights in front of clicking projectors. They were written by tired, frozen hands or in a dimmed motel room on a lonely wayside.

Within these pages lies the formula, the mystical ingredients that yielded one of football's most tyrannical reigns - the scouting reports of the 1970s Steelers.

Here is what some of the Steelers scouts thoughts from the field about the players that would ultimately lauch the team to its immortal plane.

**Mel Blount, cornerback, Southern University (6'3", 201):**

Perfect size and speed ... Very tall and rangy, but still moves feet well . . . Comes up to hit good in drills . . . covered man-to-man well and they have some fast kids here . . . Quick, but seems to lose something when receiver makes a break. I don't know if it's a lack of acceleration or a coaching point . . . I would like to get more of a line on his hitting ability . . . His coaches say he hits and I saw him crack a kid in practice . . . think he could help us at free safety . . . I'd like to say for sure he could be a cornerback but I don't know how he would do with a guy like [Roy] Jefferson all the way deep. . . Maybe I am too cautious about this.

**Projection: Potential starter, 2<sup>nd</sup> round pick**

**Jack Ham, linebacker, Penn State (6'2", 220):**

Pittsburgh area boy who is a top player . . . I think he would be playing regular for us by the middle of his first year . . . A middle backer at school but would be an OLB for us. However, he improved so much each game at MLB that I feel he'd play there for us with a little more weight and strength . . . He has the frame to get bigger and stronger . . . Good agility and jumping ability . . . Does a good job of pursuing and getting to the wide plays . . . Plays off blockers well and fills holes good . . . Shows toughness in use of arms . . . Pass coverage is impressive . . . Good hands on interceptions . . . Much better than Ray May of the Colts at the same stage . . . I think he is the type of kid we need.

**Projection: Potential starter 1st year, 1<sup>st</sup> / 2<sup>nd</sup> round pick**

**Lynn Swann, flanker, USC (5'10%", 173):** Fine quick athlete who reminds me of [Steelers WR] Jon Stagers . . . Good body control and quickness . . . Makes use of the talent he has, which is not great but good . . . Good field vision as a punt return man. Has a burst and a smooth gait . . . Hands are good . . . Can adjust or catch in noise . . . Can make the over shoulder catch of the bomb . . . Routes are disciplined but not mechanical . . . A fair blocker but on the semitough side . . . I don't feel he is a starter but he can make it and contribute.

**Projection: Potential starter, 4<sup>th</sup> / 5<sup>th</sup> round pick**

**Jack Lambert, linebacker, Kent State (6'4%", 206):**

Narrowly built guy but has gotten stronger since last spring . . . Looks like a smart and great *effort* player . . . Seems to play with reckless abandon at times . . . Flexibility and quickness in his pass drop . . . With his height he is a big obstacle to the passer . . . Good blitz . . . Uses hands and arms to playoff blockers . . . At times gets his legs tied up but his balance is good and clears his feet good for the most part . . . Must get a bit more buck and develop some strength . . . I feel he will make it and develop into an NFL starter.

**Projection: Potential starter, 2<sup>nd</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup> round pick**

**Dwight White, defensive end, East Texas State (6'3", 234):**

Good athlete who plays very inconsistently . . . Looked good against every type of play and then looked just as bad ... Effort was ok . . . In fact he worked hard in practice and didn't seem to be a "hot dog" but he blew a lot of plays and the coach yelled at him a bit . . . They told me he wasn't a dumb kid and took coaching well, but I wonder what kind of smarts he has . . . Dwight showed good hands and movement . . . Was once a tight end. However, I feel his best spot is DE . . . Not a coward . . . Gets off with the ball very well, but did not show a burst of speed in pursuit. However, his lateral moves are good and he did chase a runner down once . . . His balance is good in as much as he is never on his rear end . . . Has the talent to make a club and develop into a good starter . . . Reminds me a little of Joe Jones of the Browns.

**Projection: Make roster and improve, 4<sup>th</sup> / 5<sup>th</sup> round pick.**

### **Mike Wagner, safety, Western Illinois (6'1", 196):**

Has size, effort and pretty good movement. However, backpeddle is a little labored . . . Seems to keep good position on the receivers . . . More of a shest catcher than a hand catcher . . . I was impressed with the way he comes up to hit. However, he had some of his tackles broken. It seemed to be due to lack of strength and technique rather than guts . . . Has frame to get a bit stronger . . . I think he has the tools to merit a good look.

**Projection: Good prospect, 13<sup>th</sup> /14<sup>th</sup> round pick**

### **Franco Harris, fullback, Penn State (6'2", 225):**

Top physical prospect . . . The type of kid we're looking fo . . . Breaks down like a 5'11", 190 guy only he's bigger . . . Fine body control and quickness. . . Slides and picks well . . . Does a good job of running pass patterns ... Only a fair blocker but shows the tools to develop into a good blocker as a pro . . . Has strength and speed to be a big threat outside or in open field. However, I feel he doesn't use his strength to break tackles as much as he should ... Not a straight line runner ... Lots of movement and wiggle ... Would give us a big gun in the backfield ... I question his competitiveness ... Has the talent to be a star, but I don't know if he will be ... Worth the gamble.

**Projection: Potential starter 1<sup>st</sup> year, 1<sup>st</sup> round pick**

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### ***Moving on to 1972. More weapons are still needed to support Bradshaw, but overall it's weak array of college running backs from which to choose. Your man was Penn State's Franco Harris?***

ARJ: He was, but not without debate. Overall the position needed upgrading. Our backs were Frenchy Fuqua and Preston Pearson at the time. Noll loved Pearson, but he was a fumbler. Every fifth time he touched the football he put it on the ground. He wouldn't block either. At least Fuqua blocked like hell.

Franco was a big, strong guy, with move like a tailback. He had tremendous sophomore and junior years at Penn State, but his senior year wasn't as productive for some reason. That may have bothered some teams. They acted like he fell off tremendously, but that worked to our benefit. We had an offensive line coach named Danny Radakovich who'd been at Penn State with Harris. He convinced us this dropoff wasn't a big deal, at least not enough to pass on him. The rap on Franco was that he was a moody, emotional guy ... sensitive, that his feelings got hurt easily. Radakovich said it was a bum rap. He said he knew Harris was a good person.

### ***Who were the anti-Harris factions before the draft?***

ARJ: Our scouting department really liked him, but Noll wasn't crazy about him. He was finding reasons to be negative about Harris while we were finding reasons to be positive. I remember talking on the phone to George Young, who at the time was a scout for the Baltimore Colts. George loved Noll but he knew how he could be. He said, "What's the matter, Art? You sound really down. Is Chuck giving you a hard time again?" I said, "Yeah, he keeps telling me that [Houston fullback] Bobby Newhouse is better than Franco." George couldn't believe it! He said, "You tell Chuck this debate was settled 2,000 years ago, when Socrates said, 'A good big man is worth more than a good little man any day.'" And of course, Franco ended up being Rookie of the Year in '72.

Years later, we were watching films on a running back from Miami (FL) named OJ Anderson. He was another good, big runner.

During the discussion Noll said he didn't like Anderson for whatever reasons, but then he added, "I could be wrong, like I was wrong about another big fullback that came here. I won't mention his name," Then he got up and walked out of the damn room. Woody Widenhofer, our linebackers coach, shut the projector off and turned on the lights.

