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The College Football Historian™

Presenting and preserving the sport's historical accomplishments...written by the author's unique perspective.

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- ✓ **Deadline** for inclusion in an issue of **TCFH** is the last Wednesday of the month; with the latest to be included in the current issue being the first Wednesday of the month that month.

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*Courtesy: **Sports Illustrated Vault** (November 24, 1958; USED BY PERMISSION)*

About Homer Cooke, 1st official stat person NCAA

The Great Numbers Nonsense

By Stanley Frank

A veteran sportswriter lets fly at the bane of almost any game: the incubus of the meaningless statistic.

The greatest menace to big-time sports today is neither the shrinking gate nor TV, either in the free or paid version. It is a nonsense of numbers, the stupefying emphasis on meaningless statistics which is draining the color from competition, stifling the fans' spontaneity and distorting their appreciation of skills.

There are graver dangers to the security of the Republic, to be sure, but the importance attached to superficial percentages and phony records is promoting an attitude that equates defeat with victory. We now find merit in mediocrity and satisfaction in moral victories, a euphemism for failure. Were our guys racked up and left for dead by the other side? It could have been worse. We got to the 20-yard line twice and we set a new Cockamamie Tech record for recovered fumbles (7) in one game.

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This half-a-crumb principle is baldly plugged by the National Collegiate Athletic Bureau, which packages a complete line of football and basketball figures guaranteed to contain a consolation prize in every box. The NCAB's policy is stated explicitly in the introduction to its official manual: "Although the primary goal of all competition properly is victory, interest in a sport need not and should not be confined exclusively to the victor. Statistics, without detracting from the primary goal, do more than anything else to focus attention on 'how they played the game' in addition to the fundamental 'who won or lost.' So the role of statistics is not that of 'proving anything.'

...Rather, it is that of broadening interest to include the noteworthy feats of *both* sides."

The NCAB seems to be caught in the switches of its own doubletalk. It assures subscribers they will get the straight dope on "how they played the game," yet in the next sentence it admits the whole thing adds up to a blank in "proving anything." Such candor is commendable, although it does not answer the obvious question: Why pay attention to the nonsense in the first place?

Sports statistics are meaningless because they do not measure the most important factor in the business—the resourcefulness that is the hallmark of a champion. The Braves compiled more hits than the Yankees in the last World Series, for all the good it did them. Or, for that matter, all the good it did the Yankees in 1957 to tally not only more hits but more runs too.

In the Orange Bowl game last year, Duke had a clear edge over Oklahoma in every bookkeeping entry. The Blue Devils led in first downs 16 to 11; in yards gained 328 to 279; in completed passes 62% to 50%. They even picked up 150 yards in penalties while losing only 25 themselves. It was a breeze—for Oklahoma. The Sooners coasted to a comfortable 48-21 decision by capitalizing on six Duke mistakes that led to touchdowns.

Ratings of individual performances, which strongly influence selections for All-America, All-Conference and All-Honorarium teams, are equally unreliable yardsticks of ability. For example, the leading college punter generally is from a weak team that is bottled up deep in its own territory most of the season. As a consequence, its kicker is constantly booting for sheer distance. Conversely, the punter on a strong team is beyond midfield a good deal of the time and tries to angle many kicks out of bounds within the enemy's 10-yard line.

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Passing statistics are even more misleading because they are not properly weighted for short, flat pitches, which are no great trick to complete, and long heaves, which demand hair-trigger precision.

Despite such fallacies however, the statistics fever spreads apace, even unto the coach's bench. Last season Ken Ford of Hardin-Simmons won the passing title by connecting on 22 out of 35 pitches in his last game. Ford was not a contender until Coach Sammy Baugh, the old pro master, permitted him to heave the ball on practically every other call in the huddle. When a man unloads 35 passes in a game, his team is not playing football. It is playing basketball with shoulder pads.

According to the book, the most formidable football player in history was Art Luppino, who established the alltime record by scoring 166 points for Arizona in 1954. You never heard of this immortal whose exploits eclipsed Jim Thorpe, Red Grange and Bronko Nagurski? Shake hands with everyone east of the Mississippi and north of the Colorado rivers. In his epic season, the only big-league team Luppino encountered in nine games was Colorado, which hung a 40-18 shanty on Arizona. The caliber of opposition is another criterion statistics do not evaluate.

Paradoxically, the two men who are the superintendents of the biggest figure foundries sharply criticize the exaggerated attention given to their products by newspapermen and broadcasters. Ted Smits, sports editor of the Associated Press, and Homer Cooke, director of the NCAB, deplore the stultifying effect of statistics on sportswriting, which once was a literate craft featuring trenchant reporting and bright commentary. But they also defend the interminable flow of obscure averages and variegated records on the grounds that such material is valuable background for the fans.

"Statistics provide a valid basis for comparing athletes," Smits said recently. "For instance, I never realized the importance of rebounds in basketball until they were added to the box score. Tabulations such as runs batted in and passing averages help to give recognition to players who would be overlooked on poor teams. Of course the whole thing can be carried to extremes. Baseball writers are the worst offenders for coming up with trick records like a left-handed third baseman making two errors on one play for the first time at 3 o'clock in the afternoon."

Smits admits that "too many reporters have fallen into the trap of rewriting publicity handouts," but insists that "a lot of good, lively copy still is turned

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out." When does it see the light of day in the papers? Take the case of Herb Elliott, the Australian antelope who is unquestionably the outstanding athlete of 1958. Until the November 10 issue of SPORTS ILLUSTRATED explored the motives and methods that go into the making of a 3:54.5 miler, Elliott had been invested with no more personality than a stop watch by American newspapers. Few sportswriters had bothered to probe the whys and wherefores of the young man who broke four minutes in 10 mile races between January and September.

"I couldn't agree with you more that the emphasis on figures at the sacrifice of personalities is a bad trend," the NCAB's Homer Cooke says amiably. "You may not believe this, but I went into the statistics business 22 years ago as a protest against it. When I was a sportswriter on the West Coast I got fed up with every team coming into town and ballyhooing its football players as the best performers in every conceivable department. I began to keep my own averages on games in the Northwest to sift conflicting claims and show up press agents who were grabbing free space and headlines with phony figures."

Cooke's modest service was expanded into a national clearinghouse for college football and basketball statistics by the NCAA after World War II as a gimmick for selling guides. The annual cost of maintaining the bureau and 11 full-time employees is estimated at more than \$100,000 now, but the revenue from the sale of 175,000 guides reduces the subsidy to about \$35,000. The NCAA gets a lot of action and publicity for its money.

Each Saturday night during the football season Cooke's staff is the busiest bunch of computers this side of Cape Canaveral. Immediately after the games, 109 major colleges telegraph team and individual statistics, the latter in 52 categories, to Cooke in New York. Each report is only slightly less voluminous than a transcript of the United Nations charter. The data is fed into IBM machines, and by noon Sunday the information has been compiled cumulatively. It is given to the A.P. and U.P.I. for release, and copies are sent to each school. The routine is repeated on Monday with reports airmailed by 509 small colleges. Throughout the week the NCAB continues to grind out supplementary bulletins analyzing the flow of statistics.

Some colleges make such a production of squeezing the last decimal from the figures that they employ as many statisticians as coaches. Army assigns six actuaries to the press box for each game, and at Princeton a crew of mathematicians processes ratings in an electronic computer to appraise the efficiency of players in 80 different classifications.

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This nonsense with numbers produces a staggering mishmash of irrelevant trivia, but Cooke sees a value in them nonetheless. "Statistics do a whale of a job for the losers," he says. "I saw dramatic proof of that 20 years ago on my old beat. The University of Washington had a terrible team except for Dean MacAdams, a great punter. The fans had so little to cheer about there was a roar, as though Washington had scored a touchdown, every time MacAdams went into punt formation. His showing in the national statistics was what sustained interest in the team.

