

Five Hundred Reasons

Football's First Pro: 1892

By PFRA Research

Originally Published in *From AAA to '03* (PFRA Books)

Not even the most avid football fan would consider the 1892 grid season as the most important happening in western Pennsylvania that year. Both the headlines of the day and the long view of history give precedence to the Homestead Strike. On June 29, 1892, to protest a wage cut, members of the Amalgamated Association of Iron and steel Workers walked out against the Carnegie Steel Company at Homestead in east Pittsburgh. The steel company reacted ruthlessly, hiring Pinkerton agents as guards. In the predictable battle that followed, several workers were killed, many injured, and the state militia had to be called in to restore peace. The union was crushed, seriously setting back the American labor movement.

The grid season did not raise emotions to quite such a lethal pitch, but, in the history of professional football, it was epochal. Until then, no proved professionalism had intruded on the western Pennsylvania grid scene (or anywhere else, for that matter). True, there had been some suspicious-looking incidents in Pittsburgh during the previous season, as players bounced around from team to team with no apparent motivation except to enjoy playing a healthy game of football. Some people might wonder why the Fiscus boys were willing to come 30 or so miles to play for the Three A's when they had a perfectly good athletic club team out there in Greensburg. Or why Doc Proctor, Grant Dibert, and a couple of other P.A.C. men performed for the Three A's at the height of the Gyms' animosity toward the A's over the latter's refusal to schedule a game with them. Or why two Penn State halfbacks suddenly appeared for the Altoona A.A. But all of these examples could be ascribed to enthusiasm by the players and persuasiveness by the team managers. No one at the time or since has unearthed any evidence that these athletes received anything more than a pat on the back for their efforts.

The 1892 season was a different cauldron of seafood.

Actually, even under the suspicious eyes of the A.A.U., athletes were permitted more than friendly pats for their exertions. Some guidelines grew out of two cases on opposite sides of the country. In 1890, the San Francisco Olympic A.C. was accused by a rival club of enticing athletes to jump to its ranks with offers of jobs. After investigating, the A.A.U. ruled that the Olympics' practice was not actually professionalism but only a "semi" form of it, thus inventing the term "semi-pro," which led to countless snickers about "semi-pregnant." Although the A.A.U. didn't like the idea very much, it decided that clubs could indeed offer employment without losing their amateur status or compromising the athlete. In other words, if you paid a fellow \$20 a week to cut your grass and \$20 a game to play football, he was a professional; if you paid him \$40 a week to cut your grass and he also played on your football team, he was an

amateur. Meanwhile, the Orange A.C. in New Jersey came under fire for the expensive trophies it doled out to gridders at the end of each season. The A.A.U. wrestled with this one until 1892 when it passed a rule outlawing any kind of trophy except a banner, not to exceed twenty-five cents in cost. The miniature gold footballs received by P.A.C. players in 1891 would have made them professionals the next year.

Another way to get around the A.A.U. was to pay reasonable expenses incurred by players on road trips. In 1892, the Chicago A.A. paid expenses so reasonably that Yale grad Pudge Heffelfinger quit his job with the railroad in Omaha and moved to Chicago just to play for his expenses.

The Chicago A.A. was born out of a compensation conflict. In 1891, the members of the Chicago University Club football team decided they deserved something more than free club memberships for their exertions. When the C.U.C. turned thumbs down on their request, Captain Billy Crawford led a revolt and the team quit the club. The following season, they formed their own organization -- the Chicago A.A. As might be expected, such a club was quite liberal with expense money.

On Sunday, October 16 -- five days before Heffelfinger was due in from Omaha -- the Chicago Tribune announced: "The football game scheduled for today between the Chicago Athletic Club [sic] and the Northwestern team will not take place and for a peculiar reason. The members of the Northwestern team are willing to play, but the faculty said no, and the faculty rules. The chief reason assigned for the refusal to allow the collegians to play the local team is that the members of the latter are professionals because they take expense money in traveling around the country to play games with various teams." In other words, the Northwestern faculty would declare the Chicagoans professionals even if the A.A.U. would not.

The Tribune story went on to say that the team was busily preparing for an eastern tour that would commence on Saturday with a game in Cleveland. Pittsburgh wasn't on the itinerary, but it was there that the Chicago A.A. would have the most impact.

