

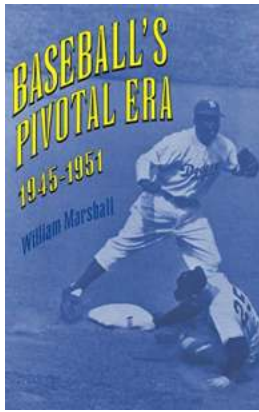
Red Grange and the Barnstorming Tour That Launched the NFL



When it comes to the history of the National Football League (NFL), one name stands out as a true pioneer: Red Grange. Known as "The Galloping Ghost," Grange revolutionized the sport and helped put the NFL on the map through his barnstorming tour in 1925. In this article, we will delve into the incredible journey of Red Grange and explore how his tour shaped the future of American football.

The Rise of Red Grange

Before delving into the significance of his barnstorming tour, it is crucial to understand Red Grange's background and his impact on the sport. Born on June 13, 1903, in Forksville, Pennsylvania, Harold Edward Grange quickly developed a passion for football. He excelled as a star player at the University of Illinois, where his speed, agility, and natural talent set him apart from his peers.



The First Star: Red Grange and the Barnstorming Tour That Launched the NFL

by William Marshall (Kindle Edition)

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In 1924, Grange had already established himself as a nationwide sensation. His electrifying performances on the college football field attracted massive crowds, making him a household name. His popularity was so immense that even President Calvin Coolidge famously declared, "That young man is one of the greatest football players I have ever seen."

The Birth of the Barnstorming Tour

Following his successful college career, Red Grange faced an important decision: whether to join the NFL or pursue other opportunities. In the early 1920s, professional football struggled to gain widespread recognition and attract consistent fan attendance. To change this, Grange and his agent, Charles C. Pyle, devised a groundbreaking plan that would revolutionize the sport.

In late 1925, Grange embarked on a barnstorming tour across the United States. The tour aimed to bring professional football to the masses by showcasing Grange's exceptional skills and drawing attention to the sport. Grange and his

team, the Chicago Bears, traveled from coast to coast, playing exhibition matches against numerous opponents.

A Game-Changer for the NFL

Red Grange's barnstorming tour had an unprecedented impact on the NFL and American football as a whole. During the 19-game tour, Grange attracted massive crowds and garnered extensive media coverage, captivating the nation's attention. This exposure helped solidify football's popularity and paved the way for future success.

Not only did Grange's tour demonstrate the potential of professional football, but it also showcased the sport's ability to generate significant revenue. The tour was a financial success, with ticket sales and merchandise transactions skyrocketing wherever Grange and the Bears played. This newfound commercial viability spurred further investments and support for the NFL.

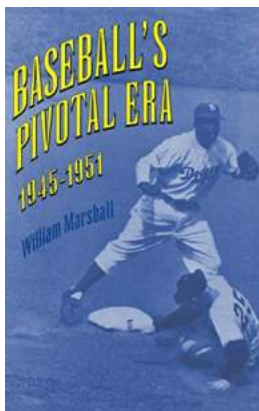
Legacy and Continued Influence

Red Grange's barnstorming tour forever altered the course of professional football. His impact extended beyond the 1925 season, setting the stage for the NFL's growth over the following decades. Grange's tour inspired other players and teams to embark on similar ventures, expanding the reach and popularity of the sport.

As for Grange himself, his barnstorming tour solidified his status as a true legend of the game. He continued to enjoy a successful football career, both as a player and later as a coach. Grange's contributions to the sport were eventually recognized when he was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1963.

Red Grange's barnstorming tour in 1925 marked a turning point for professional football in the United States. The tour showcased the immense potential of the sport, attracting crowds, media attention, and financial success. Without his groundbreaking journey, it is uncertain how the NFL would have developed and whether it would have reached the iconic status it holds today.

Red Grange remains an everlasting symbol of the sport's resilience and innovation. His name is forever etched in the annals of football's history, serving as a reminder of the powerful impact that one individual can have on an entire industry. The barnstorming tour that launched the NFL cemented Grange's status as a true pioneer and solidified his place in football lore.