"The same thing happened at Auburn in 1946. The team lost six straight games, but a freshman named Travis Tidwell led the country in total offense.

Tidwell never amounted to much thereafter, but for that one season he was a lifesaver to Auburn."

The next, inevitable step is to pump spurious excitement into the gate by deliberately fabricating records—even if it helps one's opponents. Cooke recalled a flagrant example of this abuse in a Pacific Coast game six years ago.

One team was leading by two touchdowns late in the game when someone in the press box found out that its quarterback needed one more completed pass to set some sort of regional mark. There was time for just a few more plays, and the other team had the ball far down-field. This noble eleven let its rival score a gift touchdown so it could get possession of the ball and give the hero a chance to throw a couple of passes.

Rigging statistics to build up one player is as old as the discovery that an All-America candidate does wonders for the box office. A common gambit is to concentrate publicity on a lineman by keeping a special tabulation of his tackles and the yardage he yields on defense. Since no one knows what goes on in the snake pit, the figures are accepted at face value. Is a hole opened at the hot shot's position big enough for a motorcycle to barge through with a sidecar? The college press agent loftily retorts that any idiot could have seen the stalwart was playing a looping defense on that one and was blameless for the touchdown.

Predictions of disaster by a coach whose squad is loaded for bear are a standard operational procedure applauded as clever psychology by reporters. It rarely occurs to them that they are stooges for coaches who deliberately mislead the public with a cheap trick as contemptible as feeding whisky to the Indians. If the team gets licked the coach is off the hook. If the team wins big,

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the coach's reputation as a mastermind is enhanced by the stirring triumph over insuperable obstacles. It is peculiarly fitting that all the postseason football bowls are named for agricultural crops. Through the year these joints—Orange, Cotton, Rose, Sugar, to name a few—have been irrigated by the crocodile tears of coaches whose crippled, undermanned teams have played there on New Year's Day.

The cushy bids to these clambakes are largely predicated on weekly A.P. ratings, which ostensibly represent a national poll of authoritative opinion. Actually, they are merely third-rate popularity contests.

Although some 3,000 newspapers and broadcasting stations are entitled to one vote apiece, as few as 100, and rarely more than 500, ballots are cast. The majority come from small towns shilling for local favorites. Sports editors in metropolitan centers know the poll is meaningless and don't bother to vote, but they continue to run the ratings under big headlines.

If the imagination lavished on dreaming up new statistics were applied to the business on the field, fewer teams would be suffering from pernicious anemia at the gate. A press agent is suspected of taking money under false pretenses when he fails to whip up a fresh batch of records for his client. At that, he should be able to latch onto an angle in the welter of national, regional, conference and, when things get really tough, school records. The Purdue football brochure gets double mileage from its list by drawing an arbitrary distinction between marks established before and after 1939. Those set in the last 20 years are labeled "modern era" records, thereby dating alumni past 40 as relics of the Paleozoic Age.

* * * *

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A look at the top 10 most overrated teams in Texas college football history

By Greg Tepper

[<https://www.texasfootball.com/look-the-most-overrated-texas-college-football-teams-ever/>]

LOOK The most overrated Texas college football teams ever

There may be no term in sports more acidulous than "overrated."

Fans have co-opted it to express how much they dislike something, but at its core, it's all about failing to live up to expectations, or those expectations being set too high.

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And that's an important distinction — "overrated" isn't necessarily an insult. Instead, in many respects, it's a matter of looking at the facts at hand and making a reasoned statement.

So let's take a look at the illustrious history of college football in Texas. Who are the most overrated teams across the years? We took a look at teams that started ranked in the top 12 in the Associated Press preseason rankings and finished unranked, and put together our list.

Without further ado: the ten most overrated teams in Texas college football history.

10 — 1951 Texas A&M Aggies

Preseason AP Ranking: 6th

Final Record: 5-3-2

The oldest team on our list, the first year under coach Ray George was supposed to be a big one for A&M, beginning the year 6th in the nation. But after a hot start — four straight wins, including a 14-7 win over No. 4 Oklahoma — the wheels came off, and the Aggies went 0-3-2 in their next five, tumbling out of the rankings. The saving grace? A 22-21 upset win over rival Texas (then ranked 16th) in the season finale.

9 — 1991 Houston Cougars

Preseason AP Ranking: 12th

Final Record: 4-7

The entire nation had David Klingler fever after the sensational quarterback led Houston to a 10-1 mark in 1990. His return was a big reason the AP ranked the Cougars 12th to start the year...but the defense was downright dreadful, and the high-powered offense wasn't enough to keep pace. Four losses in their first five games doomed the Cougs, and the 49-45 loss to TCU and 52-46 loss to Texas Tech to finish the year was an apropos end to a disastrous season.

8 — 2011 Texas A&M Aggies

Preseason AP Ranking: 8th

Final Record: 7-6

Riding a hot finish to 2010 that saw A&M win its final six regular season games — including knocking off No. 11 Oklahoma and No. 9 Nebraska — the Aggies had high expectations for 2011. But a porous defense cost them, allowing 30 or more points to six of their 13 opponents. The Aggies took home losses

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to mediocre Missouri and Texas teams — the latter of which ended up costing coach Mike Sherman his job.

7 — 1959 SMU Mustangs

Preseason AP Ranking: 4th

Final Record: 4-5-1

Call this a projection pick by the AP. Quarterback Don Meredith had dazzled down the stretch in 1958, and his return was a big deal for SMU in 1959. Unfortunately, it never came to fruition, as the offense sputtered all season long, averaging just 14.7 points per game (a disappointing total even then). A season-opening loss at No. 16 Georgia Tech was followed by a nice win over No. 15 Navy, but the Ponies simply couldn't hang in the loaded Southwest Conference, dropping decisions to Texas, Arkansas and TCU in the back half of the season.

6 — 1957 Baylor Bears

Preseason AP Ranking: 7th

Final Record: 3-6-1

The 1956 season was a banner one for the Bears — a crushing defense led by Jerry Marcontell guided Baylor to a 9-2 mark and a Sugar Bowl win over Tennessee. 1957, though? Thud. The defense was OK, but the offense was dreadful, averaging just 8 points per game. The non-conference loss at Miami set the tone, but it was the 19-6 defeat at the hands of rival TCU that really stung.

5 — 1954 Texas Longhorns

Preseason AP Ranking: 4th

Final Record: 4-5-1

There was no hotter team in the nation at the end of 1953 than the Texas Longhorns, who rattled off four straight wins, including toppling No. 11 SMU and No. 3 Baylor, to finish the year at 7-3. But the Longhorns couldn't handle the expectations of a No. 4 ranking, especially after getting shut out at No. 2 Notre Dame in the second week of the season. The middle stretch of the season was the death knell, going 0-4-1 to start Southwest Conference play...though their win over Texas A&M in the season finale helped coach Edwin Price save a bit of face.

4 — 1955 Rice Owls

Preseason AP Ranking: 11th

Final Record: 2-7-1

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The 1955 Rice Owls had all the ingredients of a national contender. Legendary coach? Check: Jess Neely was back. Momentum? Check: the Owls finished 1954 on a three-game winning streak, including a 20-14 win over No. 9 Baylor in Waco. Notoriety? Check: the Owls were firmly on everyone's radar. But after a 2-0-1 start — a win over Alabama, a tie with LSU and a win over No. 16 Clemson — the season cratered with seven consecutive losses. The most painful: a 20-12 home loss to Texas A&M, who famously rallied from down 12-0 in the final five minutes to beat the Owls.

