

Making Money (Lots of It) in Professional Football in the Late 1940s: The Case of the 1946 Cleveland Browns

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In its first season, the Cleveland Browns of the newly created All-America Football Conference (AAFC) averaged over 55,000 fans per game for its seven home contests. Despite the highly impressive numbers, nearly double the figure claimed to be the breakeven point for pro football teams in the immediate post World War II era, the press generally placed the team's profits at the ridiculously low figure of between \$3000 and \$5000. What made this vision seem reasonable was the notion that the high start up costs of this new enterprise, the economic problems of the AAFC and that club owner Mickey McBride had spent lavishly to promote the club initially, had severely eroded the black side of the ledger. What made this assertion even more plausible was the long accepted view that pro football was hardly a profitable investment and that even the few successful money making clubs did so on a limited basis and that escalating salaries resulting from the challenge of a new league was hardly conducive to any dramatic increase in a team's profit margin.¹

In this paper, I employ what I call 'inferential economics' to reveal the discrepancy between the rhetoric and the reality of the Browns financial picture. Inferential economics is an approach I designed in my forthcoming study of the AAFC as a means to help overcome the problems created by the paucity of financial data on pro football. I envisioned it as an effective way to facilitate the creation of an estimate of the revenues and expenditures (R&E) of each AAFC team. Despite the fact that there was no complete set of data for any one team, there were sufficient bits of economic information on pro football teams in the immediate post World War II period to create reliable and useful estimates of the R&E of AAFC teams. My fundamental premise was that I could infer estimated income and costs for teams for which such information was unavailable from teams for which data existed on various R&E components. Several factors contributed to my comfort in making what I felt were good educated guesses. One was that it was tied to the gestalt I had created by immersing myself in the conventional primary sources. Second, in all cases I erred on the side of caution as I expanded expenditures and limited income. Finally, I was concerned with constructing realistic estimates, not reconstructing truth.²

While I envisioned inferential economics more as a vehicle to assist in creating a more textured analysis of the AAFC than the construction of a precise financial assessment, I was most confident in the numbers when I dealt with the

Browns since there was more 'hard' data on them than on any other team in the Conference, including a list of the salaries of most players. From what economic data existed on the team and from what could be inferred from other pro football clubs in both leagues at the time, I was able to construct an estimate of the Browns 1946 revenues and expenditures. In the former category I estimated its income from home, away and preseason games as well as money generated from radio, concessions and its participation in the championship contest. In the latter category, I looked at salaries, travel, training, and equipment costs, fees paid to the league and park expenses.³

In contrast to the contemporary portrait of Cleveland's finances, my figures reveal quite a different picture one in which I estimated that the Browns made a robust profit in excess of \$240,000 (see Table 1).

Table 1: Cleveland Browns 1946 Estimated Revenues and Expenditures

ATTENDANCE	
Announced	399,963
Estimated	383,580
INCOME	\$779,530
Home	\$509,644
Away	\$142,213
Preseason	\$ 48,074
Concession	\$ 42,995
Radio	\$ 17,500
Championship	\$ 19,104
EXPENDITURES	\$538,080
Fees	\$ 65,841
Salaries	\$ 263,000
Operational	\$ 65,000
Travel	\$ 42,649
Training	\$ 25,000
Equipment	\$ 10,000
Park Expenses	\$ 4,305
Promotion	\$ 48,000
Other	\$ 14,285
PROFIT	\$ 241,450

What follows in this paper is an exploration into how I reached this conclusion. My road map takes us on three journeys: First, it begins with a lengthy look at how I created the estimates of R&E of the Browns; second I then do the numbers, examining the estimated finances of the team; and finally I briefly explore the meaning and implication of the numbers for understanding pro football and the AAFC-NFL conflict in the immediate post World War II years.

Creating the Numbers

In the years prior to television, gate receipts from home and away games constituted the lifeblood of professional sport teams and for the Browns they comprised nearly 85 percent of its estimated income. To generate Cleveland's take for each of its seven home and away games, I needed the following information: game attendance, price per ticket; the league and rental fees; and the breakdown of the visitor's share. Attendance for each Cleveland home game was reported in the press and from the outset the team was immensely successful. It drew reportedly over 60,000 to its home opener and twice during the season it attracted over 70,000 fans to cavernous Municipal Stadium. For the year, the Browns home attendance was reportedly 399,963 for a per game average of 57,138. What made these exceedingly impressive numbers so gleeful for AAFC boosters was that it took place in a city that the NFL had just abandoned because it claimed that Cleveland could not support pro football.⁴

Cleveland's attendance figures, and those of other Conference clubs even more, must be viewed with a healthy skepticism as padding was a common practice as both the AAFC and its NFL rival sought to place its team in a favourable light. Since the numbers were inflated, I adopted several procedures to adjust for the inflation. Where reporters expressed doubt about the announced attendance at a particular game and offered their own estimate of the crowd, I used their lower figures. On two occasions, both in 1946, reporters corrected a team's annual numbers. One Buffalo scribe asserted that the home team inflated its numbers by 9126 or 7.7 per cent of the announced attendance. The other, Francis Lewis of the *Cleveland Press*, claimed that the Browns overstated its attendance by 16,383 or roughly four per cent. Since Lewis did not give a game-by-game breakdown, I simply subtracted 2341 from the attendance figure for each Browns game. Finally, I used the Browns four per cent inflation as a starting point to gage the level of inflation for other AAFC clubs. For New York, Brooklyn and Chicago, where the two leagues directly competed and where the practice of padding was reported to be more widespread, the figure was increased to five, six and eight per cent, respectively, and I decreased the announced attendance for each of these home games by the per cent listed except in those cases where the press insisted that there was an even larger drop in the number of spectators in attendance.⁵

Admissions are one side of the revenue equation, ticket prices are the other. To uncover the revenues each AAFC team generated from its contests, I began by

estimating its after taxes average ticket prices (ATP). Here as usual only a few nuggets exist, but they were sufficient to build a profile of each club's ATP. There was also by far more fiscal information on Cleveland than any other Conference club, largely because its attendance and the financial largess that followed was a source of confirmation for AAFC supporters and the home-town audience. The data provided the gross receipts of several Browns contests. When divided by the announced number of spectators, the average price varied from \$2.09 to \$2.35, with an overall average of \$2.235. If six per cent of each Browns' (and every other teams) ticket cost went for various taxes, Cleveland's estimated ATP was \$2.10.⁶

There was some ticket price information for other AAFC teams, the Colts, 49ers, Chicago and Los Angeles. For example, in 1949 Baltimore's president asserted that his club's ATP was \$2.02. Financial data for the other clubs produced lower estimated yields, with ATPs of \$1.91, \$1.575 and \$1.73 for San Francisco, Los Angeles and Chicago respectively. For AAFC club in New York, Brooklyn, Buffalo and Miami, there was no specific ticket price data, but an estimate ATP could be constructed by looking at what general information existed on these teams and compare it with those clubs for which an estimate ATP has been created. For example, the cost of seeing the New York Yankees seemed within the Browns' price range. Like Cleveland, the Yankees were successful (twice winning its division), played in a city where high ticket prices were the norm and although its cost was less than for the NFL's New York club, the New York press never mentioned that seats at Yankee Stadium were cheap. In addition, one reporter claimed that the Yankees grossed around \$460,000 in 1946. The amount appears on the high side as even the club's announced attendance would have yielded a 2.22 ATP. However, a 2.08 ATP, somewhere between Cleveland and Baltimore, albeit closer to the former than the latter, provides a conservative but good ballpark figure for the price of a Yankee ticket.⁷