Going into the 1892 season, the only gripes about professionalism in Pittsburgh centered on Professor William Kirschner of the P.A.C. Someone had noted that the professor's salary went up in the autumn while the number of classes he taught went down. Although the good professor apparently had never played football before 1890, he was both an imposing physical specimen and a very quick learner, so that by now he was generally regarded as the foremost lineman in western Pennsylvania. A few picky A.A.A.

The Professional Football Researchers Association

members insisted on seeing a sinister relationship among the professor's ability, his reduced class load, and his salary. Despite local suspicion, the A.A.U. didn't even give the Kirschner case a sniff.

The big grid news in Pittsburgh was the upcoming meeting between the Three A's and the P.A.C. Finally, after two years of debating, the issue of local football supremacy would be settled.

But first there were a few preliminary bouts to be got out of the way. The Pittsburgh Athletic Club opened its season on Saturday, October 1, with another victory over the Western University of Pennsylvania team. Fully 500 people, including "a good showing of ladies," came out on a fine fall day to watch and cheer. It wasn't much of a game. The P.A.C. team was considerably bigger than the university boys, and they used their advantage well. Even though Kirschner and another regular lineman sat out the game, the Gyms smoothly dismantled their opponents. The final score was 16-0 and could have been worse except for some fine defensive work by Neal, the W.U.P. center and the lone black student in the entire school.

A week later, the P.A.C. ran its two-year victory string to nine with an easy 28-0 win over the Greensburg A.A. For some reason, Greensburg played mostly its second-stringers. However, the Gyms were still without Kirschner, and George Proctor also absented himself, somewhat negating the P.A.C. advantage.

For their third outing, the P.A.C. scheduled the Johnstown A.A. On the designated Saturday, between three and four o'clock, 1,200 fans showed up at East Liberty park. But when no Johnstown team had appeared by 4:15, they had to content themselves with watching an intrasquad game. The Pittsburgh PRESS commented: "Football is a great game and is full of interest when played by two distinctive clubs, but the game is rather tame when played between the first and second teams of one club." Tame or not, the assembled throng saw plenty of scoring: the first-stringers won 42-9.

The Three A's had been less active. On October 8, they played their only warm-up game. Norman McClintock scored four touchdowns in a 20-6 win over the Indiana (Pa.) Normal School at Exposition Park, by then better known as A.A.A. Park. At least three in the A's lineup, including center Neal, were members of the W.U.P. team.

Noticeably absent from the Allegheny lineup was O.D. Thompson. Apparently he was holding true to his promise to participate in football as a spectator only. Tackle W.W. Blunt, a Lehigh man, was listed as team captain, while guard Billy Kountz was designated "football manager." By playing only a single warm-up -- and that with several borrowed players -- the Three A's effectively hid its strengths and weaknesses from the P.A.C. On the other hand, effective teamwork demanded the experience of playing together under game conditions.

The upcoming game was played and replayed hundreds of times in street corner disputes before the big day. It seemed that every football fan in the area planned to be at P.A.C. Park on Friday, October 21 -- Columbus Day. Doubters said the game would never be played, insisting that animosity between the clubs ran too high.

Some things had been said on each side during the 1891 season and since that could not be easily forgiven. The latest incident involved A.S. Valentine, for two years the regular A.A.A. quarterback. Valentine had jumped to the P.A.C. at the beginning of the 1892 season and played in their first two games. Then, without warning, he suddenly jumped back to the A's. Some accused the A's of enticing him back; others, of a more machiavellian persuasion, charged he had all along been a spy in the Gyms' camp.

Against strong opposition from angry fellow clubmen, some big businessmen from the A.A.A.'s succeeded in burying the hatchet long enough to get the mutually profitable game scheduled. It would "settle this alleged ill-feeling" and lead to "cooperation in the future to advance all kinds of amateur sport." Bettors installed the P.A.C. as slight favorites because the game would be played on the Gyms' field and because they had more experience in working together.

