

# TABLE FOOTBALL 1976!

COMMENTARY/ Julian E. Compton

## FOOTBALL NORMALIZATION:

### WERE THE GREEN BAY PACKERS FOOTBALL'S BEST?

The question of "who is the best" in any sport has always intrigued me. This has led me to those games which produce not only yearly ratings of current teams but also dig into the past for greats from previous eras. To properly do this, the game must be founded on sound normalizing principles which include all of the relevant data of the sport. The data should be compared to the average performance (or some other uniform standard) in that category for the entire history of the sport. To properly do this, the game must be founded on sound normalizing principles which include all of the relevant data of the sport. The data should be compared to the average performance (or some other uniform standard) in that category for the entire history of the sport. To compare the data to the league average for one year will suffice for yearly ratings but fails miserably in rating teams over a period of several years. Unfortunately not many game creators want to be bothered with these details, but I now regard it as absolutely essential for any new game that wants to offer anything worth while to the sports game market. The same tired old formulas are no longer enough.

In light of these comments, I want to discuss three football games which do not have fully developed normalizing formulas, but do allow the matching up of teams from different years. APBA Football has for a long time been the only game to rate pro football teams from years other than the current one. As far as I know it is still the only game to offer a separate edition of great playoff match-ups from previous years. In 1976 TSG and THE have entered the past-years market by each offering eight great teams of the past for free when one purchases the current season. A comparison of the top-rated teams in each of the three games will indicate overall strength for the major teams of pro football history. By totalling the offensive and defensive points assigned to the starting lineups for each team and adding on three pass receivers for THE and TSG a comparison of team abilities will emerge. It is not a final determinate of quality but it will indicate general team strength.

In APBA through the 1973 season the top teams are: (1) Green Bay 1962-96 pts.), (2) Washington 1942 (94 pts.), (3) Miami 1972 (93 pts.), (4) New York Giants 1959 and Baltimore 1959 (91 pts.), (6) Kansas City 1969 and Miami 1973 (90 pts.), (8) New York Giant's 1962 and New York Giants 1963, Los Angeles 1967 and Green Bay 1967 (89 pts.). THE, which so far rates only two teams before 1971, has these top teams: (1) Oakland 1973 (74 pts.), (2) Miami 1973 (73 pts.), (3) Green Bay 1962 (71 pts.), (4) Miami 1972 (69 pts.), (5) Pittsburgh 1974 (66 pts.), (6) Baltimore 1958 and Los Angeles 1973 (65 pts.). In TSG,

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SIMULATION SURVEY/Rick Berg

I am not, by choice, a rabid football fan. Baseball is my chosen medium, and I find most table-top simulations of baseball more interesting and more accurate than their fall counterparts. However, as a professional game designer and avid sports fan, I still enjoy football simulations and appreciate good design and development work.

Unfortunately, football is not an easy game to simulate. Only 50% of the players are rated statistically by the NFL, and some of those stats are hard to transform into play systems because they include so many variables. A perfect example of this is the simple idea of rating Pass Receivers. How much is a receiver's gain rate dependent on his own or his QB's ability? And how do you handle this statistic? As the reader will see, I have definite ideas on this and they are discussed with the individual games where they become a factor.

There are eleven games rated in the main portion of this article. They are followed by a chart which rates each of the games in the areas which I felt were important to the consumer. Because of the ratings I have declined discussion of many of these aspects, as my reactions can be gleaned from the chart. The eleven games chosen represent those games that use statistics to achieve a result and are still available (with one possible exception). I do not think I missed a game in this area, unless it is one of which I am unaware. There are several other games that are quite popular, such as Avalon Hill's Football Game and NFL Strategy. But these games appeal to a different section of the buying populace and are purely for head-to-head play. Both of them are fairly good, if this is your area; but neither fulfill the feeling of a professional football game. I have ignored the Electric Football games, although they are very strong in my personal nostalgia files. The number of totally debilitating laughs I gained from my hoary copy of Tudor Electric Football is uncountable. Thinking of that ludicrous passer/kicker alone is enough to evoke silent gales of laughter.

As a youth I actually preferred Photo-Electric Football — you know, the one where both plays went into the slot and you pulled back the cover and the play unfolded before your eyes. Now there was a game both devious in nature and a challenge to juvenile minds! I think that one day, to increase the brilliance of the play revelation, I installed a 150 Watt bulb and set fire to the field. And on a long-pass play, no less!!!

