

Starting at the Bottom

Hundreds of Minor League Players Made it to the NFL

Compiled by Steven M. Brainerd

The appearance of the WLAFL has spawned a new interest in the possibility of a farm system for the NFL. But some nagging doubts remain: Don't the colleges prepare players for the NFL? Would a minor league produce enough players to justify its existence?

You bet it would.

This is a list of players who have graduated from pro football's minor leagues or independent teams to the majors – that is, the NFL, the AFL of the 1960s, or the AAFC of 1946-49.

The teams listed for a given player are the last minor league or independent team he played for before moving to the majors, and the first major league team. The great majority of these guys also played quite a few more years in one classification or the other, or both.

Player	Pos	College	Teams
Dick Absher	LB	Maryland	67 Virginia Sailors 68 Atlanta
Ron Acks	LB	Illinois	67 Des Moines Warriors 68 Atlanta
Henry (Hank) Adams	C	Pittsburgh	39 E. Chicago Indians 39 Chicago Cards
Abe Addams	DE	Indiana	47 Hawaiian Warriors 49 Detroit
Ben Agajanian	K	New Mexico	43 San Diego Bombers 45 Pittsburgh
Len Akin	G	Baylor	41 Milwaukee Chiefs 42 Chicago Bears
Vannie Albanese	HB	Syracuse	38 Paterson Panthers 38 Brooklyn
Frankie Albert	QB	Stanford	45 L.A. Bulldogs 46 San Francisco
Bruce Alford	K	TCU	67 Virginia Sailors 68 Buffalo
Eliau (Buddy) Allen	DB	Utah State	61 Indianapolis Warriors 61 Denver
Bob Allman	E	Michigan St.	36 L.A. Bulldogs 36 Chicago Bears
Marty Amsler	DE	Evansville	66 Wheeling Ironmen 67 Chicago Bears
Vito Ananis	HB	Boston College	42 Worcester Panthers 45 Washington
Ezzrett (Sugarfoot) Anderson	E	Kentucky St.	46 Hollywood Bears 47 L.A. Dons
Tazwell Anderson	TE	Georgia Tech	65 Lakeland Brahman 66 Atlanta
Sig Andrusking	G	Detroit Tech	36 Cleveland Rams AFL 37 Brooklyn
Chuck Apolskis	E	DePaul	38 Jersey City Giants 39 Chicago Bears
Jay Arnold	HB	Texas	40 Columbus Bullies 41 Pittsburgh
Pete Athas	DB	Tennessee	70 Norfolk Neptunes 71 New York Giants
Jim Austin	E	St. Mary's	37 L.A. Bulldogs

THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 13, No. 3 (1991)

Player	Pos	College	Teams
Chas. Avedisian	G	Providence	38 Brooklyn 41 Long Island Indians
Don Avery	T	USC	42 New York Giants 47 Wilmington Clippers
Jay Bachman	C	Cincinnati	47 Washington 67 Lowell Giants
Coy Bacon	DE	Jackson State	68 Denver 67 Orlando Panthers
Jim Baily	T	W.Va. State	68 L.A. Rams 49 Bethlehem Bulldogs
Sam Bailey	G	Georgia	49 Chicago AAFC 46 Long Island Indians
Hubert Baker	FB	Arkansas	46 Boston Yanks 42 Paterson Panthers
Vernon Baker	RB	Iowa State	43 New York Giants 67 Des Moines Warriors
Ed Balatti	E	none	68 New Orleans 46 San Francisco Clippers
Steve Bagarus	HB	Notre Dame	47 San Francisco 49ers 44 San Diego Bombers
Rudy Barber	LB	Beth.-Cook.	45 Washington 65 Wheeling Ironmen
Lou (Fats) Barle	HB	Minn.-Duluth	68 Miami 39 Cincinnati Bengals
Bill Barnard	E	C. Okla. St.	39 Cleveland Rams 38 Jersey City Giants
Gary Barnes	WR	Clemson	38 New York Giants 65 Huntsville Rockets
Earl (Cowboy) Bartlett	FB	Centre	66 Atlanta 38 Louisville Tanks
Greg Barton	QB	Tulsa	39 Pittsburgh 68 Detroit Arrows
Mike Bass	DB	Michigan	69 Detroit Lions 68 Detroit Arrows
Dick Bassi	G	Santa Clara	69 Washington 42 San Francisco Packers
Bill Baumgartner	E	Minnesota	46 San Francisco 49ers 47 Paterson Panthers
Ed Beard	LB	Tennessee	47 Baltimore AAFC 62 Wheeling Ironmen
Bruce Beekley	LB	Oregon	65 San Francisco 79 Marysville Cougars
Joe (Ed) Beinor	T	Notre Dame	80 Green Bay 39 St. Louis Gunners
Bill Belk	DL	Md.-E. Shore	40 Chicago Cards 68 Sacramento Capitols
Carlos Bell	TE	Houston	68 San Francisco 70 Richmond Saints
Kay Bell	T	Washington St.	71 New Orleans 41 Columbus Bullies
Joe Bellino	RB	Navy	42 New York Giants 63 Providence ACFL
Caesar Belser	DB	Ark. A&M	65 Boston Patriots 67 Montreal Beavers
Paul Berezney	T	Fordham	68 Kansas City 41 Kenosha Cardinals
Ron Berger	DT	Wayne St.	42 Green Bay 68 Anaheim Ramblers
			69 Boston Patriots

THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 13, No. 3 (1991)

Player	Pos	College	Teams
Gil Bergerson	G	Oregon St.	36 Paterson Panthers 36 Brooklyn
Dave (King) Bernard	QB	Mississippi	42 Wilmington Clippers 44 Cleveland Rams
George Bernhardt	G	Illinois	44 L.A. Mustangs 46 Brooklyn AAFC
Connie M. Berry	E	N.C. State	41 Milwaukee Chiefs 42 Chicago Bears
L. Bertagnolli	G	Wash. State	40 Phoenix Panthers 42 Chicago Cards
Tony Bertuca	LB	Cal. State	73 Lake County Rifles 74 Baltimore
Randy Beverly	DB	Colo. State	66 Jersey City Jets 67 New York Jets
John Biancone	QB	Oregon State	36 Paterson Panthers 36 Brooklyn
Tom Blake	G	Cincinnati	49 Erie Vets 49 New York Bulldogs
Curtis Bledsoe	RB	San Diego St.	80 Marysville Cougars 81 Kansas City
Mel Bleeker	QB	USC	43 L.A. Bulldogs 44 Philadelphia
Jim Blumenstock	HB	Fordham	46 Jersey City Giants 47 New York Giants
Ron Blye	RB	Notre Dame	67 Mt. Vernon Crusaders 68 New York Giants
Frank Bohlman	T	Marquette	41 Milwaukee Chiefs 42 Chicago Cards
Randall (Rink) Bond	FB	Washington	38 Jersey City Giants 39 Pittsburgh
Steve Bowman	RB	Alabama	66 Scranton Miners 66 New York Giants
Dave Braden	G	Marquette	40 Kenosha Cardinals 45 Chicago Bears
Hal Bradley	E	Elon	39 Paterson Panthers 39 Washington
Soloman Brannon	DB	Mor. Brown	64 Springfield Acorns 65 Kansas City
Don Breaux	QB	McNeese St.	62 Jacksonville Robins 63 Denver
Jack Brennan	E	Michigan	39 Kenosha Cardinals 39 Green Bay
Bob Briggs	DT	Heidelberg	67 Joliet Chargers 68 San Diego
Harold Brill	HB	Wichita St.	39 L.A. Bulldogs 39 Detroit
Eddie Britt	HB	Holy Cross	38 Boston Shamrocks 38 Washington
Rankin Britt	E	Texas A&M	39 Wilmington Clippers 39 Philadelphia
Bill Brown	HB	Texas Tech	41 Jersey City 43 Brooklyn
Bob Brown	WR	Alcorn St.	68 Virginia Sailors 69 St. Louis
Bob Brown	DE	Ark.-Pine Bluff	65 Wheeling Ironmen 66 Green Bay
Dave Brown	HB	Alabama	47 Jersey City Giants 47 New York Giants
Ken Brown	RB	none	69 Newark Jays

THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 13, No. 3 (1991)

