

One on One - Conversation with Jim Brown: Part 1

By Roger Gordon

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Jim Brown could talk about the process by which green plants use carbon dioxide, water and sunlight to make their own food, and people would listen. That's what happens when you:

**Are the greatest running back of all time,*

**have an aura of invincibility and*

**are 6-foot-2, 250 pounds of pure muscle at age 70 whose rock-solid physique is not too far removed from the one you had 40 years ago.*

When Jim Brown talks, people listen.

The former Cleveland Browns' fullback was a man before his time on the field and off. Besides speaking up on sensitive non-football issues of the time, he gained 12,312 yards rushing for the Browns from 1957-65, the first three of those years 12-game seasons. He averaged more than 104 yards rushing per game, still an NFL record. He led the league in rushing yards in eight of his nine seasons and topped the 1,000-yard plateau seven times. His 1,863 yards rushing in 1963 were an NFL record until O.J. Simpson broke it a decade later.

Brown won awards such as Rookie of the Year, Player of the Year and Most Valuable Player. He was voted to the Pro Bowl in each of his nine seasons and was enshrined into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1971.

Brown retired while still in his prime to pursue an acting career in the movies. Browns owner Art Modell issued The Great One an ultimatum during the summer of 1966 while Brown was busy filming The Dirty Dozen overseas. Either Brown returned to the States for training camp, Modell said, or he was out. Brown, not one to be told what to do, chose option No.2.

Brown retiring from football at age 30 took a great deal of character, but it also allowed a number of running backs that followed to surpass his rushing yardage total, with more to come. Notwithstanding, Brown will still go down as the greatest running back to ever live.

The OBR recently conducted an exclusive interview with Brown. The following is part one.

The OBR: Your statistics drastically improved when (Blanton) Collier took over as head coach for (Paul) Brown. Who did you prefer playing under more, Collier or Brown?

JB: As far as who I preferred, that's not my kind of conversation. But I'll give you the scenario. Paul Brown was the great innovator of my time. He was a man who had a very tight organization. He ruled. In fact, I liked the fact that he had a very tight organization because he kept a lot of politics among the players out of the game. As an individual, he dealt with fundamentals, he dealt with how you carried yourself on and off the field. He was a very strong, aloof individual that was a top football coach, no doubt about it, with championship teams. And I came at a time when Paul was a little older, the game was changing a little bit, and basically Paul became a little predictable. (Art) Modell ended up making a move, which we (players) didn't really create, but Art made this particular move and got rid of Paul and brought Blanton in. And, at the time, Blanton was a breath of fresh air because we had benefited from all of the other things in the past from Paul. And now we had an individual who was a father-type, a friend-type, one that would include us in ... that's not to say that Paul wasn't a decent human being, but he was totally different in his demeanor and the way that he ran his organization. But I think that in the beginning, it was good to have played under Paul because, as a rookie and a young player, I needed that kind of discipline, I needed an organization that was tight ... the players were never in groups because everybody was afraid of Paul, and we had pretty good results. And so I had the experience of that kind of discipline, and once having that, I wanted to expand myself, just like a child, when he comes into your life, eventually he wants to participate in decisions that are made. So I had good respect for both of them but, as I said, we needed to change to Blanton, I think, to go that extra mile and to win the world championship.

The OBR: When you were a rookie, were you afraid of Paul Brown?

JB: No, I've never been afraid of anybody.

The OBR: If Paul Brown had stayed as head coach, do you think you guys would have won the title in '64?

JB: Well, I don't want to get into that type of ... that's speculating. I don't think of it that way.

The OBR: When you retired in the summer of '66, you were filming *The Dirty Dozen* at the time. If you had stuck around - you were one of the few athletes who retired in his prime - Dick Schafrath and a couple other of your ex-teammates said that the Browns would have won maybe a few Super Bowls, maybe in '68 and '69.

JB: All of those kind of things are irrelevant. Why should I speculate?

The OBR: The Jim Brown of 1965 - how would he compete in the NFL of 2006?

JB: Well, the bottom line is, I'm not playing in 2006. I analyze what's going on, I like what I see that certain players possess. I like certain coaches. And it's an irrelevant point because I don't know why you want to keep me speculating about what I'll do and all of that, and it can't be proven. I can't prove what I would do, but I live when I live and I played when I played and I don't really need to be talking a certain way because that's not my wish.

The OBR: Maybe a fairer question would be, compare the NFL of '65 to the NFL nowadays. In your opinion, how has the league changed for better or for worse?

JB: Well, the change is basically there's less concentration, there's not the same kind of teamwork, same kind of team interest, it's money-dominated. You base it on the structure of the salaries and all of that, and it's almost like one play at a time. One play, you run it, you execute and you celebrate. And any athlete knows that you can't break your concentration like that and not make mental errors. So I think from the standpoint of the mentality of the game, it's played with much too much showboating and lack of continual concentration. On the other hand, you have some very outstanding coaches and you have individuals that carry themselves in a manner that they could have played in any era, and you would have thought of them as good human beings and also great players. So, on one hand, the overall state of the league now ... it's a commercial league, they have great marketing, great TV coverage, great newspaper coverage, great Super Bowl hype, great individuality, but it does not represent anything desirable as a team sport and something you'd want to use to teach your kid on how to participate in life.

The OBR: And guys like (Randy) Moss and (Terrell) Owens ... they just add to that. Is it because of guys like them, you think?

JB: I don't want to use your words. You picked Moss and Owens, and obviously they're stars that are very individualistic, but you have many, many players that think the same way, they're just not as good as those two. So you picked them out, in my opinion, because they're great players and they get more publicity, but you can go down and deal with some bit players who have the same attitude, but it's not covered the same way, so I'm looking at it as a whole. And I take the exceptions as the guys that are really dedicated and who have to put up with all these things going on around them, and I have a great admiration for them. But when it comes to the playing ability of a Moss and a Terrell Owens, they definitely have great, great talent.

The OBR: But would you say they're the epitome of the individualistic state of the league?

JB: Well, their conduct, along with many others, emphasize the whole individual attitude, the "me" generation - "I'll get mine and I'll get it my way, and I don't care about coaches or owners or anybody, I'm a superstar." It's opposite of my era. A team would not tolerate individuals that would dominate the scenario.

The OBR: You were known for not ever letting your opponent know that you were hurt even if you were. You would get up the same way every time. Give us a little bit of insight on how you came up with that idea.

JB: Well, there are many ideas when you basically use your mind, your intelligence. The thing you try to do in any competition is get all of your advantages that you can get. And you never want to give your opponent any psychological advantage or any physical advantage. So, consequently, if you get up fast on 10 plays and then get up slow on the 11th, they know you're hurt. If you're hurt, they're going to be empowered. They're going to come at

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you twice as hard. You're motivating them to come and try to get you out of the game because you're showing the fact that they have been able to hurt you. So you try to be very consistent in your mannerism as you play a game because that way, you don't encourage your opponents.

The OBR: How did you manage to only miss one half of one game and stay so durable when every linebacker was going for you?

JB: Well, first of all, I didn't miss one half of a game, I missed a few plays before halftime. I just like to be correct. The bottom line is, after you get in condition, after you know what you're doing, after you have certain experiences, you have to be lucky because you can get hurt walking down the field. Individuals have gotten hurt just jogging. So luck plays a great part of it, but in order to make sure that you leave it only to luck, you have to be in great shape and you have to understand things that you do and don't do. And you play the game hard, but you don't do certain things that are basically going to lead to injuries. Every time you go up in the air, there's a chance that you can really get hurt. If you plant your foot and get hit on that particular leg, it's a chance that you can get hurt as you come back the wrong way. So you try to know how to maximize yourself without jeopardizing yourself.

The OBR: How are the training methods different now than they were when you retired from the NFL? You had your physique ... there was not much weightlifting back then from what I have heard. Was it push-ups, sit-ups, just natural?

JB: No, it's a conscientious ... most of these things come from the mind. About 95 percent of everything I'm talking about comes from the mind. Basically, I was very proud of my body. I didn't want to be fat, I didn't want to be out of shape, I didn't want to be out of shape at *any* time of the year. I reported to camp about five pounds under weight, in good shape, and the coach would notice that right away, and then I was left alone. I played basketball, did different things in the offseason. I made sure I stayed in great shape. I wanted my clothes to fit, and I wanted to look as a fit individual. So it was just really being conscientious of my physical conditioning and having a way of keeping myself in shape. I didn't depend upon any coaches to motivate to be in shape, I was self-motivated. Some of it was vanity, and the other was that I wanted to ... I knew that if I was always in top shape, fatigue would never be a factor. Fatigue makes a coward out of all of us.

The OBR: And as for comparing the training methods from back then to today, it's just incredible how advanced they've gotten in 40 years. Do you agree with that?

JB: No, not at all. Football is really a sport ... it's a ballet where you combine many things, and they don't come in separation, they come as a flowing part of your movement. In other words, each movement is a part of another movement. You're not running the hundred-yard dash, you're not running the mile, you're not throwing the shot, you're not throwing the javelin. All of those are individual events, even when you do the decathlon, which is 10 events. In football sometimes you sprint, sometimes you float, sometimes you slow down, sometimes you jaunt, sometimes you turn, you twist, you do so many different things, and in order to do those things correctly, you have to think and your reactions have to be correct. So, therefore, when I see a combine, it doesn't mean a doggone thing to me to see those drills that they created because if you are going to deal with the top guys in the drills, then they would be the best players, but it doesn't come out that way. If you're going to get a guy that's 6-4, 290 that runs a 4.3 40, he should be the greatest player that ever lived, but it doesn't happen that way. So football is a rhythm, and if a player is taught by his position coach how to play that position, if that player has a mind of his own and a desire, a tenacity, then that player can overcome anything. If you have these guys that come out, Heisman Trophy winners, most of them don't become stars in the NFL, which means somebody's judgment has been incorrect over the years. And there are a lot of players that come from small schools that become big stars. So you must look at football as a game of all times. It's never going to change too much. They *pretend* that it's changed a lot, but if you put 11 men on one side and 11 men on the other side, and you put in the greatest schemes in the world, then the team with the greatest schemes should probably win, but that's not always true. I will put it to you this way. I say that I can take an NFL team and we can play any high school team in the country, and beat them, and I'll only use three plays ... and one defense. Okay? That's the way I describe it.

The OBR: So I'm assuming that in your mind, a very, very large percentage of being successful at the game of football is between your ears.

