



70 YEARS AGO, COLLEGE ALL-STAR GAME LIGHTS UP THE NIGHT

It is somewhat forgotten today, but in its day – from 1934-76 – the **COLLEGE ALL-STAR GAME** was *the* kickoff to the NFL preseason.

The college stars with stars on their uniform shoulders would face (for the most part) the NFL champion of the previous season at night. The first game – a 0-0 tie between the All-Stars and the Chicago Bears – drew 79,432 fans to Soldier Field. The final College All-Star Game ended prematurely in 1976 because of a thunderstorm with the Pittsburgh Steelers holding a 24-0 lead in the third quarter.

The sports editor of the *Chicago Tribune* in 1934, **ARCH WARD**, came up with the idea of having the NFL champion from the previous season face off against a team of college all-stars to benefit a charity run by the *Tribune*. But for the games in 1943 and 1944, which were played at Dyche Stadium at Northwestern University, every game was played in Soldier Field.

In the early years of this all-star experiment, the college stars actually fared quite well against their NFL counterparts. Through 1947, the pros held only a slight edge in the overall standings (7-5-2). In fact, Washington struggled mightily in the 1943 version of the game, with the All-Stars coming away with a crushing 27-7 victory highlighted by a 97-yard interception return for a touchdown by none other than **OTTO GRAHAM**.

Some of football's greatest players took part in the extravaganza as either college or pro athletes, including legends like quarterback **SID LUCKMAN**, defensive lineman **CHUCK BEDNARIK**, kicker/tackle **LOU GROZA** and linebacker **RAY NITSCHKE**. Gridiron greats from the '40s and '50s eventually gave way to more contemporary stars like **TERRY BRADSHAW**, **BART STARR** and **JACK LAMBERT**.

As the years marched on, the NFL became more and more dominant. The pros won the last 12 All-Star games. In the end, the risk of injury and the uneven level of play took away from the original appeal of putting on this preseason exhibition special. The game hit its pinnacle of popularity in 1947, when the All-Stars dominated the Bears in front of 105,840 fans – still the third highest single-game total ever – winning 16-0. Nevertheless, the All-Stars went on to win only three of the next 19 games before the 1976 finale.

The college squad actually gave the Steelers a close call in the '75 contest, with Pittsburgh sneaking away with a 21-14 win. It's no wonder the youngsters stayed close, with **WALTER PAYTON** (Jackson St.) at running back and **RANDY WHITE** (Maryland) at defensive tackle.

Here are five notable performers of the many who took part in the College All-Star Game:

- **DON HUTSON**, Alabama/Green Bay: After making his debut in this game as a standout end for Alabama in 1935, Hutson started in this contest on four separate occasions, including three during his days as a Packer. His performance, which included an 85-yard interception return for a touchdown and a 20-yard field, in the '45 game propelled the Pack to a 19-7 victory.
- **OTTO GRAHAM**, Northwestern/Cleveland: Starting with his standout performance against the Redskins in '43, Graham is the only player to be involved in the game as a college player, pro player and coach. He coached the All-Stars on 10 different occasions, including an eight-year stint from 1958-65.
- **ELROY "CRAZYLEGS" HIRSCH**, Wisconsin/LA Rams: Hirsch scored on a 68-yard touchdown run *and* a 62-yard touchdown pass from Graham in the 13th installment of this game. Ironically, Hirsch went on to have a Hall of Fame pro career for the very team he torched in the College All-Star Game, the Rams.
- **BART STARR**, Green Bay: Starr racked up 255 yards and a game-record five touchdowns in a 42-20 Packer victory over the All-Stars in 1962. He played in five games for Vince Lombardi's dominant squad, winning four. In all, Starr amassed 12 passing touchdowns in the five games.
- **JOHNNY UNITAS**, Baltimore Colts: Johnny 'U' passed for five touchdowns in two games, including four to the great **LENNY MOORE**. Unitas and the Colts easily cruised to victories of 29-0 and 32-7 in consecutive All-Star games (1959-60).



NFL FILMS: STILL SHOOTING 40 YEARS LATER

In 1964, NFL Commissioner **PETE ROZELLE** negotiated an agreement on behalf of the NFL clubs to purchase **ED SABOL**'s Blair Motion Pictures, which had filmed the 1962-64 NFL Championships. With each NFL owner paying \$1,200 for the motion picture company that would promote the NFL and preserve the history of the game, **NFL FILMS** was born.

NFL Films has accomplished many firsts en-route to becoming the preeminent sports film production company in America. It was the first to wire coaches and players for sound, the first to use ground-level slow motion and reverse-angle replays, and the first to produce "Bloopers" films.

"Right from the very beginning we wanted to document the sport in a new way," says Ed Sabol. "We wanted to take viewers to places they hadn't been before and never would have the chance to go if it weren't for our cameras and microphones."

In 1969, NFL Films became the first to use a 600mm telephoto lens to capture what Ed's son and current president **STEVE SABOL** describes as "the raw intensity of the NFL – the bloody hands, the eyes bulging and the sweat flying."

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