

SCHMIDT, RAYMOND. *Football's Stars of Summer: A History of the College All-Star Football Game Series of 1934-1976*. American Sports History Series, No. 21. Lanham, Md.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2001. Pp. x+376. Notes, illustrations, appendices, index. \$60.00 cb.

The first college-professional champion All-Star football game was played on August 31, 1934, at Chicago's Soldier Field. It was the brainchild of *Chicago Tribune* sports writer and crafty promoter Arch Ward. Staged in the depths of the great depression, it was seen as a way capitalizing on the successful baseball all-star game held in Chicago in the summer of 1933 as part of the Century of Progress festival that drew 45,000 fans.

Arch Ward enlisted newspapers from around the country to allow gridiron fans to select the college all-stars and their coaching staff. The idea for a college "all-star-pro" showdown was fashioned on the popular, but spurious, contention espoused by Glenn "Pop" Warner in the fall of 1917 that professional football was inferior to college football. This humbug was hardily endorsed by the leading college coaches including Amos Alonzo Staff, Fielding Yost, and Bob Zuppke. The naysayers had created a skeptical public, and it was that public that was attracted to the end of summer game, a game that was to survive for forty-two years.

Ray Schmidt, editor of the *College Football Historical Society Journal* since 1987 and author of a minor league baseball classic entitled *Two-Eyed League: The Illinois-Iowa of 1890-1892*, has written a solid history of the Chicago College All-Star game that will please football fanatics. He provides a summary of each of the forty-two contests in the series. He highlights the pre-game hoopla, the ceremony surrounding each contest, and the titanic battles that took place on the field. Ray also furnishes an appendix with the scores of every game, a list giving the names of the head coaches for each all-star team, the most valuable college player in each game, the college all-star team captains, and an all-star team roster for each game.

Most of the star college players of the era played on a college all-star team, including such notables as Sammy Baugh, "Crazy Legs" Hirsch, Nile Kinnick, Jim Brown, Roger Staubach, John Mackey, Dick Butkus, Mike Ditka, Bob Griese, Lynn Swann and Terry Bradshaw. Even former President Gerald Ford suited up for the college all-stars in 1935.

Despite losing nearly three-fourths of the games, the college all-stars who played in Chicago during the summer continued to hold public interest for decades after it was clear to nearly all independent observers that the game was a horrible mismatch. However, when professional football clearly achieved "big business" status in 1970, the future of the Chicago College All-Star-Pro contest was doomed. Only the power of the *Chicago Tribune* and the television contract with the American Broadcasting System kept the game going until 1976.

The author notes the appearance of Kenny Washington and Jackie Robinson as All-Star players several years before African Americans were again allowed to play in the NFL. He also notes that after the first few years of the contest, fans were no longer

allowed to select college players and their coaches for the game. Finally, the first player from a Negro college was selected for the All-Star team in 1963.

Football Stars of Summer was obviously a labor of love, and it is fortunate that Schmidt made the effort to explain to the generations that grew up after 1976 why the Chicago College All-Star game mattered to so many fans.

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