JB: Absolutely. Heavyweight fighters fight heavyweight fighters. So size has its place, etc., etc. But if you're not smart, if you don't have a great heart ... a lot of people don't have heart. You've got to have perseverance. There's a lot of qualities that you have to have to play the game. There's a lot of qualities you have to have to play *any* game. And those qualities are intangibles. They don't manifest themselves in your physical build or your speed or

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anything. Speed is for the hundred-yard dash or the 40-yard dash. Speed is speed. Then you have to measure quickness. So how do you really measure quickness? I think that quickness is more important than speed in football. Then you have to deal with balance. Balance is very, very important because if you have no balance, every time you get touched you'll fall. So we very seldom ever talk about balance, right? Then you have to have peripheral vision. Then you have to be able to make decisions on the spur of the moment. You have to be able to adjust. All these things ... it's like a part of what the game ... so some people know how to use them well and some people don't. If strength would rule the world, then water buffaloes, gorillas and things like that would rule the world. So it's how you use all of the things that you've acquired to play the position that you play. And then also to work with others in the way that *they* play the position because if you're a defensive lineman, you've got to work with the other defensive linemen, and each has a style, and so you can't just be on your own. You have to be able to learn that you have great ability, but you have to then be able to make those abilities work with the abilities of the other players. Example, Vince Lombardi took two of our defensive linemen who we didn't want and made them All-Pros, Henry Jordan and Willie Davis, because he allowed them to do what they do best. They had great quickness and great maneuverability, so he turned them loose and let the other guys play conservative, so it worked. But we tried to make those two guys play like everybody else, and that was not their forte. So we took two guys, turned them into All-Pros that we allowed to get away from us.

JIM BROWN — RUSHING * - Led NFL

FB 6-2 228 Syracuse

b: 2/17/36, St. Simons Island, GA

YEAR	Team	LG	G	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
1957	Cle	N	12	202	*942	4.66	*9
1958	Cle	N	12	*257	*1527	5.94	*17
1959	Cle	N	12	*290	*1329	4.58	*14
1960	Cle	N	12	215	*1257	5.85	9
1961	Cle	N	14	*305	*1408	4.62	8
1962	Cle	N	14	230	996	4.33	13
1963	Cle	N	14	*291	*1863	*6.40	*12
1964	Cle	N	14	*280	*1446	*5.16	7
1965	Cle	N	14	*289	*1544	5.34	*17
9 Yrs			118	2359	12312	5.22	106

(To be continued)

**THE MASTERS OF VERSATILITY
OUTSTANDING NFL BACKS BEYOND THE BIG NAMES**

By Greg Selber

There are many ways to rank running backs, and fans and researchers alike often spend their time arguing who is the best ever at the position. Most ranking systems and debates focus on pure rushing, with yards gained as the main indicator. Fewer take into consideration the total package, including receiving and returns.

This researcher ranked the runners by eras on their rushing statistics (yards, average, touchdowns) but also included production through the air (catches, yards, average, touchdowns) Players were awarded “plus points” for 1,000-yard seasons, Pro Bowl selections, league-leading seasons, and return prowess. Rushing counted for 80 percent of the weight and receiving the other 20 percent. Plus points were often the determining factor in sliding one player past another on the list.

The interesting result is that some runners who are not usually mentioned in the “superlatives” conversation very often came to the fore, as versatile players who could do it all from the position. For example, the top backs of the 1960s were, by the survey: Lenny Moore, Jim Brown, Leroy Kelly, Abner Haynes, and Jim Taylor. Two of those men, Brown and Taylor, are constantly discussed, while the others are not. In the 1950s, Joe Perry, Ollie Matson, Hugh McElhenny, and Marion Motley ranked one through four. The fifth, Chet Mutryn, is a mystery to the average fan.

Most of the players who sneaked onto the upper reaches of the list despite a low profile were ones with all-purpose skills, but also interesting personal tales beyond football, illustrating that there is more than one way to define “great.”

PIONEERS: TOWLER AND YOUNGER

The black athlete reigns supreme today on NFL rosters, comprising two-thirds of the league. It’s taken for granted that players are judged solely on the basis of ability. But that wasn’t always the case.

“Deacon” Dan Towler and “Tank” Younger were two of the NFL’s best runners in the early 1950s, with gaudy numbers despite playing part-time. They ranked 10 and 12, respectively, in the survey of most versatile backs, but their story is much more profound than simple statistics.

With its “Bull Elephant Backfield” of the late 1940s and early ‘50s, the Los Angeles Rams were the initial trailblazers in race relations. The team preceded the example that Branch Rickey set by breaking the baseball color barrier with Jackie Robinson in 1947, by signing Kenny Washington and Woody Strode in 1946. Younger arrived a year later from Grambling to become the first NFL player to make the grade from a predominantly black college.

Younger, who later became the first black assistant general manager, in 1975 with the Chargers, picked up 3,640 yards in his career at a 4.7-per carry clip. He made five Pro Bowls and caught 100 passes for an average of 11.7 yards. Every time he carried the ball in 1954 he netted 6.7 yards, and the trophy for the Black College player of the year is named after him.

“Tank was really a pioneer in the Jackie Robinson mold,” said Jack Teele, a former executive with the Rams and Chargers, in an interview with the Black College Sports Page. “He was perfectly suited to play such a role. To Tank, racial differences really didn’t exist much; you were either a good guy or a bad guy.”

Towler was a four-time Pro Bowler – and MVP of the 1952 game – who averaged 5.3 yards per carry lifetime, amassing 3,493 yards and becoming the first Ram to break 200 yards when he rumbled for 205 in 1953 against the Colts. In 1951 he went 6.8 yards for every carry, and led the NFL in yards a year later.

LENNY MOORE? YES, LENNY MOORE!

Jim Brown is considered by many to be the greatest runner ever, as he dominated the league from his rookie season until retiring prematurely after the 1965 season. His pure rushing stats are impeccable. But in his era another runner placed ahead of Brown in the ranking survey that took into consideration receiving and returns.

Though Brown was a solid receiver and had some kick return success, he was beaten in the list.

Penn State grad Lenny Moore was by this research the most versatile player of his era, a Hall of Famer for the Baltimore Colts with jitterbug moves, ample speed and acceleration, plus masterful deception. He ranks near the top of the survey in rushing, receiving and returns, after a career that saw him successfully switch positions – from flanker to running back – and overcome an injury to become the NFL Comeback Player of the Year (and MVP) in 1964.

Moore rushed for 5,174 yards on a nice 4.8 average, with 63 touchdowns. As a receiver he caught 363 balls for a 16.6 clip, and scored 42 times. The 1956 Rookie of the Year scored a touchdown in 18 straight games from 1963-65, setting an NFL record, and played in seven Pro Bowls.

The 6-foot-1, 191-pounder caught at least 40 passes five times and averaged an unheard of 7.0 per rushing attempt in three different seasons. In 1964, after having been sidelined much of the previous season, he scored 20 TDs for the Colts, including 16 on the ground, and averaged 22.4 yards a catch as the Colts went to the title game against Cleveland.

He had led the league in total yards in 1958 when the Colts won the championship against the New York Giants in the overtime televised thriller that put the league on the broadcast map.

HAYNES AND DANIELS: STARS OF A STRANGE GALAXY

The American Football League was from the outset an unconventional outfit known for outlandish uniforms, unique rules, and colorful personalities. When the AFL named its all-time team in 1970, the running backs were Abner Haynes and Clem Daniels, with Paul Lowe and Cookie Gilchrist second. Lowe and then Daniels became the first undrafted pro players to rush for 1,000 yards in a season, while Gilchrist never attended college but nonetheless became a fine pro.

In the survey of 1960s backs, Haynes is fourth overall, although he was not as well known as the top three finishers, Moore, Jim Brown, and Kelly. But the North Texas State ex was as versatile as any of them, and at the AFL's inception was the dominant offensive player for three seasons.

He was the league's initial rushing leader, earning Rookie of the Year honors in 1960, led in rushing TDs from 1960-62, and made the league All-Star Game in 1961, 1962 and 1964. He still holds 11 franchise records for the Dallas Texans/Kansas City Chiefs and is the third-leading AFL rusher lifetime.

A shifty runner and dangerous receiver who netted 12.3 on 287 catches, Haynes was also one of the outstanding return men of the time. His combined 12,065 yards is number one on the AFL list and he once scored 30 points in a single game.

"He was a franchise player before they talked about franchise players," said his recently departed coach, Hank Stram once. "He did it all – rushing, receiving, returns. He gave us the dimension we needed to be a good team."

Daniels helped Prairie View to the 1959 NAIA title but was not given a look by the pros after the season. He signed with the Dallas Texans after a year in the military but found that Haynes was firmly entrenched as the main offensive weapon; the Texans wanted him to switch to cornerback and he balked. The Oakland Raiders took a chance on the 219-pounder and he paid dividends immediately. The McKinney, Texas native known as "Bo," led the AFL with 1,099 yards in 1963, winning the league's MVP award, starting a run that saw him play in four All-Star Games and eventually gain 5,148 rushing yards. He averaged 835 yards from 1964-66 as the Raiders became one of the league's top teams, and he also was a dangerous option out of the backfield. His 16.3-yard average on 203 receptions is tops in the 1960s for backs.

THE "OTHER BROWN": AGAINST THE GRAIN

As in the case of Daniels, sometimes a player doesn't get much of a chance to make it, but defies the odds to become a star. Drafted in the 27th round by the Packers in 1959, Timmy Brown played one game for Green Bay and was released. But the Ball State grad hung in there and caught on with the Philadelphia Eagles, and the rest is NFL history. He joined the Eagles the year they won the NFL title and before he was through in 1968 he had become one of the best in team annals.

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Raised as an orphan, Brown had prior experience with being unwanted, but surpassed his obstacles just the same. He was a fan favorite in Philly, a city known for being hard on its athletes.

“The people were just great,” Brown told writer Jim Gehman in a 2005 interview. “Everywhere I went, they treated me like I was a hero. And of course, I was raised in a children’s home, so all the love I could get helped.”

Brown was another of those guys who is high on the runners survey despite a relatively low profile, in terms of notoriety. He was 10th of the 1960s backs in all-around play, with a mix of running, receiving and returns that made him the NFL equivalent of the AFL’s Abner Haynes. He rushed for 3,862 yards and 31 TDs and caught 235 passes for 3,359 more, with a healthy 14.5 average. Among his 12,681 total yards there were 5,420 gained on special teams, where he was a bona fide star.

Speedy and elusive, Brown’s 105-yard kickoff return for a TD in 1961 is the third-longest in league history, and he was one of only four men to return two kickoffs for scores in the same game, against Dallas in 1966.

