

First TV Football Game

Waynesburg Plays in First Televised Football Game

The inception of televised sports took place in the New York City area from 1939 to 1940. A signal reaching an estimated 500 homes in a 50-mile radius broadcasted games from Ebbets Field, Madison Square Garden and Yankee Stadium. Those who could afford a \$600 television set at the time witnessed television history. And it was the Waynesburg College Yellow Jackets that they first watched play football.

The Yellow Jackets visited Randall's Island, N.Y., on Sept. 30, 1939 to play in the first televised football game when they battled Fordham University at Triboro Stadium.

NBC broadcasted the game with one camera, as announcer Bill Stern made the historic call.

Fordham won the game, 34-7, over Waynesburg, guided by its all-time winningest coach Frank Wolf, despite scoring the first touchdown in the televised football history when Bobby Brooks reached the end zone on a 63-yard run.

The historic journey to New York took an entire weekend as a cavalcade of cars left Waynesburg on Thursday, Sept. 28. In all, 42 players and the team's personnel made the 400-mile trip. Among the players was John F. "Jack" Wiley, the namesake of the current Waynesburg football stadium. Wiley would move on to play for the Pittsburgh Steelers before a coaching career at Waynesburg. The Jackets finished the season 6-2-1, as did Fordham, a preseason pick for the national championship.

What was once considered the demise of attendance at games and the end of professional football, television broadcast has since developed into a lucrative business that has changed American culture. And yet, it all started when a few men from Waynesburg left town for the weekend to play a simple game of football.

➤ *From the Waynesburg University website*

Trimbrough Stadium, New York City...heard on WNYC radio...signal 50 mile radius....estimated 1000 tv sets in metropolitan area....Bobby Brooks's 65 TD run on game's third play..Fordham rallied for a 34-7 win.

➤ *NCAA News, Oct. 11, 2004, page 3.*

The first televised college football game occurred during the "experimental" era of television's broadcasting history, when a game between Fordham University and Waynesburg College was broadcast on September 30, 1939.

➤ *From the Wikipedia site*