

## FEATURE: ORIGINAL Dallas Thanksgiving Day Football



For pro football fans, watching Dallas play on Thanksgiving Day is something they've grown up with. So, if I asked you who was the first quarterback to start for Dallas on Thanksgiving Day, who would you say? Roger Staubach? Don Meredith? Craig Morton? All wrong. It's a trick question. The first Dallas Thanksgiving Day quarterback was—Frank Tripucka! And the first Dallas team to play on Thanksgiving Day was not the Cowboys, but the Texans, in 1952. And it's one of the most interesting footnotes in pro football history!

The 1952 Dallas Texans were “one hit wonders.” The year before, they were the New York Yankees. The following year, they became the Baltimore Colts. For 1952, the club was placed in Dallas, with every expectation of finding the fan following which had eluded them in Gotham. The league thought the Texas appetite for high school and college football would translate into big crowds to watch the pros. It did not. Instead, after four poorly-attended games at the Cotton Bowl, the new owners abruptly said “enough's enough” and abandoned the club. Embarrassed, the league had no choice but to take the franchise back and operate it as a “road team” for the remainder of the 1952 season, using Hershey, PA as a base of operations.

The losses piled up. When Thanksgiving Day arrived, the Texans were 0-9. With no home stadium at which to play their game against the Chicago Bears, the league arranged for the two teams to meet in Akron, Ohio. The game was to be played Thanksgiving afternoon at Akron's Rubber Bowl, but only AFTER a previously-scheduled high school football game had been played on the same field that morning. The high school game drew almost 15,000 fans. The Bears-Texans attracted only 3,000. But scattered in clusters around that dingy-up field, those 3,000 fans witnessed one of the most remarkable Thanksgiving football games ever played...

The Bears defense—solid, even in this, a down year for the club overall—dumped Texans HB Buddy Young in the end zone for a safety giving Chicago a 2-0 lead, but the Bears' offense made a game of it by gifting the Texans with a couple of turnovers in its own territory, both of which were converted for touchdowns (although one of the extra points was missed) and the Texans led 13-2 at the half. Early in the third period, yet another Chicago turnover—an interception returned by DB Stan Williams to the Bears 40—set up a third Texans touchdown, giving Dallas a stunning 20-2 lead.

However, with George Halas giving his players an earful on the sideline, the Bears came roaring back. Texans QB Frank Tripucka fumbled at his own one yard-line, Chicago DE Ed Sprinkle covered it and HB Billy Stone dove in for the score to make it 20-9. George Blanda fired a couple of touchdown strikes, kicked both extra points, and suddenly the Bears were in the lead 23-20. With only a minute to go, most of the remaining fans headed for the exits. But Tripucka unexpectedly got a hot hand, connecting on six consecutive passes in the final minute, driving the Texans 75 yards to the Chicago end zone, diving over the top himself for the final yard and the winning points in a 27-23 Dallas victory. After the game, coach Jimmy Phelan quipped, “Unaccustomed as I am to winning, I feel all right,” adding that “It's pretty hard for a team like ours to keep morale up with no home ties, we have nobody to play for except (NFL Commissioner) Bert Bell.”

It proved to be the ONLY win the Texans ever enjoyed, as they dropped their last two games to finish 1-11. After the season, the league folded the club and replaced it with a new franchise, the Baltimore Colts. About a dozen Texans players wound up on the Colts roster, including hall-of-famers Gino Marchetti and Art Donovan.

Read MORE about the 1952 Thanksgiving Game here...

<http://fs64sports.blogspot.com/2012/11/1952-dallas-texans-stun-bears-for-only.html>

Team sheets for these two 1952 Thanksgiving Day teams will allow you to re-play the game on your tabletop with SECOND SEASON! It'll be tough going for the Texans, but if you'd like to increase the odds of an upset and re-create the actual game history, award the [?] questionable symbol to all Chicago running plays.

Questions? Comments? We're always happy to hear from you! The e-mail address is [info@plaaay.com](mailto:info@plaaay.com).