The versatile “other Brown” next to Jimmy never gained 1,000 yards rushing in a season but was among the league leaders in yards from scrimmage in ‘62, ‘63 and ‘65. His top rushing year was 1965, when he had 861 for 5.4 per carry. He caught at least 50 balls twice, including 1962 when he had 52 for 849 yards and six TDs.

A Pro Bowler in 1962, 1963, and 1965, Brown showed that low draft picks can make a big impact in pro football.

CHET MUTRYN: UNKNOWN QUANTITY

Before Haynes, Daniels and the AFL, the All-America Football Conference from 1946-49 produced some serious football talent despite outsider status against the established NFL. Marion Motley, Otto Graham, Dante Lavelli, Ollie Matson: the names from that four-year experiment are big-timers. But Chet Mutryn is a name that only the diehard researcher can appreciate.

Mutryn was not big, at 5-9, 180 pounds, but he compiled an impressive resume in a brief career from 1946-50. The Xavier product is no. 6 on the runners survey for backs from 1946-1959, as he made the most of his stint. He led the league in 1948 with 96 points, rushing for 823 yards at 5.6 per carry and adding 39 catches for 724 yards, almost 20 yards per catch. The 1948 Buffalo Bisons team went to the league title game only to be crushed by the juggernaut Browns. He had picked up 868 ground yards in 1947, with a hefty 6.2 clip per rush, and led the league in kickoff returns twice.

For his career, Mutryn is fifth in AAFC rushing and sixth in receiving. He ended his run with the 1950 Colts, with a total of 3,031 yards rushing (5.2), 121 catches (15.3), plus a punt return average of 13.1 and kick return mark of 26.1 per return.

The NFL History Network refers to him as “one of the best ground gainers in the game,” and he was definitely one of the finest in the short-lived AAFC, making the All-Star team three years running.

GENE HICKERSON

By Andy Piascik

One of the great football images of the 1960's is of Gene Hickerson leading the Cleveland Browns sweep with Jim Brown, Bobby Mitchell, or Leroy Kelly following close behind. One of the fastest linemen of his era, Hickerson transformed the task of running interference into an art form. Much like the Packers of the same time, the sweep was Cleveland's signature play. The success they had with it was a major reason the Browns were consistently a contending team and among the NFL's rushing leaders throughout Hickerson's career. A good portion of the credit for that success must go to the man who wore number 66, one of the game's best offensive linemen during his 15 seasons in Cleveland.

Until he joined the Browns, Hickerson had never lined up as a guard on a regular basis. He played fullback in high school in Memphis and was good enough at it to draw interest from a number of big-time college programs. After accepting a scholarship to attend the University of Mississippi, however, he decided that the pounding backs took was not for him. Instead he moved to tackle, gradually bulked up to 250 pounds, and became the top offensive linemen in the Southeastern Conference by his senior year.

At the time, Mississippi was an SEC power. In 1955, Hickerson's sophomore year, Ole Miss posted a 9-1 regular season record and a 14-13 win over Texas Christian in the Cotton Bowl. They were 7-3 when he was a junior and 9-1-1 in a senior season that was capped by a 39-7 rout of Texas in the Sugar Bowl. Among his teammates were his brother Willie and future pros Ed and Bob Khayat, Larry Grantham, Bobby Franklin, Ray Brown, and Paige Cothren. When Ole Miss selected an all-time team to mark 100 seasons of football in 1994, Hickerson was one of the players chosen.

Hickerson earned first team all-SEC honors and some All-American mention as a senior. In the summer of 1958, he was selected to play in the College All-Star Game and was a key member of the team that defeated the Detroit Lions 31-16. In the 42-year history of the Chicago game, that victory was one of the most decisive ever posted by the collegians against the previous season's NFL champions.

One of Hickerson's coaches in college was Bruiser Kinard, a standout tackle both at Ole Miss and in the pros. While playing for the New York Yankees of the All-America Football Conference, Kinard forged a friendship with Paul Brown, head coach of the rival Cleveland Browns. Kinard gave Brown a glowing recommendation with Hickerson and the Cleveland coach got the jump on the rest of the NFL by drafting him as a future in 1957.

More than any coach up to that time, Brown valued speed and quickness on the offensive line. Hickerson, as one teammate put it, could run like a deer and after a few days of observing him in training camp in 1958, Brown knew precisely how to best take advantage of the 6'3", 250 pound rookie's rare combination of skills: he switched Hickerson to guard. In his entire pro career, he never played anywhere else.

Jim Brown has talked about the curiosity he and Cleveland's other black players had about Hickerson during that training camp. Brown and the others knew Hickerson came to the Browns with glowing credentials and that he could be an important asset to the team. They also knew that none of the SEC's schools were integrated and that most, including Mississippi, refused to play teams with black players. As a result, Hickerson had gone through his entire college career without ever playing with or against an African-American.

As it turned out, Hickerson got along very well with Cleveland's black players and formed a special bond with Brown. He also soon became an integral part of the team's great running game. He was a solid player as a messenger guard in his early years before becoming a full-time player in 1963.

Bernie Parrish is one Browns' player from that era who chafes at the "messenger guard" characterization. "What we had," Parrish said recently, "was three excellent players who all played the same position. Jim Ray Smith had been there for awhile. He was established, an all-pro every year. And on the other side we had two guys [Hickerson and John Wooten] who would've been starters for just about any other team. Paul could've traded one of them but he didn't, which was the smart thing, in my opinion."

Actually Smith was eventually traded at his own request, but not until after the 1962 season. By that time the two

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"messenger guards" were more than ready and Wooten stepped into Smith's left guard spot while Hickerson took over full-time duty on the right side. Like so many players of that era, Hickerson raves about Smith, citing the brevity of a career shortened by military service and injuries as the only thing that kept him from becoming one of the all-time greats. Under the tutelage of line coach Fritz Heisler, the Browns of the Smith-Brown-Hickerson-Mitchell era established themselves as the premier rushing team in the NFL.

Hickerson's career was interrupted when he suffered a broken leg and missed the entire 1961 season. Aside from that season, however, he was incredibly durable, missing only two other games in his career. In the five years from 1963 through 1967, the Hickerson and Wooten tandem started every one of Cleveland's 73 regular and postseason games.

Cleveland's record-breaking achievements in 1963 are perhaps the greatest testament to the play of Hickerson and his mates on the offensive line. In addition to Smith, Cleveland lost another outstanding offensive lineman at the end of 1962 when tackle Mike McCormack retired. The Browns were also rocked that offseason when owner Art Modell fired Paul Brown.

Hickerson and the rest of the offensive line stepped up big time, however, and new coach Blanton Collier opened up the offense. As a result Jim Brown set a new rushing record with 1,863 yards and the Browns led the NFL by a wide margin with 2,639 (188 per game). The team also set an all-time mark of 5.74 yards per rush that still stands. Much of that success was due to Brown's skills, but a good part of it was also due to the collective talent of the players up front.

The line again stepped up when Brown unexpectedly retired in 1966. Up to that point Kelly, who moved into the starting lineup in Brown's place, had rushed for 151 yards in two years. But the running game barely missed a beat as Kelly finished second in the NFL that year with 1,141 yards while Ernie Green added 750. The Browns again finished first in rushing yards and the team average of 5.2 yards per attempt was tops by a wide margin. They duplicated those accomplishments in 1967 as Kelly and Green again combined for almost 2,000 yards.

The Browns had some excellent teams in Hickerson's early years, most notably in 1958 (9-3), 1960 (8-3-1), and 1963 (10-4). Prior to 1964, however, the best they could do was a tie atop the Eastern Conference and a playoff loss to the Giants in his rookie year. In that stretch, Cleveland finished in second place four times.

In 1964, they finished first with a 10-3-1 record and then capped off the season with a 27-0 victory over the Colts in the NFL Championship Game. Although the Colts' defense had allowed the fewest points in the NFL, Hickerson and the rest of the Browns' offense completely outplayed them. Cleveland was effective both on the ground and through the air against Baltimore as Brown gained 114 yards and Frank Ryan and Gary Collins connected on three touchdown passes.

Cleveland remained one of the best teams in football for the rest of Hickerson's career. They won three Eastern Conference championships and made it to the postseason six times. During Hickerson's tenure the Browns won more than two thirds of their games, they did not have a single losing season, and they were in the postseason eight times in all in an era when that was a much more difficult accomplishment than it has since become.

In Hickerson's 15 seasons, the Browns led the NFL in rushing yards six times and in yards per carry seven times. Ten times from 1958-68 a teammate of Hickerson's rushed for 1,000 yards as Cleveland accounted for almost half of the NFL's 22 1,000 yard rushers in that span. In nine of those seasons, a Brown finished first in the league in rushing. Five times the Browns accomplished something that has only been done 30 times in NFL history when they averaged 5.0 or more yards per carry.

Twelve times Cleveland running backs were named as a first team all-pro. Four different backs were named to the Pro Bowl during that span, and there was only one season in Hickerson's career that a Brown runner was not selected. In three different seasons, two got named. All told, Brown, Mitchell, Kelly, and Green totaled 17 Pro Bowl selections from 1958-73. Brown and Kelly were named to the Hall of Fame's all-decade team of the 1960's and Brown, Kelly, and Mitchell are all members of the Hall of Fame.

The individual honors did not accrue just to Cleveland's running backs; Hickerson got more than his share. But the many honors accorded to Brown, Mitchell, Kelly, and Green are a positive reflection on Hickerson's skills as one of their primary blockers. Kelly is not only an enthusiastic advocate of Hickerson for the Hall of Fame, he has said that he would never have made it himself if not for his teammate.

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Hickerson earned second team all-pro honors in 1964 and 1965 and then was a first teamer five straight times beginning in 1966. In the three year period from 1967-69, he may very well have been the best offensive lineman in football. When various wire services and publications began selecting joint all-NFL/AFL teams in 1968, Hickerson was named to virtually every one both that year and in 1969. And like Brown and Kelly, he was selected to the all-1960's team.

Along with the men who ran with the ball behind him, Hickerson's skills have earned him lavish praise from numerous linemen of his era. Howard Mudd, another guard selected to the all-1960's team, has said Hickerson was the player he tried to emulate when he came into the NFL in 1964. Monte Clark was both an opponent as a defensive lineman with the 49ers and a teammate at offensive tackle for seven years in Cleveland. He raves about both Hickerson's run blocking, for which he was best known, and his pass protection skills. Dick Modzelewski, another player who played both with and against Hickerson, echoed that sentiment recently.