I said, "Woody, what the hell was that all about?" He said, "That, Art, was as close as you're gonna get to Chuck

admitting you were right and he was wrong about Franco Harris."

***You mentioned quarterback Joe Gilliam earlier, an 11<sup>th</sup> round pick in '72. Had you ever envisioned this kid beating out the -'great Terry Bradshaw when you drafted him?***

ARJ: No! I didn't envision Gilliam even making the damn team! He was a Bill Nunn guy, According to my ratings Joe was a worthy draft choice, but he was an 11<sup>th</sup> rounder for a reason. Gilliam was talented and tragic, He wasn't a dumbbell at all but he had little common sense. We had one of the all-time great defenses and a Hall of Fame runner in Franco Harris, but all Joe wanted to do was toss the ball. He got the defense in trouble a lot. Bradshaw worked his way back into the starting lineup by listening to Noll. Terry played the teams strengths. Joey was too impatient to do that. He was all downfield, a mad bomber.

***And at those depths of the draft, you're really just throwing darts anyway, right?***

ARJ: Oh, no, no, no! We never threw darts! Who are you talking to? We never threw darts! We worked our asses off creating that list of 200 players. Hey, we didn't come up with guys like Donnie Shell and Randy Grossman by throwing darts. You never tell a personnel guy that he's throwing darts!

***Wrong choice of words ...***

ARJ: Yeah, it sure was! [Laughing] But that's not to say we didn't make mistakes. I remember running into Don Shula at a banquet years later. He said, "Sit down here and talk to me. Before you hired Chuck, you guys were all set to draft Terry Hanratty with the number one pick, weren't you?" He was poking fun a little bit, but actually thought about taking Hanratty in the first round. We talked about it. Hanratty was a local kid and a Notre Damer. Heck, we ended up taking him in the second round when he should've gone in the fourth. The second round was too high, and the first would've been a disaster.

***The Pittsburgh Steelers' crown jewel- the draft of 1974. The names read Swann and Lambert, Stallworth and Webster. We could spend hours here.***

ARJ: We could, and I'd enjoy every minute.

***Swann first. According to his BLESTO scouting reports, he was well regarded but with flaws.***

ARJ: It was his speed that concerned people. I visited SC the fall of Lynn's senior year. [USC] Coach McKay rode me around on his golf cart telling me about all his senior NFL prospects. USC was the mecca of prospects, complete heaven for scouts. He drove me by each player. Wow! There were a lot of good ones. Then he showed me Lynn, who he said was his best. Too small, too slow was the word. He was truly a great, competitive athlete who made big plays in the big games consistently. Physically he moved like the greatest Olympic gymnast you ever saw on TV. The only difference was when the floor exercise ended for the gymnast he wouldn't get belted in the teeth by a defensive back. Well, Swann could take that hit and hang onto the ball. We all liked him, but that 4.6/40 was a killer for the first round.

Noll wanted an offensive weapon on Round 1. Swann was quick, could jump like a gazelle, had great hands and concentration, but he was too slow to take that high. It was something we couldn't look past. I went through the same thing when we scouted Doug Flutie of BC, but in his case he was too short. The discussion were heavy at our draft preparation meetings, and we finally set Swann aside because of his poor height and speed. We were going to try and get him later, but I doubted he'd be available.

Stallworth was pushed into our top spot by Noll. Stallworth was a great talent, and the scouts loved him but not as a

1<sup>st</sup> rounder. We felt we could get him in the third. Noll didn't care. He didn't want to chance losing him. Then luck hit again. Jack Butler got a tip that that [New England Scouting Director] Bucko Kilroy had arranged for another speed timing of Swann. BLESTO somehow got their West Coast scout in to watch it, and Swann ran a 4.5/40, The argument was over. Swann was our man.

### ***Stallworth was little known talent from Alabama A&M. Another Nunn discovery?***

ARJ: Pretty much. BLESTO's Joe Bushofski had a real good report on Stallworth, which gave us an initial heads up, but Nunn always had extensive talks with the coaches at those places. He came up with the game film of great game showcasing John. We got a copy of it and watched it over and over again. He was unbelievable, a real player.

Eventually I told Haley to send the film back to the Alabama A&M coach, that he was calling for it. The next week I got another call where's that film? I told Haley again to send it. The next week came, another complaint -- no film. By that time I knew Dick was up to something. He probably didn't want any other teams to see it. I confronted him, and he finally said, "I'll send it out at end of week, promise." So it went out month late. In the Senior Bowl they played him at defensive back for some reason, so he wasn't showcased at his natural position. That was the luckiest thing that ever happened to us. Without that film it was just word-of-mouth about how great C Stallworth could be. He was still available in the fourth, and we got him.

Funny story about Swann and Stallworth. Stallworth had true 4.5 speed, and if Lynn ran alone he'd typically be around 4.59 or 4.60. But when he raced against Stallworth in camp, Lynn would almost beat him. If he stumbled even a little, Lynn would. Swann was such a true competitor. McKay said about him, "Remember the Sundance Kid shooting targets? He couldn't hit a darn one until it got competitive, then he never missed." That was Lynn Swann.

### ***Tell me about Jack Lambert, a skinny, undersized linebacker drafted as a surprise in the second round. Eight linebackers were taken before him. Some of those names included Ed O'Neil, Rick Middleton, Fred McNeill and Doug Allen, from muscle schools like Penn State, Ohio State and UCLA. Your linebacker came from Kent State.***

ARJ: We were looking at another kid from UCLA named Cal Peterson, who we had graded about even with Lambert. One of our assistant coaches, Woody Widenhofer, said, "Peterson will be all right, a good player, but Lambert will make a strong contribution on special teams right away, while he's still learning the position." That shifted the balance toward Jack. My cousin Tim Rooney saw him take a penalty drill with the starting quarterback the week of very important game. The quarterback had to finish the drill to play, so Lambert did it with him to make sure he finished. He was tough, all business. A skinny guy - I'm not sure if ever got much bigger after college - but tough.

Let me rewind the story on Lambert back a few years. In the early '60s, I was at the University of Minnesota watching a game, taking notes. I was sitting next to an elderly lady, who was obviously a big football fan. She asked me what I was doing, and I told her I was a scout for the Steelers. She said, "Well, watch this lineman Carl Eller. He's only a junior, but he's a pretty good player." Everyone could see how good Eller was, even this old lady. Well, Eller went on to be a first-round pick a year later and a great pro for the Vikings. That's where I got the expression "This guy's so good your grandmother could scout him." I told a lot of newspaper guys that story over the years.

Early in the '74 camp, we were running our Oklahoma drills. It's a four-man exercise where a linebacker or lineman tries to stop a running back while fighting off a center. Lambert was going up against another rookie, a center we picked in the fifth round. First set of plays - Bam! Lambert gets knocked right back on his ass. They lined up again, and wham! this center knocked Lambert down again, really belted him. Phil Musick, a writer for *The Pittsburgh*

Press, was watching and gave me a little dig, saying, "Hey, Art, what little old lady told you about this Lambert guy?"

Well, Lambert went on to become a Pro Bowl and Hall of Fame linebacker, but the center in camp that day was a guy named Mike Webster, who turned out to be a pretty good player himself. Who would've figured the first cracks in camp that year would come between a Hall of Fame linebacker and Hall of Fame center?