Several games of this ilk are also no longer available: e.g., now that Avalon Hill has purchased 3M games, Thinking Man's Football is no longer available, unless you find a stray copy lying around. In essence, though, I have stuck with the games which provide the major interest to readers of such a special interest magazine. Provincial, perhaps; but there is a limit....

I received, in the course of my investigations, several college games which I will pass on to Julian Compton for his cogent analysis. I would like to state that Goal College football is the best game of its kind, regardless of price, and that Six Points is a disaster — unless you are interested in one of the strangest playing fields I have ever come across. It has something to do with marbles!

Overall, none of the games reviewed below is entirely satisfactory.

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## From the Editor

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Nice, gentle old Rich Berg is our lead-off guy this issue. I asked Rich to go a little easy on the football games to be reviewed and he complied — in his own fashion. He crucified a few, of course. A killer cannot always be denied. The rest he merely knifed in their non-critical parts. For those of you that weren't around for the last issue of TTS, please be informed that Rich is an attorney who plies the talents of writing and game-designing for Simulations Publications Inc., the wargame company. (Although he hasn't mentioned it, I assume he does this because he is lousy at lawyering.) In fact, SPI thinks so highly of Rich that they placed his picture on the cover of a recent issue of **Moves**, their wargame publication. I know — because Rich very generously sent me a copy, unasked. After seeing the picture, I couldn't decide why he would want anyone to see it; in fact, if I had been in his position, I would have sought an injunction to stop distribution of the magazine. However, not to be outdone, we took a considerable sum out of the TTS budget and commissioned a well-known artist to do a portrait of Rich. Unfortunately, because of the length of Rich's article, we did not have room to run the portrait. Not wanting a total loss of our money, however, we had one of our staff artists redraw the portrait in smaller form. You will find the final rendering below. It's just another reminder that TTS is synonymous with quality.

Our other writers for this issue are our old standbys: Julian Compton, John Swistak, Bill Rehrig, Rick Teverbaugh, Bob Jones, and Larry Green. These are the guys that make this magazine worth bothering with issue after issue and they probably do not realize their worth. Considering the piddling pittance they receive, I'm certainly glad they don't.



On tap for next time is our promised survey of table hockey games. It will be done by Rick Teverbaugh and should be a winner. John Swistak will be furnishing a mini-survey of all of the less expensive baseball games on the market — the ones costing \$3.00 or less. Larry Green is also covering a couple of these same games. Julian Compton will probably update his college football game-survey. Bill Rehrig is taking time out from his superb series on replays to discuss the acceptance of the APBA Master Game after its first year on the market. And Dennis Bialaszewski and I have buried the hatchet and Dennis is whipping up a discussion article on **REPLAY BASEBALL** to lay on us for an upcoming issue. We'll be running Steve Goldstein's postponed review of **BALLPARK BASEBALL** in an upcoming issue — as soon as I can locate where I filed it. Plus we'll try to round up something on basketball apropos of the season. So how does all of that grab you?

That's all the poop for now. Thanks to Rich, there's not enough space left for me to continue what I consider to be the best feature of this magazine. Here's hoping we don't receive over one or two cancellations because of the brevity of my column.

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We wish to acknowledge the support of the following companies in furnishing materials for review in this edition: Big League Game Co., Statis-Pro Games, G.B. Games, and Six Points College Football (Box 762, Omaha, NB 68101.)

### NOTES

If a date is listed after your address label, this is your expiration date. Many labels still do not carry this date; however, all labels will be converted to this form within one year. If you order a game because of something you have read in TTS, please be sure to mention that fact in your order. This will help us to obtain more games for review in future issues. If you wish to respond to an ad in TTS, but do not want to clip the coupon, feel free to send in your order on a plain sheet of paper. It's the check that is enclosed with the order that counts, not the coupon.

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## From the Readers

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Dear Mr. Faulk, I would like to take this opportunity to compliment you on the Spring 1976 issue of Table Top Sports — my first as a new subscriber. It is an interesting and much needed publication. While TTS is not yet an APBA Journal (Ben Weiser really does a superior editorial job), it has great potential because of the coverage of all table sports games.

Now for the other reason I am writing — to comment on Mr. Kilgus' letter and your response regarding the unwarranted yet loyal following enjoyed by the APBA baseball game. Although I have purchased APBA's products almost from its inception in the early 1950's, I am fully aware of the game's limitations. Consequently, I have bought most of the other games on the market including Negamco, BLM, Replay, SOM and Sherco II. Nevertheless, I still keep coming back to APBA, buying most of their products, attending the conventions, etc. Why?