With a Columbus Day parade slated for early afternoon and the game to start at 3:30, Pittsburgh became a traffic nightmare. The parade was still in full swing when most people coming from the business section and from Allegheny were en route to the East End. The trollies couldn't get into the center of town, and the game crowd could get out by pushing through the throng of parade watchers. Many football fans turned back, staying to see the end of the parade or going home in frustration. Even so, between 3,000 and 4,000 people jammed into P.A.C. Park. Countless more watched for free from windows and rooftops of surrounding buildings. Blue and white A.A.A. ribbons were as common as red and white banners of the P.A.C. The teams lined up as follows:

<u>A.A.A.</u>		<u>P.A.C.</u>
Donnelly	<i>Left End</i>	Burt Aull
Emery	<i>Left Tackle</i>	Reilly
Coates	<i>Left Guard</i>	Lalus
Rowand	<i>Center</i>	Stayer
Kountz	<i>Right Guard</i>	Ritchie
Blunt	<i>Right Tackle</i>	Kirschner
Floy	<i>Right End</i>	Phelan
Ewing	<i>Quarterback</i>	C.E. Aull
Valentine	<i>Left Halfback</i>	Martin
Bolen	<i>Right Halfback</i>	Proctor
McClintock	<i>Fullback</i>	Dibert

Stayer, the P.A.C. center, was an unfamiliar face, but Captain Charley Aull introduced him as an old friend he happened to meet on the street. The regular P.A.C. center was injured, Aull explained, so Stayer would be forced to stay in the lineup if the game was to be played. Grudgingly, the Three A's agreed.

The game was a real barn burner. Everyone played as though his life depended on the outcome. No doubt a great deal of money did depend on just that, including some handsome amounts the players had bet on their own performances. Curiously, Stayer -- the friend recruited from off the street -- turned out to be one of the best players in the game.

Ten minutes into the game, Dr. George Proctor of the P.A.C. picked up an Allegheny fumble and scurried into the end zone for a touchdown. His goal after brought the score to 6-0.

The Professional Football Researchers Association

The teams battled on even terms for the remaining thirty- five minutes of the first half and well into the second. Professor Kirschner had been nursing an injured ankle all season, and, in the second stanza, he went limping to the sideline. With the Gyms' line thus weakened, the Alleghenys were able to work the ball downfield until it rested only two yards from the goal line. Norman McClintock tried left end with no success, but on the next play he skirted the right side for a touchdown. While the crowd screamed, he kicked the goal that knotted the score at 6-6.

That ended the scoring. The big game had settled nothing.

What it did do was bring the dispute between the two clubs to white heat. The P.A.C. accused the Alleghenys of dirty play to purposely injure Kirschner. The A.A.A. countered that the professor was a professional who didn't belong on the field anyway.

E.V. Paul of the A's announced he was willing to bet anyone that the Gyms had indeed used a professional, and he didn't mean Kirschner. Suspicion focused on Stayer, the mysterious streetcorner friend of Captain Aull. Suspicion turned to accusation when the supposedly injured player Stayer had replaced appeared to be quite healthy the next day when the P.A.C. had another game.

Playing two games in as many days was a little much for the Gyms' limited manpower. Dibert and a couple of others did not play. Kirschner was on the field -- limping -- as the referee. Fortunately, the opposition put up by Geneva College was not strong, and the Gyms won easily, 18-6.

Some thought it odd that P.A.C. manager George Barbour, who was neither injured nor exhausted, was not seen among the 1,000 people who attended the game. The significance of his absence was revealed only several days later.

In the meantime, the whole "Stayer story" came out. His real name was A.C. Read, and he was a well-known shot putter and captain of the Penn State University football team. In one sense, Charley Aull's version had been true: the two were indeed old friends. Aull had been captain at P.S.U. the year before.

The revelation that the P.A.C. had used a "ringer" in the big game was a shocker. Although no one on the Three A's side -- not even E.V. Paul -- could prove that Read had actually been paid and Aull hadn't tried to palm him off as a P.A.C. member, the Penn State center was definitely imported talent. By using him, the P.A.C. had escalated the situation. A climate now existed in which neither club would hesitate to take the final step to professionalism. The rematch was scheduled to be played three weeks and one day after the first meeting.

It was a busy three weeks in which the games on the field were only slightly more interesting than the games behind the scenes.