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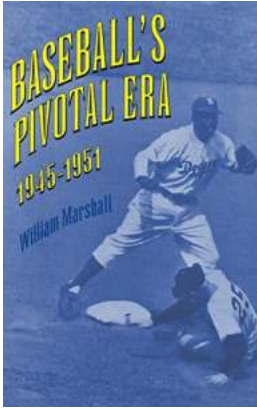


With personal interviews of players and owners and with over two decades of research in newspapers and archives, Bill Marshall tells of the players, the pennant races, and the officials who shaped one of the most memorable eras in sports and American history.

At the end of World War II, soldiers returning from overseas hungered to resume their love affair with baseball. Spectators still identified with players, whose salaries and off-season employment as postmen, plumbers, farmers, and insurance salesmen resembled their own. It was a time when kids played baseball on sandlots and in pastures, fans followed the game on the radio, and tickets were affordable. The outstanding play of Joe DiMaggio, Stan Musial, Ted Williams, Bob Feller, Don Newcombe, Warren Spahn, and many others dominated the field. But perhaps no performance was more important than that of Jackie Robinson, whose entrance into the game broke the color barrier, won him the respect of millions of Americans, and helped set the stage for the civil rights movement.

Baseball's Pivotal Era, 1945-1951 also records the attempt to organize the Pittsburgh Pirates and the Mexican League's success in luring players south of the border that led to a series of lawsuits that almost undermined baseball's reserve clause and antitrust exemption. The result was spring training pay, uniform contracts, minimum salary levels, player representation, and a pension plan—the very issues that would divide players and owners almost fifty years later.

During these years, the game was led by A.B. "Happy" Chandler, a hand-shaking, speech-making, singing Kentucky politician. Most owners thought he would be easily manipulated, unlike baseball's first commissioner, the autocratic Judge Kennesaw Mountain Landis. Instead, Chandler's style led one owner to complain that he was the "player's commissioner, the fan's commissioner, the press and radio commissioner, everybody's commissioner but the men who pay him."



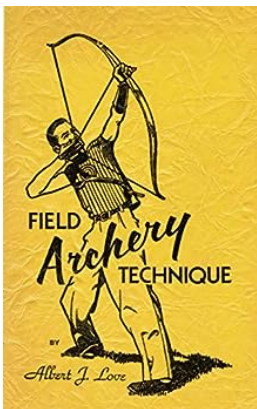
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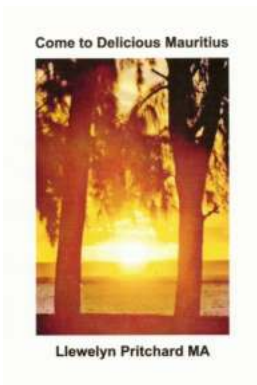
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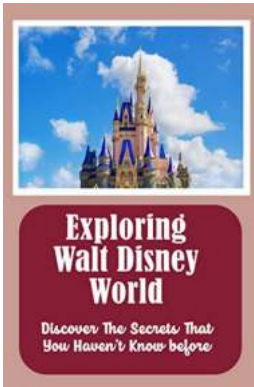
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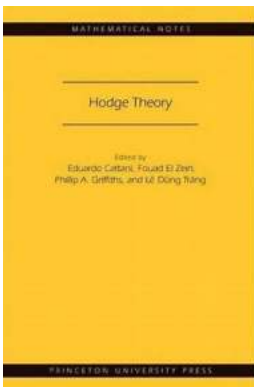
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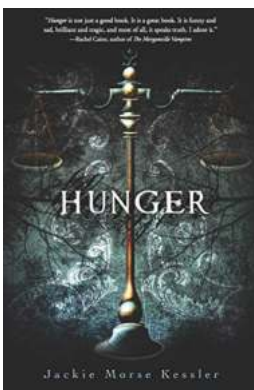
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