**INT A-D**  
Keane 1-8  
Williams 9-12  
Petitbon 13-16  
Davis 17-19  
Baggett 20

**INT E-K**  
Reid 1-7  
Colo 8-14  
Flowers 15-20

**SACK**  
Marchetti 1-7  
Donovan 8-11  
Gandee 12-13  
Averno 14  
Colo 15  
Grigg 16  
Tait 17  
Tanner 18  
Cannamella 19  
Jankovich 20

**KICK RET**  
Young 1-9  
Baggett 10-16  
Taliaferro 19-20

**PUNT RET**  
Baggett 1-12  
Young 13-20

**RET**  
Buddy Young  
Billy Baggett  
George Taliaferro  
Joe Campanella  
Keever Jankovich

**KR**  
28\*  
24\*  
24  
13  
15

**PR**  
6  
9\*  
(4)  
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[+1] TEAM DEFENSE Y: [NC] FUMBLES: [D] PENALTIES: [A]

<b>A</b> [HB] 1 / 0 Johnny Petitbon 0+ / 0 Billy Baggett 1- / 0 Dick McKissack	<b>B</b> [S] 2- / 0 Tom Keane 1 / 0 Will Sherman 0+ / 0 Billy Baggett	<b>C</b> [S] 1 / 0 Jerry Davis 1 / 0 Will Sherman 0+ / 0 Billy Baggett	<b>D</b> [HB] 1 / 0 Stan Williams 0+ / 0 Billy Baggett 1- / 0 Dick McKissack
<b>E</b> [OLB] 0 / 1- Keever Jankovich 0 / 1- Joe Campanella 1- / 0 Sonny Gandee	<b>F</b> [MG] 0 / 1 Sisto Averno 0 / 1- Joe Reid 0 / 1- Barney Poole	<b>G</b> [OLB] 0 / 0+ Pat Cannamela 0 / 1- Keith Flowers 0 / 1- Joe Reid	
<b>H</b> [DE] 2- / 0 Gino Marchetti 1- / 0 Sonny Gandee 0 / 1- Barney Poole	<b>I</b> [DT] 1 / 1 Art Donovan 0+ / 0 Don Colo 0 / 1- Barney Poole	<b>J</b> [DT] 0 / 0+ Chubby Grigg 0 / 1- Hamp Tanner 0 / 1- Barney Poole	<b>K</b> [DE] 0 / 1- Art Tait 0 / 1- Barney Poole 0 / 1- Hamp Tanner

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## 1952N Dallas • DEFENSE

† Opposing runners have □ yards added to all OU run gains.

## 1952N Dallas • OFFENSE

† George Taliaferro may throw two passes per game from SB box, changing runs to passes; Dick Hoerner is given an IN grade of C for first four carries; Bob Celeri has □□ yards added to all OU run gains.

<b>TA</b> [OT] 1- / 1 Jim Lansford 0 / 0+ Chubby Grigg 0 / 1- Hamp Tanner	<b>GA</b> [G] 0 / 1 Weldon Humble 0 / 1- George Robison 0 / 1- Barney Poole	<b>CE</b> [C] 0 / 1- Brad Ecklund 0 / 1- Keith Flowers 0 / 1- Joe Reid	<b>GB</b> [G] 1 / 2 John Wozniak 0 / 1- George Robison 0 / 1- Barney Poole	<b>TB</b> [OT] 0 / 1 Ken Jackson 0 / 0+ Chubby Grigg 0 / 1- Hamp Tanner
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<b>EA</b> [E] 1 / 0 Stan Williams 1- / 0 Gene Felker 0 / 1- Barney Poole	<b>R</b> (14) (11) (12)	<b>QB</b> [QB] 0 / 1 Frank Tripucka 0 / 1- Bob Celeri 1 / 2- → → George Taliaferro 0 / 1- Hank Lauricella	<b>CMP</b> B D Z F	<b>X</b> 4 6 22 0	<b>Y</b> 10 4 10 9	<b>Q</b> 9 16 16 16	<b>OU</b> C A† B D	<b>EC</b> [E] 1 / 1- Dick Wilkins 0+ / 0 Ray Pelfrey 0 / 1- Bob Celeri 1- / 0 Tom Keane	<b>R</b> 13* 14 (9) (24)
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<b>SB</b> [RB] 1 / 2- → → George Taliaferro 0+ / 0 Billy Baggett 0 / 1- Chuck Ortmann	<b>IN</b> B (D) (D)	<b>OU</b> B (C) (D)	<b>R</b> 12 (14) --	<b>FB</b> [RB] 0 / 1 Zollie Toth 0 / 1 Dick Hoerner 0+ / 0 Billy Baggett	<b>IN</b> C E† (D)	<b>OU</b> D E (C)	<b>R</b> (7) (17) (14)	<b>EB</b> [RB-FL] 1 / 1 Buddy Young 0+ / 0 Billy Baggett 0 / 1- Hank Lauricella	<b>IN</b> E (D) (E)	<b>OU</b> C (C) (D)	<b>R</b> 12 (14) --
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<b>PK</b> Chubby Grigg Pat Cannamela	<b>XP</b> D C	<b>FG</b> F F	<b>LFG</b> +30[--] +30[--]	<b>KO</b> D D	<b>INSIDE</b> Toth 1-7 Taliaferro 8-13 Hoerner 14-17 Young 18-19 Baggett 20	<b>OUTSIDE</b> Taliaferro 1-5 Young 6-11 Baggett 12-14 Toth 15-16 Hoerner 17-18 Lauricella 19-20	<b>SC-SH-MED</b> Wilkins 1-4 Young 5-7 Taliaferro 8-10 Pelfrey 11-13 Toth 14-15 Hoerner 16 Williams 17 Feker 18 Celeri 19	<b>LONG</b> Pelfrey 1-6 Taliaferro 7-12 Young 13-18 Keane 19-20 ----- Baggett 20 Keane 20 Poole 20
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<b>PU</b> Hank Lauricella Bob Celeri	<b>AVG</b> 35 42	<b>RET</b> B D	<b>COF</b> C D	<b>BLK</b> B B
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[+3] TEAM OFFENSE FUMBLES: [D] PENALTIES: [A]