There is only one reference to how home and visiting AAFC teams shared their gate receipts, beyond the Conference's bold announcement almost immediately following its formation that it guaranteed visiting teams \$15,000, five thousand more than its NFL rival. It stated that the visitors would receive either the guaranteed money or forty per cent of the gate after the home team deducted for taxes and rental. The situation closely approximates how the NFL divided in dollars and for which specific league data does exist and I worked on the principle that in this matter both leagues were essentially similar. In the NFL, a visiting team had the option of taking the guarantee or forty per cent of the gross revenue after the home team made the following deduction: all taxes; fifteen percent of the after taxes revenues; and the league fee of four per cent of the first after taxes \$10,000 in receipts and two per cent of the remaining revenue. The fifteen per cent deduction is the only place where the NFL and AAFC may have varied. Since all NFL clubs (except Green Bay) paid this percentage in rental fees, this deduction no doubt represented this outlay. In the AAFC, far greater differences in rental fees existed and there is no information on whether this deduction was based on a

team's rent or a universal percentage. In most cases, selecting the deduction based on the rental fee paid would make only a slight difference in a team's revenue, but this was hardly true for Cleveland where for the 1946 season a flat fifteen per cent deduction, rather than its rent rate, would have netted it a substantial additional profit. In the absence of specificity but forced to choose, I selected to base this deduction on the actual rental fee. This procedure limited the profits/losses of teams with favourable rental agreements, but it did not impact my overall assessment of the AAFC's financial condition and often this procedure was off set by the fact that the better off clubs, as we shall see, were at times called upon to bale out their less fortune brethren.⁸

Money from radio provided a small supplement to the earnings pro football teams made from gate fees. Specific dollar amounts exist only for 1949 and Cleveland self reported receiving \$20,000 in radio rights that year. Since it is not known what they obtained in prior years, I downgraded the Browns by \$2,500 for its initial season. The Browns favourable rental deal also contributed to it receiving a larger share of the concession money than most if not all clubs in both leagues. Since professional football teams did not own the stadiums they played in, revenues from concessions went to the owners of the parks, whether private entrepreneurs or municipal governments, with the notable exception of the sale of programs and the accompanying advertising revenue. The Browns, however, split the Municipal Stadium money with the city. While there was no data on how much each spectator spent on concessions and parking for 1946, fortunately that information did exist for Municipal Stadium for 1961 through 1963. During these three years, the Browns take was 14 cents per attendee and I dropped this number in half to estimate its 1946 share of the concession and parking money.⁹

Programs were generally priced at a quarter, although there were minor variations in the share each club received because of differences in what vendors obtained from selling the product and/or the percentage ballpark/owners took from the receipts. Despite differences among teams, George Marshall's figures for his Redskins appear representative. Marshall received \$13,000 from the sale of programs and \$11,000 from the sale of advertisement. His share for each program sold was 19.5 cents, with the vendor keeping the difference. Dividing Marshall's revenues by the per program price indicates that he sold 11,111 programs per game, or to nearly forty per cent of the attendees. It cost Marshall eleven cents to print each program, or \$10,000 for the 91,000 programs printed. Subtracting this cost from the revenue left Marshall with a net program profit of \$14,000.¹⁰

While there is no specific data on how much the Browns or any AAFC club earned from program sales and the accompanying advertisement, the Washington example facilitates a viable estimate. It is doubtful that any AAFC team obtained the same amount of advertisement dollars as such a venerable NFL team as Washington. Nevertheless, it probably received at least half that amount (\$5,500) given the booster spirit associated with many of the teams and that much of the advertisement dollars came from businesses with a vested interest in the team.

There is no reason to suspect that the cost of a program in an AAFC park differed from an NFL one, that its printing cost varied, that there was significant variance in the division of money from program sales from what existed in Washington, or that AAFC fans bought programs at a rate less than NFL ones. Nevertheless, as an expression of my policy of caution, I slightly dropped the AAFC rate to three out of eight, even though the Washington figure may have actually been small as the Eagles management insisted that half its customers bought a program. The most difficult question revolves around the issue of cost overrun, which in Marshall's case was over 24,000 and nearly \$2,700, or virtually twenty per cent of his program profits. Marshall's huge error in the number of printings was no doubt linked to the significant drop in his team's attendance (nearly 5,000 per game) from the previous season. While his overestimation was probably an anomaly, every team printed more programs than it sold. Accounting for the amount can only be guesswork, and here I estimated that each AAFC team printed ten per cent more copies than were bought.¹¹

Conference clubs obtained revenues from exhibition games, albeit generally a limited amount. Arch Ward, the pivotal figure behind the AAFC's formation, always insisted that one of its major weaknesses was its failure to exploit preseason games. Whereas NFL clubs often used such contests to cover their training camp costs and begin the season in the black, this was far less an occurrence in the AAFC. Attendance figures for AAFC exhibition games were limited, the revenues they generated even more so, and there was no transparency of the various fees paid or how the teams divided the revenues. While preseason revenues were the most difficult R&E category to estimate, I decided to estimate their after expenses receipts an AAFC team received for exhibition games at \$12,500 or half their training camp costs. There were exceptions to this scant amount and where there was such information, I naturally enhanced the preseason revenues of the respective teams. One exception was the 1946 exhibition game between Cleveland and Brooklyn held in nearby Akron Ohio, which attracted a reported crowd of 35,964 and supposedly grossed over \$100,000. Since the stated receipts would have required at minimum a pre-tax ticket price of \$2.78, far in excess of Cleveland's season price, the dollar data must be revisited. To estimate Cleveland's take, I reduced the attendance by the Browns four per cent figure and based the revenues generated on its 2.10 ATP. I worked on the assumption that the league fee was the same for exhibition and regular season games, but I had no data on what cities charged football clubs to rent their stadiums for preseason contests or even whether it was a flat fee or percentage of the gate. I strongly doubted that Akron charged the fifteen per cent that major league ballparks charged their NFL renters since it was not major league, that the Akron-Canton-Massillon areas was Paul Brown territory, and especially since McBride had business interests in the Canton-Akron. While I would not be shocked to learn that Cleveland paid a straight fee or the same six per cent it paid Municipal Stadium, to be on the cautious side I estimated the rental fee at nine per cent (a fifty per cent increase

over its seasonal fee) and presumed that it took none of the concession money except for the revenue from the sales of program following the same procedure used to estimate its income from this endeavor. I also doubled what Cleveland normally paid for park expenses and while it was quite possible that the team bused to the game from its nearby training camp on the same day, I deducted my average estimate for hotel and meal money of \$1,135 (see below). As for the preseason division of revenues among the teams, I found only one example, a 1950 exhibition between Baltimore and San Francisco, but I suspect that it is a representative depiction of the procedure. In this case the home team arranged the contest and offered the visitor a flat guarantee, described as the unusual amount of \$22,500. The 49ers largess had less to do with its quality as a draw and more to entice it make the costly coast-to-coast trip. While I believe that the AAFC likely adopted the same procedure, in the absence of any specific information on the amount or range of the guarantees, I estimated the visitors take at 25 per cent (in contrast to the season forty per cent) of the estimated receipt minus expenses.¹²

Finally, involvement in the championship expanded Cleveland's coffers. While there were fairly accurate press report about the receipts of such games and broad discussion of the financial breakdown, how much went to each participating club is not known. As such I gave each club \$15,000 beyond expenses and since the 1946 contest was held at Municipal Stadium added concession and program money to the Browns take. I generally followed the usual season procedures but raised the percentage of programs sold to 45 per cent midway between the claims of Washington and Philadelphia as I presumed spectators were more willing to buy on these special occasions.

Salaries were far and away the largest component of the expenditures of teams. About the salaries of football players in immediate post World War II, we know that there was universal agreement that the emergence of AAFC dramatically drove them up. We fortunately have numbers for some teams during these years, especially from the NFL, but for this period, the most comprehensive set of salary information for any pro football team exists for the Browns as a document in the Pro Football Hall of Fame contains the salaries and signing bonuses of its players for the years 1949 and 1950. The list also included the same information on players who played from 1946 through 1948 and were still on the active roster in the subsequent two years. Since there was significant continuity among the Browns personnel, especially among its stars, all of whom were with the team during its four AAFC years, the data permits the creation a very confident approximation of the Browns payroll and for its first season and I approximated its players payroll at \$209,000.¹³