***Your top pick in 1976 was a Clemson tight end named Bennie Cunningham, an exceptional talent who produced very average results. Zero Pro Bowl appearances, and only 20 touchdown catches in an 11-year career. You must have expected bigger things from this player.***

ARJ: Bill Nunn and I had many talks about Cunningham. Bennie was only a good player in our setup. In his defense, we didn't throw a lot of passes to the tight end. They were mostly blockers on the Steelers. And we already had Randy Grossman, who had phenomenal short pass-catching ability. Randy, due to his size limitations (6'1", 218), couldn't be a top blocker for our style of football. However, he was a go-to guy in situations. So if the tight end was only going to get three or four passes tossed at him per game, Randy would get at least one of those. You can see how frustrating that would be to Bennie. Remember, Swann and Stallworth were fighting to get balls tossed their way. Even Brent Jones couldn't make it in Pittsburgh as a tight end because of his blocking. We didn't begin to look at that position as an offensive weapon until years later.

Years later Nunn said that Bennie could've been a star had he played on another team, much like Frank Lewis did. I recall Nunn once spoke to Ben about moving to offensive tackle. We had done that before with Larry Brown and it was a very successful move. Well, Bennie chased Nunn all over the St. Vincent practice field yelling, "Don't even start that idea, Nunn!" Then he came to me and said, "Keep Bill quiet, will ya?"

***Mike Kruczek became Terry Bradshaw's backup at quarterback in 1976. Steady but unspectacular. He played sparingly over his four seasons in Pittsburgh, except for several key starts during his rookie season. Would you have preferred an upgrade at that position, or was the Noll's staff comfortable with Kruczek, who never threw a touchdown pass as a Steeler?***

ARJ: Kruczek was a smart guy. Big and strong, very dedicated. The way he played during his starts in '76 was something else. He did a fine job for us, and we beat Cincinnati, Miami and a few other teams with him. Kruczek was basically programmed by Noll to not get the defense in trouble. No turnovers! We only scored a few points in each of the games he played, but he did what Noll wanted. That was also part of his problem -- Kruczek was way too mechanical. Defenses could lock onto him, and I'm not sure he would've gotten much better.

In 1977 we drafted Cliff Stoudt to eventually replace Kruczek, and the coaches fell in love with that guy. Stoudt had a great arm, but I never thought he had the touch or the accuracy. I remember seeing Paul Zimmerman from Sports Illustrated before our '83 playoff against the Raiders. Bradshaw was hurt and Stoudt was going to start the game. He said, "You know, Art, Stoudt is the worst quarterback in football." And the worst part of it was, I agreed with him. Paul confirmed what I thought - Stoudt was terrible, although I couldn't admit it to him being the Steelers' personnel guy. I think we would've been better off keeping Kruczek.

***How much consideration did you give to Notre Dame's Joe Montana, who was available in the '79 draft? He was a local kid who had a good career in college for the Irish.***

ARJ: Not very much. We had him slotted as a third-rounder, right where he went. Haley liked Montana a lot, but I wasn't as high on him. He wasn't a big player, and he tossed a soft ball, easy to catch or intercept. Overall we were more interested in bigger, stronger quarterbacks like Bradshaw. Stoudt, Kruczek and Mark Malone were big guys as well.

***And now we move to bad news point of the interview - the disastrous drafts of the late 1970s and early '80s. The names now read like high priced listings in a forgotten phone book miscues like Willie Fry (#2, 1978), Greg Hawthorne (#1, 1979), Bob Kohrs (#2, 1980) and Keith Gary (#1, 1981). From 1975-86, the Steelers drafted 182 players; only five remained with the team that eventually would earn Pro Bowl honors. From boom to bust for the Steelers -- what happened?***

ARJ: Of course, in that 182 you're counting those low-round choices as well, who have very little chance of making the team, let alone the Pro Bowl. But obviously they were very disappointing years for us. Success had spoiled us in a sense, and by the mid-1970s we started getting into trouble with our drafting philosophy. We outsmarted ourselves by thinking we could put heart and consistency into great athletes that showed occasional production, love of the game and toughness. As "Bear" Bryant would say, were trying to make chicken salad out of chicken shit.

We began to draft great athletes who were flashy but lacked consistency. By flashy I mean players who showed occasional flashes of greatness. That was the old Will Wall philosophy -- if a guy does it once, he can be taught to do it all the time. That obviously was too simplistic an approach, and it finally caught up to us. With all the success we had, I think we developed a certain amount of arrogance -- that our weightlifting program was the best, that our coaching was the best. We believed we could coach consistency into these great athletes. Bullshit! There's no way you can teach consistency. We thought that's what we had done with Franco Harris, but in reality that wasn't true. Franco was already a consistent player. We just started using him differently, which made him more productive.

Our first real mistake in drafting on flash came in 1975 with a guy named Bob Barber, a defensive end from Grambling. We took him in the second round. In college he had all the statistics and would make beautiful plays, but when he got to camp he was terribly inconsistent. He didn't even make the team. Barber was an indicator of things to come. Hawthorne, a running back from Baylor, was another one. We took him first in '79 on his potential, but again there was no consistency.

Now when you're drafting in the later rounds, you need to have that philosophy. For example, LC Greenwood was a flashy player in college. He played in spurts. LC wasn't consistent, but we didn't take him in until the 10<sup>th</sup> round. At that level you can afford to gamble and make mistakes. You can't do that with your high picks. Jack Butler would occasionally pull me aside and say, "Art, you gotta get guys that are productive, that make more than two plays a game. The Steelers don't need any more guys who leave it all on the college field."

***Who was the biggest heartbreaker of all your draft choices?***

ARJ: Believe it or not, it was a guy who made the team - Frank Lewis. Not because he didn't turn out to be a great player, but because he didn't turn out to be a great player for the Steelers. Getting playing time with Swann and Stallworth around was a tough chore. Frank didn't truly develop until he went to the Bills in '78. That was the year they put in the five-yard chuck rule, and I believe that really helped his game. He had some trouble getting off the line and past the defenders under the old rule.

***A player that always puzzled me was Dwaine Board, a defensive end drafted in 1979 who ended up having a great career with the 4gers? Yet he couldn't make the team that drafted him, the Steelers with an average age of 31 on the starting defensive line?***

ARJ: Let me tell you, there was almost an open fight in the personnel department over Dwaine Board. I was extremely high on him. LC and Dwight White and Joe Greene were all getting up there in age, and I felt we needed to start grooming some new players. Chuck decided to keep one of the older guys instead and let Board go. I remember I called George Young, who was now GM of the Giants, and told him, "You gotta take this Board. Offer us a trade for him because, if not, we're gonna let him go for nothing." I wasn't looking for much in return, maybe a

middle-round draft pick. I directed a lot of players toward the Giants while George was there. No stars, but guys that could at least help them. For some reason, George wasn't interested in Board. Then John McVay, the former Giants coach who had become the 4gers' VP of Football Operations, heard about Board from Haley and claimed him as soon as he hit waivers. I always regretted letting him go.

***Do you recall your biggest argument with Chuck Noll over drafting a player? I once asked Noll this question, and he predictably dodged it. He said there were never arguments, only disagreements.***

AJR: [Laughing] That sounds like something Chuck would say. If you had credibility with him, he'd go along with things you on certain things, but he still had the final say. I had some battles with him. The drafting of Franco Harris was probably the biggest. It got heated. But even if I lived three lifetimes, I couldn't beat up Chuck Noll. It's a good thing my daddy owned the team or I would have gotten my ass kicked a few times. Well, it was like the Battle of Midway in World War II. Before Midway we never won a battle; after Midway we never lost one. Well, before Franco the Steelers couldn't get a winning season; after Franco arrived, we went 13 years without a losing one.