On October 29, the Three A's invaded the dreaded East for a game at Washington D.C., against the strong Columbia Athletic Club. Unfortunately, three regular linemen, including Captain Blunt, were not available to make the trip. Adding to the Alleghenys' problems was an all-night train trip that left them with virtually no rest.

Expectations were for a loss. Nevertheless, a coterie of fans came along, including a Pittsburgh Press "correspondent."

Surprisingly, the A's played with a vim and vigor they had not possessed even in the P.A.C. game. Through ninety minutes of football, they fought the Columbians to a scoreless draw. As far as the Alleghenys were concerned, it was a moral victory. Basking in glory, they returned home and found themselves forced to cancel a game at Geneva College the following week. Moral victories or not, the Alleghenys still had a problem every time they had to put eleven men on a football field.

Meanwhile, the P.A.C.'s unbeaten streak came to an end. On November 5, the Penn State University team arrived at P.A.C. Park, vowing to defeat the Gyms by "40 to 0 or we will not return to school." They had to settle for 16-0, but reportedly none of them missed any classes. The Penn State team was second only to that of the University of Pennsylvania in the state, and Penn was second in the world to Yale. It was the Gyms' turn to talk about moral victories.

Significantly, the P.S.U. team, led by Captain A.C. Read in the middle, was able to gain almost at will through the weak center of the Gyms' line. Neither Read nor Kirschner would be available to the P.A.C. on November 12. The A's certainly would be able to run wild up the middle -- if they could find eleven players. And, if the P.A.C. did nothing to improve their lineup. By now, speculation as to what players would or would not be in the two lineups had become almost as popular as football itself in Pittsburgh.

On October 22 -- the day after the first P.A.C.-A.A.A. game and while the Gyms were playing Geneva College -- P.A.C. manager George Barbour went to Cleveland to watch the Chicago A.A. in the first stop on its eastern tour. He was accompanied by another P.A.C. member, a Yale alumnus. They saw an impressive performance. The Chicagoans easily destroyed the Cleveland A.C. 29-0. Knowton "Snake" Ames, the former Princeton All-America, ran all over the field until his own teammates had to appeal to him to take it easy on the home team.

Even more inspiring than Ames' performance, as far as Barbour and his friend were concerned, were the actions of Pudge Heffelfinger. The young giant personally wrecked the Cleveland offense, led Ames on his excursions with bulldozing blocking, and at one point crashed into a Cleveland runner with such devastating impact that the ball was torn loose, allowing Heffelfinger to pick it up and streak for a touchdown. Here, the visiting Pittsburghers realized, was more than a replacement for the limping Kirschner. Here was the greatest football player in the world.

The Yale man offered to introduce Barbour to Heffelfinger.

About a week after George Barbour returned from Cleveland, the Pittsburgh Press printed a rumor that had been swirling through the city: "A very improbable sort of story is being circulated at present about the P.A.C.'s offering Heffelfinger and Ames of the Chicago football team \$250 to play with the East End team on Saturday, Nov. 12, against the A.A.A." Another version had Ames offered only \$100.

Ridiculous, said Barbour, a wishful P.A.C. man started the story.

The Professional Football Researchers Association

Other rumors made the rounds, although only a few got newspaper ink. The P.A.C. was bringing in a new halfback from the East. Clarence Lomax, the former Colgate end, would be in one lineup. Jesse Riggs, twice All-America guard at Princeton, was coming. Rags Brown. Simon Martin. Had all the rumors proved true, the two teams might have lined up thirty to a side, none of them club members.

After a successful start in Cleveland and a 35-0 drubbing of Rochester University, the Chicago A.A. bogged down on its tour. Six games in twelve days was too much even for this outstanding crew to handle, especially when they met three of the four best teams in the world. It was no disgrace that they dropped three successive games to Princeton, Penn, and Harvard.

The final game of the tour, against the tough New York Crescents, really turned things sour. The New Yorkers refused to take field unless Ben "Sport" Donnelly was barred from the Chicago lineup because of some alleged rough tactics the year before when he played for the Manhattan A.C. Foolishly, the Chicago captain acceded to the Crescents' ultimatum and benched Donnelly.