Cleveland's payroll was expanded by \$54,000 to cover the salaries of coaches, assistant coaches, scouts and trainers. When Paul Brown signed as the club's head coach for \$25,000, he emerged as the highest paid member of his profession in pro football, a point the Conference proudly trumpeted. I estimated the salary of an assistant coach at \$6,250 based on the average pay of the two

assistant coaches listed in the Philadelphia Eagles' affidavit in the Radovich case. This is the only data for this position, but their affiliation with a championship club suggests that the amount was at least representative and maybe on the high side. Although the Philadelphia deposition noted only two assistants, most NFL clubs had three such coaches. AAFC teams probably followed the prevalent NFL pattern, but Cleveland actually had four. The cost of scouting varied widely among NFL teams with outlays as low as \$3,900 and as much as \$10,000 including travel expenses for the 1949 champion Philadelphia Eagles. Cleveland's scouting procedures differed from other clubs as its coaches doubled as scouts, which may explain why it had four assistants. I charged the Browns \$1,500 (which Philadelphia outlaid) for scouts' travel expenses. Finally, one writer gave a \$10,000 fee for trainers, but given the cost of an assistant coach this is dubious, and they more likely received no more than a quarter of that fee or \$2,500.¹⁴

While salaries were by far a team's largest expenditure, there were other outlays including rental fees. I already noted that contributing to the Browns' huge profitability was a very favorable rental deal in which it paid only a six per cent fee. How McBride obtained this arrangement is not known, but his connections to Cleveland politics in all likelihood played a contributing role. A more vital factor, however, was the general non usage of Municipal Stadium by the city's professional baseball and football teams. Prior to World War II, Cleveland's teams in both sports usually disdained the big ballpark on the Lake for the smaller League Park. Given these conditions, city officials were more than happy to obtain a tenant for Municipal Stadium and willingly provided it at a bargain rate. The advantages of the Browns' more favourable deal were quite apparent to the lament of writers in its west division rival city of San Francisco. For example, in 1946, the Browns paid nearly \$1,500 less in rental fees than the 49ers even though it drew more than twice as many fans to its home games and had an estimate ATP that was nine per cent higher.¹⁵

Travel costs were a constant concern for the coast-to-coast Conference. There was no specific data on the travel expenses of AAFC teams, but it does exist for a couple of NFL ones. The Giants travel expense for the 1949 season was \$11,596. Philadelphia paid roughly the same amount, outlaying \$13,544 in 1949 and \$11,008 in 1950. The Giants also declared that it paid \$5,674 for hotels and players meals. Data did not exist on any other club's total outlay for these expenses, but in 1950 NFL teams reported on the daily cost of a double hotel room in their respective cities and their contributions to the meal money of the players. While costs varied from city-to-city and from team-to-team, the Giants' expenses were representative and somewhat on the high side.¹⁶

Knowledge of the Giants' expenditures on travel, hotels and meals facilitates the construction of an estimate of what AAFC teams paid for these expenses. As the Giants made five road trips its average cost per trip was \$3,450. Since the Giants traveled exclusively by train, it is necessary to account for the cost Conference clubs incurred when they flew. Cleveland stated it paid a \$1.90

per air mile. Since airline prices varied, I increased its fee by a dime and used the Rand-McNally road map to provide the miles between cities. By this method, a New York-Los Angeles roundtrip flight cost \$11,300, within the \$10,000-\$12,000 range reporters insisted was the price of such travel. This method does not work for shorter flights. For example, a Pittsburgh to Philadelphia round trip would calculate at \$1,232, but Art Rooney placed the price at \$2,640. As a result for flights of less than 2,000 miles, I added \$1,500 to the two dollars per mile price.¹⁷

While AAFC teams used both air and rail travel, I needed to determine when they went by plane or train. This was less of an issue for Cleveland as there is evidence that the club flew regularly, although it most likely took the train for the short hop to Buffalo. Additional travel expenses need to be accounted for as AAFC teams often doubled up to avoid the heavy cost of coast-to-coast flying as the Browns did when it played on consecutive weekends in Los Angeles and San Francisco. I used the Giants numbers to calculate the cost of moving the team one way by train and an extra week of hotel and meals.

Football clubs incurred other operational expenses. Figures for the Green Bay Packers in 1950 offer useful insight into these expenses and provide an estimate of a team's operational cost. When these numbers were totalled they came to the tidy sum of virtually \$55,900, and included, for example, \$12,750 for entertainment; about \$1,600 for legal fees and league meetings, and \$23,000 for insurance and unemployment compensation. To these numbers I added \$9,100 for various office staff workers, rounding the figure to \$65,000. The cost of publicity and promotion also revealed somewhat of a range among NFL clubs, from \$15,000 for the Giants to \$25,000 for the Eagles. In 1950, however, the Browns placed its outlay at even a higher figure of \$32,000. For the 1946 season, I added another \$16,000 (half its declared amount) to the Browns' promotional number given all the talk of the vast sums of money McBride spent to publicise his team.¹⁸

Training camp cost clubs an estimated \$25,000. This figure derived by first multiplying sixty players at camp, by 28 days by the cost of eight dollars per day per player, a close approximation to what NFL teams reported as the cost for this expense. To this amount of \$13,440, I added \$1,000 per week for the rental of facilities, although no specific data existed on this cost. The remaining money was expense of bringing players to camp, which was roughly the average NFL outlay for this cost. One journalist placed the price of new equipment for a football club at \$5,000. While reporters often overstated operational costs, I doubled this figure for the Browns' first year. Finally, clubs incurred a variety of park expenses, among them the cost of ticket takers, ushers, field markers and police. Data from NFL teams reveal a wide range in these outlays, with New York and Washington paying as little as \$900 and \$1,000 per game, respectively, while others teams paid over \$4,000. Cleveland's favorable stadium deal, however, significantly reduced its costs here as it paid only \$540 per game in park expenses and another \$75 per game for the city to audit the receipts from the gate and concessions.¹⁹

Doing the Numbers

The huge throngs that flocked to Cleveland's Municipal Stadium in the Browns initial season, exceeding 50,000 in five of its seven home games, laid the foundation for the team's exceptionally lucrative year. Table 2 provides a financial breakdown of the revenue generated from the Browns' home games. It shows that it generated estimated gross revenues after taxes of \$805,510 from which it paid visiting clubs a total of \$295,866 leaving McBride's men with an estimate income from home games of \$509,644. From this amount the Browns paid \$65,841 in league and rental fees and a nominal \$4,305 in park and audit expenses, resulting in an estimated profit from home games of \$439,500. To give this number a richer context, it more than doubled what the club outlaid in player salaries. The numbers would have been even higher if the AAFC did use the exact the same breakdown that the NFL employed in sharing the revenues between home and visiting clubs. If the Browns took fifteen per cent off the top rather than its six per cent rental fee from the revenues visiting teams drew their percentage, it would have added nearly \$29,000 to its home game coffers. If this procedure was in effect some of this amount would be offset by reductions in take home pay in Buffalo and New York, neither of whom had the fifteen per cent rental fees but even after the approximate \$5,115 decline the Browns would have had an estimated \$23,900 more on the black side of its ledger.²⁰

Table 2: Estimated Revenues of Browns 1946 Home Games

Team	Estimated Attendance	Revenue	Rent	League Fees	Park Expenses	Visitor's Share	Browns' Take
Miami	57,795	\$121,367.40	\$7,282.04	\$2,627.35	\$615.00	\$44,583.20	\$76,784.20
New York	54,744	\$114,962.40	\$6,897.74	\$2,499.25	\$615.00	\$42,226.16	\$72,736.24
Brooklyn	41,372	\$86,881.20	\$5,212.87	\$1,937.62	\$615.00	\$33,092.28	\$53,788.92
Los Angeles	68,792	\$144,463.20	\$8,667.79	\$3,089.26	\$615.00	\$53,082.46	\$91,380.74
San Francisco	68,045	\$142,894.50	\$8,573.67	\$3,057.89	\$615.00	\$52,505.18	\$90,389.32
Chicago	58,116	\$122,043.60	\$7,322.62	\$2,640.87	\$615.00	\$44,830.04	\$77,213.56
Buffalo	34,713	\$72,897.30	\$4,373.84	\$1,657.95	\$615.00	\$25,546.20	\$47,351.10
	383,577	\$805,509.60	\$48,330.57	\$17,510.19	\$4,305.00	\$295,865.52	\$509,644.08

The Browns took in only an estimated \$142,213 from its road contests, a per game average of \$20,316. (see Table 3) In fact, in three of its seven games Cleveland went home with only the guaranteed money. The limited road revenue is hardly surprising since the Conference in 1946, sans Cleveland, had an estimated home attendance of slightly more than 18,900 per game. Nor is it difficult to understand why Paul Brown became so quickly disillusioned with the AAFC in light of the estimated \$153,653 difference between what visitors took from Municipal Stadium and what his club brought home from road games.²¹