"He was an all-around great player," Modzelewski said. "He was so fast getting out leading those sweeps, people didn't realize he was also strong and a great technician in pass blocking. Whoever he was blocking just did not get to the quarterback."

Partial evidence of that was Cleveland's consistent ranking among the leaders in fewest sacks allowed during his career. In the four seasons that Bill Nelsen was the starting quarterback, for example, the Browns allowed only 79 sacks even though multiple surgeries to both knees had rendered Nelsen less mobile than even Joe Namath. Included in that stretch were a league-leading total of 21 in 1968 and just 16 in 1970.

Hickerson's 15 seasons with Cleveland are the third highest total in team history, behind only Lou Groza and Clay Matthews. He is also one of only four Browns to reach the 200 game plateau. He went almost 12 years without missing a game, playing in 165 consecutive games through the end of his career, and did not miss a single offensive play in his last two seasons.

Although he is most often linked with fellow guards Smith and Wooten and the running backs he blocked for, Hickerson is also joined closely to offensive tackle Dick Schafrath. Their careers ran almost concurrently, and for most of that time Hickerson anchored the right side of the offensive line and Schafrath the left. The two played in 161 regular season games together and both played in six consecutive Pro Bowls.

To Jim Brown, they're linked in other ways as well. He ranks both among the best linemen he has ever seen. "These guys would throw a block at the line of scrimmage, then they'd get up, run 10 or 20 yards down the field, and nail someone else," Brown told sportswriter Terry Pluto. "It was common for Hickerson and Schafrath to throw three blocks on one play." And Brown is adamant in his belief that at least one and probably both belong in the Hall of Fame. "How in the world can you have three Hall of Fame runners and not have anybody from the line?"

GENE HICKERSON

Hickerson, Robert Eugene
Mississippi

B: 2/15/1935. Trenton. TN

Drafted: 1957 Round 7 Cle

1958 Cle 12	1959 Cle 12	1960 Cle 12
1961 broken leg	1962 Cle 12	1963 Cle 14
1964 Cle 14	1965 Cle 14	1966 Cle 14
1967 Cle 14	1968 Cle 14	1969 Cle 14
1970 Cle 14	1971 Cle 14	1972 Cle 14
1973 Cle 14		

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6-3, 248

HS: Trezevant [Memphis, TN]

THE MOST ENDURING MAJOR PASSING RECORD ON THE BOOKS

By Roy E. Brownell II

Introduction

In an age in which 4,000-yard passing seasons are routine and 100-reception years barely merit a second mention, it is nothing short of remarkable that Norm Van Brocklin's single-game mark of 554 yards passing has stubbornly remained on the books for more than half a century.

The record has survived developments in the game that have dramatically inflated passing statistics. In 1978, the NFL implemented rule changes that opened up the passing game by limiting contact between defense backs and wide receivers. Partly as a result, a variety of passer-friendly tactics have taken hold such as the pervasive use of the shotgun and the implementation of wide-open sets such as the "Run and Shoot" and the "West Coast" offense. Increasing numbers of indoor stadiums have been built, reducing the number of cold, rainy and muddy games which tend to deflate passing yardage. Finally, overtime was introduced into the regular season in 1974, providing opportunities for longer games. All of these factors have led to a wholesale rewriting of the record book with respect to passing statistics.

This revolution in passing is borne out by the fact that all of the single-game, season and career records for attempts, completions and completion percentage have been set in the post-1978 era. The season and career marks for passing yardage and touchdown passes have also all been set since 1978. (The record for touchdown passes in a single game was set in 1943 and has been equaled several times thereafter). Six of the eight 500-yard passing games have occurred since 1978 and the record for most passing yards in two consecutive games was set in 1985 (Phil Simms with 945 yards).

With the exception of Van Brocklin's mark, only the esoteric (average attempt) and the ignominious (interceptions) have survived this modern assault on the record book.

Van Brocklin's record stands alone not only for longevity among major single-game *passing* records but also among single-game *yardage* records. The NFL single-game records for most rushing, receiving, combined, kickoff return and punt return yardage and yardage from scrimmage have all been established since 1978.

Van Brocklin's mark thus raises three questions. What were the circumstances surrounding the game that permitted him to set such a longstanding record (particularly in a much less pass-happy era)? Why has the record remained unbroken? And under what circumstances is the record likely to be broken?

The 1951 L.A. Rams and New York Yanks

Van Brocklin's record-breaking performance took place on September 28, 1951 – opening day of the NFL regular season. In that game, the Rams coasted to a 54-14 victory over the hapless New York Yanks. The performance of the two teams in the 1951 opener would reflect each team's fortunes for the rest of the season.

LA had appeared in the NFL title game in each of the previous two seasons only to come up short both times. In 1950, LA had established NFL records by scoring 466 points and gaining 5,420 yards from scrimmage. The Rams were also coming off a preseason in which they had won four of their six games. In 1951, LA would finish 8-4, lead the NFL in scoring again, surpass its own single-season record for yards from scrimmage and ultimately defeat the Cleveland Browns in the NFL Championship.

The Rams had talent to spare, particularly on offense. Future Hall of Famer Van Brocklin was not even the starting quarterback. Fellow future Hall of Famer, Bob Waterfield typically started games and then platooned with the "Dutchman". Van Brocklin started opening day only because Waterfield was out with an injured knee. The two would alternate not only as quarterback for the Rams but also as NFL passing leaders in the early 1950s. In 1951, both would be selected to the Pro Bowl.

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In addition to Van Brocklin and Waterfield, the Rams featured two Hall of Fame wide receivers, Elroy "Crazylegs" Hirsch and Tom Fears. In 1951, Hirsch would go on to lead the NFL in receptions, set a league mark for receiving yards in a season (1,495) and tie the record for most touchdowns (17). To his credit, Fears had established and then reestablished the NFL mark for most catches in a season the previous two years (77 and 84, respectively). In addition to Hirsch, the third end, Larry Brink, was named to the Pro Bowl in 1951.

To top it off, in 1951, the Rams sent two running backs, Dan Towler and Tank Younger, to the Pro Bowl and suited up former Heisman Trophy winner Glenn Davis in the backfield for good measure.

Thus, a Rams offensive explosion should not have been wholly unexpected. In fact, the face off between the two teams the previous November should have given some hint of what was to come. That day, the Rams and Yanks together rolled up 1,133 combined yards, a record that still stands. (LA was responsible for 636 of those yards).

On the other hand, the Yanks' performance in the opener boded ill for them. Despite a respectable 7-5 showing in 1950, Yanks coach Red Strader was let go the first day of training camp in 1951. In the off season, the Yanks also lost their quarterback and two key linemen to the CFL. The team's fortunes only declined from there. New York was beaten in all of its preseason games including a 52-0 drubbing at the hands of Cleveland and a 52-14 trouncing by Washington. The Yanks would go on to finish in the basement of the league with a 1-9-2 season in 1951 and give up more points than any other team in football. After the season the team would disband.

The game itself

Thirty thousand three hundred fifteen were on hand to watch what turned out to be a record-setting day at the Coliseum. The game began inauspiciously enough as the Rams failed to score on their opening drive as a field goal attempt failed. By their second possession, however, they began to hit their stride. Van Brocklin made quick work of the Yanks defense as he hit Hirsch for 41 yards for a touchdown. On their next possession, Van Brocklin again moved the Rams briskly down the field. This time, running back Dick Hoerner concluded the 67-yard drive by rumbling 22 yards for a score. The Rams quickly got the ball back at their own 20. After connecting for 13 yards to Jerry Williams, Van Brocklin hit Vitamin T. Smith for a 67-yard touchdown to close out the Rams' fourth possession. That left the tally 21-0 Rams at the end of the first quarter.

To begin the second quarter, Van Brocklin drove the Rams 98 yards on 13 plays for their fourth straight touchdown. He ended the drive by running the ball in himself from one yard out. The very next time the Rams got the ball, Van Brocklin hit Hirsch for a 47-yard score to cap a 78-yard march. The Yanks were then finally able to hold the Rams on their next possession, breaking the streak of five straight touchdowns. Van Brocklin was forced to punt the ball away and the Yanks' Buddy Young promptly returned the offering 79 yards for a score. The Young punt return was the last score of the half, leaving the Rams up 34-7.

In the third quarter, the Rams' offense showed brief signs of slowing down. Before long, however, Van Brocklin resumed his assault on the Yanks secondary by hitting Hirsch for his third touchdown catch of the game. This time the pass was from 26 yards out, upping the LA lead to 41-7.

On the first play of the final quarter a Van Brocklin lateral to Hirsch was intercepted and run back for a score by the Yanks' Art Tait. Undeterred, Van Brocklin promptly led the Rams 79 yards down field on the ensuing drive that ended with his final touchdown pass of the game. Following a play fake, Van Brocklin lofted a one-yarder to Hirsch for the score. The Rams then ended the scoring with a 90-yard drive during which Van Brocklin just missed a sixth touchdown pass when Tommy Kalmanir was stopped at the one yard line. The drive was capped by a one yard run by Towler, leaving the score 54-14.

After all was said and done, Van Brocklin had completed 27 of 41 passes, including five touchdown passes (and three interceptions). He had bested Johnny Lujack's previous mark of 468 yards set two years earlier by 86 yards.

To put the mark into perspective, the single-season record for passing yardage in 1951 was 2,938 set by Sammy Baugh in 1947. This total projects to 3,917 yards in a contemporary 16-game season, more than 1,100 yards behind the 16-game record held today by Dan Marino.

Yanks coach Jimmy Phelan called Van Brocklin's performance "the finest exhibition of passing I've ever seen." He added that "Van Brocklin was hitting them in the eye practically every time he threw the ball." Years afterward, Van Brocklin was modest about his effort. "Everything I threw seemed to be caught and run for a long gain." He added: "In those days, there wasn't as much attention to statistics as there is now."

For his part, Hirsch finished with nine receptions for 173 yards and four touchdowns. His performance was rivaled by Fears who caught seven passes for 162 yards. Smith caught two passes for 103 yards and a score. That day, in addition to Van Brocklin's passing mark, the Rams set NFL records with 735 yards from scrimmage (a mark that still stands) and 34 first downs.

What accounts for the record?

Aside from the obvious factor that "the Dutchman" was at the top of his game, there were several additional factors that help explain Van Brocklin's record-breaking performance. First, LA was simply an offensive juggernaut with the game's best passing attack and the Yanks were the worst defensive team in the league. As Van Brocklin himself noted, "I think it was simply a matter of the Rams having overall superior talent." Van Brocklin had the added advantage of passing to the two premier receivers of the time and he had a formidable running game that kept the defense from overplaying the pass.

