

*The first 5 Seasons: 1946-49*

## **College Division Team Statistical Highlights, 1946-72**

*A Forgotten Era of College Football  
Statistics©*

By Tex Noel

College Division—that became NCAA II in 1973—statistics according to the **OFFICIAL 2009 NCAA Divisions II and III Football Records Book** officially began during the 1948 season.

Two years before the NCAA came-up with the idea of compiling annual compilations on teams not recognized as a major college.

J. Randall Pratt, in writing on page 87 in the **1947 NCAA Football Guide**: *“Initial steps were taken during the fall of 1946 to expand the nation-wide coverage of collegiate football statistics to the small college and universities.”*

The NCAA had first begun compiling official numbers back in 1937 for a reported 125 schools classified as major college.

Pratt continued: *But last fall the National Collegiate Athletic Association’s service bureau under took for the first time the compilation of corresponding statistics-of-play detail for several hundred collegiate teams not so prominent in the national public eye.*

Pratt stated that the new coverage would not be as comprehensive as teams on the Major College level. *Nevertheless it offers the possibility for the future of comparative recording of the performances of many small-college stars whose deeds on the gridiron valor might otherwise remain in relative obscurity.*

In this report, it will list the team stat-leaders in 1946 total offense and total defense per game averages and in 1947 rushing-passing-total offense and defensive leaders.

In 1946, Muhlenberg College in seven of its games that were reported to the NCAA, gained 2981—an average of 425.9; while Findlay stopped its eight opponents averaged of 95.5 (764 yards).

In all, both sets of rankings contained 15 teams; with 10 teams on both sides of the ball included in both list, while each list has five teams that made one but not both compilations.

Team	Offensive	Defensive
Boston University	260.1	161.9
Delaware	335.1	163.4
Franklin & Marshall	267.8	132.6
Kent State	349.1	115.1
Muhlenberg	425.9	115.4
Oklahoma City	392.7	121.5
Rochester	268.5	178.5
San Jose State	252.8	155.6
Southeastern Louisiana	298.4	142.7
Trinity TX	387.0	100.8

Looking at just “raw numbers” Oklahoma City rambled for 4320 yards in 11 games; with Franklin & Marshall—in just 5 of its games reported—surrendered 663 yards.

A year later, the Muhlenberg Mules not only became the first team to repeat a team championship, but also became the initial school to have a double-championship in the same season.

By increasing its yards per game total in 1947 by a slim 1.9 yards, Muhlenberg repeated as the Total Offense leader, averaging 427.8 over a 10-game schedule, picking up 4278 yards.

As productive as the offensive unit was, the Mules ground defense was as stubborn as the school’s mascot, yielding 37.2 yards—7.2 less than runner-up Lawrence College, the division’s overall top defensive unit.

In eight games, the team out of Wisconsin was the lone college team to hold its opponents below 1000 yards in 1946 (759)—an average of 94.9.

The College of Pacific not only claimed the passing title in 1946, with an average, 294;3 mark, but was also coached by a mentor who decided that 57 years patrolling a college sideline was enough.

The Tigers were coached by the “Grand Old Man of the Midway,” Amos Alonzo Stagg, who after began his time at Pacific since 1933; retiring after the 1946 season.

Susquehanna and Fresno State each completed 100 of their tosses, but in three less games (7 to 10) the former held a 23-yard advantage, to win the passing offensive title, 184.6 to 151.6 per outing.

Down in South Texas, Texas A&I blanketed its opponents’ air game to the tune of 38.8 over a 9-game schedule.

This season, two teams seemed to rage their personal statistical battle, as Muhlenberg and Lawrence College appeared all three offensive

categories and rushing defense; with Muhlenberg appearing in the Passing stats and Lawrence, Pass D.

**A closer look at these two schools reveals:**

Muhlenberg, 1<sup>st</sup> TO—427.8...Lawrence College, 7<sup>th</sup>—320.8  
Muhlenberg, 2<sup>nd</sup> RO—283.0...Lawrence College, 4<sup>th</sup>—271.6  
Lawrence College, 1<sup>st</sup> TD—94.9...Muhlenberg, 3<sup>rd</sup>—113.4  
Muhlenberg, 1<sup>st</sup> RD—37.2...Lawrence College, 2<sup>nd</sup>—47.4  
Muhlenberg, 3<sup>rd</sup> PO—144.8...Lawrence College, 2<sup>nd</sup> PD—43.8

The official College Division statistical era began in 1948—and what a way to usher in

official leaders!

223.8 per game was the only school to exceed 200 yards.

Hanover, a small college in Southern Indiana, not only established standards for the 1940's, but its total offense average is still the mark schools have aimed for and missed heading into the 2010 season.

Three schools, College of Pacific, Emporia State KS and Jacksonville State AL each placed teams among the Top 15 ground gainers, the first two seasons of statistical leaders.

Through an 8-game schedule, the Panthers' finished with a 2103 yardage difference higher than the second place finisher, Trinity CT—in one more game—4993-to-2890 yards.