Claude Brownlee	DE	Benedict	70 Cleveland 66 Harrisburg Capitols 67 Miami
Player	Pos	College	Teams
Les Bruckner	FB	Michigan St.	41 Kenosha Cardinals 45 Chicago Cards
Bob Bryant	DB	S. Carolina	67 Des Moines Warriors 68 Minnesota
Hubie Bryant	WR	Minnesota	69 Wheeling Ironmen 70 Pittsburgh
Amadeo (Mike) Bucchianeri	G	Indiana	42 Wilmington Clippers 44 Green Bay
Phil Bucklew	E	Xavier	38 Cincinnati Bengals 38 Cleveland Rams
G. Bugenhagen	T	Syracuse	69 Indianapolis 70 Boston Patriots
Ray Buivid	HB	Marquette	37 N.Y. Yankees AFL 38 Chicago Bears
Sam Busich	E	Ohio State	39 Columbus Bullies 43 Detroit
Young Bussey	QB	LSU	40 Newark Bears 41 Chicago Bears
Frank Bykowski	G	Purdue	40 Milwaukee Chiefs 40 Pittsburgh
Ronnie Cahill	HB	Holy Cross	42 Holyoke Golden Bears 43 Chicago Bears
Jamie Caleb	RB	Grambling	62 Cleveland Bulldogs 65 Cleveland Browns
Bob Callahan	C	Michigan	47 Paterson Panthers 48 Buffalo AAFC
Bill Callihan	QB	Nebraska	39 Columbus Bullies 40 Detroit
Tony Calvelli	G	Stanford	46 San Francisco Clippers 47 San Francisco 49ers
Mike Campbell	RB	Len.-Rhyne	68 Detroit Arrows 68 Detroit Lions
Leo Cantor	FB	UCLA	40 L.A. Bulldogs 42 New York Giants
Dick Capp	TE	Boston College	66 Lowell Giants 67 Green Bay
G. Cappelletti	WR	Minnesota	58 Sarnia Golden Bears 60 Boston Patriots
Hal Carlson	T	DePaul	37 N.Y. Yankees AFL 37 Chicago Cards
Levert Carr	T	N.C. Central	68 Las Vegas Cowboys 69 San Diego
Duane Carrell	P	Florida St.	73 Hagerstown Bears 74 Dallas
Howie Carson	HB	Illinois	41 Milwaukee Chiefs 44 Cleveland
Walter Carter	DE	Florida St.	81 Sacramento Buffaloes 87 Tampa Bay
Chet Chesney	C	DePaul	38 Cincinnati Bengals 39 Chicago Bears
George Cheverko	HB	Fordham	46 Jersey City Giants 47 New York Giants
Max Choboian	QB	S. Fernando	65 Norfolk Neptunes 66 Denver
Steve Chomyszak	DT	Syracuse	67 Waterbury Orbits 68 Cincinnati

THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 13, No. 3 (1991)

Earl Christy	DB	Md.-E. Shore	67 Waterbury Orbits 68 New York Jets
Ben Ciccone	C	Duquesne	37 Cincinnati Bengals 42 Chicago Cardinals
Player	Pos	College	Teams
Jim Clack	C	Wake Forest	69 Norfolk Neptunes 71 Pittsburgh
Harry Clark	HB	W. Virginia	45 San Diego Gunners 46 Chicago Bears
Wayne Clark	E	Utah	41 Hollywood Bears 44 Detroit
Ray Clemons	G	C. Okla. St.	38 L.A. Bulldogs 39 Detroit
Dave Cloutier	DB	Maine	63 Portland Seahawks 64 Boston Patriots
John Clowes	G	Wm. & Mary	47 Richmond Rebels 48 Brooklyn AAFC
Dave Colavito	LB	Wake Forest	74 New York Rams 75 Philadelphia
Al Coleman	DB	Tenn. State	68 Charleston Rockets 69 Cincinnati
Dick Compton	WR	McMurry	65 Mobile Tarpons 67 Pittsburgh
Glen Condren	DE	Oklahoma	68 Huntsville Hawks 69 Atlanta
Jerry Conlee	QB	St. Mary's	42 San Francisco Packers 43 Detroit
Enio Conti	G	Bucknell	40 Jersey City Giants 41 Philadelphia
John Contoulis	DT	Connecticut	63 Ansonia Black Knights 64 New York Giants
Bill Cooper	QB	Penn State	37 Cincinnati Bengals 37 Cleveland Rams
Joe Corn	HB	none	48 Hawaiian Warriors 48 Los Angeles Rams
John Counts	DB	Illinois	61 Stamford Golden Bears 62 New York Giants
Bill Craven	DB	Harvard	73 Chambersburg Cards 76 Cleveland
Leon Crenshaw	DT	Tuskegee	67 Lowell Giants 68 Green Bay
Cleveland Crosby	DE	Arizona	81 Canton Bulldogs 82 Baltimore
Dave Crossan	C	Maryland	64 Camden Wildcats 65 Washington
Otis Crowell	T	Hard.-Sim.	46 L.A. Bulldogs 47 San Francisco 49ers
Dick Danahe	T	USC	46 L.A. Bulldogs 47 Los Angeles AAFC
Frank (Boley) Dancewicz	QB	Notre Dame	47 Wilmington Clippers 48 Boston Yanks
Ed Danowski	HB	Fordham	40 Jersey City Giants 41 New York Giants
Bill Davidson	E	Bald.-Wall.	39 Columbus Bullies 39 Pittsburgh
Bob Davis	HB	Kentucky	41 Columbus Bullies 42 Philadelphia
Bob Davis	QB	Virginia	70 Jersey City Jays 71 New York Jets
Fr. DeBernardi	P	El Paso	80 Baltimore Eagles

THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 13, No. 3 (1991)

Player	Pos	College	Teams
Nick DeFelince	T	S. Conn. St.	81 Kansas City 64 Hartford Charter Oaks
Bob DeFruiter	HB	Nebraska	65 New York Jets 48 Paterson Panthers 48 Los Angeles Rams
Spiro Dellerba	LB	Ohio State	49 Erie Vets 49 Baltimore AAFC
Frank Dempsey	G	Florida	50 Richmond Rebels 51 Chicago Bears
Tom Dempsey	K	Palomar J.C.	67 Lowell Giants 69 New Orleans
Jerry Dennerlein	T	St. Mary's	39 L.A. Bulldogs 40 New York Giants
Dick Deschaine	P	none	53 Marinette Hornets 55 Green Bay
Charles Detwiler	DB	Utah State	69 Huntsville Hawks 70 San Diego
Ben Dial	QB	East N.M.	66 Wheeling Ironmen 67 Chicago Bears
Wallace Dickey	T	SW Texas St.	67 Orlando Panthers 68 Denver
Dave Diehl	E	Mich. State	39 Cincinnati Bengals 40 Detroit
Johnnie Dirden	WR	Sam Houston	77 Houston Seagulls 78 Houston Oilers
Bob Dobelstein	G	Tennessee	49 Paterson Panthers 49 Los Angeles AAFC
Pete Dobrus	T	Carn.-Mell.	41 Long Island Indians 41 Brooklyn Dodgers
John Dockery	DB	Harvard	68 Bridgeport Jets 69 New York Jets
Les Dodson	HB	Mississippi	41 Wilmington Clippers 41 Pittsburgh
Bill Donckers	QB	San Diego St.	74 Sumner Bengals 76 St. Louis
Bob Douglas	HB	Kansas St.	37 Pittsburgh Americans 38 Pittsburgh Pirates
Brian Dowling	QB	Yale	69 Bridgeport Jets 72 New England
Greg Dubinetz	T	Yale	78 Highland Park 79 Washington
Walt Dubzinski	C	Boston College	42 Holyoke Golden Bears 43 New York Giants
Mitch Dudek	G	Xavier	65 Jersey City Jets 66 New York Jets
Jim Duncan	DB	Md.-E. Shore	68 Harrisburg Capitols 69 Baltimore
Rick Duncan	K	E. Montana	67 Wheeling Ironmen 68 Philadelphia
Coy Dunn	HB	USC	42 San Diego Bombers 43 Washington
Lou Eaton	T	California	43 Alameda Mustangs 45 New York Giants
Ed Ecker	T	John Carroll	46 Akron Bears 47 Chicago Bears
Bob Eckl	T	Wisconsin	41 Cincinnati Bengals 45 Chicago Cardinals
Weldon Edwards	T	TCU	48 Wilmington Clippers 48 Washington

THE COFFIN CORNER: Vol. 13, No. 3 (1991)

Bill Ellenboggen	T	Va. Tech	73 Albany Metro-Mallers 75 New York Giants
Carlton Elliott	E	Virginia	50 Erie Vets 51 Green Bay
Earl Elsey	HB	Loyola	45 L.A. Bulldogs 46 Los Angeles AAFC
Player	Pos	College	Teams
John Embree	WR	Compton JC	67 Wheeling Ironmen 69 Denver
Bob Emerick	OL	Miami-Ohio	36 New York Yankees 37 Cleveland Rams
Bill Erickson	G	Georgetown	47 Jersey City Giants 48 New York Giants
Len Eshmont	HB	Fordham	45 Oakland Giants 46 San Francisco 49ers

Obviously, there's a lot more to this list, but we hope it's piqued your interest in the topic. We'll continue this in future issues of the *Coffin Corner*.