At times there was a lot of tension between Noll and me. I once called him a "know-it-all." He looked back at me with an expression like, "You rich-kid jerk." [Assistant coach] George Perles heard me say it. He told me that if my dad didn't own team Chuck would've canned me. I told Perles to take a walk. Actually, we were all right Noll was a know-it-all, but the best coach and a great man; Perles was a big mouth; and I was an obstinate rich kid whose dad owned the team. Just not a lazy one.

***As the quality of the Steelers drafts deteriorated over the years, the Pittsburgh media became increasingly tough on you and your department. Was anyone particularly hard on you, to the point where the criticism might have become a personal affront?***

ARJ: There was, and I have good story about it but I won't tell it to you. It got into a nationality type of thing. The guy really went after me.

***Can you tell the story if you leave out the specifics?***

ARJ: I guess I can clean it up. This guy that gave me trouble was on Pittsburgh radio and on television. My wife picked me and my sons up at camp one year and we were driving back to Pittsburgh. He came on the radio and this guy was really on my case, ranting about me and the lousy Steelers drafts, that type of thing. Nobody in the car said a word. We just listened. When we finally got home, the 11:00 news was on, and the same guy was on TV, although he wasn't talking about me this time. Finally my wife spoke up and said, "This guy really is a simple blankety-blank," really gave it to him. It was shock because she never said a word about him on the ride home. I was laughing like hell because I knew she had held it in all that time. I guess I was lucky in that sense because I was on the road a lot and didn't hear much of the criticism from the media. I missed a lot of it.

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### **How Pittsburgh's Braintrust Viewed Stars It Passed By**

**Dave Casper, offensive tackle/tight end, Notre Dame (6'3", 248):**

Has the talent to do a lot of things as a blocker but doesn't, at least not consistently ... Has strength, blocking quickness and balance, but if he is not directly involved in the play he is just a stand-around ... They say he sort of walks like a farmer plugging through a plowed field but he sure runs with fluidness ... As a TE he got open short and caught the ball ... I don't think he can contribute as a pro TE...Can be good but will tax the best of coaches.

**Projection: *Make Roster and Improve, 4<sup>th</sup> /5<sup>th</sup> round pick***

### **Brian Sipe, quarterback, San Diego State (6'1", 195):**

An exciting player at times but plagued with a scatter-arm ... Short on passing talent. .. Moves well in pocket and can scramble but has trouble finding second receiver ... Can get it close enough to make you think it is the receiver's fault on an incompletion ... Can get the ball deep ... Had some big games in college, but not any better than a camp player.

**Projection: *Questionable Prospect, 17<sup>th</sup> round pick / free agent***

### **Duane Thomas, fullback, West Texas State (6'2", 213):**

Has all the equipment to be a great one ... Intangibles are questionable ... [West Texas] Coach Harris says he's a fine kid who has some small character flaws like running up credit card bills, not showing up for practice, poor school work, walking off the field, and not playing with pain ... He also has a black militant for a brother, but the brother isn't supposed to get to him ... He isn't a fine practice player but didn't "dog it." In fact he showed flashes of brilliance as a runner in practice ... Catches pitch-outs ok and fielded an onside kick good ... Big, strong and fast, can explode through a hole ... Hard for one tackler to bring him down ... Durable, even if the coach said he didn't like pain ... Good lead and cut blocker. .. Ducked his head on one man-an-man block I saw ... Does a good job of picking his way through traffic and running over people in the open field ... Would be a fine screen pass runner ... If his character would hold up, I think he would be a terrific offensive weapon as a pro ... Let someone else motivate him.

**Projection: *Potential starter, 1<sup>st</sup> round pick***

### **Cliff Branch, flanker, Colorado (5'10", 169):**

[scouted during '72 Hula Bowl] Still feel the same way about Branch, although he did catch the ball in practice a little better than I thought he could but not much ... He's a little bigger than I thought he was ... Don't believe this boy is very tough ... The footing wasn't the best but he fell down too many times ... A couple of times I got the impression he was hunting for a place to lay down. Could be wrong on this ... / still feel this is a very dangerous football player but it's going to take a far better passer than these QBs to hit him cause I don't think he is going to catch the off-thrown ball well. .. There is also no doubt that with his great speed he can kill a club.

**Projection: *Make roster and improve, 4<sup>th</sup> /5<sup>th</sup> round pick***

### **Dan Dierdorf, offensive tackle, Michigan (6'3", 255):**

A squatty built guy ... Looks like if he got any heavier he would be a fatso ... Strong kid with a good pop but inconsistent sustain and follow-through ... Not a real quick in-line blocker. .. Did not pull for sweeps or traps but from his pre-game workout and the way he covered punts I'd say he'd have difficulty in those techniques. Effort is ok. I wasn't impressed with his foot movement or his potential to be a good pass protector as a pro. Did show good one-on-one strength and pop on a goalline drive. Perhaps he would have some defensive possibilities.

**Projection: *Good prospect, 12<sup>th</sup> / 13<sup>th</sup> round pick.***

### **Jack Youngblood, defensive tackle, Florida (6'4", 242):**

[from junior year] I feel Jack is a sure thing to make our club. However, I don't feel he's a sure thing to help us ... Doesn't dominate hiestammates in scrimmages Has some fine physical attributes like size, speed and strength . . . Showed good lateral pursuit, not stiff at all ... I felt his pass rush was ordinary ... Low blocks tie him up but he won't have that problem with uS ... The best I saw him was a little OT he played in a drill. Blocked strongly, so might be an OT prospect. .. Very raw and would have to be taught an awful lot to help us ... 1 was starting to question his meanness until he handled a fellow pretty well in a fight during a scrimmage. **Projection: *Make roster and contribute, 5<sup>th</sup> / 6<sup>th</sup> round pick;*** [from senior year] Very strong Lateral move, pursuit and agility are good ... Gets off with ball ok Has a mean streak (at times I felt he was a cheap-shotter) ... Hard to run at him ... Good pass rush ... Showed good rate of improvement over last spring ... Not a finished product but the way he's going I think he'll start in NFL and be a winner ... I rate him above Bill Stanfill of Georgia at the same stage ... Not great but has chance to be real good.

**Projection: *Potential starter, 1<sup>st</sup> round pick***

***The biggest criticism of Steelers management was that its Super Bowl stars, the heroic veterans of all the great battles of the 1970s, were employed long past their prime. Do you agree or disagree?***

ARJ: I can agree, but that's what happens when you put together a great team. Those players performed for you and brought you championships, so it's easy to get emotional about them. You wouldn't think Noll would get emotional over players. He was like General George Marshall, a straight-laced, hard-nosed guy like that didn't let his feelings get in the way of progress. Well, he did get sentimental, though not in front of the camera. He kept some guys on longer than he should have. He wasn't able to find room for guys like Dwaine Board or Brent Jones, and that obviously hurt us. I'm not criticizing him for it. It would've been a very hard thing, to just throw those guys away who had done so much for your team.