KICKOFF COV [D] PUNT COV [D]



<b>INT A-D</b> Dooley 1-10 Kindt 11-15 Jo. Hoffman 16-18 Stone 19-20	<b>INT E-K</b> Weatherly 1-8 Connor 9-12 Ja. Hoffman 13-14 Clark 15-16 Dempsey 17-18 F. Williams 19-20	<b>SACK</b> Sprinkle 1-6 Connor 7-11 F. Williams 12-13 Bishop 14 Ja. Hoffman 15 Clark 16	<b>KICK RET</b> George 17 Jo. Hoffman 18 Weatherly 19 Cross 20 Dempsey 20	<b>PUNT RET</b> Hunsinger 1-9 White 10-16 Macon 17-18 Dimancheff 19-20	<b>RET</b> <b>Chuck Hunsinger</b> <b>Wilford White</b> Eddie Macon Jimmy Lesane Babe Dimancheff	<b>KR</b> <b>21*</b> <b>27</b> 33† -- 27	<b>PR</b> -- <b>5*</b> 11 3 (0)
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[NC] TEAM DEFENSE Y: [NC] FUMBLES: [B] PENALTIES: [B]

<b>A</b> [HB] <b>1 / 0+ Jim Dooley</b> 1 / 0 Jimmy Lesane 1 / 1- Bones Weatherly	<b>B</b> [S] <b>1 / 0+ Al Campana</b> 1 / 0 Jimmy Lesane 1 / 0 Bones Weatherly	<b>C</b> [S] <b>1 / 0 John Hoffman</b> 1 / 0 Billy Stone 1 / 0 Eddie Macon	<b>D</b> [HB] <b>1 / 0+ Don Kindt</b> 1 / 0 Billy Stone 1 / 0 Eddie Macon
<b>E</b> [OLB] <b>1 / 1 Bill George</b> 1 / 1- Bones Weatherly 0 / 1 Frank Dempsey	<b>F</b> [MG] <b>1 / 1 Herman Clark</b> 0 / 1 Frank Dempsey 0 / 1 Bobby Cross	<b>G</b> [OLB] <b>2 / 2 George Connor</b> 1 / 1- Bones Weatherly 0 / 1 Frank Dempsey	
<b>H</b> [DE] <b>2 / 1 Ed Sprinkle</b> 1 / 0 John Hoffman 0 / 1 Ed Bradley	<b>I</b> [DT] <b>1 / 1- Bill Bishop</b> 0 / 1 Bobby Cross 0 / 1 Ed Bradley	<b>J</b> [DT] <b>1 / 2- Fred Williams</b> 0 / 1 Bobby Cross 0 / 1 Ed Bradley	<b>K</b> [DE] <b>1 / 0+ Jack Hoffman</b> 1 / 0 John Hoffman 0 / 1 Ed Bradley

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## 1952N Chicago • DEFENSE

† Eddie Macon scores TOUCHDOWN on any KICKOFF RETURN over 45 yards.