The APBA cards have a mystique about them that the other games cannot match. They are not just printed probabilities reflecting raw statistics but numbers that represent something more. In trying to solve the APBA formula (if one exists that has logic to it), numerous questions arise each year. Last year, for instance, was Andy Messersmith given the proper pitching grade? Was Johnny Bench short changed on homers? Did Joe Morgan get too many stolen bases for the 1974 season? It all depends on the board frequencies and what one thinks the formula is. As a result, much correspondence is generated and sizeable attendance is guaranteed at conventions. For example, I recently received in the mail an unsolicited dozen page manuscript which attempts to explain APBA's card making formula. It took me days to analyze this paper! Seriously, as a middle age Wall Street banker, you would think I have better things to do with my time than spend many hundreds of hours each year analyzing every card. But I do — which amounts for much of APBA's success.

I admit to rarely playing APBA's baseball game, preferring to do battle with my two teenage boys via the advanced version of SOM which is easily our favorite face to face game. The new Master Game, however, holds much promise as indicated in Mr. Goldstein's favorable review, although I disagree with his criticism of the game's system for rating pitchers. It is a good approach in that it is consistent with the basic game and yet represents a significant refinement and enhancement for differentiating between pitchers of comparable skills. The APBA system often more accurately reflects the pitcher's overall performance compared to a card based on just the statistics. For instance, Will McEnaney had poor statistics in 1975 but a good ERA and was effective in numerous relief appearances.

In conclusion, I hope you will be objective about all the games and not knock APBA just because it is the biggest and most successful game company. Your remark about injuries, rain outs, etc. — all of which APBA had long before any of the other games were invented — was not appropriate nor in keeping with the hoped for factual content of TTS. APBA does serve a need, whether it is for the analytical nut like me or those who want a fast play/solitaire game. It really does have a large, loyal following!

Sincerely, R.D. Schumacher, New York, NY

Thank you, Mr. Schumacher, for your compliment on the Spring TTS. And I do not take offense at your comparison of my editorial efforts with those of Ben Weiser of AJ. Ben is a journalist by training and education. While attending Brown University fulltime, Ben found time to edit AJ, edit and publish the quarterly official publication of the Society for American Baseball Research, host a regular program on the Brown campus radio station, arrange an annual APBA convention, and involve himself in several curricular related activities such as the investigation of a Rhode Island children's home. Ben is now moving into a less strenuous "upstairs" position at AJ so that he can devote most of his efforts to his new job — Assistant to the Managing Editor at Foreign Policy Magazine.

In comparison, I am a physicist by training, I don't know a thing  
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## BATTER UP!

(After completing this review, new advertisements appeared offering individual players with the game. For this reason the latter part of this article will appear to be something which has been added on.)

**Astra Game Co., Inc., Box 579, Forest Hills, NY \$6.95 ppd.**

Contents: (In a plastic bag, inside a folded carton.) 2 double-sided Play Result Boards (with 8 base situations), Special Situation Booklet (with Steal, Sacrifice, etc. Charts), 13"x15½" Playing Board, Rules Pamphlet, 5 player discs, 4 special dice (only 3 are used at one time), 24 **TEAM** batting and pitching performance cards (two-sided) 3-5/8" x 4-1/4".

The game takes about 20 minutes and is quite simple to play—basic action following lines similar to **SPORTS ILLUSTRATED** and the defunct games, **BE A MANAGER** and **ASG**; i.e., a pitcher roll being followed by a batter roll.

The dice are different—the three used in the Special Situation Booklet are extremely reminiscent of **SPORTS ILLUSTRATED** and the fourth die (used with the team performance cards) is merely an extension to produce 40 differentiable results instead of 30.

The Base Situation Charts look good even if 1 and 3 are identical in all results (as are 2 and 4). Extra Base Hits don't change drastically from one chart to another as in **APBA**, but there are some slight differences.

Without individualized batter ratings, the hit-and-run loses much of its effect (Bobby Bonds is as good as anyone else on the Yankee team), but the chart (which is used as a substitute for Runners on First or First and Third Charts) seems reasonable in its application and results.

The steal is handled well, as the manager must decide whether to hold the runner or not whenever there is a runner on first and second is unoccupied. If he elects not to hold, any runner who is a threat to steal (rating 2 or above) increases his rating (both parts) by 2; thus, a runner with a .625% success factor (a "2") becomes a runner with a .7685% success factor (a "4"). If the manager elects to hold the runner, play number 23 (generally, a groundball to the first baseman) becomes a ground "single to right-field." What might be an error implies one should always hold Boston runners on first. There are no 23's on any pitching card and Boston is the only team without one on its batting card; hence, holding the runner will have no ill effects for the team in the field. The effect of holding the runner varies from team to team with Oakland gaining the most (about .066 in batting average) if any one of the A's five stealing threats (two 2's, two 3's, and a 4) is held.