On the Eastern Seaboard, Morgan State's Bears were applying the proverbial hug on its 8 opponents, holding them totally to 104.4 and stopping the ground game at a 44.8 clip (only 1.6 per play.)

Harry F. Schiffer, author in the 1948 story in **Official NCAA Football Guide** (1949), page 41, wrote: *Hanover reached a pinnacle in its 51-0 victory over Franklin (Ind.). The Panthers gained 426 yards rushing and 484 passing, for a total offense day of 910 yards—the greatest number of yards ever gained by one team in one game. (Heading into the 2010 season, the mark still stands!)*

A screeching Eagle pass-D of Ashland dug sharp talons into 9 opponents and held on preventing just 91 yards—a screeching 10.1 average.

Of the total yardage Hanover gained that season, 400.4 were by land; with another 223.8 was gain by sending the ball down field. The

This defense “caught” more of its opponents' passes than teammates of the opponents that threw the ball. Defenders latched-onto 19 errant throws, while permitting receivers to hauling two less.

Ironically, even with the various schemes offensive and defensive coordinators have implemented over

the years, these standards established that first year by Hanover and Ashland remain intact.

Hanover not only used its feet by picking up record yardage, the team equaled the mark of Central Michigan for punting average, 44.0—but the power of the decimal point carried the latter to a 44.05 per boot and was awarded the championship.

While there was no Top 10 compilation for the highest scoring teams, a single team, Sul Ross State TX, in a perfect 10-0-0 season scored 431 points—43.1 per game average, was the nation's leader.

On the subject of scoring, two schools completed an equal number of passes—76—but, San Jose State found the end zone 2 more time than Wayne State NE, 22-20. The latter won another title by just 2: in the number of attempts, 209-to-Susquehanna's 207.

As the decade of the 1940s came to a close, statistical accomplishments was just beginning to take-off in 1949.

Baldwin-Wallace saw its 106 completions travel 1575 yards—an average of 196.2 over 8 games, claiming its first statistical title.

One area of the country that saw the Passing Game accepted faster than the other parts of the country were teams from the Southwestern of the In its annual game with Cal Poly, the Tigers roared to monumental proportions, becoming the initial

USA—College Division teams were no different.

In 1949, three teams from that part of the country made the Top 10 in Passing Offense, with establishing five-year highs.

New Mexico A&M launched an aerial circus, as it heaved the ball 259 times, completing 120 of the tosses—eclipsing previous mark.

Teams in Texas accepted the forward pass faster than the rest of the country.

The 1948 Guide stated this on how Texas teams accepted the passing game:

*"...representing an area where the forward pass is reputedly part of the scenery"* and in 1949 Hardin-Simmons made its mark as well.

The West Texas team was successful 59.8 of the time, a shade below that of Hanover's accuracy of aials of, 61.1 %. (Hanover completed 96 of 157, while Hardin-Simmons' threw 22 more times, completing 107.

Cowboy receivers lassoed the ball 29 times for scores, breaking San Jose State's mark a year earlier.

As impressive as Hanover's highlights from a year ago...to College of Pacific presented its own statistical memories in 1949.

College Division team in the 50-500-5000 "club!"

*That Thanksgiving Day 88-0 "struggle" saw COP pile up 639 yards on combined rushing and passing, pushing its season's total up to almost three miles—5029 yards. (Page 60, 1950 **The Official NCAA Football Guide**)*

A season-ending game saw COP travel to Hawaii and, while not statistics were kept, the final score was recorded. The Tigers finished their outstanding season with a 75-0 routing of Hawaii.

In an 11-game schedule, Southern LA ran the ball 800 times, but still Jaguars still fell short of Hanover's still-to-be-eclipsed mark, finishing with an average of 382.9.

College of the Pacific made it 3-for-3, by appearing with the top ground-gainers every season since official tallies were first compiled: 1947, 1<sup>st</sup>—294.3; 1948, 6<sup>th</sup>—301.1; 1949—4<sup>th</sup>—344.3.

Defensively, New Haven State stopped nine opponents to-the-tune of 95.6 per game, almost evenly divided on each side of the line of scrimmage: second in stopping the ground game, 48.2 and 8<sup>th</sup> in Pass Defense, 47.3.

From an offensive explosive a year ago, to applying the hurt in 1949, Hanover stopped its 8 rushing opponents to a 43.5 average, while Wilmington allowed just enemy passers to complete 25.7 passes, in taking the *Pass D* honors, with a 39.9 standard.

Benedict SC booted the pigskin the farthest 45.8, holding off runner-up Morningside IA, by a slim 1.8 margin.

College Division teams were comprised of schools from the small schools in the NCAA and colleges in the NAIA.

## **NATIONAL CHAMPIONS**

From 1958, the wire service UPI named a national champion—via a poll of coaches; with the AP (writers and broadcasters) beginning in 1960. These two services named the **College Division National Champion** through 1975.

To view the annual College Division #1 teams, visit the link for the national championships elsewhere on [Small-College-Football-History](#) site.