3 — 2010 Texas Longhorns

Preseason AP Ranking: 5th

Final Record: 5-7

You knew this one would be on there. After coming within an eyelash of a national championship the year before, the Longhorns were on the short list of title contenders the next year, especially with super-prospect Garrett Gilbert taking over an experienced offense and a playmaking defense. But a home loss to UCLA spelled the first sign of trouble, and it only got worse from there. The offense never materialized around Gilbert, who ended up transferring, and the Longhorns missed a bowl for the first (and only) time in the Mack Brown era.

2 — 1985 SMU Mustangs

Preseason AP Ranking: 3rd

Final Record: 6-5

Put aside, for a moment, the fact that the Ponies found out they were going on probation for the fifth time in nine years right before the season — this is still a hugely disappointing season. Coming off four consecutive 10-win seasons, 1985 was supposed to be the year the Ponies got over the hump, especially with star running back Reggie Dupard back in the mix. But the Mustangs just couldn't keep up with the vicious Southwest Conference, losing to Baylor, Texas A&M, Arkansas and Oklahoma, not to mention a baffling non-conference loss to Arizona. This was supposed to be a culmination of SMU's program; instead, it was the beginning of what would be a two-decade slide.

1 — 1965 Texas Longhorns

Preseason AP Ranking: 2nd

Final Record: 6-4

This was it. A year removed from the 1963 national championship, this was the year that Darrell K Royal's Longhorns got back to the mountaintop. The 10-1 season in 1964 was the build-up, and this was

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the crowning moment, with all-everything Tommy Nobis leading the charge. And things started off perfectly — three comfortable wins over Tulane, Texas Tech and Indiana, and a dominant 19-0 victory over Oklahoma in the Red River Showdown vaulted the Horns to the No. 1 spot in the nation. A gut-punch loss to No. 3 Arkansas ended the undefeated run, but it was what happened next that send the season into a tailspin — a 20-17 home loss to woeful Rice. It didn't get any better — a loss to SMU, a loss to TCU...and all of a sudden, the year that was supposed to be the next big step for the Texas football program turned into the top spot on this list.

Honorable Mentions: *1980 Houston Cougars, 1950 SMU Mustangs, 1997 Texas Longhorns, 1968 Texas A&M Aggies, 1977 Texas Tech Red Raiders, 1952 TCU Horned Frogs*

* * * *

From Within the Membership

Dean Jackson...will be hosting Fort Wayne's (Ind.) *Greatest Sports Legends* radio show each Thursday at 7:30 am and again at 7:30 pm.

"I'll be paying tribute to the legends of Fort Wayne sports history. The teams, the traditions, the characters and the players," Jackson said recently.

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Source: The National Football Foundation & College Hall of Fame

President's Day Football Celebration

Football has remained an important touchstone for numerous U.S. presidents over the years.

IRVING, Texas (Feb. 12, 2016) – Whether they played football, served as a football manager or merely understood the role of football in developing the young men who play the sport, numerous U.S. presidents have paid tribute to the gridiron over the years. In honor of the upcoming President's Day on Monday, Feb. 15, the National Football Foundation (NFF) takes a quick look at the presidential perspective on football's role in society.

"Football commands a special place in our society," said NFF President & CEO **Steve Hatchell**. "It teaches life lessons. It creates opportunities. It brings communities together. It breaks down barriers, and it instills a competitive spirit that extends far beyond the gridiron. All of these attributes are critical to the fabric of our society. As we celebrate President's Day, it's important to

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take stock of the insights of our nation's greatest leaders, and their perspective on football's role in strengthening our country."

Seven U.S. Presidents have claimed the NFF Gold Medal, the organization's highest honor, and the connections between the White House and the gridiron have a rich history. Below are some of the many links between the gridiron and the White House, including the thoughts and comments from several past presidents.

President Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909):

Despite never playing football because of bad vision, Theodore Roosevelt played a critical role in the history of the sport. To make the game safer, he held a summit at the White House in 1905 that led to the neutral zone, limits on the number of players on a side, the forward pass and the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States, which would later become the NCAA. He understood that football had a role in preparing young men for the hardships in life. His football quotes include:

"In life, as in a football game, the principle to follow is: Hit the line hard. Don't foul and don't shirk, but hit the line hard!"

"Athletic sports are good, especially in their roughest form, because they tend to develop courage. They are good also because they encourage a true democratic spirit."

"One of the best things about football is that it exemplifies the value of VIM. Of all the legacies left us by the Romans, there is none more important than this little word VIM. Printed in capital letters, it is a handsome word and looks the way it means - earnest, spirited energy. It ought to be carved over the doors of all buildings through which pass athletes, soldiers, sailors and all men who engage in any competition, strife or contest."

"The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who at best if he wins, knows the thrills of high achievement and, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."

President Woodrow Wilson (1913-1921):

An educator and college president before he became U.S. President, Woodrow Wilson was an assistant football coach at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Conn., for two seasons while he taught history. His football quotes include:

"I have always thought it was an accepted fact that football was an educational factor I have seen that impression made too many times upon players and spectators, by a game won through some trait of character, not to believe firmly that football is educational in its influences."

"To excel personally and, collectively to win, a player must mobilize into action the following mental acts: judgment, persistency, initiative, aggressiveness, fortitude, courage, chivalry and the will to win."

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"Repeatedly doing so makes these acts traits of his own character. Spectators seeing these traits in action likewise copy them. These are basic traits of character essential to success in any endeavor. Therefore, to my mind, football is pre-eminently an educational factor."

"Football develops more moral qualities than any other game of athletics... This game produces... qualities not common to all athletics, that of cooperation, or action with others, and self-subordination. These are things to be encouraged, and they unquestionably come from the game of football."

President Calvin Coolidge (1923-1929):

Having never played football, Calvin Coolidge appreciated the traits instilled in the men who served in his administration who had played the game.

"I have had in my Cabinet four great football guards. In fact, wherever I turn in Washington I meet officials who once were famous players. They tell me that this characteristic runs all through public life in the state, county and municipal governments."

President Herbert Hoover (1929-1933):

The recipient of the 1960 NFF Gold Medal, Herbert Hoover was the manager of football team at Stanford University, and he helped stage the first "Big Game" between Stanford and California in 1892. His quotes include:

"You have already had ample evidence before you of the enormous benefits nationally of football... It does perform a service that reaches into many phases of the life of our nation. And, I know that those reflections are upon the whole country, that is, of sportsmanship as a teacher of morals greater indeed than any other agency except religion. And of course, the sports create in the mind of the young the will to endure and the will to win, and all those are on reflections on the nation as a whole."

"It has always been a source of great satisfaction and pleasure that I was the financial manager of the Stanford varsity football team in 1894. I was not in football long, but long enough to learn that it is a marvelous game, entertaining, recreative and educational. The qualities in which a player must perfect himself are valuable to him all through life and that is why so many old football men are conspicuous successes in life. They have been trained in the essential grooves."

"I would like to expand my assertion that football is a great teacher of morals to the extent that it is not limited to the members of the contesting teams, but that it radiates out to huge crowds at the games – those who attend know well the rules of sportsmanship."

"There are many extraordinary values of the game of football. Its adoption by practically all our schools and colleges makes it not only a great agency of physical training, but also a great stimulant of healthy competition. But there is an even greater value, which embraces all other sports as well – that of sportsmanship. Next to religion, it is the greatest of all teachers of morals."

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President Dwight D. Eisenhower (1953-1961):

The 1958 recipient of the NFF Gold Medal, Dwight D. Eisenhower played halfback and linebacker at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. A knee injury ended his career in 1912, but he continued to participate in the sport as a junior varsity coach. He remained a staunch proponent of the game and the virtues it instills in the young men who play it. His quotes include:

"But I noted with real satisfaction how well ex-footballers seemed to have leadership qualifications . . . I believe that football, perhaps more than any other sport, tends to instill in men the feeling that victory comes through hard -- almost slavish -- work, team play, self-confidence, and an enthusiasm that amounts to dedication."