Players distinguishable as Lopes(6), Morgan(6), and Rivers(5) can have their ratings evidenced by statistical means, but the Royals "6" rated catcher is divided fairly evenly among three players, none of whom show such fantastic base stealing potential—it has to be an error; it stands out too much to be anything else. Which brings up another point—are these three parttime catchers rated as a combined group; or is just one of them rated?

The sacrifice chart is based on the batter bunt rating and runner speed (base running, not stealing); while the squeeze play depends entirely on the batter's bunt rating.

The basic fielding rating (A is best, F is worst) is only for errors ("possible error" occurs on the play result board; the dice are rolled and the error chart is checked), but catchers are rated (plus or minus) to affect the runner's stealing ability, and outfielders have an effect on stretch situations when they are optional, be it from first to third on a single or racing home on a flyout.

There is an injury chart, but without injury ratings it doesn't have much impact; even with injury ratings it wouldn't have too much impact on team batting; especially without a substitute to put in.

The game is neatly put together. Glossy medium-heavy stock is used for the play result board and glossy paper is used for the "Special Situation Booklet" and instructions which sometimes creates a glare problem. (The instructions and player cards are on flat stock in the game with individual players.)

Additional information regarding the game with individual players:

576 player cards (divided about 14/10, fielders/pitchers) approximately 1.42" x 2.75".

game with 576 players: \$10.50

game with AL or NL: \$8.75

576 player cards only: \$4.75

24 team cards only: \$2.50

Prices are expected to increase next year, but the cards will be larger and contain the player's vital statistics. There are also plans to release some Great Teams next year and a "Hall of Fame" version.

The four homerun numbers now become differentiable since some pitchers will convert certain homerun numbers into doubles; while other pitchers will give up homeruns off their card to batters with the same homerun number (if the batter has different homerun numbers, or none at all, it becomes a single.)

The fourth die, which causes forty result numbers, has been eliminated.

Along with the catchers' throw ratings the pitchers are rated for their ability to hold the runner close and thereby cut down on the runner's chance to steal safely.

If a pitcher gives up more than 4 earned runs in an inning his probability of giving up hits is increased, but this factor may be eliminated by pitching 2 consecutive shutout innings at a later point. There is also a "pitcher endurance Factor" which is more like a critical inning. If certain conditions are met during this or any subsequent inning the pitcher tires, losing his ability to stop the homerun and increasing his probability of allowing a hit (this factor replaces the former effect). From this point the pitcher cannot recover and can only get worse; even to the point of injury if he is allowed to continue.

The individual player cards come 24 to a perforated sheet approximately as heavy as that used by **STATIS PRO**. National league pitchers have their batting cards on the reverse side of their pitching cards.

The playing time with individual players will increase about 10–15 minutes above that of the basic game.

If you collect baseball games, the team edition is a worthy addition; filling the void between games with no player ratings and games with categorized player ratings. If you want a fast playing game with team results and don't care about individual statistics, your game has finally arrived. Or, if you're looking for an inexpensive game with players rated in most major categories (no left/right difference), and you liked **SI**'s style, here it is.

A few facts about the creator garnered from a small correspondence with him: maximum age—35 (played **APBA** at age 10), became interested in testing accuracy of **APBA** and devised his own games, devout Dodger fan from Brooklyn, computer programmer, games are a sideline right now.

### TABLE TOP SPORTS

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## BE YOUR OWN CRITIC

Readers of TTS and other materials often eagerly consume words of "authority" on the merits and/or demerits of a game without a second thought and possibly become unnecessarily attached to a game which doesn't suit them. My opinions on a game relate directly to what I expect to see in a game, and no critic can divorce his own expectations from his critical review. It may be that a game highly recommended by one person is just as highly unsuitable to a reader who takes those words of the review as the "gospel" truth. Conversely, an unsatisfied tabletop game fan may find that a game which has received severe criticism by an "expert" is exactly what he wants for hours of enjoyment. The variety of game players' personalities is undoubtedly a large part of the reason for the large number of tabletop games in each sport. The differences between games of the same sport may be very subtle, but they may cause one to shout his approval while another cries out in despair in his disapproval. Therefore, I think it would do well for everyone to become his own critic. Let's take basketball games as an example.