Sport Donnelly was a combative sort who had played for several teams after leaving Princeton. He'd even been with the A.A.A. early in the 1892 season before joining the Chicago tour. Allegations that he sometimes did nasty things on a gridiron were nothing new to Sport. One of his favorite ploys was to surreptitiously belt an opponent, then go to the referee and say, "Watch this guy. He's been slugging me all day." Sure enough, when the poor fellow retaliated on the next play, it would be right under the watchful eye of the ref, who would then throw the man out of the game.

But being tossed out himself, particularly before the game even started, was a new experience for Donnelly, and he didn't like it one bit. When the Crescents tied Chicago, he flew into an absolute rage, quitting the team and refusing to return to Chicago. His friends Ames and Heffelfinger sided with him. They too decided to stay in the East and return to Princeton and Yale respectively to help with the coaching. Another of Sport's buddies, Big Ed Malley, once of the Detroit A.C., agreed to go back to the Windy City only because his home was in the midwest.

And who should just happen to be in New York to watch the Chicago-Crescent game? None other than a couple of A.A.A. men. They couldn't have come at a better time.

On November 7, Barbour and his friend traveled to Chicago to greet the team upon its return from the East, and, reportedly, to hand over a large sum of money to Messrs. Heffelfinger and Ames. Alas! neither hero was there, both having carried through on their threats to quit the team. Sadly, the two P.A.C. men returned to Pittsburgh.

Despite all the rumors, both managers kept the identities of any ringers they had employed a mystery. Two weeks before the rematch, Billy Kountz was quoted as saying: "Why shouldn't we have the same team? All the men who lined up at the East End grounds on Columbus Day are anxious as can be to try it over again In fact, I think we will play about the same team as we did before, and if the East Enders play the same team, I think we will

be able to beat them without any trouble. Our boys are getting stuck on themselves, and you may be sure we will not put up an easy team on that day. We want the game and will not neglect any precautions to win the same."

If nothing else, the hype had proved profitable. Not only did the first game divide \$1,200 between the two club treasuries, but memberships were skyrocketing as well-to-do Pittsburghers scurried to become associated with organizations that were constantly in the news. From mid-October until mid-December, the P.A.C. doubled its members to 600. The Three A's kept pace.

On an individual basis, those on the winning side stood to make a killing on November 12. Although P.A.C. backers refused to bet even money, A.A.A. men had reportedly wagered \$5,000 to \$10,000 on their team.

The attendance at Recreation Park was expected to top 5,000, but a spell of cold and snow dropped the final total to about 3,000. Half the anticipation was in wondering who might show up for either team.

When the P.A.C. took the field to work out, Simon Martin, a well-known lineman from the Steelton A.C. in eastern Pennsylvania, was there to shore up the middle of the line. Rags Brown, until recently a regular halfback with the Johnstown A.A., was also present but not starting because he had been ill. The Gyms certainly seemed to have their share of ringers. Clarence Lomax was also on the grounds but not suited up. Apparently the P.A.C. hadn't come up with enough incentive.

Then the A.A.A. team appeared. It didn't take anyone very long to recognize Sport Donnelly, Ed Malley, and Pudge Heffelfinger. They had been reported in the city the night before. Only Snake Ames was missing. The P.A.C. took one long look and then went back to their horse-drawn omnibus. After several minutes, the referee declared a 6-0 forfeit, but only the most credulous expected that to hold up.

Negotiations began on the field. Barbour represented the P.A.C. For the A.A.A., out came none other than O.D. Thompson, Esq. Despite Billy Kountz's fine title of "football manager," when the stakes were high, there was no question who was running the A.A.A. team.

The Pittsburgh Press described the scene:

Confusion dire reigned all this time and it seemed as though the best advertised and most promising event of the foot ball season was about to wind up in a farce. The Allegheny men claimed they had only followed the East Enders' example in that they had got these three men. It was cited that on Columbus day the East Enders had played a State college man at center under an assumed name and the A's made a virtue of the fact that they had not complained at the time.

Old Thompson, who was temporarily master of ceremonies, declared that the East Enders had been after Jessie Riggs, of Baltimore, an ex-Princeton man and a player of national repute, for this game. This he

The Professional Football Researchers Association

said he could prove by a letter from Riggs to himself saying he had refused the proposition of the Pittsburgh Athletic Club.