"Morale -- the will to win, the fighting heart -- are the honored hallmarks of the football coach and player. Likewise, they are characteristic of the enterprising executive, the successful troop leader, the established artist and the dedicated teacher and scientist."

President John F Kennedy (1961-1963):

The 1961 recipient of the NFF Gold Medal, Kennedy played junior varsity football as a wide receiver at Harvard. He famously said when accepting the NFF Gold Medal, "Politics is an astonishing profession. It has permitted me to go from being an obscure lieutenant, serving under General MacArthur, to Commander-in-Chief in fourteen years, without any technical competence whatsoever. And it's also enabled me to go from being an obscure member of the junior varsity at Harvard to being an honorary member of the Football Hall of Fame." His quotes on the importance of football to our country include:

"I think General MacArthur really spoke about football in the classic way, because on so many occasions in war and peace I have seen so many men who participated in this sport, some celebrated and some obscure, who did demonstrate that the seeds had been well sown."

"This is a great American game. It has given me personally some of the most pleasant moments of my life."

"I do not suggest that physical development is the central object of life or that we should permit cultural and intellectual values to be diminished. But I do suggest that the physical health and vitality constitute an essential element of a vigorous American community."

"Politics is like football; if you see daylight, go through the hole... "There are not so many differences between politics and football."

"But why, some say, the moon? Why choose this as our goal? And they may well ask why climb the highest mountain? Why, 35 years ago, fly the Atlantic? Why does Rice play Texas? We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win, and the others, too."

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President Lyndon B. Johnson (1963-1969):

Like President Coolidge, Johnson did not play football but appreciated the traits and benefits of the game. In 1966, he was honored with the Tuss McLaughry Award, given by the American Football Coaches Association to a distinguished American for the highest distinction in service to others. Below are quotes from his acceptance speech:

“In the nearly 100 years that Americans have been enjoying this great sport, Presidents and Cabinet officers and Justices and leaders in every walk of life have first learned the lessons of discipline, of dedication, out on the athletic fields of the United States.”

“Football is really and truly an American institution. It embodies our highest ideals of character and courage. So I not only have a very healthy respect for the game and the institution, but I have respect for the men who have developed it and who have built it.”

President Richard M. Nixon (1969-1974):

The 1969 NFF Gold Medal recipient Richard Nixon played substitute tackle at Whittier College (Calif.) from 1932-34. His accomplishments on the field were minimal, but the game’s impact on his life was significant. He remained a passionate fan who appreciated the game’s role in instilling the competitive spirit in the young men who played the game. His quotes include:

“What does [football] mean, this common interest in football of Presidents, of leaders, of people generally? It means a competitive spirit. It means, also, to me, the ability and the determination to be able to lose and then come back and try again, to sit on the bench and then come back. It means basically the character, the drive, the pride, the teamwork, the feeling of being in a cause bigger than yourself.”

“All of these great factors are essential if a nation is to maintain character and greatness for that nation. So, in the 100th year of football, as we approach the 200th year of the United States, remember that our great assets are not our military strength or our economic wealth, but the character of our young people, and I am glad that America’s young people produce the kind of men that we have in American football today.”

“One of the men who influenced me most in my life was my coach, and I think that could be true of many public men. My coach was an American Indian, a truly remarkable man and a great leader. I learned more about life from than I did about football; but a little about football... I learned a lot sitting by the coach on the bench – learned about football and learned about life.”

“I look back on football and have many pleasant memories. I just enjoyed playing it, watching it, reading about it over the years.”

President Gerald Ford (1974-1977):

The 1972 recipient of the NFF Gold Medal, Gerald Ford excelled as a center and linebacker at Michigan, distinguishing himself as the best player to ever serve in the White House. His efforts contributed to Michigan claiming the national crown in 1932 and 1933 and the Big Ten Conference titles in 1932 and 1933. After graduating, he played in the 1935 College All-Star Game against the NFL champion Chicago Bears. His quotes include:

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“Thanks to my football experience, I know the value of team play. It is, I believe, one of the most important lessons to be learned and practiced in our lives.”

“But what about winning? How about a good word for the ultimate reason any of us have for going into a competitive sport? As much as I enjoyed the physical and emotional dividends that college athletics brought me, I sincerely doubt if I ever suited up, put on my helmet without the total commitment of going out there to win, not to get exercise, gold, or glory, but simply to win. To me, winning is not a shameful concept. I would like to think that winning is in the great American tradition. Two hundred years ago we fought for our freedom, and we won; and for the next hundred years we challenged a continent, and we won.”

“There are plenty of parallels between football and elective politics. You play hard, you play to win, but you don’t last long if you don’t play clean. You have to train and stay in top condition. Fumbles and lucky breaks you take in stride, and you soon learn you can’t win ‘em all. You fight your heart out for 60 minutes – you shake hands – and you get ready for the next game. In both cases you have lots of Monday morning quarterbacks.”

“I think the biggest carryover from the gridiron to government – or any other competitive career – is the concept of teamwork. There never was a football star so brilliant that he could shine alone without 10 other guys whose names are now forgotten. And, if you take a close look at history, this is also true of our greatest political leaders. They have been stellar players, but even more they have been great captains of great teams.”

President Ronald Reagan (1981-1989):

The 1971 recipient of the NFF Gold Medal, Ronald Reagan played guard at Eureka College (Ill.), lettering during three years in the early 1930s. Before entering politics, Reagan’s distinguished acting career included a well know role as Notre Dame’s star halfback George Gipp in the 1940 film “Knut Rockne: All-American.” He also briefly worked as a radio announcer, calling Iowa football games for a local radio station early in his career. His connection to football would endure, and his football related quotes include:

“I am indebted to football for so many things. Football provided an education. As a matter of fact it provided my career. In 1932, when you graduated you didn’t start out to have a career. You just hoped that in some way you could find a job, any kind of job. I received \$5 and bus fare to broadcast the Iowa-Minnesota game for a local radio station. That turned into a sports announcing career. And even later, in Hollywood, when I found myself bogged down making some pictures... the Gipper won one for me and made possible everything that has happened since.”

“There is a mystic something about football... Anyone who has played in more than the one sport – and most athletes do – knows there is something unique, something that captures the spectator and the player-captures him emotionally-about football that he can feel about football more seriously than he can feel about other sports.”

“What does it matter if it’s only a game if it has the power to make boys become men capable of self-sacrifice and unselfish, noble deeds.”

The College

Football

Historian-16-

"I don't if we will ever be able to identify and prove what each man learns from football so that we can list it and hang it on a wall like a diploma or like a license for the practice of a profession. I do know that down through the years I've somehow placed my faith in men of the sports world and seldom has that faith ever been betrayed."

* * * *

Source: The Kingston Daily Freeman, 1934

SPORT SLANTS

By ALAN J. GOULD/Associated Press Sports Editor

Football Racketeers

Perhaps no figure in American college sports experienced a more poignant pang of feeling than Parke Hill Davis, Princeton '93, upon reading the charge of Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace that our universities not only have failed to develop or produce leadership but that "our college life has expressed its vitality in such rackets as organized football."

To Mr. Davis, a giant of a man, whose athletic experiences and memories go back to the days of Heffelfinger and Muldoon, this must have seemed like the blow from a blunt instrument in the dark.

A lawyer in Easton, Pa., Mr. Davis has devoted much of a lifetime to the tabulation of football records and analysis of its history, following long service as a coach and rule maker. He played and coached at Princeton (*editor's note no record Davis being on the sideline has ever been located*). He founded football at Wisconsin. He organized a number of the gridiron code. Now, as the game's more or less official historian, he has to his credit the authorship and compilation of an amazing amount of information.