First of all, the tabletop game player must evaluate what he wants from his basketball game. Is the accurate reproduction of team performances sufficient for you to enjoy your game? Do you want the maximum number of opportunities for demonstration of your coaching skills, or would you rather see the players play the game while you sit back and watch? Do you want to see the individual scoring averages work out as accurately as possible? Do you want to keep full and accurate detailed statistics? Is offense most important to you? Do you prefer to see the intricacies of individual defense? Do you only want a game that plays fast? What aspects of the game do you want to be most accurate? Do you want a game that is simple enough that young children can play as well? When you have spent some time thinking out the answers to these questions you are ready to undertake your own personalized criticism of a game.

I have "devised" five aspects of a basketball game which you may want to use for your personal critique. 1) Simplicity — can you "pick up" the rules quickly? How long does it take for the larger portion of the action to become automatic? How complicated are the charts which are to be used? 2) Playability — how long does a full game take with and without full statistics? With and without "advanced" features? 3) Smoothness of Flow — how many dice throws, card tosses, or chart references are involved per play? 4) Reproduction of Team Performances — since basketball is a team sport, how does the game show team offense such as slowdown offenses or fast break offenses? Does team defense figure into the game in any way, such as team shots allowed and shooting percentage allowed? Since turnovers are usually team factors, does the game so indicate? 5) Reproduction of Individual Performances — how well does the game reproduce such features as field goals attempted, shooting percentage, free throws attempted, blocked shots, steals, assists, fouls committed, fouls drawn, offensive rebounds, defensive rebounds, defensive shot percentage allowed, and offensive fouls?

Some games have no control of individual rebounds, specific team or individual fouls and turnovers, no assists, and no specific defensive abilities. Look for the importance of the center in the game, for it is a fact that the teams which have a dominant center win in the NBA. Is it possible to have different defensive matchups at either end of the court so that you can make sure that your good defensive guard is guarding the opponent's best scorer? Basketball oddities which might occur in some games and may be important to you are the 24-second clock, loose ball fouls, tip-ins, technical fouls, stall, press, jump balls, fouls committed by a man other than the defender, home court advantage, and more. My final bit of advice is that each reader and player sit down and decide what he wants out of a game, and don't let an "expert" send you in the wrong direction.

## INSTANT ACTION BASEBALL

When it comes to head-to-head competition on a scale that is very realistic without using any player statistics, **Instant Action Baseball** is the utmost in visual table top baseball enjoyment. Their advertising includes the statement, "the closest thing to real baseball since the box seat."

In physical replay it could not help but remind the gamer of Sher-Co II, without player statistics of course. But with **Instant Action** a complete three-dimensional park comes as standard equipment, complete with outfield walls and working scoreboard. Players are attached to the playing surface by magnetics.

One difference between this game and Sher-Co II is the pitcher-batter confrontation. Using a deck of playing cards, a pitcher can put the ball inside or outside, low or high, and then have it move into or away from the hitter or have it break down. The only detraction to this situation would be that after contact is made, the kind of hit is not based on where the ball was pitched; hence there is no advantage to keeping the ball low. There is even a penalty for a pitcher who uses a lot of pitches.

Errors are handled in possibly not the most scientific manner, but in a way that produces most believable results. Balls carom off the wall and careless outfielders charging balls hopelessly up to the wall can find the ball bounding behind them, allowing the runner to take an extra base.

Batted balls are not merely divided into fly balls and grounders, but rather into hard hit grounders and balls which would count as slow rollers, along with hard stinging liners and lazy pop-ups and points in between.

Of course certain changes could be made depending on the ingenuity of the gamer to give a fielder a stronger arm or more range afield, but the way the game now stands, it is almost possible to predict without much counting just whether or not a runner will be safe or out when trying for the next base. It is also possible to tell when a runner will be absolutely safe. The error keeps one unsure of an absolute out.

The game flows as smoothly as possible considering the physical movement of players, but playing time is dangerously close to that of a real game. Of course that time could be erased down to a neater playing time by eliminating the batter-pitcher match up, but that, to me, is the most ingenuous part of the contest.

What we have is a game that is better than any similar such attempt has been. With a few alterations it could be modified to use player statistics without severely cramping the already bulky playing time.

For the fan unconcerned with playing actual teams or duplicating real-life stats, this game truly is "the closest thing to real baseball since the box seat."

**Ed. Note:** **Instant Action Baseball** is a new game on the market being advertised in such places as **The Sporting News**. It sells for around \$20.00. Comments on this article may be addressed to the author Anthony Apts. No. 40, Muncie, IN 47304.