***The Steelers passed over tremendous football players like Jackie Slater, Harry Carson, Mike Singletary, Matt Millen and William Andrews, to name a few. You undoubtedly scouted players like these and were aware of their talents. Are there one or two players you still regret not drafting when you had the opportunity?***

ARJ: In the scouting game, you shouldn't look back too closely at the other cards in the game that could have been played. You'd constantly be second-guessing yourself and drive yourself crazy. I can't really think of anybody, to be honest. The thing I always fought for was sticking to your preferred list of 200 players. You didn't allow the coaches to influence you and cause mischief. My rule was simple - Follow The List. And I was always pretty satisfied that we did that.

***What about Noll? Where there any players he regretted not drafting?***

ARJ: I know one guy Noll kicked himself up and down about was Dan Marino. He loved Marino with a passion. 1983 was a strange time for quarterbacks in Pittsburgh. Bradshaw was hurt and ended up missing most of the season. Stoudt was going to be the starter because the coaches loved him, and Mark Malone - the Kordell Stewart of his day - was the backup. Noll had identified Marino as being his top choice. We had chased down all the rumors that Marino was into drugs and found they weren't exactly true. Marino wasn't a horrible person in that respect, but he was a smart ass. I guess one drawback to scouting Pitt players was that we got to know them a little too well. They were local, and we heard all the rumors.

We were drafting 21<sup>st</sup> that year and had identified three players we wanted to take in that slot - Dave Rimington, a center from Nebraska; Gabe Rivera, a defensive tackle from Texas Tech, and Marino. Rimington had knee problems and we backed away from him, so it came down to either Rivera or Marino. Noll was all for Marino, then he had a change of heart. He said, "Let's start rebuilding this team the way we did in the beginning - with a great defensive lineman." He was referring to us taking Joe Greene back in '69, and it seemed like a good idea again. Gabe played pretty well for us, but he broke his back in a car wreck six weeks into the season. We never really had a chance to fail with the guy. It wasn't a necessarily a bad draft pick, but it was unfortunate what happened to him. Still, my dad used to always growl, "You should've taken Marino!" Right up till the day he died he'd give us a little dig on it.

***You must have been devastated by Rivera's accident, both personally and professionally.***

ARJ: It was such a difficult, sad thing. I believe he would have been a solid player for us for a number of years. I'll give you a quick story about Rivera. After his accident, we looked back over his personal files and we saw that he had something like 32 traffic tickets. I brought that up to one of the scouts. The scout said, "Well, Tony Dorsett also had 32 traffic tickets in college, too. Would we have passed on him?" In terms of driving, Rivera had no regard for the

law. Maybe somebody in the scouting staff who was a little astute might have said, "This guy could be trouble," but we weren't smart enough to see that.

The failure rate on your first- or second-round picks is pretty high because of the intangibles. Maybe the guy has an attitude problem or a drinking problem or a drug problem. It's a big jigsaw puzzle you're trying to put together. For example, Gabe was supposed to go on a diet, to eat a lot of tuna. Well, he was eating 25 cans of tuna a day. It was something you sorta laughed at. Then we brought in a psychologist to give us a lecture about the qualities of a winning personality, and he pointed out that kind of thing, along with all the speeding tickets, were red flags. But we weren't psychologists.

***Do you feel a Marino-Noll combination would have worked in Pittsburgh, considering their personalities?***

ARJ: That's a really good question. For one thing, playing in Pittsburgh would've been a lot tougher on Danny if things didn't go well right away. Pittsburgh was his hometown, and he was under the microscope. Down in Miami, he played for a coach in Don Shula who was very much like Noll. Noll copied a lot of things from Shula when they were together in Baltimore. I'll say this - with a talent like Marino, Noll would've found a way to make it work.

***Who was your favorite long-shot success story?***

ARJ: A player like Joe Gilliam or Mike Wagner. Everybody knows who the top prospects are. All the scouts agree that so-and-so is a first rounder. It's they guys at the bottom of your 200 list. the ones that people disagree on, that make you feel good when they succeed. It shows you were right.

A real favorite of mine was Loren Toews, a linebacker from Cal-Berkeley that we took in the 8<sup>th</sup> round in '73. Cal's stadium is huge, and I was sitting way up near the top by myself. All of a sudden a bunch of Boy Scouts came up and sat next to me. They were helping out as ushers for the game, then they came up to have a little picnic in the stands. They noticed I was scouting the game. The leader pointed to one of his scouts and said, "This kid's brother is the best player around here. His name is Loren Toews. If you have time, watch him." I had him way down on my list and didn't expect to be impressed.

Well, as the game went on, I saw all the characteristics in Toews that Noll was looking for in his linebackers. Smart, aggressive, even had a little bit of Jack Ham in him. I had Haley take a look at him in another game, and we both thought he was a pretty good player. We brought him in, and this guy had some pretty damn good days in camp his rookie year. He ended up starting in our first Super Bowl. Toews was never a Pro Bowl guy, but he became one of my favorite success stories.

You can take it a step further some of our free agents like Donnie Shell, who wasn't even drafted. He was a linebacker in college but we projected him as a safety, which is a pretty big jump for the pros. I think Shell should be in the Hall of Fame. Randy Grossman is another one. Our rating system for receivers went 0,1,2,3 ... the lower the number, the better the hands. Grossman could get some separation from a defender, but he wasn't a big guy. What he did have was 0 hands - the best. With Bradshaw, you didn't bring in some free agent with just "nice hands," a guy who rated a 2. Terry threw the ball so hard that the receiver had to have a 1 or a 0, which Grossman did. He caught whatever was near him.

***You talked about the feelings you had as Three Rivers Stadium was being destroyed. But the dynasty had long been gone and the arena was past its prime. It was symbolic, in a way, like the great naval battleships that served their purpose and won the wars, then were sent to the scrap yards. How does it feel looking back on a tremendous football era that ended nearly 25 years ago?***

ARJ: The glory days were so long ago, and now nobody around the team really knows me anymore. It reminds me of a story. Once I took my family to an NFL meeting that we being held in Hawaii. Joe Foss, the former governor of South Dakota, was there. As a former Marine reservist, I knew all about Foss and wanted to meet him. He was a great marine aviator in World War II, a war ace. He shot down more Japs than [Cleveland DE Joe] "Turkey" Jones had sacks. I went over to Gov. Foss and said, "Governor, I'm Art Rooney, Jr. of the Steelers. I just wanted to say hello thank you for what you've done for our country." He was real nice to me, and I could see that he loved our game.

The next day I was with my son, Mike, who was around 13 years old. We saw the Joe Foss standing around a reception room by himself, so I felt it was a good time to introduce the great ace to the kid, something for the lad to remember. So I walked over and said, "Governor Foss, I'd like you to meet my son. Mike, this is Governor Joe Foss. He's a friend of your grandfather." We were all smiling, shaking hands. I told Mike, "Governor Foss was a great Marine aviator, a top ace." Mike, who didn't know anything about Foss' career, asked him, "Oh, where did you fty your airplane?" Foss looked at him and, in a somewhat proud but sincere manner, answered, "A little west of here, son ... a little west of here."

Years later, when the Steelers played the last game at Three Rivers Stadium, we hosted a big party. Most of the great players of the '70s were in attendance, all the stars. My son Mike, now a grown man of 6'6" 250-lbs, introduced me to a friend of his who's on Bill Cowher's coaching staff. It was quite obvious that his friend didn't know of me or really even care, but he was nice. I was Mike's old dad and a Rooney, so this fellow went out of his way to make a little conversation.