Second, Yank ineptitude on offense was vital to Van Brocklin's yardage output. The Yanks set a record of their own during the game by punting 14 times. The Yanks mustered only 166 yards in total offense, completed less than 1/3 of their passes and scored no offensive touchdowns. Because of their poor offensive showing, the Yanks were forced to punt the ball repeatedly back to Van Brocklin's offensive unit, giving the "Dutchman" repeated opportunities and sufficient time to add to his yardage total.

Third, Van Brocklin got the rare opportunity to play an entire game. While he and Waterfield would split quarterbacking duties for the rest of the year, as noted earlier, Waterfield had to sit out the opener with an injury. Any other game of the year and Van Brocklin's playing time would have been halved by Waterfield. The Rams' third string quarterback, Tom Keane was a defensive back who took few snaps all year, probably leading Rams coach Joe Stydahar to leave Van Brocklin in for the entire game. Such a decision was probably not a difficult one for Stydahar who had a reputation for rolling up the score. In a preseason game in 1950, LA scored 70 points against the Baltimore Colts and kept passing until the game was over. Afterwards, Stydahar acknowledged, "[s]ure we poured it on ... I wish we could have beaten them by 100 points."

Finally, one suspects the opportunity to play the whole game permitted Van Brocklin to develop an offensive rhythm he would not have otherwise enjoyed if platooning with Waterfield. He may also have felt particularly motivated to prove himself with his rival out and it being the season opener.

Why hasn't the record been broken?

There appear to be several reasons why Van Brocklin's record has not been broken. First, it is less likely today that a player would be left in a blowout game for as long as Van Brocklin was simply to break the record. Warren Moon had an opportunity to break Van Brocklin's mark in 1990. He was within 27 yards of the mark late in a game against the Chiefs but took himself out as the Oilers were cruising to a 27-10 victory. In 2004, Donovan McNabb had passed for 464 yards in just over three quarters against Green Bay. But, with more than 11 minutes to play, he was benched.

These instances reflect that, as a general matter, coaches are wary of leaving their quarterbacks in the game during one-sided contests just to pad their statistics since doing so exposes them to needless risk of injury. Moreover, coaches and players today are generally more sensitive than Stydahar to the appearance of running up the score.

Finally, some records can be more easily pursued under blowout conditions than others. As columnist Dan Daly has noted, setting a single-game rushing record in a blowout can be achieved without the stigma attached to passing the ball gratuitously in a one-sided contest.

How can the record be broken?

In order to break Van Brocklin's mark, a number of factors need to converge. First, it goes without saying that the quarterback, his receivers and his offensive linemen must all be at the top of their game.

Second, the game itself must involve drives by both teams that do not use up much time on the clock. Otherwise, there will be insufficient time for the quarterback pursuing the record to rack up the necessary yards. In Van Brocklin's case, he was greatly helped because the Yanks punted 14 times, gained only 166 yards in total offense

and scored in a manner that gave the ball back to LA immediately. (One Yanks score came on an interception and the other on a punt return).

Third, the game cannot develop into too much of a blowout either way. If the team with the record-challenging quarterback is either up by too much or down by too much, he may get benched (as happened with Moon and McNabb). Moreover, a team with a big lead will likely begin to run the ball more often, burning precious time off the clock. Therefore, the game needs to be close enough to permit the record-challenging quarterback to keep throwing the ball and to prevent the winning team from running out the clock.

Fourth, several elements that are detrimental to an offense as a whole, but helpful to a record-challenging quarterback, need to be present: bad field position, tackles for a loss and offensive penalties. The longer the drives, the more potential yardage the quarterback can amass per drive. Penalties and losing yardage on rushes or sacks provide opportunities for "bonus" passing yardage on a drive. An 80-yard touchdown drive with 20 yards of offensive penalties translates potentially into 100 yards worth of passing yardage. (By the same logic, defensive penalties under such circumstances are "bad" since they shorten the field for the quarterback). Contemporary accounts of the Rams/Yanks contest do not indicate if Van Brocklin enjoyed the benefits of such passing yardage "windfalls" on his drives. He certainly could have, however, since the Rams were penalized for 80 yards in the game. What is clear is that the Rams were often faced with poor field position; hence their long drives of 98, 90, 80, 79, 78 and 67 yards. These drives gave the "Dutchman" ample opportunity to rack up yardage.

Fifth, the longer the game the better. An overtime period can provide a golden opportunity to pile up additional yardage.

Finally, it is important that the weather and field conditions not be detrimental to the passing game (e.g., excessive cold, mud, rain).

Post Script

Van Brocklin himself would never again approach the dizzying statistical heights of his 554-yard day. In fact, he would never reach the 400 yard mark a second time, let alone 500. The very next week he fell precipitously back to earth, managing to complete only 6 of 17 passes for 129 yards with two interceptions in a loss to the Browns.

Although he would go on to lead the Rams to the 1951 NFL title and the Eagles to the 1960 championship, Van Brocklin's 554-yard performance remains perhaps the best-known part of his legacy. His mark remains today the most enduring, major passing mark in the NFL record book.

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PFRA MEMBER BRINGING FOOTBALL AND ITS HISTORY TO YOUNG FANS

by Mike Kennedy

There are as many reasons for poking around the dark corners of pro football history as there are pro football researchers. What nearly all of us have in common, however, is that we were captivated by the sport as kids – despite the gnawing suspicion that we were not seeing a full and accurate picture of pro football's past. PFRA member Mark Stewart turned his childhood curiosity into a career, authoring more than 20 football books aimed at young readers.

* * *

A third-generation writer and editor who grew up in New York City, Stewart rooted for the Giants and Jets as a pre-teen during the 1960s. He was even able to rub shoulders with some of the teams' stars.

"Tucker Fredrickson dated my mother's secretary, which came with all kinds of cool fringe benefits," he recalls. "And our downstairs neighbor was Dick Schaap, who entertained a steady stream of New York athletes, including Joe Namath. I remember being invited to the opening of Namath's restaurant, Broadway Joe's, on Broadway around 55th Street. This was a short-lived fast-food venture, and I'm sure he took a bath on it – but the milkshakes were the best I'd ever had."

Stewart's interest in pro football led him to explore its history. However, there were few reliable sources aimed at young readers. What he found were books published in the 1950s and '60s that focused primarily on the cartoon-character qualities of old-time players like Jim Thorpe and Bronko Nagurski, and provided almost no context in terms of how one era related to the next, or how the game itself was developing. When Stewart turned to statistical sources; the picture became even less clear.

"In baseball, statistics could help young fans make sense out of the game's history," he says. "In football, it made things even more confusing."

Fast forward to the 1990s. After graduating from Duke University and working as a sportswriter and editor, Stewart was approached by educational publisher Grolier to create two sports series—one focusing on biographies and another on histories. Recalling his own frustration as a child, he structured the football titles to deliver a comprehensive picture of the sport in a way that would be understandable to young readers. This proved trickier than anticipated, as it required deep research, then judicious editing, and finally a writing style that would not overwhelm his audience. The book on football history – *Football: History of the Gridiron Game* – weaves together the amateur, pro and college stories, and remains the only resource of its kind for grade schoolers and junior high students.

"The authorized biographies were the most fun," Stewart says. "They were aimed at reluctant readers who idolized NFL players. I got to collaborate with Dan Marino, Jim Kelly, John Elway, Jerry Rice, Junior Seau and other stars, and they focused on the choices they made as kids that helped them later as pros. We covered some revealing territory in those books."

Stewart has since authored biographies of Peyton Manning, Randy Moss, Daunte Culpepper and Tom Brady, as well as a history of the Super Bowl – all aimed at a pre-teen or young teen audience. In 2004, he collaborated with Simeon Rice of the Buccaneers on *Rush to Judgment*, a book aimed at adult fans.

Over the years, Stewart has amassed a collection of football books that numbers close to 1,000, plus thousands more periodicals, from the 1930s to present. When he is not creating new books (histories of the Browns, Broncos, Steelers and Dolphins are due out this fall) he puts his resources and experience to work on the JockBio.com web site, of which he is a co-owner. The site features free full-length biographies on more than 30 NFL players, as well as in-depth interviews with Phil Villapiano, Lynn Swann and Tom Jackson.

With around a million words on pro football in print and on line, what gives Stewart the most pride?

“As any football researcher knows, getting at the heart of the history – and getting it right – is a very rewarding process,” he says. “I have the added pleasure of knowing that I sparked a curiosity and love of pro football history among a lot of fans out there who are now in their teens and twenties.

“When it comes time to ‘hand off,’ I know they won’t fumble the ball.”

* * *

Editor’s Note: Among Mark Stewart’s 2006 books are histories of the Philadelphia Eagles, Indianapolis Colts, New England Patriots and Dallas Cowboys, all part of Norwood House’s TEAM SPIRIT series. They are copiously illustrated and feature memorabilia from the author’s collection. Stewart can be contacted at jockbio@comcast.net

Or check out the website at www.JockBio.com

The Super '70s: Memories of Pro Football's Greatest Era –
18 Chapters of Interviews with Football's Most Influential
Players, Coaches and Sportscasters

ProFootballWeekly.com Sports Writer Publishes Unique Chronicle of Football in the 1970's

Chicago, IL – Mad Uke Publishing today announced the publication of *The Super '70s: Memories of Pro Football's Greatest Era*, a collection of interviews with prominent figures in professional football during the 1970s, written by *ProFootballWeekly.com* columnist Tom Danyluk. Paul Zimmerman, a distinguished senior football writer for *Sports Illustrated*, provides his thoughts in the foreword.

The Super '70s: Memories of Pro Football's Greatest Era offers readers an inside look at the history, people, and games that made the 1970s one of the most memorable decades in professional football. Organized in 18 chapters – one for each former NFL player, coach, or media personnel interviewed – the book includes a historical look at the behind-the-scenes moments of the decade. Interviews with instrumental figures such as Houston Oilers coach Bum Phillips, sportscaster Curt Gowdy, and Baltimore Colts quarterback Bert Jones capture untold stories regarding player/coach relationships, on-the-field moments, and the media's perspective on the game.

Filling a void in the publishing industry for historical yet entertaining books about professional football in the 1970s, *The Super '70s: Memories of Pro Football's Greatest Era* touches on defining topics such as the rise of the Pittsburgh Steelers dynasty, the street gang warfare of the Oakland Raiders and the emergence of America's Team, the Dallas Cowboys.