### KEGLER KINGS

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## MARKETING TABLE SPORTS GAMES

I wish more table sport game producers would follow STRATOMATIC'S flexible and aggressive marketing policies. For the first time purchasers STRATOMATIC offers a colorful brochure for only 10¢. If the prospective purchaser decides to invest in a STRATOMATIC game, he has a variety of purchase options available to him. If he wants to begin at the least possible cost, he could invest in the gift set (playoff teams only) or selector set (5 teams of purchaser's choice). Either set sells for about seven or eight dollars. If the purchaser wanted to stay with STRATOMATIC the following year, he could order all of the player cards, just one league, or individual teams at about 65¢ each. I don't know of any other game manufacturer who allows this variety of selection. A new purchaser buying the complete STATIS-PRO game, for example, has only one choice — a complete game with all teams for about \$15.00. I wonder if STATIS-PRO sales might increase if they offered an introductory game set, with only the playoff teams, for about seven or eight dollars. Even APBA, the supposed king of table games, does not offer an introductory game set. The purchaser must spend \$13.50 or nothing. In the last few years two new game companies, LONGBALL and ASG, offered complete games at about \$15.00. Once again, the prospective

purchaser had no choice. He either spent \$15.00 or he couldn't find out how well he liked these new games.

Another marketing strategy that requires discussion is the offering of a brochure. I believe most table games are sold on the basis of what the prospective purchaser sees in the brochure. I for one want to know what the game system is before I invest my hard earned money. I have never bought a game based solely on the manufacturer's advertising. It is imperative, in my opinion, that game producers provide a brochure free or at a nominal charge of 10¢ to 25¢ to cover postage and handling. Gamecraft's policy of charging \$1.00 for a brochure seems counter-productive, despite the fact that they return the dollar if you purchase the game. I am aware that Jack Kavanagh's philosophy was to avoid sending brochures to what he calls "coupon clippers". I'm convinced that the "coupon clipper" of today is the purchaser of tomorrow. APBA offers a beautiful brochure free. Apparently they aren't worried about "coupon clippers".

SHORT SHAKES...Jack Kavanagh and I had lunch and a few drinks together recently in Springfield. Naturally we discussed EXTRA INNINGS and table gaming in general.

Recently I obtained 13 issues of *Games Digest* at Johnson's Bookstore in Springfield (a favorite browsing spot of Jack Kavanagh and myself). These issues were dated 1937 and 1938. Perhaps *Games Digest* was the first publication for table game hobbyists? Elsewhere in this issue is a freebie football game that came from one of these issues.

I recently joined the American Society for Baseball Research and discovered a number of table gamers among its members. If you like baseball research and statistics you should consider joining or at least obtaining some of their publications.

### REPLAY TECHNIQUES/Bill Rehrig

## STATISTICS: THE BACKBONE OF A REPLAY

One of the most important aspects of any table game venture is the keeping of accurate, up-to-date records. There are many advantages to keeping statistics current with your play: you will be able to keep a close check on player use, there will be the opportunity to keep watch on the actual accuracy of your record-keeping, and you can keep an eye on the batting, home-run, won-lost races, etc. as the season progresses.

There are those in the table gaming world who literally play an entire 154-game schedule, and then sit down to try to figure out the stats for each player from game No. 1. The frustration of spending the countless hours to do this would send me immediately to the funny farm.

Actually, the keeping of current records enhances the whole season, since you can see the entire season unfold, which therefore increases the drama when your two top home-run hitters meet head-to-head, or the two top ERA pitchers duel it out.

Of the many record keeping systems I have tried, I have found the following to be the easiest to use:

1. for PITCHERS, I keep the following: Games, games started, complete games, shutouts, innings pitched, won-lost, runs, earned runs, hits allowed, walks, and strikeouts.
2. for BATTERS, I keep games, at bats, hits, doubles, triples, home runs, runs, runs batted in, stolen bases, walks, strikeouts, and errors.
3. For each team I set up a sheet with columns for each category 1/4" wide. This allows me to keep records for 5 players on 1 sheet, if I hold the page with the 11" side horizontally. I then draw horizontal lines across these columns. The player's name heads each column, and as he accumulates records each game, they are entered on each line. I record each individual game separately, so that I can keep a close eye on streaks, and use, as well as accuracy. After every 7 games, I total up each player's record.
4. for PITCHERS, I arrange the page the same way as for the hitters, except that the column headings for each player are different.

Pitchers totals are actually easier to keep, since during any given 7-game span, each pitcher will have only 2-3 appearances.