The young coach asked me what I'd done with the Steelers. I said, "Well, I was a scout." "Oh!" he said "Who did you scout?" I looked around me and saw those old Steelers - Lambert and Swann and Larry Brown and the others - standing nearby. For a moment I thought of Governor Foss' reply to my son years before. I didn't know how to put it into my own words, so I just kept it to myself.

"A little west of here, son ... a little west of here."

## PRO FOOTBALL IN THE DAYS OF ROCKNE

By Emil Klosinski (Panoply Publications)

Review by Frank J. Stevens

One of the things I've always found particularly valuable about Emil Klosinski's books is that when he quotes a source it's pretty much firsthand information despite the fact that we're often looking at events that took place in the early part of the last century.

That's certainly the case with Klosinski's totally informative and entertaining look at professional football before the days of the NFL. His book, "Pro Football In The Days of Rockne," first published in 1976, has just been re-released by Panoply Publications and is available from your favorite bookseller.

As the title implies, the book concentrates on the pro game as it was played during Knute Rockne's days at Notre Dame. South Bend, Indiana, is the area most focused upon but Klosinski gives an overall view of the early pro game not only in Indiana but Illinois and Ohio as well. He concentrates on the years from 1914 to 1919 and the main source of his information is none other than his father, John, who was a hard-nosed lineman who starred for the champion South Bend Arrows, among other pro teams. In addition, writer Klosinski gathered facts and anecdotes from four of his father's contemporaries -- Lot Borkowski, Steve "Paster" Sobieralski, Tony Skowronski and George Greenburg. As he says in his acknowledgements, basically the book is the story of those five men, all of whom played for professional teams that were coached by Rockne.

Until Klosinski's book came along in the mid-70s, not much was known about Rockne's connection with pro football. But the legendary coach not only played the game after graduating from Notre Dame (and possibly a few Sundays when he was still an undergraduate), he coached it as well, oftentimes in tandem with his coaching duties at Notre Dame. If several plays for Rockne-coached college and pro teams looked similar, there was good reason. He would often try out new formations with his pros and then move them over to his Notre Dame squads or vice versa.

Pro football in its infancy, before the NFL was even thought of, was not nearly the popular game it eventually became. Crowds often were sparse and the college game was king. The early pioneers, like Klosinski's father, played the game not only for the few extra dollars it brought them, but for the joy of the game itself. There were no plush living conditions, meals, transportation or other perks that eventually became part of professional football. The pioneers were accustomed to scrounging together their own uniforms, taking public transportation to get to their game sites, brown bagging their meals and oftentimes tending to their own injuries.

But, in retrospect, one can see that the pro game would catch on. Cities and towns all over the midwest supported teams and intense rivalries developed even in those days. Scheduling was unsophisticated, sometimes on a week to week basis. Klosinski reports that it was in 1916 that the first team in professional football had a complete season's schedule in advance of the season. The team was the South Bend Jolly Fellows Club, or the JFCs, and the team opened its season in mid-September with South Bend River Park followed by teams from Mishawaka,

Elkhart, South Bend Silver Edge, Wabash, Rockford, Evanston, Massillon and closing with Goshen in late November.

As rivalries developed, the pro game began to grow in popularity and conditions improved for the participants. You can sense the rising popularity of the pro game even before the NFL established itself in the early 1920s. College players were welcome additions to the rosters of the pro teams, especially when a big rivalry game was on tap. Players ranging from the likes of Pudge Heffelfinger to George Gipp played for the pros, albeit sometimes under fictitious names. But the seeds were sown for the game to become what it is today and we owe a lasting debt to those early pioneers who gave so much to the game in its infancy.

Emil Klosinski's book, in its new, updated edition, is a must read for football fans everywhere. We understand that Panoply plans to re-release another Klosinski book, "Notre Dame, Chicago Bears and Hunk," the Hunk Anderson biography, this year and Klosinski's "Gipp at Notre Dame-The Untold Story," was published in 2004, giving Klosinski a body of work that ranks among the very best in historic football literature.

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Frank Stevens is a veteran writer. He is currently working on a screenplay about the Civil War spies, the Moon sisters.

# FRANK RYAN and GARY COLLINS

By Roger Gordon

Originally published in *The Orange and Brown Report*, April 2006

Frank Ryan and Gary Collins. The names are synonymous with one thing to most Cleveland Browns fans - the events of Dec. 27, 1964. That was the day Ryan and Collins combined for three touchdown pass plays that staked the Browns to one of the most stunning upsets in NFL history. The Browns defeated the visiting Baltimore Colts that day, 27-0, in the NFL Championship game. It was the Browns' fourth - and last - NFL title, and eighth championship overall including their days in the All-America Football Conference.

Ryan was Cleveland's starting quarterback who also happened to be a year away from earning his Ph.D. in mathematics from Rice University. He came from a family in Fort Worth, Texas, that produced a long line of Yale University alums.

Collins was a starting wide out from a family in tiny Williamstown, Pennsylvania, in which money was scarce. He grew up "in the boonies," as he calls it.

Ryan didn't need football, Collins did. The two men emanated from entirely different backgrounds. They were complete opposites. They will forever be intertwined, however, with their achievements on that memorable afternoon two days after Christmas in 1964.

Both joined the Browns in 1962 when Paul Brown was still the head coach. A 1958 graduate of Rice, where he led the Owls to the Cotton Bowl his senior year, Ryan came to town as part of a five-player trade with the Los Angeles Rams to back up Jim Ninowski. By mid-season, Ninowski was out with an injury and Ryan was calling the signals. Collins, a three-sport star in high school, was the Browns' No. 1 draft choice out of the University of Maryland in '62 (the AFL's Boston Patriots also drafted him and offered him much more money, but Collins opted for the stability of the NFL). A year later, he was starting opposite a rookie by the name of Paul Warfield.

"Gary and I had started developing a connection back in '62," Ryan recalls, "when he was a 'freshman' and I was a first-year player with the Browns. We would work after practice with Blanton [Collier], who was an assistant coach then, working on moves and anticipating things and what not, me anticipating where he was going and him understanding when the ball would be there and all that sort of stuff."

What had become a stagnant offense quickly made a complete 360 the next year under new head coach Collier, who had replaced the fired Brown. Ryan beat out Ninowski in a stiff competition for the starting spot. He had a magnificent season, throwing for 25 touchdowns and just 13 interceptions. Collins led the Browns in receptions (43), receiving yards (674) and touchdown catches (13). Furthermore, Jim Brown rebounded big time from his "down" season the year before in which he rushed for less than 1,000 yards by gaining nearly 1,900, an NFL record that would stand until O.J. Simpson would shatter it a decade later. The Browns finished 10-4 but lost out to the New York Giants by a game for the Eastern Conference title.

Ryan believed the Browns had a legitimate shot at dethroning the Giants in the East heading

into the 1964 season.

"We knew we had a really good team," he said.

Although the Browns finished 10-3-1, edging out the St. Louis Cardinals for the East title, and were considered to be a fine club, they were simply not regarded to be in the same class as the powerful Colts. Baltimore won the Western Conference with a 12-2 record and was the third-highest scoring team in NFL annals at the time. The Colts were loaded - on both sides of the ball. On offense, they had such stars as Johnny Unitas, Lenny Moore, Raymond Berry, John Mackey and Jim Parker. Defensively, they allowed just 229 points, the fewest in the league.

