

# Professional Football

In Europe, "football" is the term used for the game we call soccer. Oddly enough, North American football was actually devised from the game of soccer.

Professional football is conducted under the rules of the National Football League (NFL). The game as we know it, is very different from those early days. The first soccer game ever played in America was between Princeton and Rutgers colleges. This evolved into football and in 1876, Walter Camp, known as the "Father of American Football", wrote the rules of American football.

In the early 1900s, football players were paid only \$500 to play professional football. You can't even get a pro player to attend an autograph signing for that amount these days. The Allegheny Athletic Association and the Pittsburgh Athletic Club were the first teams to play football, as we know it. As professional football evolved, more teams began to form. The first teams to become professional were the Pittsburgh Pirates (now known as the Steelers), the Bears, Cardinals, Giants, and Packers. The Cardinals were the very first professional football team. At that time, the Cardinals were based in Chicago. Over time, the team moved to St. Louis, then Phoenix, and finally to their current home in Arizona.

Since those early days, the professional football league has grown, and it continues to grow. Today's professional players receive millions of dollars, plus millions more through endorsements and advertising revenues. It's a far cry from the \$500 paid to their league ancestors. People have been playing football for more than a century, and the sport has grown from a small pastime to one of the most important games in North America.

The NFL regulates professional football. The NFL currently has more than thirty teams that play, representing many of the states. The greatest degree of football hype is reached at Super Bowl time. A really good team is defined by the number of Super Bowl wins they have to their credit. Some have won the title many times, while others have never reached that degree of glory.

Professional football players are usually recruited from college teams. Coaches scout out the college teams to see which players have the potential and skill to make it as a professional football player. These athletes must be disciplined individuals who are able to focus as much as possible on the game, and avoid being distracted from their main goal. Every year, each NFL team strives to make it to the Super Bowl. Only one Super Bowl competitor will win the trophy, but both teams are considered the greatest, most competitive professional football teams.

From its humble beginnings on a soccer field, to a stadium filled with screaming NFL fans, professional football has grown to be one of the most important sports in North America.