Some players tend to rush through the recording of stats, as if it were a task that is needed to be done, but done with quickly. I have found, using this method myself, that the mistakes I make in transposing figures, addition, etc. take literally HOURS to ferret out, and the minutes longer that it takes to do things carefully, and correctly the first time, actually pay off in additional time to play games.

Record-keeping is a personal thing. For some, all that is necessary is to find out how many games each team has won and lost. Others need to know how many times each player breathes. The system described herein is adaptable to any requirement, and enables you to keep accurate, neat, and organized records for each player with a minimum amount of effort.

RIZZUTO									
	G	AB	H	2	3	4	R	RBI	S/E
1	1	3	1				1		1
2	1	4	2	1			2		1
3									
4	1	3							
5	1	3	3	1	1		2	1	1
6	1	3							
7	1	4	1		1		1	1	1
TOT	6	20	7	2	2	0	6	2	3
8									
9									
10									
11									

## TABLE FOOTBALL Cont'd.

Then again, neither is life. Each game is flawed; but, more important, each game reflects the individual biases of its designer(s). Thus what one player will find intriguing, another will disdain. For example, Statis-Pro will appeal to those who are interested solely in solitary play and finishing a complete season with minimal effort and fuss. For the "Compleat Gamer", S-P will be a bore. T.H.E.'s relative lack of physical presence will annoy some while hardly affecting others. I have thus gone to some pains to explain the general viewpoint of the game within the context of this knowledge. The information herein imparted is wholly subjective. But for those who are interested in dabbling into this area it could provide them with sufficient insight to make their own choice.

Note: The prices listed for the games are approximate, and players interested in any item should write first for information.

### APBA PRO FOOTBALL GAME (1001 Millersville Rd, Lancaster, PA)

APBA was the first table football game I ever purchased (I think it was the first of its kind designed). That was back in 1962 or so. College was dull that year, and APBA was relatively fun. (I remember the Packers rolling the Cardinals 77-34; accurate?. No - but a lot of laughs). I've grown since then, so has APBA. In retrospect, it was a turkey then - it's a buzzard now.

APBA is still an attractive game physically, although far from perfect (it is quite cluttered). But it just does not feel like football. And I will never, for the life of me, figure out why I get about 25 cards of offensive and defensive linemen who are all rated for their running, passing and kicking abilities. What a waste of time and energy!

But that is immaterial when considering the game. The paucity of offensive plays - 2 runs, 3 passes - as well as a simplistic defensive approach are not cardinal sins. But they tend to simplify a game that doesn't need it in that area. It doesn't hurt the running game, which is quite good in every phase. But the passing game is what sinks APBA. Receivers have little to do, aside from providing ratings of A, B, C or D (there is a somewhat complicated - and confusing - optional receiver system that does little to mollify the basic situation). That system works poorly in baseball; it works worse here. Passing - especially gain rates - is thus entirely on the QB's card. Accuracy, percentage-wise, is good. But this is not an accuracy reflective of actual realism, for in APBA you either complete short or long. While a large minority (maybe 35-40%) of passes in the NFL are of the 10-15 yard variety, you will see little of that in APBA. Too many short passes go for 4, 5 yards - and there is no middle ground between that and the long bomb. (20+). Who's kidding whom?

APBA has a good feel for fumbles and returns, but its interception system is strange - and not too good. The relative total strengths of the teams - offensively and defensively - are a result of adding up player ratings and comparing the total team ratings. Most teams end up in the 'B' category - which means that they're all about the same defensively and offensively (for all intents and purposes). Travesty.

The APBA system is the good-old 11-66 two dice read-out, the dice numbers giving a play number on the player cards which can be found on the large play boards. Lots of good numbers all over the place - but most of them are rarely used. Thus for all the pretty card work and plethora of ratings and numbers, APBA does not give the true feel of pro football. It plays artificially, and its stats are compiled artificially. It has little insight into the game and too much system and not enough substance. For the \$18+ price-tag, which gives you only about 2/3 of the players, you can really do much better elsewhere.

(No. of games played for review: Approx. 50-75 from 62-64; 5 since then.)

### BIG LEAGUE MANAGER (321 E. Superior St., Duluth, MN 55802)

BLM is the only football game that I have actually played through a complete 14-game season for both leagues. I say "leagues," because this was back in 1967-68-69. I have played the game since then, to be sure, but not with the intensity of those "Golden Days". I can therefore vouch fully for the accuracy of BLM; it is excellent - and it is meaningful. By the latter, I mean that the end result is derived from realistic stats (remember, one 100 yard gain and 24 zero gains equal a 4.0 average! (f. APBA's passing stats). BLM's stats are solid in

virtually every department, including interceptions and penalties, areas poorly covered in other games.