Table 3: Estimated Revenues of Browns 1946 Road Games

Team	Estimated Attendance	ATP	Revenue	Rental Fee	League Fee	Brown's Share
Miami	8,538	\$1.50	\$12,807	\$3,000.00	\$ 512.80	\$15,000.00
New York	32,539	\$2.08	\$67,681.12	0.00	\$1553.62	\$26,451.00
Brooklyn	14,394	\$1.73	\$24,901.62	\$3,735.24	\$ 698.03	\$15,000.00
Los Angeles	21,222	\$1.575	\$33,424.65	\$5,013.70	\$ 868.49	\$15,000.00
San Francisco	39,419	\$1.91	\$75,290.29	\$11,209.54	\$1705.81	\$24,916.38
Chicago	47,805	\$1.73	\$82,702.65	\$12,405.40	\$1854.05	\$27,377.28
Buffalo	29,000	\$1.82	\$52,780.00	\$ 5,278.00	\$1255.60	\$18,498.56
	192,917		\$349,587.33	\$40,641.88	\$8,448.40	\$142,213.16

The Browns were able to partially compensate for its limited take in road revenue with a relatively lucrative exhibition contest in Akron. Table 4 shows that an estimate crowd of 34,525 generated estimated revenues of \$72,502.50. After subtracting various expenses, the paying of the visiting Dodgers and adding the money earned from the sales of programs, minus the cost of production, Cleveland went home with a tidy estimated profit of \$48,075. Concessions, the sale of programs, again minus their cost of production, and their accompanying advertising yielded another \$42,995 in estimated revenues (see Table 5). Finally, the Browns generated an estimate \$19,104 from its participation in the 1946 championship contest with \$4,179 of this revenue coming from its share of the concession and program sales.

In contrast to Cleveland's estimate \$779,530 in income, the club had an estimated \$538,080 in expenditures with salaries constituting the largest share, an estimated \$263,000 or slightly less than half the total estimate for expenditures (see Table 1). Of the Browns salary, an estimated \$209,000 went to the players with roughly \$40,000, or slightly less than twenty per cent of the player's payroll, going to signing bonuses for a significant number of them, including many of the team's leading members, such as Lou Groza, Dante Lavelle, Marion Motley and Otto Graham, to ensure that they joined the club after they completed their military service. McBride's outlay was most likely larger than for any NFL club, indicating that AAFC owners were willing at this point to outspend their senior circuit counterparts. Despite Cleveland's large outlay, McBride was probably not the Conference's biggest spender in 1946, being surpassed by pro football's two wealthiest owners, Dan Topping (New York Yankees) and Ben Lindheimer (Los Angeles Dons), with the latter having the reputation of being generous to a fault. Both these and other Conference owners took a different approach to the signing of players than did Paul Brown. Whereas several clubs sought and signed NFL veterans, Brown went after first year players, a large contingent of whom played for him at Ohio State or against him at other Big Ten schools. This approach enabled him to ink three Future Hall of Famers, Graham, Groza and Motley, for

\$7,500, \$5,000 and \$4,000 plus signing bonuses. While these and other Browns were paid fairly well by the standards of the day, especially for rookies, by signing still untested pros and by inking some early, he obtained them for what performance wise proved to be less than their true market value.²²

Table 4: Revenue from Exhibition Game

	Revenue	Expenses
Initial Revenue	\$72,502.50	
League Fee		-\$1,650.05
Rent		-\$6,525.23
Park Expense		-\$1,040.00
Visitor's Take		-\$15,821.81
Browns' Share of Gate	\$47,465.41	
Concessions <i>(see italicised)</i>	\$1,743.76	
* <i>Advertisement</i>	\$785.71	
* <i>Program Sales</i>	\$2,524.67	
* <i>Program Production Costs</i>		-\$1,566.62
Travel Expenses		-\$1,135.00
Total Revenues	\$48,074.17	

Estimated Crowd Attendance: 34,525

Table 5: Revenue from Concessions and Programs

Browns' Share of Concessions		\$26,850.60
Advertising From Programs		\$ 5,500.00
Program Sales <i>(see italicized below)</i>		\$10,644.42
<i>No. of Programs Sold</i>	143,843	\$28,049.39
<i>No. of Programs Produced</i>	158,227	-\$17,404.97
Total Revenue		\$42,995.02

The remainder of the payroll went essentially to pay the salary of the head and assistant coaches, with \$4,000 going to pay a trainer and cover scouting costs. I did not include in my estimate the five per cent of the profits that Paul Brown received as part of his contract. Already the highest paid coach, his cut would have generated an additional \$12,072.50. If my estimates are correct, his salary and bonus for 1946 came to the tidy sum of \$37,072.50, far more than what he would have received if he had stayed at Ohio State. I choose this direction since I was more interested in understanding the financial condition of the club and the Conference in general, not the technical bookkeeping side of the team. Training and operational costs came to another \$90,000. As spelled out when I did the numbers on revenue generated from gate receipts, the Browns paid \$65,841 in rental and leagues fees and a measly \$3,780 in park expenses. Operational costs, training camp and equipment placed another estimated \$100,000 on the red side of the Browns' ledger.²³

From Cleveland's formation, its owner Micky McBride was deeply committed to heavily promoting his enterprise and he constantly won the praise of the local press, who contrasted his effort with what they insisted had been the lackluster work in this domain by the absentee owner of the NFL's Cleveland Rams. While the press felt that the McBride's promotional campaign in Cleveland and throughout Northeastern Ohio heavily contributed to the team's shrinking profits in its initial year, there was not a single guess into his outlay. The 1950 report reveals, however, a McBride willing to spend to sell his team. If he spent half the \$48,000 estimated to be his 1946 promotional cost before his team played its first game it would have been more than most NFL teams spend on promotion in a year. When the bonus money for players is added to this \$24,000, it is easy to understand the press view, an accurate one at that, of McBride outlaying large amounts of capital to build the best for his team and its fans. At the same time, it should be emphasised that these start-up dollars are accounted for in my estimates.²⁴

The Browns travel cost (see Table 6) was roughly the same as most Conference clubs except its West Coast teams, but was dramatically higher than for NFL clubs. In fact, the Browns cost to go to Los Angeles and San Francisco to play consecutive games was more than the New York Giants travel expenses for the entire 1950 season as it cost Cleveland \$19,962 to fly to the West Coast, train from one city to the next, stay for one week then fly back. These numbers amplify why NFL owners had so vehemently opposed the placement of a club on the West Coast and continually sought to keep their teams from playing in Los Angeles. What made these high costs so acerbating was that for the two West Coast games the Browns only brought back \$38,716, not even twice their travel cost.²⁵

Table 6: Travel Costs

Destination	Miles	Travel Method	Transportation Cost	Meals and Hotel	Total Costs
Buffalo	191	Train	\$2,264.00*	\$1,135.00	\$3,399.00
Chicago	355	Fly	\$2,920.00	\$1,135.00	\$4,055.00
Miami	1235	Fly	\$4,940.00	\$1,135.00	\$6,075.00
New York	486	Fly	\$3,444.00	\$1,135.00	\$4,579.00
Brooklyn	486	Fly	\$3,444.00	\$1,135.00	\$4,579.00
Los Angeles	2366	Fly**	\$4,732.00	\$1,135.00	\$5,867.00
San Francisco	2480	Fly**	\$4,960.00	\$1,135.00	\$6,095.00
LA to SF		Train	\$1,160.00	\$6,840.00	\$8,000.00
			\$27,864.00	\$14,785.00	\$42,649.00

* The Buffalo destination by this procedure would be slightly cheaper by plane than by train. I have chosen the lesser price here.