## 1952N Chicago • OFFENSE

† George Blanda is given a CMP grade of "F" for MEDIUM and LONG passes; Eddie Macon is given an OU grade of "AAAA[?]" for first three carries; Leon Campbell is given an IN grade of "C" for first three carries.

<b>TA</b> [OT] <b>2- / 2 George Connor</b> 0 / 1 Bobby Cross 0 / 1 Frank Dempsey	<b>GA</b> [G] <b>1 / 2- Dick Barwegen</b> 0 / 1 Ed Bradley 0 / 1 Frank Dempsey	<b>CE</b> [C] <b>1- / 1 Wayne Hansen</b> 0 / 1 Bob Moser 0 / 1 Ed Bradley	<b>GB</b> [G] <b>1 / 1 Bill George</b> 0 / 1 Ed Bradley 0 / 1 Frank Dempsey	<b>TB</b> [OT] <b>1 / 1 Bulldog Turner</b> 0 / 1 Bobby Cross 0 / 1 Frank Dempsey							
<b>EA</b> [E] <b>1 / 1- Bill McColl</b> 1 / 0 Bill Wightkin 1 / 0 John Hoffman	<b>R</b> <b>14</b> (17) (9)	<b>QB</b> [QB] <b>1 / 1- George Blanda</b> 1 / 0 Steve Romanik 0 / 1 Bob Williams	<b>CMP</b> <b>Z†</b> E C	<b>X</b> <b>7</b> 4 8	<b>Y</b> <b>8</b> 9 6	<b>Q</b> <b>14</b> 16 13	<b>OU</b> <b>AA</b> F C	<b>EC</b> [E] <b>2 / 1- Gene Schroeder</b> 1 / 0 Bill McColl 1 / 0 John Hoffman	<b>R</b> <b>17*</b> 14 (9)		
<b>SB</b> [RB] <b>0 / 1 Chuck Hunsinger</b> 1 / 0 Eddie Macon 1 / 0 Babe Dimancheff	<b>IN</b> E D (C)	<b>OU</b> <b>D</b> D[?] <sup>†</sup> (AAA) (14)	<b>R</b> <b>(10)</b> (3)[?]	<b>FB</b> [RB] <b>0 / 1 Fred Morrison</b> 1 / 0 John Dottley 1 / 0 Leon Campbell	<b>IN</b> B A D†	<b>OU</b> B C D	<b>R</b> <b>(13)</b> (13) --	<b>EB</b> [RB-FL] <b>0 / 1 Billy Stone</b> 1 / 0 Wilford White 1 / 0 Eddie Macon	<b>IN</b> C (F) D	<b>OU</b> B (F) D†	<b>R</b> <b>(22)</b> (19) (3)[?]

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<b>PK</b> George Blanda Wilford White	<b>XP</b> AAA AA	<b>FG</b> C D	<b>LFG</b> <b>+25[E]</b> +20[F]	<b>KO</b> D E	<b>INSIDE</b> Morrison 1-8 Dottley 9-14 Hunsinger 15-16 Stone 17-18 Campbell 19-20	<b>OUTSIDE</b> Morrison 1-5 Dottley 6-7 Stone 8-10 Hunsinger 11-13 Macon 14-16 White 17-18 Dimancheff 19-20	<b>SC-SH-MED</b> Schroeder 1-5 McColl 6-8 Hunsinger 9-10 Stone 11-12 Morrison 13-14	<b>LONG</b> Schroeder 1-10 Stone 11-16 White 17-19 Dimancheff 20 ----- Dimancheff 19 Campbell 20 Hoffman 20	<b>PU</b> <b>Fred Morrison</b> Bob Williams	<b>AVG</b> <b>42</b> 45	<b>RET</b> C E	<b>COF</b> C D	<b>BLK</b> B C	<b>KICKOFF COV [C]</b>	<b>PUNT COV [C]</b>
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[+3] TEAM OFFENSE FUMBLES: [D] PENALTIES: [C]

