



The National Forgotten League: Entertaining Stories and Observations from Pro Football's First Fifty Years

Dan Daly

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The first fifty years of America's most popular spectator sport have been strangely neglected by historians claiming to tell the "complete story" of pro football. Well, here are the early stories that "complete story" has left out. What about the awful secret carried around by Sid Luckman, the Bears' Hall of Fame quarterback whose father was a mobster and a murderer? Or Steve Hamas, who briefly played in the NFL then turned to boxing and beat Max Schmeling, conqueror of Joe Louis? Or the two one-armed players who suited up for NFL teams in 1945? Or Steelers owner Art Rooney postponing a game in 1938 because of injuries? These are just a few of the little-known facts Dan Daly unearths in recounting the untold history of pro football in its first half century.

These decades were also full of ideas and experimentation, such as the invention of the modern T formation that revolutionized offense, unlimited player substitution, and soccer-style kicking, as well as the emergence of televised pro football as prime-time entertainment. Relying on obscure sources, original interviews, old game films and statistical databases, Daly's extensive research and engaging stories bring the NFL's formative years—and pro football's folk roots—to life.

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