** Both the flight to Los Angeles and back from San Francisco were one way.

Finally, the Browns paid one-seventh of the \$100,000 the Conference gave Dan Topping to quit the NFL and bring his newly acquired Yankee Stadium into the AAFC. The significance of Topping's decision was clearly understood as virtually everyone agreed that the AAFC could not survive without a New York team and without the Topping move no large New York ballpark would have been available. Until Topping bolted, the AAFC-NFL battle was one mainly of rhetoric and possibilities, but Topping's action meant war. Arch Ward gleefully maintained that Topping's move was 'destined to change the character of professional football in the United States' and Conference Commissioner Jim Crowley stated that the reason AAFC officials tendered such a lucrative offer was because it enhanced 'the value of every other franchise in the new organization since it would bring into the conference a much needed New York club'. While Ward's perspective may have proven more correct if the AAFC had won the war and while there was certainly merit to Crowley's assertion, several AAFC owners, including McBride were less than pleased with the large amount of money the man Tim Mara derogatorily described as the Poor Rich Boy extracted from them. This was hardly the only and perhaps not the major reason for the feud that quickly ensued between the Browns and the Yankees, but it certainly was a contributing factor.²⁶

Meaning of the Numbers

The discrepancy between the rhetoric and my estimates, the huge profits I claim the Browns made, far larger than generally believed pro football teams generated in this period, does create, I must confess, a moment of pause about the results and the approach, especially in the absence of specific data. Nevertheless, I am reassured by my long-term recognition that sport owners have been less than forthright about the financial side of their teams and that until the past generation journalists have by and large been more than willing to uncritically accept the pronouncements of these entrepreneurs about the status of their business. I am also buoyed, as I stated at the start of the paper, by those elements that contribute to confidence in both the process and the numbers generated, especially that I immersed myself in a vast array of primary sources and that I believe I erred on the cautious side. Nevertheless, I am cognisant that my estimated profits surely do not look like the figures one would find in its tax report given the multiple talents of tax accountants. I am also absolutely certain that Paul Brown was correct in his contention that McBride and the Conference's other financial angels (Lindheimer and Topping) often dug into their pockets and, at times, profits to help their financially strained brethren and the AAFC as a whole. Brown provides no detailed information here and we do not know whether this money was used to help a club overcome a cash flow problem or if the money was to pay off debts. Yet I have no doubt that McBride paid a large share of the reportedly \$80,000 plus debt the Miami Seahawks left the AAFC when it collapsed after the 1946 season and I would not be surprised to learn that his contribution was a quarter of this amount or that the Browns did not receive any of the \$15,000 minimum guarantee when it played in Miami near the end of the season.²⁷

For several reasons I choose not to include this part of the economic equation here. I had envisioned inferential economics more as a tool to assist me in understanding the Conference's financial condition as a whole and in the larger study the Seahawk debt is included in its estimated numbers, which reveal losses even larger than the Browns profits. In addition, I was more interested in looking at the R&E breakdown of a team than to account for the exact amount of money McBride pocketed. What the numbers told me was of more significance than the precision. In this light, what stood out for me was the size of the Browns numbers, and when I had my doubting moments I posed the following scenarios. If I overestimated the Browns' profits by 25 per cent, its net gain would have been reduced by about \$60,000 but the club would have still been over \$180,000 in the black. Even more revealing I feel is that if Cleveland's revenues were reduced by ten per cent and its expenditures increased by a like percentage, shrinking its profits by 55 per cent (and \$131,761), Cleveland's estimated net gain would have been roughly \$109,700. Whichever way examined, the estimated numbers indicate that the 1946 Browns made a significant amount of money.

The Browns' financial largess was an anomaly in the first year Conference; not only in its size but that it made a profit at all. Of the AAFC's seven other clubs, all but one were in the red and the Yankees would have been in this condition as well had it not been for the money it was provided when it joined the new enterprise. Clearly it was Cleveland's cash that carried the Conference into its second of what would be its four-year history, and it is very possible that had it not done so well the AAFC may have died a quick death even though my estimate figures on the AAFC as a whole show that its losses were significantly less than the press had pronounced.

While Cleveland's figures were hardly representative of AAFC teams or NFL ones for that matter, its numbers and inferential economics do provide a valuable lens through which to create a more textured understanding of pro football in the immediate post World War II years. For example, this approach helped me gain a better handle on the AAFC's losses for its four years, and these figures suggest that its demise was neither inevitable nor solely economically driven. It also enabled me to more effectively address several other issues, including one of the central themes of my larger work: how established and rival leagues confront each other, and it allowed me to better explore whether the AAFC erred by entering so many markets which already had NFL teams.²⁸

I hopefully provide interesting answers to these and other issues in my larger study on the AAFC and pro football in the immediate post World War II era. For the remainder of this paper I want to briefly look at how the Browns' numbers yield valuable insights into the finances of a parallel NFL club, the New York Giants and the implication of its numbers for comprehending the direction of the AAFC-NFL war; and, what the numbers reveal about the economics of pro football at mid-century and the general condition of the sport.

Despite the Browns' very lucrative 1946 season, the honor of football's most profitable team that year no doubt went to the New York Giants. While I did not estimate the ledgers of NFL clubs, a cursory comparison of available data on both teams and the ability to infer led me to strongly believe that the New Yorkers made an estimate profit 25 per cent larger than Cleveland, placing it over \$308,000 in the black (see Table 7). While both clubs had roughly the same estimate attendance for seven home games, the Giants had an ATP placed at 65 cents more. The result was over \$200,000 more than the Browns in its share of home revenue receipts, but its larger overall income significantly shrunk as it generated less road money as it played only four away games and produced no concession or program money. While the estimated income of Mara's men was nearly \$90,000 more than McBride's contingent, its estimate expenditures were only \$23,000 more even though it paid nearly \$183,000 in rental and league fees compared to only about \$66,000 for the Browns. The Giants payroll, although one of the highest in the NFL, was about \$20,000 less, it paid \$33,000 fewer dollars in publicity, had one-third the Browns travel bill and Mara definitely would not have given Topping or his team a dime let alone an amount exceeding \$14,000.²⁹

Table 7: Approximation of New York Giants 1946 Finances

ATTENDANCE	
Announced	408,849
Estimated	388,407
INCOME	\$870,024
Home	\$714,064
Away	\$94,460
Preseason	\$25,000
Concession	\$ 0
Radio	\$ 21,500
Championship	\$ 15,000
EXPENDITURES	\$561,696
Fees	\$ 182,980
Salaries	\$ 243,600
Operational	\$ 65,000
Travel	\$ 13,816
Training	\$ 25,000
Equipment	\$ 10,000
Park Expenses	\$ 6300
Promotion	\$ 15,000
Other	\$ 0
PROFIT	\$308,328

The size of the Giants profits also produced the same moment of doubt. This time I took a different route to re-examine the numbers based on a comparative assessment on the 1949 profits the Philadelphia Eagles reported in the Radovich case. For that year the Eagles stated that it earned \$61,654 and had gross admission receipts of \$572,590. By contrast the 1946 Giants had estimated post-tax admission receipts of \$1,068,119. Even if the admission receipts are viewed as similar, the revenue difference is \$495,529. Since the home team took a drop less than half the total post tax gate money, the 1949 Eagles would have added another \$247,765 to its coffers if it had the same gate revenue as the 1946 Giants, and this extra cash would have brought the Eagles profits to \$309,419, even more than estimated for the Giants. It is true that the Eagles played two more road games than the Giants and from such contests would have generated roughly \$45,000 after expenses. Such shrinkage would have left the Giants with an extremely impressive \$265,000 in profit and it should be kept in mind that while the Giants revenue stream was calculated on a very conservative 2.75 ATP, the Eagles average pre-tax ticket price was \$3.43. Whatever the precise amount, there is no doubt that Mara's men made a whole lot of money in 1946.³⁰

Recognition of New York's very lucrative season is one way of better understanding how the economic numbers assisted me in creating a more textured picture and in this case a different view of Mara, the Giants and the AAFC battle than the one presented in the press and subsequently in popular histories. The Giants exceedingly prosperous 1946 season provided Mara with a significant cushion for the financially turbulent times that followed as a result of the ongoing struggle between the leagues, the hefty amount he spent on new talent, the decline of his team on the field and the dramatic drop at the gate. How Mara fared throughout the remainder of the football war is not known for certain, but the notion that he dropped a bundle during the late 1940s with one writer placing his losses at \$280,000 for the AAFC year and a club historian viewing the Giants as nearly bankrupt by time the struggle ended must be viewed with a jaundice eye in light of his exceedingly large 1946 profits. Similarly, the romantic image of Mara as the hardheaded Irishman willing to spend his last dollar to defeat the upstart Conference is refreshingly naive. For the Giants owner the battle with the AAFC was always a mixture of the personal and the financial and the former always influenced and at times clouded his judgment of the latter. It is one thing to acknowledge this point; it is another to erroneously see this son of immigrants (who spent twenty years building a family business and for whom passing it on to his children was central to who he was) as Don Quixote willing to sacrifice all for a noble cause. Rather Mara could continually maintain his hard-line stance throughout the four-year struggle because the massive profits he banked in 1946 made this strategy that much easier to pursue and it surely comforted the blows of the difficult times that followed and pointed to what might lay ahead.³¹