Having all this in mind, as I say, Mr. Davis must have trembled with indignation, born of the knowledge that he has personally compiled page after page of names of president, and cabinet men, congressmen, senators, generals and admirals, governors and college presidents, figures high in the judiciary, finance and industry—all with the background of football playing experience or connection with the game.

The College

Football

Historian-17 -

“Our Racketeers”

I have seen this list many times. It has grown, of course, with the number of years and the increasing industry or research of Mr. Davis. I have another copy of it before me. It's customary heading of "Graduates of the Gridiron" is supplemented in pencil with the ironic words, "Our Racketeers."

The first name on the list is that of Franklin D. Roosevelt, who played tackle and fullback at Gorton School on an informal class teams while he was studying at Harvard.

There follow the names of four other presidents—Woodrow Wilson, who coached football at Princeton and also Wesleyan; Calvin Coolidge, who helped coach one year at Amherst and is likewise identified as "informal counselor of Park Davis"; Theodore Roosevelt, the elder who was vitally interested in the reform of football rules in 1905; and Hubert Hoover, member of the Stanford football team in 1894.

Great names fairly swarm over the remaining pages. It is impressive company and it seems as Mr. Davis so consistently has pointed out, to emphasize the qualities of leadership or ability stimulated by the greatest of sports.

Big Men, All

Chief Justice Stone played guard at Amherst. The late Gen. Leonard Wood was a halfback at Georgia Tech. Senator Wharton Pepper played in the line Pennsylvania line. Former Ambassador Robert Bacon was a Harvard captain and halfback.

Vance McCormick, chairman of the war-time Trade Board was captain and quarterback at Yale. Governor Pinchot of Pennsylvania played guard for Old Eli. Secretary Iberia was a captain and tackle at Nebraska. John Reed Kilpatrick, head of Madison Square Garden, was All-America at Yale. Willie Heston of Michigan and Wally Steffen of Chicago, other famous All-Americans, now are judges.

* * * *

The College

Football

Historian-18-

Bo Carter Presents...College Football Hall of Famers who were born and passed away in March

1 (1883) Tom Shevlin, Muskegon, Mich.	3-(d – 1966) Calvin Roberts, St. Louis Park, Minn.	6 (1927) Jim Owens, Oklahoma City, Okla.
1 (1884) Vince Stevenson, Livingston, Ky.	4 (1888) Knute Rockne, Voss, Norway	6 (1942) Jerry Rhome, Dallas, Texas
1 (1961) Mike Rozier, Camden, N.J.	4 (1964) Shane Conlan, Frewsburg, N.Y.	6 (1943) Ronnie Caveness, Houston, Texas
1-(d – 1959) Albie Booth, New York City	4 (1971) Jeff Wittman, Rochester, N.Y.	6 (1950) Johnny Musso, Birmingham, Ala.
1-(d - 1969) Andy Kerr, Tucson, Ariz.	4-(d – 1962) Pat O’Dea, San Francisco, Calif.	7 (1943) Rick Redman, Portland, Ore.
1-(d – 1979) Hube Wagner, Pittsburgh, Pa.	4-(d – 1986) George Owen, Milton, Mass.	7 (1950) Thom Gatewood, Baltimore, Md.
2 (1934) Howard “Hopalong” Cassady, Columbus, Ohio	4-(d - 1989) Harvey Jablonsky, San Antonio, Texas	7 (1952) Lynn Swann, Alcoa, Tenn.
2 (1935) Gene Stallings, Paris, Texas	4-(d - 2009) George McAfee, Durham, N.C.	7 (1955) Tommy Kramer, San Antonio, Texas
2 (1946) Wayne Meylan, Bay City, Mich.	5 (1875) Frank O’Neill, Syracuse, N.Y.	7-(d – 1956) Paul Des Jardien, Monrovia, Calif.
2 (1954) John Sciarra, Los Angeles, Calif.	5 (1918) Paul Christman, St. Louis, Mo.	7-(d – 1977) Bernie Bierman, Laguna Hills, Calif.
2-(d – 1970) Paul Christman, Lake Forest, Ill.	5 (1921) Dave Schreiner, Lancaster, Wis.	7-(d – 1983) Rip Engle, Bellefonte, Pa.
2-(d – 1971) Dixie Howell, Hollywood, Calif.	5 (1922) Bob Odell, Corning, Iowa	8 (1873) Charley Brewer, Honolulu, Hawai’i
3 (1890) Art Howe, South Orange, N.J.	5 (1970) Michael Payton, Harrisburg, Pa.	8 (1893) Harry Young, Charleston, W.Va.
3 (1917) Carl Hinkle, Hendersonville, Tenn.	5-(d - 1974) Fred Crawford, Tallahassee, Fla.	8 (1917) Dan Hill, Asheville, N.C.
3 (1952) Randy Gradishar, Warren, Ohio	5-(d – 1990) Stan Barnes, Palm Springs, Calif.	8 (1931) Earle Bruce, Pittsburgh, Pa.
3 (1962) Herschel Walker, Wrightsville, Ga.	6 (1892) Clark Shaughnessy, St. Cloud, Minn.	8 (1938) Pete Dawkins, Royal Oak, Mich.
		8 (1965) Kenny Gamble, Holyoke, Mass.

The College

Football

Historian-19-

9 (1877) Art Hillebrand, Freeport, Ill.	12 (1880) Bobby Marshall, Milwaukee, Wis.	16 (1920) Buster Ramsey, Townsend, Tenn.
9 (1927) Jackie Jensen, San Francisco, Calif.	12-(d – 1968) Bill Hollenbeck, Bryn Mawr, Pa.	16-(d – 1943) Paul Bunker, POW Camp in Japan
9 (1944) John Huard, Waterville, Maine	12-(d – 1983) Ki Aldrich, Coffeyville, Kan.	16-(d – 2006) Bill Hartman, Athens, Ga.
9 (1965) Brian Bosworth, Oklahoma City, Okla.	12-(d – 1987) Woody Hayes, Upper Arlington, Ohio	17 (1871) John Outland, Hesper, Kan.
9-(d – 1937) Walter Steffen, Chicago, Ill.	13 (1918) George McAfee, Ironton, Ohio	17 (1876) Bill Morley, Cimarron, N.M.
9-(d – 1971) Barry Wood, Tamaica Plain, Mass.	13 (1938) Joe Bellino, Winchester, Mass.	17 (1905) Joe Donchess, Youngstown, Ohio
9-(d – 2005) Glenn Davis, La Quinta, Calif.	13 (1969) Chris Zorich, Chicago, Ill.	17 (1912) Joe Styhahar, Kaylor, Pa.
10 (1927) Bill Fischer, Chicago, Ill.	13 (1977) Joe Hamilton, Alvin, S.C.	17 (1914) Sam Baugh, Temple, Texas
10 (1949) Chip Kell, Atlanta, Ga.	13-(d – 1932) Percy Wendell, Boston, Mass.	17 (1915) Bill Hartman, Thomaston, Ga.
10 (1960) Bill Stromberg, Baltimore, Md.	14 (1903) Ed Weir, Superior, Neb.	17 (1916) Bob Suffridge, Fountain City, Tenn.
10-(d – 1919) John Dalton, Brooklyn, N.Y.	14 (1936) Dr. Jim Swink, Sacul, Texas	17 (1931) Ray Beck, Bowden, Ga.
10-(d – 1954) Frank Thomas, Tuscaloosa, Ala.	14 (1943) Charlie Green, Dayton, Ohio	17 (1967) Johnny Bailey, Houston, Texas
10-(d – 1945) Ed "Robbie" Robinson, Boston, Mass.	14 (1978) Ron Dayne, Berlin Township, N.J.	17-(d – 1965) Amos Alonzo Stagg, Stockton, Calif.
11 (1893) Ellery Huntington, Nashville, Tenn.	14 (d – 1925) Walter Camp, New York City	17-(d – 1992) Frank Carideo, Ocean Springs, Miss.
11 (1894) Bernie Bierman, Springfield, Minn.	15 (1898) Clarence Swanson, Wakefield, Neb.	18 (1905) Benny Friedman, Cleveland, Ohio
11 (1941) Rex Mirich, Florence, Ariz.	15 (1926) Norm Van Brocklin, Eagle Butte, S.D.	18 (1906) Frank Wickhorst, Aurora, Ill.
11-(d – 1979) Beattie Feathers, Winston-Salem, N.C.	15 (1937) Randy Duncan, Osage, Iowa	18 (1910) Wear Schoonover, Pocahontas, Ark.
11-(d 1995) Herb McCracken, Ocean Ridge, Fla.	15 (1956) Ozzie Newsome, Muscle Shoals, Ala.	18 (1928) James Williams, Waco, Texas
	15-(d – 1990) Tom Harmon, Los Angeles, Calif.	18 (1932) Dave Maurer, Duquesne, Pa.
	15-(d – 2006) Dick Wildung, Minneapolis, Minn.	18 (1938) Joe Kapp, Santa Fe, N.M.
	16 (1872) Phillip King, Washington, D.C.	18 (1961) Curt Warner, Pineville, W.Va.