The brash Collins, for one, felt the Browns would win the game and pulled a 'Joe Namath' four years before the guarantee *everyone* remembers.

"Certainly," he says. "In fact, they did interviews with me before the game. You're 24 years old and a guy puts a mike in front of you and says, 'Well Gary, you're 17-point underdogs. You think you're going to win the game?' What am I going to say, 'We're going to lose?' And I come out and I said, while sitting there in the old locker room at League Park, our practice site, 'We're going to win big. I'm not even worried about it.' And people are laughing. They were calling me 'Cocky kid.' But that's the way I felt. That's the way I played football - with confidence."

I think we all felt," Ryan recalls, "that we had a chance to win the Baltimore game."

The Browns, led by Ryan, Collins, Warfield and of course The Great On8 - Brown - scored just 13 points fewer than the Colts during the regular season, but it was their defense - 01 bend-but-don't-break unit -- that most experts felt would finally break.

It didn't.

"Nobody expected the outcome on the defensive side," Ryan says, "and that's really the signal feature of that game - the outstanding defense that our team played."

The Cleveland defense was outstanding indeed, limiting the star-studded Colts to a measly 181 yards on the day. The Browns intercepted a frustrated Unitas twice and recovered a pair of Baltimore fumbles.

Nonetheless, the Browns entered the contest such huge underdogs that when they fought the Colts to a scoreless tie at the intermission, it was *already* considered a major upset.

The offense got in gear in the second half. Lou Groza's 43-yard field goal early on broke the scoreless tie. Soon after, Ryan connected with Collins for the first touchdown when he hit No. 86 in the end zone from 18 yards out. Ryan's pass nearly hit the goal post.

"It was a broken pattern," Collins recalls, "and I almost missed it."

Touchdown No. 2 was a 42-yard strike in which two defensive backs slipped and fell.

"I just broke clean," says Collins, who admitted there was nothing unusual in the game plan that specifically called for he and Ryan to click the way they did. "Warfield and I got single coverage

and it just happened that things went that way. They weren't doubling Paul. They just played us one up."

Which was not enough, at least on Collins' side of the field.

The third and final TO was the killer, and one for the ages. Collins hauled in Ryan's long pass in full stride at the Colts' 13-yard line with Baltimore's Bobby Boyd draped all over him (and actually interfering although a penalty was not called). Boyd slipped and fell. Collins was gone.

He disappeared into a sea of fans near the bleachers.

"That was just a case of a big guy against a little guy, 6-4 against 5-10," Collins remembers. "The ball's there, I outreached him, and he fell. Frank made a good throw. It was easier than it looked."

"It was an amazing feeling after the third one," says Ryan, who completed 11 of 18 passes for 206 yards, the three TO tosses and an interception. "I think everybody lightened up and loosened up a little bit with that score. You realized that, 'Yeah, it's probably going to happen, we're going to beat these guys.'"

When the clock struck 0:00, pandemonium reigned. Thousands in the throng of nearly 80,000 fans rushed the field to celebrate the Browns' first NFL title in nine years.

Collins, who caught five balls for 130 yards, admits the enormity of the feat did not hit home immediately.

"You don't realize it at the time," he says. When you're 24 you think, 'Geez, this is going to be easy.' And you know, we did get back in [the NFL title game] the next year and years after, but we never got over the hump, never got to the big one."

Translation: The Browns lost to Green Bay in the 1965 NFL Championship game and to Baltimore and Minnesota in the 1968 and '69 league title affairs, respectively, the latter two denying them shots at Super Bowls III and IV. Collins stuck around two more years - he scored the first-ever TO on Monday Night Football - after the loss to the Vikings before leaving the Browns. Ryan, who was having elbow troubles, had been released by the Browns during training camp in 1969. He spent two years backing up Sonny Jurgensen with the Washington Redskins, including Vince Lombardi's final coaching stint in '69, before calling it quits.

Ryan and Collins have a mutual respect for one another.

"Gary was a fine person, and he was a very fine football player," Ryan says. "He gave you a lot of confidence throwing the ball, and he sure let you know if you didn't throw the ball right. He was outspoken, but he was always right. He never did anything in a petty way. And he desperately wanted to win. He was a winner."

"I had a good relationship with Frank as far as communicating on and off the field," says Collins. "A lot of people felt Frank was weird, but he was weird. The guy is a genius. The man is brilliant, and you have to respect him for that. Frank had to work hard to 'come down' to be 'one of the guys.'"

After his playing days were done, Ryan accepted a position with the U.S. House of Representatives in which he oversaw computer operations. After eight years in Washington, he became athletics director at Yale, where he was also a member of the mathematics faculty. After more than a decade in Ivy League country, Ryan worked for a year in the corporate world as president of a company based in Fort Worth that manufactured low tech electrical devices. He then headed back to his alma mater of Rice, where he was vice president for external affairs and taught math before retiring in 1996.

These days, the 69-year-old Ryan resides outside the small town of Grafton, Vermont, with his wife of 48 years, Joan. The couple has four grown sons and eight grandchildren.

His hobbies?

"I do mathematics," he said matter-of-factly, adding that he also enjoys golfing, reading, traveling and keeping house.

Collins, meanwhile, had a short stint as a player in the World Football League after leaving the Browns. He also coached in the WFL and at a small college in Pennsylvania. He ventured into the sporting goods business for a few years before settling into the insurance field. He retired in 1997.

Nowadays, Collins, 65, lives with his wife of 25 years, Carole, in Hershey, Pennsylvania, just 40 miles from Williamstown. He has two grown sons from a previous marriage and four granddaughters. Collins keeps busy by staying in shape and dabbling with his guitar.

Whereas Ryan is soft-spoken and mild-mannered, Collins likes to talk, and pulls no punches in doing so especially when the topic is the position he helped define.

"If you're a receiver," Collins says, "I think the greatest asset you should have is to be able to catch. A lot of [today's wide receivers] don't think that way. It's 'I run a 4.4 [in the 40-yard dash].' That's what they think. A lot of these guys, they have no moves. They run that go-pattern and out-jump a guy. I'd take a Paul Warfield over Randy Moss."

Collins also is turned off by the egomaniac nature of many of today's professional athletes.

"All you do is you shoot baskets, or you hit a baseball, or you catch a football or you throw a football," he says. "You don't do anything like develop a vaccine. Do something important before thinking you're important."

Both Frank Ryan and Gary Collins enjoyed marvelous careers with the Browns. Ryan passed for 13,361 yards. He nearly threw for 3,000 in 1966, the last of three consecutive seasons in which he was selected to play in the Pro Bowl. Collins had 331 receptions for 5,299 yards. He doubled as a punter for much of his career, and led the league with a 46.7-yard average in 1965, his first of two straight seasons as a Pro Bowler. Unfortunately for both - especially Collins - their fine careers are overshadowed by their exceptional performances against the Colts in '64.

There are worse things for which to be remembered.

# Mario Gianelli

By John Maxymuk

Adapted from *Eagles By the Numbers*, Camino Books, 2005.

Mario Gianelli was known as "Yo-Yo" since childhood when friends shortened his name to something they found easier to say. Throughout his life, this genial giant displayed a remarkable ability to bounce back from adversity.