Similar to the Browns, the size of the Giants profits was an anomaly. Unlike Cleveland's Conference counterparts, however, other NFL teams more frequently found themselves in the black. While those on the right side of the ledger included the usual money-makers, the Bears and Redskins, at least half and probably more of the NFL clubs were to differing degrees in this situation as a result of record attendance which witnessed a nearly forty per cent increase in the number of spectators over 1945. The favourable condition enabled NFL owners not to flinch in the face of the new competition and rising salaries, and it made it relatively easy for the more prosperous and hard-line owners to convince their colleagues to stay the course and see the Conference and its challenge as something that would be short lived. In fact, one of the ironies of the football war was that the AAFC was founded and legitimated by the vision that an emerging post war economic boom would make it sufficiently fiscally sound to succeed and challenge the hegemony of the NFL. It was the older league, however, that was better situated to take advantage of the exploding economy, and the early benefits (which hindered the AAFC from bringing the NFL to the bargaining table as Ward had forecasted) remained throughout the conflict and left the NFL in a more advantageous negotiating position even when the end of the boom by the onset of the 1948 season began to severely alter the financial situation within the sport.³²

The estimated numbers also suggest that the press had little insight into the finances of pro football and this lack of knowledge profoundly shaped their image of the NFL-AAFC struggle. Writers treated football owners even more romantically than their baseball counterparts, presenting them as involved in a very risky business purely for the love of the sport and as men who generally barely eked out a profit even in the best of times. My numbers, however, present a different portrait and naturally lead me to a different perspective on the financial condition of pro football in the immediate post World War II era. There is no question that the extent of the profits the Giants or Browns generated were the exception, and it would be a while before either team returned to those numbers again. It is also true that wide variations remained in the financial fortunes of pro football teams, that the war between the leagues limited profits and caused losses in the ledgers of some NFL teams and most AAFC ones, and that this situation became worse after the post War economic boom slowed down. Nevertheless, for me a variety of economic numbers illuminate two critical and related points. One is that by the late 1940s well-drawing and well-run football teams could produce more than perfunctory profits and in fact provided their owners a tidy return on their money. The second is that by the onset of the second half of the twentieth century, pro football had achieved new heights of popularity as evident by the rising number of spectators that attended its game, the dramatic expansion in the press coverage it received and the greater potential entrepreneurs had for economic return on their investments. While pro football still trailed baseball by some distance in terms of public interest and its place in the American sports psyche and while I am willing to accept Michael Oriard's assertion that it still lacked the national attention of the college game, the foundation for its slow ascendancy to its position as America's most popular sport was being poured in the late 1940s. The story of the profits generated by the Browns provides a glimpse into what was to come. While the incredibly successful marriage of pro football and television in the 1960s jettison the sport to heights unimagined two decades earlier, it could do so because the sport had already established a firm financial footing as the numbers reveal. As for these numbers, I wish that as Casey Stengel said, we could 'look it up'. Unfortunately, this is not the case. But with scholarly integrity we can create, through methods such as inferential economics, a useful way to glance at what those numbers may have been and thus achieve a vision that facilitates a richer understanding of the development of pro football.³³

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NOTES:

Abbreviations

Scrapbooks

A All-America Football Conference

N Bert Bell

CB Cleveland Browns

Newspapers

BE *Brooklyn Eagle*

BEN *Buffalo Evening News*

CHA *Chicago Herald American*

CN *Cleveland News*

CP *Cleveland Press*

CPD *Cleveland Plain Dealer*

CST *Chicago Sun-Times*

CT *Chicago Tribune*

GBPG *Green Bay Post Gazette*

LAE *Los Angeles Examiner*

LAT *Los Angeles Times*

MN *Miami Daily News*

NYHT *New York Herald Tribune*

NYJA *New York Journal American*

NYM *New York Mirror*

NYN *New York Daily News*

NYP *New York Post*

NYS *New York Sun*

NYT *New York Times*

NYWT *New York World Telegram*

PI *Philadelphia Inquirer*

PPG *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*

SFC *San Francisco Chronicle*

SFCB *San Francisco Call and Bulletin*

SFE *San Francisco Examiner*

SFN *San Francisco News*

SN *Sporting News*

WP *Washington Post*

WTH *Washington Times-Herald*

Columns

IWN *In The Wake of the News*

JITB *Jack In the Box*

Lwd *The Lowdown*

PD *Plain Dealing*

PWH *Powerhouse*

PS *Press Sport*

SA *Sporting Additions*

SC *Sport Comments*

SP *The Sports Parade*

SpSC *The Sporting Parade (LA)*

SPc Setting the Pace
ST Sports of the Times
VS Views of Sport

1. F. Lewis, 'PS', *CP*, 21 August 1947, A3, p. 46; E. Prell, 'All-America Conference', *Street and Smith, 1947 Football Pictorial Yearbook* (New York: Street and Smith, 1947), p. 89; J. King, 'High Pressure Selling Job Puts Cleveland Pros Over', *NYWT*, 28 September 1946, A1, p. 193; E. McAuley, 'Well Why Shouldn't McBride Draw Picnic Weather', *CN*, 30 December 1946, p. 20; W. Byers, 'Showdown in Pro Football', *Liberty*, 14 September 1946, p. 56; P. Zimmerman, 'Spse', *LAT*, 28 January 1946, 1946-47 NFL Clips, p. 4; H. Wismer, *The Public Calls It Sport* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p. 35; D. Camerer, 'Operation Football', *Pic: The Magazine For Young Men*, October 1946, p. 27; V. Flaherty, 'L.A. Adds Ammunition to Pro Football War', *LAE*, 25 October 1945, A1, p. 11; S. Woodward, 'VS', *NYHT*, 16 January 1946, A1, p. 45; E. Prell, 'Pro Football In '46 A \$5,000,000 Box Office Deal', *CT*, 24 March 1946, A1, p. 58.

2. Newspapers yielded a variety of valuable pieces of economic information, but they must be continually read with a familiar recognition of their limitations. A notable exception was the publication of the R&E of the 1950 Green Bay Packers in the *Green Bay Post Gazette*. Since Green Bay was publicly owned, this detailed balance sheet, I suspect, offers a fairly accurate account of its finances. The article broke down the team's revenues and expenditures, including its outlay for travel, its contribution to the NFL office, and the costs of a variety of other items that could not be found in any other document, such as the amounts paid in unemployment compensation and legal fees. See A. Daley, 'Bell To Decide NFL Divisions', *GBPG*, 23 January 1951, N5, p. 253. While newspapers offered some useful information in assessing the finances of pro football, several documents in the Pro Football Hall of Fame (PFHF) were of immense value as they provided data on several dimensions of the economics of the sport. The Eagles' affidavit in the Radovich case yields fruitful insights into the records of one team. In addition to its profit, it gave for the 1949 and 1950 seasons the club's radio and television fees, travel expenses and salaries of the head coach, two assistant coaches and a little more than half the players, including most starters. See, William A. Radovich v. The National Football League. Deposition of Frank L. McNamee – PFHF. Another document contained the 1949 and 1950 salaries and signing bonuses of Cleveland players. The list had the same information for those still active Browns players for the years 1946 through 1948. See Cleveland Browns, Active Players, Bonuses and Salaries for 1946-1947 and - 1948 and Cleveland Browns, Inc. Team Payroll 1949 and 1950. PFHF. The most significant document, an oasis in the midst of a dry desert, was the NFL Business Managers Meeting held in March 1950, four months after the AAFC and NFL merged. The meeting was designed to find out how each club operated so that the NFL could reach 'a basis for a formula of operation that will be efficient, beneficial and economical for all' (p. 1). Although not every team attended, and those present did not offer information on each issue explored, the meeting covered an exceedingly wide range of financial topics, such as each team's ticket prices and the amounts they generated in radio revenues to their respective rental fees, takes from concessions, travel costs, and park expenses. See NFL Business Managers Meeting, 3 March 1950, PFHF.