Mr. Thompson also called attention to the fact that he had positive evidence from the Chicago men that the Pittsburghs had been after Heffelfinger and Ames, of the Chicago team, and he went on to call attention to the fact they were playing S. Martin, a Steelton man, at center, and were in a position to play Rags Brown, of Johnstown, and Lomax, of the same place, two outsiders. Going on, Mr. Thompson came to the conclusion that the Allegheny management had been successful where the East End manager had failed.

In other words, Thompson's defense was a classic debate maneuver that, shorn of its verbiage, translated as: "Oh yeah! Well, you're one too!" Barbour had the perfect answer to that. He simply kept his team off the field. As persuasively as Thompson might argue, he knew that no one would be satisfied with a forfeit, and, perhaps more important, the A.A.A. men would play hell trying to collect their bets. He tried a different tack.

After the East Enders left the field Manager Thompson had the field cleared, the star players retired from the Allegheny team and a scrub game was arranged between some of the 3A's and the Western University team. After the game had been in progress 10 minutes the East Enders commenced to make overtures, and after several fruitless efforts agreed to play an exhibition game if all bets on the original game were declared off.

Barbour insisted later that this was what he'd been angling for all along. He knew that sooner or later the game would be played, but he hoped by making it later that he could save the money that the team members and others in the P.A.C. had bet.

This proposition was at first refused with scorn by the Allegheny managers and orders were given for the scrub game to go on, but cooler heads prevailed and after much talking and peering the claims of the crowd on both teams became potent and the A's gave in though they declared they would not have done so but for so many people being present who wanted to see the game.

The Gym managers went back to their hack and invited the players out, but they wanted to hear something about it, and when they were told they suggested that the referee had not made the announcement to the crowd that the game was only an exhibition contest to amuse the crowd, and all bets had been declared off. This objection was heard and arranged satisfactory [sic], and the East Enders came out on the field ready to play foot ball. The game was to have commenced at 3 o' clock, but all this wrangling took up so much time that when the referee put things in operation it was 3:55 o'clock and everybody felt sore at some body or something, but could not really say who or what.

So little time remained before dark that it was agreed to play only thirty-minute halves. The teams lined up as follows:

<u>A.A.A.</u>		<u>P.A.C.</u>
Donnelly	<i>Left End</i>	Burt Aull
Malley	<i>Left Tackle</i>	Reilly

Heffelfinger	<i>Left Guard</i>	Lalus
Trees	<i>Center</i>	S. Martin
Coates	<i>Right Guard</i>	Ritchie
Blunt	<i>Right Tackle</i>	Gumbert
Floy	<i>Right End</i>	Phelan
Ewing	<i>Quarterback</i>	C.E. Aull
Valentine	<i>Left Halfback</i>	B. Martin
Bolen	<i>Right Halfback</i>	Proctor
McClintock	<i>Fullback</i>	Dibert

In retrospect, the game itself was predictable. The three Chicago players gave the Three A's a terrific advantage, but they had never practiced with their new teammates and a lot of mistakes were made. The P.A.C. substituted team play for talent and stayed in the game right up to the end. The only score came a little more than halfway through the first half when Heffelfinger jarred loose a fumble, picked up the ball, and trucked around left end for 35 yards and a touchdown. Malley missed the goal.

The Aull brothers were both badly hurt during the contest. Burt Aull was knocked out of the game in the first half with a severely bruised head. Rags Brown went in and played well, despite just coming from a sickbed. Captain Charley Aull's injury was more serious. With about twelve minutes to go, he was caught in a pile-up and so wrenched his back that he had to be carried off. By that time it was so dark that most were willing to call it a day, and the game ended at 4-0.

Sport Donnelly wasn't ready to quit, having been punched in the final minute. He was quoted as shouting: "Oh, I wish this game would last just two minutes longer. I just want two minutes to get even!"

Both sides were upset with the way things turned out. The A.A.A. men were angry at not collecting on their bets, the P.A.C. at the importation of the Chicago players. The Gyms called Heffelfinger a paid professional and insisted he had been paid \$500 -- an incredible amount. On top of that, the Gyms charged, all three Chicago men had received TWICE their expenses. The pot and the kettle, said the Three A's. According to their version, the Gyms had paid Simon Martin. Not so, said the P.A.C. He'd only been promised a job. Each club threatened to take the other to the A.A.U. Then each club backed down after realizing that its own activities had best not be too closely scrutinized.