The College

Football

Historian-20-

18-(d – 1984) John Smith, West Hartford, Conn.	21 (1951) John Hicks, Cleveland, Ohio	23-(d – 1980) Frank Sundstrom, Summit, N.J.
18-(d – 2000) Bob Blackman, Hilton Head, S.C.	21 (1967) Clarkston Hines, Chapel Hill, N.C.	24-(d - 1930) Walter Eckersall, Chicago, Ill.
18-(d – 1975) Biggie Munn, Lansing, Mich.	21-(d – 1971) Gomer Jones, New York City	24-(d – 1947) Dr. John Outland, Laguna Beach, Calif.
19 (1913) Nello Falaschi, Dos Palos, Calif.	21-(d – 1995) Frank Merritt, Clearwater, Fla.	24-(2003)-Jess Dow, Orange, Conn.
19 (1914) Jay Berwanger, Dubuque, Iowa	21-(d – 2015) Chuck Bednarik, Coopersburg, Pa.	25 (1909) Frank Howard, Barlow Bend, Ala.
19 (1931) George Morris, Vicksburg, Miss.	22 (1879) Art Poe, Baltimore, Md.	25-(d – 1983) Edwin “Goat” Hale, Jackson, Miss.
19-(d – 1977) Buck Shaw, Menlo Park, Calif.	22 (1931) Billy Vessels, Cleveland, Okla.	25-(d – 2013) Hank Lauricella, New Orleans, La.
20 (1906) Ben Stevenson, Smith Mills, Mo.	22 (1954) Ross Browner, Warren, Ohio	26 (1870) Lee McClung, Knoxville, Tenn.
20 (1909) Marchmont “Marchy” Schwartz, New Orleans, La.	22 (1960) Jimbo Covert, Conway, Pa.	26 (1899) Buck Flowers, Sumter, S.C.
20-(d – 1910) James Hogan, New Haven, Conn.	22 (1969) Russell Maryland, Chicago, Ill.	26 (1899) Harry Kipke, Lansing, Mich.
21 (1884) Jim McCormick, Boston, Mass.	22-(d – 1993) Jack Riley, Kenilworth, Ill.	26 (1906) Rip Engle, Elk Lick, Pa.
21 (1889) Jock Sutherland, Coupar Angus, Scotland	23 (1886) Nathan Dougherty, Hales Mill, Va.	26 (1960) Marcus Allen, San Diego, Calif.
27 (1922) Alex Agase, Chicago, Ill.	23 (1927) Wayne Hardin, Smackover, Ark.	26 (1966) Wesley Walls, Batesville, Miss.
27-(d – 2006) Ron Schipper, Holland, Mich.	23-(d – 1934) George Woodruff, Harrisburg, Pa.	27 (1898) Herb Stein, Warren, Ohio
28-(d – 1962) Bob Neyland, New Orleans, La.	23-(d – 1977) Joe Stydahr, Beckley, W. Va.	27 (1921) Malcolm Kutner, Dallas, Texas
28 (1899) Buck Shaw, Mitchellville, Iowa	29 (1906) Jim Bausch, Marion Junction, S.D.	31 (1950) Ed Marinaro, New York City
28-(d – 1953) Jim Thorpe, Lomita, Calif.	29 (1955) Earl Campbell, Tyler, Texas	31-(d – 1931) Knute Rockne, Bazaar, Kan.
28-(d – 1955) Art Howe, Plymouth, N.H.	29-(d – 1986) Bill Murray, Durham, N.C.	31-(d – 1952) Bo McMillin, Bloomington, Ind.
29 (1902) Don Miller, Defiance, Ohio	30 (1914) Bob Reynolds (Stanford), Morris, Okla.	31-(d – 2003) George Connor, Chicago, Ill.
	30 (1935) Willie Gallimore, St. Augustine, Fla.	31-(d – 2013) – Dick Duden, Severna Park, Md.
	31 (1938) Bob Anderson (Army), Elizabeth, N.J.	

The College

Football

Historian-21-

Next month the NFL will hold its annual draft—that was first held in 1936.

I am creating a database that will include every player selected in not only the NFL Draft; but also every league—an additional 8 leagues—that has followed and held a player draft*.

Subscribers to TCFH being asked for their input. I am seeking your assistance by submitting your overall Top 10 players from the NFL Draft—not from every draft. Also, the player who was the player that was the bust of all taken in the opening round. If you wish, one player—regardless of the other leagues—would be your choice, to represent them.

Other options include the 10 best players that your favorite NFL Team has selected; or ones from your favorite college (or Alma mater)

A number of college and pro football people have expressed an interest in this project; which is why I am putting it before the subscribers of TCFH.

*Other leagues include: All-American Football Conference; American Football League; World Football League; United Football League; Canadian Football League; Xtreme Football League; All-American Football League and United Football League.

Deadline is May 13, 2016...any questions, contact Tex Noel.
[ifra.tcfh@gmail.com]

All who submit selections will be mentioned in the project.

* * * *

Sporting Life, 1892

Punts and Kicks

Of 17 games played between Yale and Princeton since and including 1876 Princeton has won 6 and Yale 10.

Princeton has scored just once against Yale since 1885. That was in 1889, when Princeton, 10 to 0. Since 1885 Yale has made 65 points to 10 for Princeton.

The College

Football

Historian-22-

TCFH subscriber, Bill Connelly, has compiled and written several stories and analytical analyses of college football teams. Over the next few months, his stories will be published here.

Thanks Bill for sharing them with the subscribers.

The 23 most perfect offenses in the history of college football

By [Bill Connelly](#) □ [@SBN_BillC](#) on Feb. 29, 2016, 12:44p

From 1902 Michigan to 2005 USC, these are the best offensive units of all time.

Our college football memories are local and recent -- we remember our teams and our conferences, and we remember teams that played during our time. Where we went to school and when will directly impact who we think of as the greatest players, or teams, or coaches, or units.

This makes sense, of course. College football's history is immense and you cannot know everything, so you dial down into what you can know. But here's where numbers can add layers and context to our memories. We can never compare teams from the 1900s or 1940s to the present day because of size and general improvements in athleticism, but we can compare them on the greatness scale. Greatness happens every year, but which eras or teams or offenses had the *greatest* greatness?