3. Even when the numbers of professional sport appear 'clean' they must be approached with a dose of skepticism. Let me illustrate. In an affidavit, the Philadelphia Eagles claimed it made a profit of roughly \$61,650 in 1949 and about \$73,000 the following year. I suspect the numbers accurately project the club's books given the legal nature of the document. However, my trouble with the figures is this: how did the Eagles' profits increase by only about \$11,350 when its

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home attendance rose by 41,456 and its gross receipts by \$134,632. It is dubious that expanding expenditures could account for the entire discrepancy. I offer a possible explanation of the discrepancy in my forthcoming work on the AAFC as well as a fuller exploration into inferential economic. See the Appendix: 'Financing Football: Show Me The Money'. Also see McNamee Deposition.

4. 'Local Pride', *CPD*, 6 September 1946, A1, p. 136; H. Sauerbrei, 'Browns Show Record 60,135 Versatile Attack', *CPD*, 7 September 1946, A1, p. 138; F. Lewis, 'PS', *CP*, 7 September 1946, A1, p. 144; '71,134 Boost Browns Total to 232,066', *CP*, 21 October 1946, A2, p. 45; 'Tale of Two Cities', *CPD*, 15 October 1946, A2, p. 30; H. Goldstein, 'Exciting, Though Puzzling This Big Time Football', *CN*, 22 October 1946, A2, p. 49; J. Williams, 'Mara Predicts New Pro Loop Will Drop \$1,000,000', *NYWT*, 26 October 1946, A2, p. 57; V. Flaherty, 'Browns Want to Play National League Pros', *LAE*, 24 October 1946, A2, p. 55.

5. F. Lewis, 'PS', *CP*, 10 September 1947, A3, p. 142; C. Kritcher, 'SC', *BEN*, 6 December 1947, A5, p. 12. For other citations to padding, see G. Kessler, 'Rocket bubbles deflates', *CST*, 23 October 1947, A4, p. 82; N.P. Clark, 'Colts Explode in 28-28 Tie With 49ers', *AAFC* 4, p. 14; D. Freeman, 'Sport Spurts', *CS*, 8 October 1947, A4, p. 19; G. Rice, 'SPc', *NYS*, 29 October 1947, A4, p. 107; B. Addie, 'SA', *WTH*, 27 October 1947, A4, p. 69; B. Lee, 'AAFC Plans Next Move – Dallas', *SFC*, 12 October 1947, p. H4; T. Meany, 'AAC Making Progress In Its Second Year', *PM*, 30 October 1947, A4, p. 110; T. Meany, 'Mara Pins A Rose on All-America Conference', *PM*, 20 November 1947, *AAFC*, 4, p. 189; D. Eisenberg, 'Yanks Claim 70,060 Metropolitan Pro Grid Record', *NYJA*, 24 November 1947, A4, p. 201; R. Treat, *CHA*, 8 November 1947, N4, p. 142. There seems to be several reasons why reports about padding were almost exclusively confined to New York and Chicago. One is that the practice appears to have been more prevalent there as the competition between the leagues led owners to try to demonstrate as much public interest as possible. Second, it was in these cities where NFL owners openly questioned the numbers Conference clubs claimed were present. Finally, reporters in dual league cities had greater latitude to challenge the figures as they were less bound to a hometown team. This stood in marked contrast to cities such as Baltimore and San Francisco where the booster press often functioned as a publicity arm of the local pigskin squad. Los Angeles was the exception of the two-team city situation as there was no charges of padding and in fact an attendance list of all sports events held at the Los Angeles Coliseum from 1946 to 1947 shows that the actual and announced attendance was virtually the same. I thank Bruce Javitz for getting me the Coliseum list

6. For examples of reports of game receipts, see H. Sauerbrei, 'Browns Win 4th in a Row', *CPD*, 30 September 1946, A1, p. 197; 'Record Pro Crowd Sees Browns Win', *NYS*, 21 October 1946, A2, p. 45; J. MacDonald, 'What a Job Counting It', *SFCB*, 1 November 1946, A2, p. 75; H. Weisman, '80,067 See Browns Down Grid Yanks', *NYM*, 6 October 1947, A4, p. 13; A. Ward, 'Browns Beat 49ers', *CT*, 15 November 1948, 3, p. 1. The Browns provided a partial breakdown of its prices and the number of seats available at that price. While it covered prices at the lower end of the price scale it does point to the reasonableness of the 2.10 ATP assessment. See *NFL Business*, 5. For a breakdown of one Browns game by the number of tickets sold at the various prices, see F. Lewis, 'PS', *CP*, 10 September 1947, A3, p. 122. Lewis' figures show an average pre-tax ticket of \$2.35.

7. D. Eisenberg, 'Lay Plans For '49', *NYJA*, 17 January 1949, N2, p. 160; '49ers Gridders Drew 225,422 Customers', *SFC*, 17 December 1946, p. 3H; P. Sullivan, 'Lwd', *SFE*, 17 September 1946; B. Dyer, 'Coliseum Grid Crowds Averaged 40,000 Fans', *LAT*, 15 December 1948, A7, p.

101; T. Mara, 'Why We Won The War', *Sport*, February 1950, p. 84; B. Yonkers, 'Bad News for Bills', *CP*, 17 December 1948, A7, p. 107; Jack Sells, 'Football Footnotes', *PPG*, 20 December 1947, N1, p. 445.

8. National Football League Constitution and By Laws, 1946-1950; L. Cohen, 'SpP', *NYP*, 23 October 1946, A2, p. 52.

9. For radio money, see NFL Business, p. 17; McNamee Deposition; For the Brown's lease to Municipal Stadium, see 'Cleveland Browns lease, 24 July 1947', Carl B. Stokes Manuscript Collection, MS No. 4370, Container 29, Folder 524, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, OH. For material on Brown's per spectator take of concessions and parking fees from 1961 to 1963, see 'The Cleveland Browns, the City of Cleveland, and Municipal Stadium', Stokes Collection, Container 29, Folder 524, WRHS. I am especially grateful to Phil Suchma for bringing this material to my attention.

10. NFL Business, pp. 8-11.

11. For Eagles claim, see NFL Business, p. 10.

12. A. Ward, 'IWN', *CT*, 21 June 1951, N5, p. 317; P. Sullivan, 'LD', *SFE*, 31 August 1950, N4, p. 128; 4 August 1950, N4, p. 144; 8 September 1950, p. 25.

13. Cleveland Browns, Active Players, Bonuses and Salaries for 1946-1947 and – 1948 and Cleveland Browns, Inc. Team Payroll 1949 and 1950 – PFHF. My vision of NFL payrolls were influenced by NFL Business, p. 21; McNamee Deposition; Daley, 'Bell', N5, p.253. Comments on payrolls appeared from time-to-time in the press. Some were fairly accurate, others less so. For some examples, see D. Parker, 'High Cost of Losing', *NYM*, 19 September 1948, A6, p. 8; B. Gould, 'Grid Dodgers See Writing On Wall', *BE*, 1947, A4, p. 52; R. McGown, 'Yankees Will Strive to Stop Graham's Passes', *NYT*, 20 November 1947, p. 43; Camerer, 'Operation Football', p. 27; 'Tale of Two Cities', A2, p. 30.

14. For signing of Paul Brown and accompanying fanfare, see P. Brown with J. Clary, *PB: The Paul Brown Story* (New York: Atheneum, 1979), pp. 121-22; J. Dietrich, 'Paul Brown Signs 5-Year Contract to Coach New Pro Grid Team Here', *CPD*, 9 February 1945, p. 1; 'Paul Brown Signs to Coach Pro Team', *NYT*, 9 February 1945, p. 20. Also see McNamee Deposition; NFL Business, p. 22.

15. For San Francisco lamentations, see B. Spencer, 'The News Sport', *SFN*, 11 November 1948, p. 15.

16. NFL Business, pp. 14-16; McNamee Deposition.

17. NFL Business, p. 15. In 1949, the Giants played technically six away games but one was in the Polo Grounds against the New York Bulldogs.

