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 AF-TER 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 dinged-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.

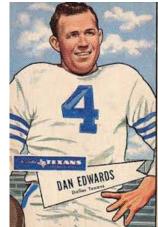
Questions? Comments? We're always happy to hear from you! The e-mail address is info@plaay.com.







FRANK TRIPUCKA QB • Texans





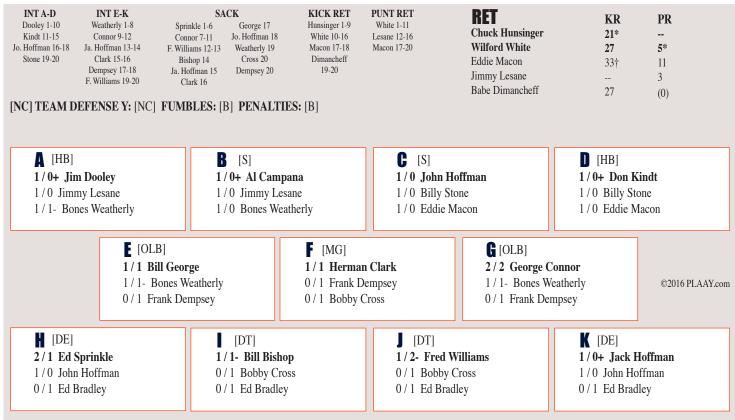
1952N Dallas • DEFENSE

 \dagger Opposing runners have \Box 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 up yards added to all OU run gains.

TA[OT]GA[G]1-/1Jim Lansford0/1Weldon Humble0/0+Chubby Grigg0/1-George Robison0/1-Hamp Tanner0/1-Barney Poole					0 / 1- Keith Flowers					GB [G] 1/2 John Wozniak 0/1- George Robison 0/1- Barney Poole			TB [OT] 0/1 Ken Jackson 0/0+ Chubby Grigg 0/1- Hamp Tanner				
I/0 Stan Williams (14) 0/ I-/0 Gene Felker (11) 0/ I/1- Barney Poole (12) 1/		0/1-Bo 1/2-⊁	ank Tripucka		CMP B D Z F	6 22	Y 10 4 10 9	9 16 16	OU C A† B D	1/1- Di 0+/0 Ra 0/1- Bo	[E] Dick Wilkins Ray Pelfrey Bob Celeri Tom Keane		R 13* 14 (9) (24)				
SB [RB] 1/2- → George Taliaferro 0+/0 Billy Baggett 0/1- Chuck Ortmann	IN B (D) (D)	OU B (C) (D)	R 12 (14) 	FB [R 0/1 Zol 0/1 Dic 0+/0 B	l lie Tot k Hoer	mer	IN C E† (D)	OU D E (C)	R (7) (17) (14)	0+/0 B	B-FL] ddy Youn illy Bagge ank Lauric	ett	IN E (D) (E)	OU C (C) (D)	R 12 (14)		
Pat Cannamela $C = F + 30[-] D$		Taliafer Hoerne Young Bagg	1-7 ro 8-13 r 14-17 18-19 ett 20	OUTSIDE Taliaferro 1-5 Young 6-11 Baggett 12-14 Toth 15-16 Hoerner 17-18 Lauricella 19-20	SC-SH-MEI Wilkins 1-4 Young 5-7 Taliaferro 8-1 Pelfrey 11-12 Toth 14-15 Hoerner 16 Williams 17 Feker 18 Celeri 19	0 3	LONG Pelfrey 1-6 Taliaferro 7-12 Young 13-18 Keane 19-20 Baggett 20 Keane 20 Poole 20	PU Hank La Bob Cele	ri	AV 35 42 OFF COV	G RET B D [D] PU	C D	BLK B B DV [D]				



1952N Chicago • DEFENSE

 \dagger 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.

TA [OT]GA [G]2-/2 George Connor1/2- Dick Barwegen0/1 Bobby Cross0/1 Ed Bradley0/1 Frank Dempsey0/1 Frank Dempsey					U	0 / 1 Bob Moser 0 / 1 B					G] ill George d Bradley rank Dempse	ÿ	TB [OT] 1/1 Bulldog Turner 0/1 Bobby Cross 0/1 Frank Dempsey				
EA [E] 1/1- Bill McColl 1/0 Bill Wightkin 1/0 John Hoffman		R 14 (17) (9)		1/0 \$	QB] G eorge Blai teve Roman Bob Williams	ik	CMP Z† E C	X 7 4 8	Y 8 9 6	14 16	OU AA F C	1/0 Bil	E] E ene Schroed 11 McColl hn Hoffman	er	R 17* 14 (9)		
SB [RB] 0/1 Chuck Hunsing 1/0 Eddie Macon 1/0 Babe Dimanche	0	IN E D (C)		R (10) † (3)[?] A) (14)	FB [F 0/1 Fr 1/0 Jo 1/0 Le	hn Dott	ley	IN B A D†	OU B C D	R (13) (13)	1/0 Wi	B-FL] I ly Stone Iford Whit die Macon	te (N C F)	OU B (F) D†	R (22) (19) (3)[?]	
George Blanda	XP AAA AA	FG C D	LFG +25[H +20[F	E] D	O Morr Dottl Hunsin	SIDE ison 1-8 ley 9-14 iger 15-16 e 17-18	OUTSIDE Morrison 1-5 Dottley 6-7 Stone 8-10 Hunsinger 11-13	SC-SH-M Schroeder McColl 6 Hunsinger Stone 11-	1-5 5 -8 9-10	LONG Schroeder 1-10 Stone 11-16 White 17-19 Dimancheff 20	Fred Mo				PLAAY. COF C D	com BLK B C	
[+3] TEAM OFFEN	SE FU	MBLE	S: [D]	PENAL	Campb	pell 19-20	Macon 14-16 White 17-18 Dimancheff 19-20	Morrison 12 Dottley 1 Macon 1 White 12 Wightkin	3-14 5 6 7	Dimancheff 19 Campbell 20 Hoffman 20		KICK	OFF COV [(PLAAY		