There were reports that some A.A.A. players had quit the team rather than be associated with professionalism. There were reports that some regular A.A.A. players wanted to be paid. A few jokers started calling the club the "Four A's." With heavy sarcasm, the extra A stood for "amateur." Pittsburgh newspaper, walking a shaky middle road, continued to refer to both teams as amateurs while printing most of the charges of professionalism.

A few enthusiasts hoped to see still a third game scheduled, but O.D. Thompson was conveniently forced to go to New York and remained there well into December. Ironically, he was called to New York to defend a couple of Three A's trackmen from A.A.U. charges of professionalism.

Sport Donnelly stayed in town for another week to play end for the A's against Washington and Jefferson College. Again there were

The Professional Football Researchers Association

accusations of professionalism, but these were somewhat forgotten when the undefeated Presidents won 8-0 in a snow storm.

The A's final game was a Thanksgiving Day contest in Cleveland against the local A.C. Donnelly had gone back to Princeton to watch his alma mater lose to Yale, but his place was taken by Clarence Lomax. Until then, Lomax had been considered in the P.A.C. camp, although he hadn't actually played any games for them. Ross Fiscus returned to the fold and scored the touchdown that won the game 4-0. A victory over Cleveland was always popular in Pittsburgh, and no one cared whether any pros were involved or not.

The same day saw the P.A.C., now badly chewed up, drop its third straight game. This one was to a strong Lehigh team by 21-0. 2,500 showed up at P.A.C. Park for the last cheers of the 1892 season.

Almost lost amid the wrangles of who-paid-whom-and-how-much-if-at-all was the question that began it all -- which athletic club had the stronger grid team. Most fans gave the nod to the Three A's because of their 3-1-2 record, including the November 12 win over the P.A.C. But complicating the issue was the presence of Heffelfinger & Co. P.A.C. enthusiasts continued to claim that they had the top AMATEUR team among the local clubs.

Eventually, of course, it was all forgotten. New seasons, new teams, and new disputes occupied the fans. Heffelfinger died at age 86 in 1954. Several obituaries mentioned his strong disapproval of professional football, which was at that time gaining in popularity.

Then, nearly 70 years after the A's defeated the Gyms with the aid of Heffelfinger's touchdown, a page from the Three A's 1892 Account Book was discovered. Today, it is one of the most treasured artifacts at the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio. Handwritten in faded ink on ruled paper and signed by O.D. Thompson, the text settled once and for all whether the A.A.A. had actually transgressed into professionalism almost seven decades earlier.

Since its discovery, this page from the A.A.A.'s own account book has been accepted as proof of professionalism in western

Pennsylvania in 1892. But historians are quick to point out that the fact that Heffelfinger received \$500 and Donnelly \$250 the next week only makes them the first and second PROVED pros. How long the practice had been going on in one place or another is anybody's guess.

Expense Accounting Allegheny Athletic Assoc.

-- Football Club --

Game of Oct. 29, 1892 -- A.A.A. vs. Washington, D.C.

Balance carried over (account)	\$432.20
Guarantee's gross profit (check)	258.00
Team traveling expenses (check)	221.85
Net profit	36.15
Total balance	468.35

Game of Nov. 12, 1892 -- A.A.A. vs. Pittsburgh A.C.

Balance carried over (account)	\$468.35
Game receipts gross profit (cash)	1683.50
Visitor's guarantee expense (check)	428.00
Park rental expense (check)	50.00
Donnelly, Malley, Heffelfinger expense (cash)	75.00
Schlosser hotel bill for above (check)	9.00
Game performance bonus to W. Heffelfinger for playing (cash)	500.00
Total expenses	1062.00
Net profit	621.00
Total balance	1089.85

Game of Nov. 19, 1892 -- A.A.A. vs. W. J. College

Balance carried over (account)	\$1089.85
Game receipts gross profit (cash)	746.00
Visitor's guarantee expense (check)	238.00
Park rental expense (check)	50.00
Payment to Donnelly for playing (cash)	250.00
Total expenses	538.00
Net profit	208.00
Total balance	1297.85

This above accounting is hereby certified as
correct by the below signed team managers.
O.D. Thompson