18. NFL Business, pp. 13, 16-20; Daley, 'Bell', N5, p. 253.

19. NFL Business, pp. 8-11, 20-1.

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20. Buffalo and New York had less than fifteen per cent rental fees. Buffalo paid ten per cent, whereas Topping owned both the Yankees and Yankee Stadium. While he may have technically paid a subsidiary company, I was not interested in whether money flowed from one pocket to the other.

21. For Brown's discontent, see his autobiography, *P.B.*, pp. 177-95.

22. See 'Cleveland Browns, Active Players, Bonuses and Salaries'. For my estimates of AAFC payrolls by team, see 'Appendix'. For the press vision of Yankee payroll, see McGown, 'Yankees Will Strive', p. 43; J. Burchard, 'You Think You Got Inflation? Take A Look at Pro Football', *NYHT*, 26 January 1948, A5, p. 81. For view that Lindheimer was 'generous almost to a fault with players and money', see Brown, *P.B.*, p. 176. For Dons signing thirteen former NFL players in 1946, seven of whom were ex-Washington Redskins, see, 'AA Raids NFL', *NYJA*, 16 January 1946, A1, p. 48; E. Prell, 'Rockets' Wilkens, Dons' Artoe Set to Resume Feud', *CST*, 14 October 1946, A2, p. 9. Also see J. King, 'Brown Still Wins With Ohioans', *NYWT*, 25 September 1946, A1, p. 186; Brown, *P.B.*, pp. 124-43.

23. For Browns, five per cent figure see Brown, *P.B.*, p. 120.

24. For McBride as the great promoter, see F. Lewis, 'Browns Success Not Accidental', *CP*, 26 September 1946, A1, p. 183; King, 'High Pressure', A1, p. 193; M. Matthews, 'Hester Pledges Changes After 44-0 Hawk Lacing', *MDN*, 7 September 1946, A1, p. 143. For anti Rams and Reeves sentiments in Cleveland, see H. Goldstein, 'Whose Stadium?' *CN*, 9 January 1945, CB, p. 5 ; H. Goldstein, 'Sweeting Parting', *CN*, 6 February 1946, CB, p. 51; J. Dietrich, 'JIB', *CPD*, 10 February 1946, p. 3C; 8 June 1945, CB, p. 29; G. Cobbledick, 'PD', *CPD*, 23 October 1945, CB, p. 35; B. Yonkers, 'Browns Aim To Make Fans Forget Departed Rams', *CP*, 6 February 1946, CB, p. 50.

25. The savings by staying in California rather flying back to Cleveland and then returning the following week was a lot less than I expected, only \$1,692. For AAFC teams losing money or making a modicum of profit the saving may be significant, but given the Browns' financial situation the benefit was more that it allowed them to avoid the exhaustion produced by back to back round trips. The minor savings does suggest that the NFL's willingness to accept San Francisco into its league had less to do with its desire for a second West Coast team to help clubs defray the cost of one of its teams traveling to Los Angeles and more to do with the 49ers economic potential.

26. J. Drebinger, 'Topping's Eleven Joins New Circuit', *NYT*, 6 December 1945, p. 33; L. Rice, 'Topping Bolts to New Grid Loop', *NYJA*, 5 December 1945, A1, p. 17; J. King, 'Topping Quits NFL, Joins New Pro Grid Loop', *NYWT*, 6 December 1945, A1, p. 17; A. Ward, 'Topping's Pro Eleven Joins All-America', *CT*, 6 December 1945, p. 27; A. Ward, 'IWN', *CT*, 7 December 1945, p. 35; Byers, 'Showdown', p. 55; J. Drebinger, 'Yankees Contract For Stadium Lights', *NYT*, 16 November 1945, p. 14; '100,000 Was Paid Topping to Switch', *NYT*, 11 December, 1945, p. 29; J. Cannon, 'Poor, Little Rich Boy Has Tim Mara's Scorn', *NYP*, AAFC, 1, p. 49. For Mara's snipes at Topping for taking money, see James A. Burchard, 'Mara, Marshall and Bell Hurl Harpoons at Admiral Ingram', *NYWT*, 10 October 1947, A4, p. 23. For anti-Topping sentiment among owners, see E. Munzel, 'New York Players Cause First Rift in A.A.', *CST*, 6 January 1946, CB, p. 47; J. King, 'A-A Owners Meet to Mull Over Future', *NYWT*, 14 October 1948, A6, p. 65.

27. Brown, *P.B.*, pp. 176, 189.

28. My data shows that what proved devastating to the AAFC were clubs that played in cities that had three pro football clubs, as its Chicago and Brooklyn franchise were responsible for half of its losses. The financial debacle of these teams led me to question why didn't the AAFC relocate these club and speculate on what its fortunes would have been if they had moved both Chicago and Brooklyn.

29. I took attendance figures for the Giants and other NFL teams in 1946 from J. Quirk and R.D. Fort, *Pay Dirt: The Business of Professional Team Sports* (Princeton NJ: University of Princeton Press, 1992), p. 344. I subtracted the same five per cent for padding for the Giants as I did for the New York Yankees of the AAFC. I based my calculation of Giants four road games on the average attendance of its four Eastern Division opponents. I gave the Giants and other NFL clubs an estimated ATP of 2.75, which from all I can gather on NFL ticket prices would be truly on the very conservative side. The Giants broke down its 1946 payroll by the average price it paid by position. To get the approximation I based my calculation on each player position by the following: six ends, six tackles, six guards, three centers and twelve backs. I then took the average salary of these 33 players and multiplied by three giving the team 36 players, one above the roster limit. I gave the Giants head coach a salary \$15,000, the same as Greasy Neale of the Philadelphia Eagles, and assumed it had three assistant coaches. The trainer was given same \$2,500 as the Browns. I took other R&E information on the Giants from the NFL Business Meeting. It provided 1949 data on travel, park and scouting expenses, promotion outlay and radio money (which I place in 1946 at the same \$4,000 more than the Giants made in 1950 compared to the Browns). I gave the Giants the same \$15,000 for engaging in the 1946 championship contest. The Giants did not sell its own program or share in concession money. I had no information on the revenue it took in from exhibition games but given the view that such contests generated sufficient money to pay for training camp I placed it at the break-even figure of \$25,000. I kept operational expenses and equipment at the same prices as the Browns.

30. If the profits of 1950 Eagles (\$72,978) profits on gross receipts of \$716,590 were used rather than its 1949 figures, the Giants would have banked \$203,743 after accounting for the Eagles two more home games.

31. For claims of Giants losses during AAFC years, see E. Sainbury, 'Bitter Pro Football War Cost Magnates \$9,000,000', *PI*, 25 December 1949, N3, p. 409. One historian of the team went so far as to claim that by the end of the 1949 season the Giants were lucky to be alive and that Mara had reportedly lost one million dollars. See B. Gottehrer, *The Giants of New York: The History of Professional Football's Most Fabulous Dynasty* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1963), p. 217. For Mara as hard headed, see J. Williams, 'Yankee Stadium Was Main Key in Football War', *NYWT*, 6 December 1945, A1, p. 22; A. Danzig, 'Pro Giants To Play Seven Home Games', *NYT*, 30 April 1946.

32. For post-war boom and growth of pro football, see D. Daniels, 'Postwar Football Destiny', *NYWT*, 3 August 1945, A1, p. 6; B. Leiser, 'SF', *SFC*, 17 September 1944, p. 1H; J. Powers, 'Pwh', *NYN*, 13 January 1946, A1, p. 39; B. Spencer, 'Crowley Arrives', *SFN*, 1946-47 NFL Clips, p. 9; M. Woodward, '3 More Cities Ask Pro Grid Berths', Expansion Folder-1944, PFHF; A. Daley, 'ST', *NYT*, 5 January, 1944, p. 12.

33. Michael Oriard asserts that it was not until the late 1950s, especially following the Colts-Giants championship game, that there emerged a significant shift in the image of professional

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football in popular magazines. Oriard does recognise that the NFL attendance markedly increased throughout the decade of the 1950s but does not take note of the tremendous growth the sport enjoyed in the immediate aftermath of World War II. See his brilliant work, *King Football: Sport & Spectacle In The Golden Age of Radio & Newsreels, Movies & Magazines, The Weekly & The Daily Press* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), especially pp. 215-18 and his Epilogue.