"The 1970s was arguably the most exciting and memorable era in NFL history," comments author Tom Danyluk. "It revealed a treasure of great teams, timeless moments, and dynamic personalities, yet few books, if any, have been written focusing on that specific period of time. *The Super '70s* is filled with fun, fresh stories and interviews with 18 legendary figures in pro football who share insight on their careers, relationships, and memories from that decade."

Tom Danyluk was born in Johnstown, Pennsylvania and attended the University of Pittsburgh and Loyola College in Maryland, where he earned degrees in chemical engineering and business administration. He currently resides in Chicago, Illinois, where he writes a weekly column, *The Pro Game*, for *ProFootballWeekly.com*. *The Super '70s: Memories of Pro Football's Greatest Era* (ISBN 0977038300) is visible on Bowker's BooksInPrint.com and is available for purchase on Amazon.com and at major national retailers. For more information, please visit www.BookWire.com where you can read an author biography as well as a professional book review, or visit Tom Danyluk's website at: <http://www.thesuper70s.com>.

Most Combined Scores in a Quarter of a Regular Season Game (TDs, FGs & Safeties), excludes extra points (minimum 7)

No.	Tot SC	Winner vs Loser Score Types	Qtr	Final Score	Total Pts		Type
1	8	St. Louis Cardinals (3-TD, 2-FG) vs Philadelphia Eagles (3-TD)	2	36-34	47	Dec 13, 1964	6-TD, 2-FG
2	7	Green Bay Packers (6-TD) vs Detroit Lions (1-TD)	2	57-21	48	Oct 7, 1945	7-TD
3	7	Los Angeles Rams (6-TD) vs Detroit Lions (1-TD)	3	65-24	48	Oct 29, 1950	7-TD
4	7	Los Angeles Rams (6-TD, 1-FG) vs Detroit Lions (3-TD)	2	48-35	45	Oct 30, 1960	6-TD, 1-FG
5	7	Houston Oilers (3-TD, 1-FG, 1-S) vs Oakland Raiders (1-TD, 1-FG)	2	47-16	35	Dec 17, 1961	4-TD, 2-FG, 1-S
6	7	Oakland Raiders (4-TD) vs Houston Oilers (3-TD)	2	52-49	49	Dec 22, 1963	7-TD
7	7	*Atlanta Falcons (2-TD, 2-FG) vs New Orleans Saints (3-TD)	2	40-34	41	Sep 2, 1979	5-TD, 2-FG
8	7	Los Angeles Rams (5-TD, 1-FG) vs Green Bay Packers (1-TD)	2	51-21	44	Sep 21, 1980	6-TD, 1-FG
9	7	Tampa Bay Buccaneers (2-TD, 2-FG) vs Chicago Bears (3-FG)	4	32-31	40	Nov 19, 1989	5-TD, 2-FG
10	7	Miami Dolphins (3-TD, 1-FG, 1-S) vs Indianapolis Colts (2-TD)	4	34-31	39	Oct 10, 1999	5-TD, 1-FG, 1-S
11	7	Kansas City Chiefs (3-TD, 1-FG) vs Cleveland Browns (1-TD, 2-FG)	4	40-39	35	Sep 8, 2002	4-TD, 3-FG
12	7	Indianapolis Colts (2-TD, 1-FG) vs Tennessee Titans (3-TD, 1-FG)	1	51-24	41	Dec 5, 2004	5-TD, 2-FG

* - Overtime

NOTRE DAME, CHICAGO BEARS AND “HUNK”

By Heartley “Hunk” Anderson as told to Emil Klosinski
(ISBN 1-886571-20-1, \$19.95, Panoply Publications, 2006)

Review by Frank J. Stevens

You would think the coach who invented two of football’s most definitive defenses would be deserving of wider recognition. Heartley “Hunk” Anderson was one of the game’s most illustrious and creative coaches.

Anderson is credited with devising the now-famous “blitz” defense while with the Detroit Lions. He originally called it the “Red Dog,” and sportswriters named it the “Blitz.” He subsequently created the Safety Blitz while he was with the Chicago Bears. And while his prowess as a coach has been summarily ignored by the NFL Hall of Fame, no less than George Halas called him “the greatest line coach who ever lived” and Knute Rockne said of him, “There isn’t anyone who knows more about line play or can teach it better than Hunk Anderson.” (The College Football Hall of Fame had the wherewithal to induct Hunk in 1974.)

Hunk, with the able assistance of writer Emil Klosinski, recorded his illustrious career in an autobiography entitled “Notre Dame, Chicago Bears and Hunk” which was first published in 1976, when Anderson was in his late 70s. The book has just been republished by Panoply Publications and includes a 2006 update by Klosinski which details the ignoring of Hunk by the pro Hall of Fame. The book is a valuable piece of literature for anyone interested in both college and pro football from the early part of the last century up to and including the early 1950s, when the pro game was on the brink of exploding into the giant sports entity that it is today.

During his career as both a player and coach Anderson was noted for mincing few words, and, with the fine hand of Klosinski recording his life’s events, Hunk weaves a fascinating story of a man who unabashedly reveals how much playing and coaching the game meant to him. In a warm and touching end to the book, Hunk points out that he was still available to lend his football expertise to anyone who desired it, even a Pony League team. As he says in his closing statement, “After all, football has been my life!”

And what a life it was. Born in 1898 in the small village of Tamarack, in Michigan’s upper peninsula, Anderson became such a good hockey player that he considered turning professional. But he participated in all sports and it was football that won the day when his best friend from Calumet High School, George Gipp, got him a Scholarship to Notre Dame. Anderson came to Notre Dame as a fullback but when Gipp introduced him to Knute Rockne he was quickly told that the team didn’t need fullbacks but could use some guards. Anderson didn’t hesitate a moment in telling Rockne that he was looking at the best guard he’d ever see. Thus did Anderson’s career as a hard-nosed lineman begin. While standing only 5’11” and weighing 170 pounds, Anderson was the starting left guard for the Irish from 1918 to 1921. The team was undefeated in 1919 and 1920 and 31-2-2 during Anderson’s tenure as a player.

Anderson tells of beginning his coaching career as a part-timer for local pro squads while he was a junior at Notre Dame. He had the unenviable task of succeeding the immortal Knute Rockne as Notre Dame’s head coach following Rockne’s untimely death in 1931. Scholarship restrictions made his three years at Notre Dame difficult ones, and Anderson relates his side of the story of his less than successful 1933 season with honesty and alacrity.

From Notre Dame it was on to the pros, where Anderson eventually became George Halas’ right hand man as defensive line coach. His defensive innovations became legendary. Curly Lambeau said, “Playing against an Anderson-coached line is like messing around with a jungle full of wounded tigers.” “Gloomy Gus” Henderson was more succinct: “Anderson is the Master of Defense.”

Books like this one are valuable not only for their historic content but because they make just plain good reading. It is refreshing to see companies like Panoply giving them renewed life and they belong in the libraries of anyone and everyone who enjoys historical events and, more specifically, the game of football.

Frank Stevens is a veteran writer who has just finished a screenplay based on the Confederate spies, the Moon sisters. He also has a mystery novel in the works.

Some Journalistic ‘Hitchhiking’

By Bob Irving

This article is the result of analysis of information which appeared in Sports Illustrated over a three-year period.

Paul Zimmerman (Dr. Z) and David Sabino collaborated in the early September pages of Sports Illustrated in 2003, ‘04 and ‘05 to provide readers with their projected Team Power Rankings and Player Value Rankings respectively, for all AFC and NFC teams and players of the National Football League. Those three seasons are now history allowing us to acknowledge the enormous effort of those two men in compiling the rankings: they applied many carefully chosen criteria through several layers of analysis in order to arrive at their final choices. A secondary benefit, probably unrealized at the time by those authors, was the comparisons and analyses their work would spawn, which became the basis for what follows here.

Player Value Rankings (PVR) of the Two Conferences

For each of the years mentioned above, Sabino carefully ranked as many as 500 players on several criteria which, when taken together, resulted in a numerical rank for each player. This was done for seven offensive positions: running back, quarterback, fullback, kicker, two wide receivers, and a tight end for each team in each conference. In an earlier paper (Sports Illustrated’s 2003 Pro Football Predictions, Coffin Corner, 27:1, 2005), projected Team Rank was correlated with projected Player Value Ranking to test the idea that the best teams (as projected) should contain the best players. Here, using the ‘03 data plus ‘04 and ‘05, the emphasis was to determine the extent to which teams (represented by the seven offensive positions above) projected highest in team rank by Dr. Z, would differ from those he projected lowest in team rank. To reiterate (and hopefully clarify), we simply used all the Player Ranks for seven positions for all 32 teams taken together in a huge analysis of variance – applied separately to each of the three years.

We got what we expected: None of the F-ratios was significant – the rankings were so similar that none of the teams, represented by their seven skill position players, stood out above any of the others; parity at its best!

The three F-ratios were:

2003 -----	0.545
2004 -----	0.466
2005 -----	0.562

What do we conclude? That competition between teams to succeed is so great that every team, by player draft, trading, and player development, remains a legitimate contender, at least as seen by Dr. Z and David Sabino. This is exactly as it should be and no sleight of hand could have arranged the results we found.

We’ve just seen that the two conferences, as judged by seven skill positions, are virtually identical – the F-ratios were very small, as we expected. Sabino’s ranking did what it was designed to do. That said, how about a look at whatever differences exist between the seven skill positions themselves? How much differently are the players valued, position by position?

Analysis of Player Value Rank in the Seven Offensive Skill Positions

To reduce calculation time to a manageable amount, (using a Sharp EL-557 hand-held calculator), each skill position was represented by eight players from each conference chosen alternately starting from the top of the list (S.I., 2003, ‘04, ‘05) for each position. These particular analyses were based on samples of the total group; seven positions with sixteen players each totaled 112 players for each of the three years.

The F-ratios resulting from the analysis of variance described above were quite enormous. For each year they were so large that the chance of the seven positions being from a common population was FAR LESS than one in ten thousand; an F-ratio of 5.68 is the required minimum for that level!

The three F-ratios were:

2003 -----	55.28
2004 -----	44.85

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2005 ----- 37.39

The next step was to see which particular positions were: significantly different from which others. In other words, can we rank the positions for each year by their value as seen by David Sabino?

Using another statistical procedure, comparing each position with each other position, the seven offensive positions could be rank-ordered by Player Value for each year. Those ranks were as follows:

	2003	2004	2005
1	RB	RB	RB
2	QB	WR1	WR1
3	WR1	QB	QB
4	WR2	WR2	WR2
5	TE	TE	TE
6	K	K	K
7	FB	FB	FB

Rank numbers 1 and 4, 5, 6, and 7 were constant through the three years. After 2003 the QB and WR1 switched positions in the rank-ordering by Sabino.