Bill's Kickstarter

On Monday, I used an estimated version of my S&P+ ratings -- using points scored and allowed (the only data points available) to compare output to expected output based on opponent strength -- to [rank which programs were the best in each decade going back to the 1890s](#). It used 10-year averages and didn't give bonus points for championships, which meant that Penn State fans were frustrated by a low 1980s ranking (yes, the Nittany Lions won two national titles; they also won eight or fewer games five times) and Nebraska fans were angry that their Huskers were overtaken by FSU in the 1990s (yes, the Huskers won 2.5 national titles; FSU won two and was generally better in the non-title seasons).

Today, let's use these numbers to look at one specific side of the ball: offense.

Offenses usually have the advantage over defenses. Offensive innovations change how we perceive the sport; defensive innovations are the counters to offensive innovations. It is a give and take that has gone on since Princeton and Rutgers met on a New Jersey field in 1869.

Offenses also have the advantage statistically. Whereas the perfect defensive score (zero) has never changed, offenses can go higher and higher and higher. And they sometimes have. That means certain teams have figured out a way to stretch further and further down the long tail of the bell curve.

The College

Football

Historian-23-

Per my estimated S&P+ numbers, the best defense of all time (which we will discuss later in the week) had a percentile grade of 99.87 percent, meaning it was deep into the 99th percentile when compared to other defenses from that season. In all, only seven defenses have hit the 99.5 level.

Meanwhile, 120 offenses have hit 99.5 or higher, and, when rounded to one decimal point, 23 have been what I'll call 100 percenters. I'll talk about the 99 Club soon in a Football Study Hall post. But for now, let us celebrate offensive perfection.

The 100 percenters

1904 Vanderbilt

1907 St. Louis

1902 Michigan

1906 Vanderbilt

Because Amos Alonzo Stagg's 1906 Chicago team is on the *50 Best** list, I've been reading a little bit about the 1906 season, the first after Teddy Roosevelt helped institute rules changes that both opened football up and saved it. Chicago was one of the first teams to figure out how to move the ball via forward pass, but the Maroons aren't on the 100 percent list. Instead, those honors go to Dan McGugin's Vanderbilt Commodores and Eddie Cochems' Saint Louis Billikens (or whatever SLU was known as at the time).

SLU actually completed the *first* official forward pass in college football history, and while this team didn't exactly play the toughest of schedules, the Billikens-To-Be outscored opponents by a 407-11 margin that year. In 1907, against a mix of big and small schools, SLU was almost as proficient. It outscored Arkansas, Washington (Missouri), Kansas and Nebraska by a combined 171-6. Decent.

[About SLU's offensive proficiency, a ref said this at the time:](#)

"What struck me the most ... was the perfection which the eleven has attained in the forward pass. It was the most perfect exhibition of the possibilities of the new rules in this respect that I have seen all season, and much better than that of Yale and Harvard. St. Louis' style of pass differs entirely from that in use in the east. There the ball is thrown high in the air and the runner who is to catch it is protected by several of his teammates, forming an interference for him. The St. Louis university players shoot the ball hard and accurately to the man who is to receive it, and the latter is not protected. With the high pass protection is necessary, as the ball requires some time to reach its goal, time enough for the defensive side to mix in. The fast throw by St. Louis enables the receiving player to dodge the opposing players, and it struck me as being all but perfect."

So while Yale was playing a game of 500, or almost inbounding the ball rugby-style, St. Louis was actually playing what we would come to know as football.

1908 LSU

1914 Texas

1917 Georgia Tech

In 1916, Georgia Tech beat Cumberland, 222-0. In 1918, John Heisman's ramblin' wreck outscored Furman, 11th Cavalry and NC State by a combined -- and yes, this is true -- 369-0.

In 1917, Tech never hit triple digits but might have had its best team, and offense, of the bunch. The Engineers beat a nine-win Penn team, 41-0, early in the year, but didn't hit their stride until late October. In their final five games of the year (against Washington & Lee, Carlisle, decent Vanderbilt and Tulane teams, and 6-2-1 Auburn), they scored 360 points. Yes, 98 of those came against Carlisle. But they also beat future SEC mates Vandy, Tulane and Auburn by a combined 199-7. This Heisman guy was kind of a jerk, but I think he may have known a thing or two about how to put the football in the end zone.

The College

Football

Historian-24-

1929 USC

Going by my decade rankings, USC may have been the best program of the 1920s despite being *brand new*. And despite two losses (15-7 to Cal, 13-12 to Notre Dame), the Trojans were far too much for every other opponent on the schedule to handle. They beat UCLA, 76-0. Washington: 48-0. Idaho: 72-0. Carnegie Mellon: 45-13. An awesome Pitt team: 47-14. Howard Jones' tenure at USC was still on the rise -- the Trojans would go 30-2-1 from 1931-33 -- but while the defense would improve in the coming years, there was no improving on what the offense produced in the final year of the 1920s.

1930 Utah

The 1930 Utah team made its way into my book by force. Few teams have put together a more prolific run than Ike Armstrong's Utes from 1929-32. They were, at worst, in the 99.6 percentile in each of those years, peaking in 1930, when they scored 340 points in eight games, including 320 in six Rocky Mountain Conference contests. BYU went 5-2-4 but lost, 34-7. Colorado went 6-1-1 but lost, 34-0.

Utah was an interesting program at that time. The school was easily the class of the RMC and between 1928 and 1932, it lost only to Pacific Coast Conference foes (Washington and Oregon State in 1931, USC in 1932). It was a little bit of a Boise State situation, where we couldn't get a complete read on them because they were isolated in an iffy conference. Regardless, compared to projected output, they aced the 1930 test.

1931 USC

1944 Army

1945 Army

1934 Alabama

1945 Alabama

With Glenn "Mr. Outside" Davis and Doc "Mr. Inside" Blanchard, Army was unstoppable for most of three seasons (1944-46). The two combined to score 97 touchdowns, a duo record that stood until broken by Reggie Bush and LenDale White. In 1945, Blanchard won the Heisman. In 1946, Davis won the Heisman after two runner-up finishes. The Cadets not only put up crazy numbers -- 56 points per game in 1944, 46 in 1945 and "only" 26 in 1946 -- but did so against the nation's best teams. They put up 59 on No. 5 Notre Dame and 23 on No. 2 Navy in 1944, then took things to another gear.

Here are actual scores from the 1945 season:

- No. 1 Army 28, No. 9 Michigan 7
- No. 1 Army 48, No. 19 Duke 13
- No. 1 Army 48, No. 2 Notre Dame 0
- No. 1 Army 61, No. 6 Penn 0
- No. 1 Army 32, No. 2 Navy 13

When I post the top 50 teams since World War II (which technically ended right before the 1945 season), don't be surprised to see 1945 Army ranking really, really high. This team -- and especially this offense -- was a wrecking machine. And while I doubt anyone will feel too sorry for Crimson Tide fans, Army was so good that it overshadowed another nearly perfect football team in the South.

The College

Football

Historian-25-

The balance of power shifted to Notre Dame and the service academies as World War II came to a close, but that didn't stop Alabama's absurd 1945 run. The Crimson Tide scored 25 points on a Tennessee team that allowed only 27 combined in eight other games. They scored 26 on an LSU team that otherwise allowed eight per game. They scored 55 on Mississippi State, 60 on Kentucky and 71 on Vanderbilt. And in the Rose Bowl on Jan. 1, with Army at home having already secured the national title, the Tide romped over hometown USC, 34-14.

Alabama averaged 43 points per game ... and was completely overshadowed.

1952 Oklahoma

1956 Oklahoma

1959 Syracuse

Bud Wilkinson's Split T was particularly unstoppable in 1952 and 1956. In a defensive era, the Sooners were held under 34 points just twice in 1952 and once in 1956. But let's talk about the perfection that was the 1959 Syracuse offense.