In 1942, Yo-Yo was a star guard on the undefeated and top-ranked Boston College Eagles team led by fullback Mike Holovak. Before their final game against local rival Holy Cross with their 4-4-1 record, BC expected that with their victory would come an invitation to play undefeated Tulsa in the Sugar Bowl for a shot at a national title. After Holy Cross crushed BC 55-12, the planned post-game celebration at the Coconut Grove nightclub was cancelled, and Gianelli and other players headed to a private party elsewhere. From that party, they could hear the sirens fill the night as the Coconut Grove burned down in a horrific fire that killed nearly 500 people.

BC went to the Orange Bowl that year to face Alabama. In the rush to the field from the locker room, Gianelli knocked over the water cooler which fell on his foot and broke a toe. Mario watched from the sidelines as BC lost to Alabama 37-21. In March 1943, he joined the army and took part in the horrific invasion of Okinawa on April 1, 1945. During the next few months, over 12,000 American troops would be killed on that Pacific island. Once again, Mario survived, and when he returned to the States, now weighing 265 pounds, he was courted by the Boston Yanks who had drafted him in the NFL draft. Yo-Yo was not impressed by their offer, though, and returned to BC. His fellow linemen included Hall of Famers Ernie Stautner and Art Donovan as well as future pros Art Spinney, John Kissell and Ed King. King would become one day governor of Massachusetts. Amazingly, with all these great players, there were no more bowl appearances in Mario's junior and senior seasons.

Boston still owned Gianelli's NFL rights while Cleveland had drafted him for the All-America Conference. At this point, Mario's coach Denny Myers got involved and talked to his old friend Greasy Neale about Gianelli's talents. Mario was a massive player for his time, but with speed, agility and quickness. Moreover, he was described as a hard-working player who was always at the bottom of the pile with his shirttail hanging out. He was just what the Eagles needed to fill the middle of their line that had proven to be a weakness in the 1947 championship game loss to the Cardinals. Neale sent a sixth round pick to Boston for Mario's draft right and signed him for \$6,000 - roughly twice what the Yanks and Browns had been offering.

Before reporting to the Eagles, though Gianelli was invited to play in the 1948 College All Star Game in Chicago. The College All Star Game was created in 1934 as a charity benefit by Arch Ward, the same Chicago sportswriter/promoter who conceived baseball's All-Star Game in 1933. College football was king at that time, and this game matched the current NFL champion against a team of just-graduated college all stars. As Mario prepared to face the Cardinals in 1948, the pros barely led the series by the slim margin of 8-5-1. In the ensuing years of course, professional football would firmly establish itself as the top level of gridiron competition, and the

game was discarded after 1976 due to waning fan interest, with a final tally of 329-2.

Mario actually appeared in the game three consecutive years, the first as an All Star losing to the Cardinals in 1948 and then in 1949 and 1950 as part of the defending champion Eagles. He was on the winning side in 1949 when the Birds won 38-0, but lost again 17-7 to the 1950 All Stars.

When Gianelli finally reported to Eagles training camp, he was a 27-year-old veteran and quickly earned a starting guard position. At first he played both offense and defense, but when free substitution was adopted in 1949, he became primarily a defensive middle guard and shored up the center of their defense. In one game against the Bears, the Eagles were having trouble defending the fullback catching passes over the middle. So at halftime, Greasy Neale told Mario to drop back and cover the fullback. Yo-Yo said to the coach, "You think a guy as big as me can cover a fullback? You're crazy." But he did it anyway in a precursor to the zone blitz schemes of today. Another personal highlight came in the second game of the 1949 season when Mario blocked a punt out of the end zone for a safety in a 22-14 win over the Lions. His career ended after only four years in 1951 when a chop block by the Redskins ruined his knee. Mario retired rather than undergo surgery.

After football, Gianelli worked in the liquor business and for the State Racing Commission. In 1991, he was inducted into the Boston College Hall of Fame, and he passed away in 2003. Going from BC to Philadelphia, Gianelli was a "double eagle" who is remembered as a big guy in more ways than one.

# Un-Bear-able Quarterbacks

By Timothy Holland

In 1944 the Chicago Bears and Detroit Lions tied for second place in the west, so it was decided that a coin would be flipped to figure out who would choose before whom in the college draft. The Bears had their eye on a quarterback out of Northwestern by the name of Otto Graham, but they lost the toss and, to their surprise, the Lions chose him. Before Graham could play for Detroit, the Navy grabbed him and he went to Great Lakes Naval Academy where Paul Brown was coaching the football team. Brown had coached at The Ohio State University while Graham had played for Northwestern, so he knew what kind of an athlete Otto was.

After the war, in 1946, the All-America Football Conference came into existence and Brown and Graham became head coach and quarterback respectively for the Cleveland Browns. Over the course of the next four years, the Browns would win every league championship in AAFC history before the league folded and Cleveland along with San Francisco and Baltimore were taken in by the NFL.

In 1948, the Bears brought Texas University .quarterback Bobby Layne into the fold.. Layne stayed with Chicago for one year before George Halas traded him to the New York Yankees as a favor to team owner Ted Collins for \$50,000 and two draft picks. It did not seem to be a bad move at the time considering that the Bears had Johnny Lujack to play the quarterback position and drafted George Blanda to back him up. But over the next decade, it would prove quite costly.

After one year with the Yankees, Layne was traded to the Detroit Lions, (yes those Detroit Lions), in exchange for fullback Camp Wilson. To the chagrin of "Papa Bear" Halas, the Browns, after joining the NFL in 1950, would go on to represent the Eastern Conference in the league championship game in each of their first six years in the league. A span that stretched from 1950 to the retirement of their quarterback, Otto Graham, after the 1955 season. The Browns would win the championship three times in those six years in 1950, '55, and '56.

Even worse for Halas, Bobby Layne's Detroit Lions would end up being Cleveland's biggest nemesis. They would play the Browns in three consecutive championship games from 1952-1954, defeating them in the first two games. But Graham would retire by getting the last laugh with a victory over the Lions in 1954 and his last championship in his final game against the Los Angeles Rams in 1955. Layne would stay with the Lions through the 1957 season before being traded once again, this time to the Pittsburgh Steelers. During his time. in Detroit, Layne had also been a part of three championship teams. So from 1950 to 1957, George Halas had to watch as a quarterback that he had lost to a coin flip and another league and another that he had traded as a favor to a friend whom that friend traded to the team that beat him in that coin flip, won six of the league's eight championships while the Bears lost their only title game appearance in 1956 to the New York Giants. In fact, the Bears would not win another championship until 1963. The year after Bobby Layne retired. And, not coincidentally, both Graham and Layne are in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

This is not the only time that Halas would lose a great quarterback to the flip of a coin. In 1969 the Steelers finished tied with the Bears for last place, both with records of 1-13. Each team coveted a young quarterback from Louisiana Tech by the name of Terry Bradshaw. Once again a coin was tossed and once again the Bears lost. The Steelers took Bradshaw with the first pick in the 1970 draft and went on to win four Super Bowls from 1974 to 1979. The Bears would make the playoffs only twice during the span of Bradshaw's career which lasted from 1970 to 1983, ironically the same year that Halas died. Immediately thereafter Chicago went to the playoffs four straight years and won the Super Bowl in 1985. And Bradshaw, like Graham and Layne, would also go on to the Hall of Fame.