The relative constancy seen above was expected but the position of some of the players within the rank order is somewhat surprising, the stuff of bar-stool debate. This writer can't claim any expertise in pro football but the following seem to be reasonable questions to ponder, judging by position, leaving individual players' names aside. First, the quarterback is the team offensive director (assumedly), and virtually always the passer. His responsibilities, and offensive output, arguably transcend those of the running back or wide receiver. Second, the kicker in many teams ranks at or near the top in scoring for a season but in this list is next to the bottom. What we see in the ordered list is the result of Sabino's rating ---- with some disagreement from this writer! I'm reminded of the article in Coffin Corner, 26:5, 2004, by Greg Thomas, *Football's Least Replaceable Players* (an alternative way of saying *most indispensable*). Using some indisputable statistical criteria, he makes an effective case for rating quarterbacks and kickers much higher than they are seen in the list above. Mr. Sabino, take note!

After going through the data above it was apparent that Dr. Z's Team Ranks could be correlated against the Player Value Ranks calculated by David Sabino.

Dr. Z's Team Ranks Versus Sabino's Player Value Ranks

The 'Ranks' mentioned in this title were calculated, for both teams and players, with rank #1 being 'best', #2 second best, etc. In the paper mentioned above, the rank-order correlation between Dr. Z's Team Ranks versus the Player Value totals of Sabino, for 2003 was .647. This correlation is discussed later here.

One would normally think that a team ranked 'number 1' would have players whose ranks are better (thus lower) than any other team in that list. This was the hypothesis in the paper mentioned above. Here, Sabino's seven Player Value totals were rankordered and subsequently correlated against Dr. Z's rank-ordered Team Ranks.

Here's what was found:	2003	.627
_____	2004	.551
	2005	.636

Whether Dr. Z and Sabino worked independently of each other was not revealed in the stories but those correlations are still fairly good (even better if they worked independently). However, they do show that the best ranked teams (projected) certainly don't have the best ranked players (projected). This, of course, is pretty obvious in real life as well as in a magazine article.

Note: In the 2003 article mentioned above, Player Value Totals for each team were correlated against Team Ranks. In this analysis, Player Value Ranks were used, resulting in the discrepancy noted; .647 versus .627 - simply a matter of different databases.

Finally, since Dr. Z predicted each teams' finish in each of the years we've considered, and we now have the actual finish of each team, how highly correlated did we find them to be?

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With rank-order correlation, the predicted vs actual season-end standings, team-by-team were:

2003.406 2004.465 2005.316

What do we conclude? Prediction, in pro football, is a tenuous business. But I sure hope they'll be back to entertain us for many seasons to come with their fearless prognostication. These two men 'jazz up' the upcoming seasons with their predictions, which, at *the time*, are pretty hard to *dismiss*. *Injuries*, trades, *failures* to meet expectation, players who suddenly 'blossom' unexpectedly, teams who 'come together' for whatever reason, and probably many other reasons, make each season a new experience for all of us.

Interstate Trade

By Tim Holland

In 1964 the Baltimore Colts met the Cleveland Browns for the National Football League championship. Despite the fact that the Colts had the better record, the game was played in Cleveland's Municipal Stadium. Coached by Don Shula, the Colts were the heavy favorite coming into the game as they boasted the best record in the NFL, the league MVP in quarterback John Unitas and a stingy defense which had allowed the fewest points and touchdowns in the league. The Browns, coached by Blanton Collier, came into the game led by league rushing champion Jim Brown.

The Browns would prove the experts wrong by shutting out the Colts, 27-0. The offensive stars of the game were Cleveland's Brown, quarterback Frank Ryan and end Gary Collins. Collins, in particular, had a red letter day as he scored all three of the Browns touchdowns on passes from Ryan. This could not have gone over too well with Baltimore fans, because Collins had gone to college right in their own back yard having attended the University of Maryland.

Four years later, the Colts would return to Cleveland for the 1968 NFL championship under many of the same conditions. Baltimore, once again, boasted a better record than the Browns and were the favorite. Shula was still the head coach and the team was led by an MVP quarterback in Earl Morrall and the top ranked scoring defense in the league. Collier was still the coach of the Browns, Ryan and Collins were still quarterback and receiver and the team once again boasted the league leader in rushing, Leroy Kelly.

The Colts would exact revenge for the '64 loss by shutting out the Browns just as they had been blanked four years earlier, 34-0. The offensive star of the game for Baltimore was halfback Tom Matte. As Collins had done before him, Matte scored three touchdowns. Too which Colts fans must have said to their Cleveland counterparts, "Turnabout is fair play."

Why, you ask? Because Matte had played his college ball in Cleveland's back yard for The Ohio State University.

Ed Khayat

By John Maxymuk

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

The Eagles have employed three head coaches whose names began with the letter K, and all three have been complete disasters. The nicest thing that can be said about former Eagle player Ed Khayat's tenure as coach is that it was over quickly, less than two seasons. He did not hang on for four or five years like Rich Kotite and Joe Kuharich did. As a player, he had a nomadic 10-year professional career in which nothing was ever handed to him.

The Mississippi-bred Khayat was a moderately sized defensive tackle who joined the Washington Redskins in 1957 as a free agent out of Tulane. In Washington, Ed had the opportunity to absorb some of that special K Coaching Magic from the master himself, Joe Kuharich. Khayat was cut by Kuharich the next season, and Buck Shaw picked him up for the Eagles. Shaw first tried Eddie out as an offensive tackle, and then in 1959, moved him to defensive end, but that didn't take either. Finally, Khayat moved back to defensive tackle as a starter for the 1960 championship Eagles. He wasn't particularly fast. or big or strong, but he was scrappy and motivated.

In 1962, he was let go again and returned to Washington where he spent two seasons with his brother Bob who was the Redskins ineffective field goal kicker. During that season, Eddie had a confrontation with New York coach Allie Sherman after the Giants game in DC. Sherman charged at Khayat after the Giants victory and shook his finger at him while the two had a shouting contest. It was a scene repeated 40 years later when another Coach Sherman, Packers coach Mike Sherman, confronted Buccaneer Warren Sapp after Sapp delivered a cheap shot to Packer tackle Chad Clifton. Giant defensive tackle Dick Modzelewski was quoted in the Washington Post the next day saying Khayat was, "dirty. He's no good. He can't play well. He did a lot of punching in New York, and he was punching out there today." Eddie, after all, had been the Novice Division Golden Gloves Heavyweight Champion for Mississippi in 1953-4. Khayat returned to the Eagles in '1964 to spend two more seasons absorbing the brilliant coaching wisdom of Joe Kuharich in Philadelphia, and then concluded his career with a final season with the Patriots in 1966.

Upon retirement, Eddie moved directly into coaching, joining the staff of Tom Fears in New Orleans in 1967 as the defensive line coach. When Fears was fired in 1971, both he and Khayat joined Jerry Williams' staff in Philadelphia. Williams of course had coached Khayat on the 1960s team and was in the midst of his third straight losing season in Philadelphia. After losing the first three games of the 1971 season by a combined score of 110-24, Williams was fired by owner Leonard Tose and Ed Khayat was hired as interim coach.

His start as a head coach was not auspicious as the Birds dropped their next two games. Khayat then got the inspired notion that what was holding back the team was its facial hair and ordered the players to shave it off. "Good grooming is one of the many facets of discipline," he said at the time. The Eagles won their next game in the rain against the Giants and went on a 6-2-1 tear for the rest of the season. They concluded the year with a four-game winning streak. Tose was so impressed that he gave Khayat and GM Pete Retzlaff two-year contract extensions. The key to the team's improvement was the defense led by middle linebacker Tim Rossovich and free safety Bill Bradley who paced the NFL in interceptions in 1971.

What followed in 1972 was that Ed Khayat became the personification of the Peter Principle and rose to his

level of incompetence. As an assistant coach, he was a positive, happy-go-lucky motivator who was big on communication. As an interim head coach of a team that was 0-5, he was under absolutely no pressure to succeed. After the stirring turnaround in 1971, however, increased expectations led to increased pressures, and Khayat seemed to tighten up. Bad things started in training camp when Rossovich and Bradley staged a holdout. Rossovich was traded, and outside linebacker Steve Zabel was asked to move over to the middle where he felt unfamiliar and uncomfortable. With the linebacking corps weakened, the other holes in the defense became more pronounced. As for the offense, the starting quarterbacking was split between rag-armed incumbent Pete Liske and overmatched rookie John Reaves with pretty boy Rick Arrington available as a third unviable option. Because the Eagles were behind and throwing the ball a lot, Harold Jackson provided the one bright spot that year by leading the league in receptions and yardage. The Eagles lost their first five games for the second consecutive year, but this year also lost the last five games to finish 2-11-1. The lowest point came on November 26th when the Birds lost to the Giants 62-10. It was the team's worst loss for the decade, and Khayat accused his team of the ultimate sin, quitting. Three weeks later, Khayat was fired and Retzlaff resigned.

Khayat continued on as a popular defensive line coach in the league for the next 20 years before moving on to the Arena League. In the Arena League, Eddie has been the head coach of three different teams and led the Nashville Kats to back-to-back championship game appearances in 2000-1. He was inducted into the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame in 2004 joining his brother Robert who was now the chancellor at the University of Mississippi. Eddie Khayat was a decent guy who got in way over his head with a very bad team, but Eagle fans should remember him as a player who would never quit.

SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION FOR NFL TEAMS

From John Mamyuk

More Than Six Degrees of Separation

Chicago/Sf. Louis/Phoenix/Arizona Cardinals

Hall of Fame back Paddy Driscoll (1920-25) played with lineman Herb Blumer (1925-33) who played with lineman Phil Handler (1930-36) who coached Hall of Fame back Charley Trippi (1947-55) who played with end Mal Hammock (1955-66) who played with quarterback Jim Hart (1966-83) who played with tackle Luis Sharpe (1982-94) who played with cornerback Aeneas Williams (1991-2000) who played with punter Scott Player. (8 degrees)

Boston Braves/Washington Redskins

Hall of Fame halfback Cliff Battles (1932-37) played with Hall of Fame passer Sammy Baugh (1937-52) who played with quarterback Eddie LeBaron (1952-59) who played with defensive end John Paluck (1956-65) who played with Hall of Fame receiver Charley Taylor (1964-77) who played with quarterback Joe Theisman (1974-85) who played with cornerback Darrell Green (1983-2002) who played with Patrick Ramsey (2002-05) (7 degrees)

Portsmouth-Spartans/Detroit Lions

Fullback Father Lumpkin (1930-34) played with Hall of Fame back Dutch Clark (1931-38) who played with back Buddy Parker (1935-36) who coached Hall of Fame linebacker Joe Schmidt (1953-65) who coached linebacker Charlie Weaver (1970-80) who played with quarterback Eric Hipple (1980-89) who played with runner Barry Sanders (1989-98) who played kicker Jason Hanson (1992-2005). (7 degrees)

Six Degrees of Separation

New York Giants

Back Hinkey Haines (1925-28) played with tackle Steve Owen (1927-33) who coached end Jim Lee Howell (1937-47) who coached halfback Alex Webster (1955-64) who coached linebacker Brad Van Pelt (1973-83) who played with quarterback Phil Simms (1979-93) who played with defensive end Michael Strahan (1993-2005).

Philadelphia Eagles

Founder Bert Bell coached Hall of Fame end Bill Hewitt (1937-39, 1943) who played with guard Bucko Kilroy (1943-55) who was the line coach for defensive tackle Marion Campbell (1956-61) who coached quarterback Randall Cunningham (1985-95) who played with linebacker Willie Thomas (1991-99) who played with quarterback Donovan McNabb (1999-05)

Pittsburgh Steelers

End Wilbur Sortet (1933-40) played with Hall of Fame guard Walt Kiesling (1937-8) who

coached Hall of Fame defensive tackle Ernie Stautner (1950-63) who played with linebacker Andy Russell (1963-76) who played with Hall of Fame center Mike Webster (1974-88) who played with center Dermonti Dawson (1988-2000) who played with Hines Ward (1998-2005).

Cleveland Browns

Hall of Fame tackle/kicker Lou Groza (1946-67) played with defensive end Jack Gregory (1967-71, 1979) who played with linebacker Clay Matthews (1978-93) who played with runner Earnest Byner (1984-88, 1994-95) who played with tackle Orlando Brown (1994-95, 1999) who played with kicker Phil Dawson (1999-2005).

Five Degrees of Separation

Green Bay Packers

Founder Curly Lambeau coached Hall of Fame halfback Tony Canadeo (1941-52) who played with quarterback Tobin Rote (1950-56) who played with Hall of Fame tackle Forrest Gregg (1956-70) who coached tackle Ken Ruettggers (1985-96) who played with Brett Favre (1992-2005)

Detroit Lions

Back Buddy Parker (1935-36) coached Hall of Fame linebacker Joe Schmidt (1953-65) who coached linebacker Charlie Weaver (1970-80) who played with quarterback Eric Hipple (1980-89) who played with runner Barry Sanders (1989-98) who played with kicker Jason Hanson (1992-2005).

Cleveland/Los Angeles/Sf. Louis Rams

Tailback Johnny Drake (1937-41) played with end Jim Benton (1938-42, 1944-47) who played with Hall of Fame quarterback Bob Waterfield (1945-52) who coached Hall of Fame defensive tackle Merlin Olsen (1962-76) who played with Hall of Fame tackle Jackie Slater (1976-95) who played with wide receiver Isaac Bruce (1994-2005).

San Francisco 49ers

Quarterback Frankie Albert (1946-52) coached quarterback John Brodie (1957-73) who played with Hall of Fame cornerback Jimmy Johnson (1961-76) who played with tackle Keith Fahnhorst (1974-87) who played with wide receiver Jerry Rice (1985-2000) who played with center Jeremy Newberry (1999-2005).

Baltimore/Indianapolis Colts

Hall of Fame defensive end Gino Marchetti (1953-66) played with linebacker Mike Curtis (1965-75) who played with guard Ken Huff (1975-82) who played with punter Rohn Stark (1982-94) who played with runner Marshall Faulk (1994-98) who played with quarterback Peyton Manning (1998-2005).

Four Degrees of Separation

Dallas Cowboys

Quarterback Don Meredith (1960-68) played with Hall of Fame defensive tackle Bob Lilly (1961-74) who played with defensive end Too Tall Jones (1974-89) who played with quarterback Troy Aikman (1989-2000) who played with tackle Flozell Adams (1998-2005).

Dallas Texans/Kansas City Chiefs

Defensive back Johnny Robinson (1960-71) played with center Jack Rudnay(1970-82) who played with kicker Nick Lowery (1978-93) who played with linebacker Derrick Thomas (1989-99) who played with tight end Tony Gonzalez (1997-2005).

Denver Broncos

Wide receiver Lionel Taylor (1960-66) played with center Larry Kaminski (1966-73) who played with linebacker Tom Jackson (1973-86) who played with Hall of Fame quarterback John Elway (1983-98) who played with wide receiver Rod Smith (1995-2005).

Boston/New England Patriots

Defensive tackle Jim "Earthquake" Hunt (1960-70) who played with defensive tackle Houston Antwine (1962-71) who played with defensive tackle Julius Adams (1971-87) who played with tackle Bruce Armstrong (1987-2000) who played with quarterback Tom Brady (2000-05).

Buffalo Bills

Wide receiver Elbert Dubenion (1960-68) played with safety John Pitts (1967-73) who played with guard Joe DeLamielleure (1973-79, 1985) who played with defensive end Bruce Smith (1985-99) who played with wide receiver Eric Moulds (1996-2005).

New York Titans/Jets

Hall of Fame flanker Don Maynard (1960-72) who played with guard Randy Rasmussen (1967-81) who played with kicker Pat Leahy (1974-91) who played with linebacker Mo Lewis (1991-2003) who played with quarterback Chad Pennington (2000-05).

Oakland Raiders

Hall of Fame center Jim Otto (1960-74) played with Hall of Fame guard Gene Upshaw (1967-81) who played with Hall of Fame defensive end Howie Long (1981-93) who played with wide receiver Tim Brown (1988-2003) who played with wide receiver Jerry Porter (2000-05).

Los Angeles/San Diego Chargers

Hall of Fame tackle Ron Mix (1960-69) played with tackle Russ Washington (1968-82) who played with center Don Macek (1976-89) who played with defensive end Leslie O'Neal (1986-95) who played with punter Darren Bennett (1995-2005).

Minnesota Vikings

Defensive end Jim Marshall (1961-79) played with quarterback Tommy Kramer (1977-89) who played with defensive end Chris Doleman (1985-93) who played with wide receiver Cris Carter (1990-2001) who played with quarterback Daunte Culpepper (1999-2005).

Atlanta Falcons

Linebacker Tommy Nobis (1966-76) played with center Jeff Van Note (1969-86) who played with tackle Mike Kenn (1978-94) who played with tackle Bob Whitfield (1992-2003) who played with quarterback Mike Vick (2001-05).

New Orleans Saints

Wide receiver Dan Abramowicz (1967-73) played with quarterback Archie Manning (1971-82) who played with kicker Morten Andersen (1982-94) who played with defensive end Joe Johnson (1994-2001) who played with quarterback Aaron Brooks (2000-05).

Three Degrees of Separation and Less

Chicago Bears

Founder George Halas coached Hall of Fame tight end Mike Ditka (1961-66) who coached tackle Big Cat Williams (1991-2002) who played with linebacker Brian Urlacher (2000-05).

Houston Oilers/Tennessee Titans

Defensive back Jim Norton (1960-68) played with Hall of Fame defensive end Elvin Bethea (1968-83) who played with tackle Bruce Matthews (1983-01) who played with quarterback Steve McNair (1995-2005).

Miami Dolphins

Tackle Norm Evans (1966-75) who played with guard Bob Kuechenberg (1970-83) who played with Hall of Fame quarterback Dan Marino (1983-99) who played with linebacker Zack Thomas (1996-2005).

Cincinnati Bengals

Center Bob Johnson (1968-79) who played with linebacker Reggie Williams (1976-89) who played with punter Lee Johnson (1988-98) who played with tackle Willie Anderson (1996-2005).

Tampa Bay Buccaneers

Hall of Fame defensive end Lee Roy Selmon (1976-84) who played with runner James Wilder (1981-89) who played with tackle Paul Gruber (1988-99) who played with linebacker Derrick Brooks (1995-2005).

Seattle Seahawks

Hall of Fame wide receiver Steve Largent (1976-89) who played with wide receiver Brian Blades (1988-98) who played with fullback Mack Strong (1994-2005). (2 degrees)

DOUBLE DIPPIN''

By Timothy Holland

Most football fans know that Weeb Ewbank is the only man to coach teams to world's championships in the NFL (the 1958 and '59 Baltimore Colts) and the AFL (the 1968 New York Jets). And that Norm Van Brocklin is the only man to quarterback two teams to the NFL title, the 1951 Los Angeles Rams (with help from Bob Waterfield), and the 1960 Philadelphia Eagles. But not many know that Tobin Rote is the only man to quarterback teams to championship game victories in both the NFL and AFL.

In 1957, Rote replaced the injured Bobby Layne and led the Detroit Lions to the NFL title. And in 1963, he quarterbacked the San Diego Chargers to the championship of the AFL.

Another thing that makes Rote's titles unique are the scores of the championship games. In 1957, the Lions crushed the Cleveland Browns by a score of 59-14. And in 1963, the Chargers pounded the Boston Patriots 51-10. These victories make Rote the only quarterback to start in two championship games where his team scored 50 points.

Another unique AFL player was Paul McGuire. Yes, the same Paul McGuire on ESPN television, who played during the entire tenure of the league from 1960 to 1969. McGuire played linebacker and punted for the Los Angeles/San Diego Chargers from 1960 to 1963 and the Buffalo Bills from 1964 to 1969. From 1960 to 1966, he participated in six of the league's first seven championship games missing out only in 1962. He would be on the losing side in the first two, but from 1963 to 1965 McGuire would accomplish something that no other player in the history of professional football will ever be able to do. Paul McGuire played on three consecutive AFL championship teams.

In 1963, he was a teammate of Tobin Rote's when the Chargers crushed the Patriots 51-10. The next year he was traded to Buffalo where he became a part of a team that would defeat the Chargers in back to back title games by scores of 20-7 and 23-0 in 1964 and '65. McGuire had a chance to play on four consecutive AFL championship teams when the Bills made it back to the title game in 1966. But they lost to the Kansas City Chiefs who, as the Dallas Texans, had kept his Chargers out of the AFL's version of the big game in 1962, by a score of 31-7. Thus denying McGuire a chance to play in the first Super Bowl. A game in which he would never play.