Ben Schwartzwalder's Orangemen were in the middle of a nice run -- they finished in the top 10 in both 1956 and 1958 and would go 15-5 in 1960-61 as well -- but 1959 was the pinnacle. Despite a schedule that featured eight of 11 teams finishing .500 or better, Syracuse was steady and phenomenal. The Orange beat Navy, 32-6, then took down Holy Cross and WVU by a combined 86-6. They took on eastern powers Pitt and Penn State back-to-back, both on the road, and scored a combined 55 points in two wins. They emasculated Colgate and Boston University by a combined 117-0. And to finish the regular season, they headed west to UCLA and won, 36-8.

Despite tension and (if you believe the telling in *The Express*) iffy officiating, The 'Cuse finished the season by putting 23 points on a Texas defense that had allowed just seven points per game to that point.

Sophomore (and future Heisman winner) Ernie Davis was the star of the offense with 686 yards (7 per carry), but Syracuse was powered by remarkable balance. Three players rushed for at least 500 yards, seven more rushed for at least 115 and five finished with at least 100 receiving yards. This offense could do everything and ended up with a national title ring.

1971 Oklahoma

After a defense-heavy 1960s, Oklahoma became one of the first teams to perfect the game-changing wishbone formation. In 1971, with head coach Chuck Fairbanks and offensive coordinator Barry Switzer, the Sooners posted rushing numbers that would seem absurd even today. Greg Pruitt rushed for 1,760 yards, quarterback Jack Mildren rushed for 1,289 (and passed for 889 on only 32 completions) and the foursome of Leon Crosswhite, Roy Bell, Joe Wylie and Tim Welch pitched in with another 2,116 yards.

Oklahoma hung 33 points on No. 17 USC, 48 on No. 3 Texas (which had invented the wishbone only a few years earlier), 45 on No. 6 Colorado, 31 on No. 1 Nebraska and 40 on No. 5 Auburn. Their only loss came via Johnny Rodgers' perfect punt return in the late-November Game of the Century against Nebraska. While the Huskers had the better defense (they didn't allow more than 17 points in any other game), OU's offense was as good as it got in the 1970s.

Behold, the horror of hapless Kansas State trying to stop Oklahoma in a 75-28 loss.

1980 BYU

1983 Nebraska

1988 Oklahoma State

The College

Football

Historian-26-

BYU put its best overall team on the field in 1983, but Jim McMahon led its best offense three years earlier. Meanwhile, the exploits of Turner Gill and Mike Rozier in the 1983 Nebraska offense are legendary. But I'm not going to lie: It made me so happy to see 1988 Oklahoma State on this list.

You might remember some guy from that team.

OSU was enjoying a reasonable run of success in the mid-1980s. The Cowboys would pay for that with sanctions that would wreck the program in the early-1990s, but they had gone 10-2 in both 1984 and 1987, and they would do so again in 1988.

But 1988 was different. The 'Pokes averaged 26 points per game in 1984 and, with Thurman Thomas taking most of the carries, 34 in 1987. In 1988, they lost Thomas, a future NFL Hall of Famer, and improved by 15 points per game.

Texas A&M fell, 52-15. Colorado and Missouri fell by a combined 90-42. Nebraska prevailed over the Cowboys in Lincoln, but OSU scored 42 points in the meantime. Kansas State, Kansas and Iowa State fell by a combined 157-79. Texas Tech gave up 45. Wyoming gave up 62 in the Holiday Bowl.

The 1988 OSU team was one of the last ones eliminated when I was paring my 50 Best* list to 49. I regret it, and if you want to donate \$70 to the Kickstarter to earn a vote on the 50th team, then vote for the 'Pokes, I wouldn't complain.

1995 Nebraska

Since the era of scholarship limitations kicked in, only two teams have produced perfect offenses. The 1995 Huskers were one and it's almost boring to talk about them because we all acknowledge how unstoppable they were. They played a scheduled that featured seven teams that finished .500 or better and four that won at least 10 games. They averaged 53 points per game. They outscored Michigan State and Arizona State in September by a combined 127-38 and wrapped up a perfect regular season with a 37-0 win over Oklahoma that could have been much worse.

Average score against those four 10-win teams: NU 49, Haplessly Overmatched Foe 18.

This team was just ... actually ... I don't need any more words. I only need this (and you knew what it was before you even saw there was a video embedded here):

That'll do it.

2005 USC

I'm sure it will annoy Texas fans that my numbers *only* graded the 2005 Longhorns out at 99.3 percent on offense and 93.6 percent on defense, one of the most perfect, well-rounded teams in recent college football history. But really, UT fans should celebrate. Their team won one of the greatest games of all-time because they stuffed this killing machine on fourth-and-2, then went downfield and won the game.

USC scored 600 points in 12 regular season games -- 70 on Arkansas, 45 on Oregon, 34 on Notre Dame, 55 on Washington State, 51 on Stanford, 50 on Fresno State, 66 on UCLA -- and then scored 38 against a Texas defense that was just about the best of the season.

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That touchdowns record set by Davis and Blanchard? White and Bush broke it. They combined for 3,042 rushing yards, 697 receiving yards and 44 touchdowns in 2005. Matt Leinart threw for 3,815. Dwayne Jarrett and Steve Smith caught 151 passes for 2,231 yards. There was absolutely nothing this offense couldn't do.

Except get two yards on fourth-and-2, I guess.

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Additional Football Information can be found by visiting one of IFRA's partner's websites—you'll be glad that you did!!

- **Football Geography.com**

Andrew McKillop, Andrew.mckillop@footballgeography.com

- **www.gridirongreatsmagazine.com**

Bob Swick, bobswick@snet.net

- **TheUnderDawg.com (CSD football)**

Reggie Thomas, reggie@theunderdawg.com

- **D1SportsNet.com**

William Lansdale, info@d1sportsnet.com

- **Leatherheads of the Gridiron**

<http://www.leatherheadsofthegridiron.com/>

Joe Williams, leatherheadsofthegridiron@gmail.com

- **One Point Safety** <http://onepointsafety.com/>

Travis Normand, travisnormand@gmail.com

- **Blog on College Football**

<http://www.tuxedo-press.com/>

Tom Benjey, Tom@tuxedo-press.com

- **www.theworldoffootball.com**

Randy Snow, randysnow22@yahoo.com

- **Pro Football Researchers Association**

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- **Black College Sports www.ehbcsports.com**

Edd Hayes, edd.j.hayes@gmail.com

If you have a college football website or blog and would like have it displayed here, send Tex Noel an email ifra.tcfh@gmail.com.

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From the American Football Coaches Association...

GRANT TEAFF NAMED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EMERITUS OF THE AMERICAN FOOTBALL COACHES ASSOCIATION

WACO, TEXAS – New American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) Executive Director Todd Berry named Grant Teaff, Executive Director Emeritus. Teaff, who served as the executive director of the AFCA since January 1994, will step aside from those duties at the end of the month.

"In further cementing Coach Teaff's legacy, we are happy to announce that The American Football Coaches Association is awarding Coach Teaff the title of Executive Director Emeritus," Berry said. "His 21 years of service to the AFCA and his six decades of service to the game of football allow him to continue to be a great spokesman for the game and our association. This will allow Coach Teaff to continue his broad outreach of his outstanding program, 'Beyond the Game' under the AFCA banner and to continue to represent the AFCA at various functions."

With this new title, Teaff will be able to continue to work with companies associated with the AFCA and broaden the reach of his "Beyond the Game" curriculum.

"Since I first encountered football as a boy in Synder, Texas, the game and our profession has been an important part of my life," Teaff said. "I felt that through coaching I could make a difference in the lives of those who played the game. I'm very grateful with Coach Berry's decision as executive director to allow me to remain a part of the AFCA as executive director emeritus. I look forward to helping Coach Berry and the AFCA Board of Trustees in serving our great game, our profession and, of course, those who play the game."

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