BLM uses a mesh system, in that the ratings of the offensive players are reduced or increased by the rating of the defensive play called. There are 14 offensive plays, almost equally divided between run and pass, along with 8 defensive formations (which have varying effects on the 14 plays). In addition, the defensive player may key on one offensive player. BLM also uses "Defensive Aces," cards that may be played at key times (chosen by the player) which strengthen the area of the player the Ace card represents. Thus a strong defensive player can have an Ace Rating of, say 8 (use his Ace card 8 times in one half) while some players have no Aces.

The ratings of the games are based on a maximum of 50. The QB's rating is always combined with his intended receiver's rating. The rating of the runner or passer/receiver is then combined with the defensive rating and a play number obtained. A spinner is then used (a random number booklet is recommended heartily), and the number obtained by cross-referencing the rating and the spun number on the Play Board is a number that translates into a play result under the correct chart for that play. Thus each rating (50 of them) will have 50 different possibilities, and while a fair portion of the numbers on the play board tend to be the same - especially in the lower ratings - this gives quite a large variety of results. Runners and receivers are also rated for fumbles, while passers are rated for interceptions, susceptibility to the sack, and scramble ability. One annoying note: for some strange reason there is no 3 yard rushing gain. Strange.

BLM is an excellent football game. It is excellent because it is a balanced game; it does not overburden the player with too many things to do; its mathematical computations are kept at a minimum level (an unusual achievement for the BLM company) and yet it provides good statistics and a good feel for coaching. While it is somewhat short in the defensive department, rating players only through the somewhat artificial Ace method, its offensive game system is quite superior, especially in passing. And in BLM (as in Strato-Matic) it is the well-balanced teams that win - and in this, BLM truly reflects the realities of Pro Football.

(No. of games played for review: over 500 since 1967.)

### SPORTS ACTION CANADIAN PRO FOOTBALL (Box 6090, Wetaskiwin, Alberta, Canada T9A 2E8)

If you have any interest in CFL Football, this game is quite a find. All things considered, it is one of the best football games available - and it is quite well-produced, to boot. (CFL Football, as you probably know, uses 3 downs, 5 backs, a 110 yard field, plus a scoring item known as a rouge point.)

The game itself bears a strong superficial resemblance to Strato-Matic, a resemblance fostered by the style and type of the rules. But if it does have a similar feel to SOM, it does have some interesting - and strong - differences. Four dice are used, and added together in pairs (2-12). Basically, the offensive player chooses a play and the defensive player picks a defense (1 to 5). The offensive player rolls all four die; two are used on the Defensive Card of the Defensive Team to adjust the defense called (up 1, No Change, etc.); the other two bring about the result on the offensive player's card under the adjusted defensive rating. In addition, whether the player can run Inside or Outside well may adjust this further.

This is just the basic system; the fun is in the advanced game, where runners run at 8 defensive line-holes and passers pass into certain areas against zones or man-to-man. The defensive player has 10 formations which show the effect of each defensive player against both the run and the pass, depending on the defensive call and his defensive strength.

The game can thus get quite interesting as a two-player game (it's not that good solitaire) and the end result is a very pleasant surprise. The accuracy seems to be quite good (my CFL stats are not complete; but the game tells you where you can obtain complete ones!!) and the feel of the game is excellent. There is plenty for both coaches to do. Specialty ratings (interceptions, runbacks, kicking) are all better than average, and the instructions are clear and informative (an area inhabited by a plethora of poor writing).

Cont'd. p. 7



# SHOW AND TELL

APBA

Height: 6-0 Weight: 195 Born: 9-18-51

Darryl Floyd

**STINGLEY**

Offense: End (2) (EB-2)

OC-K

Defense: 2

TA-P

Pass Receiving: Short-B; Long-C-7-2(2) J-2

	R	P	K	R	P	K	R	P	K
11-	3-	7-14	31-	5-24-14	51-	5-24-14			
12-	25-25-20	32-	27-25-20	52-	11-25-20				
13-	35-35-35	33-	3- 7-14	53-	34-34-34				
14-	21-21-21	34-	21-21-21	54-	21-21-21				
15-	5-20-14	35-	5-20-14	55-	3-20-14				
16-	9-23-20	36-	9-23-20	56-	11-23-20				
21-	24-24-21	41-	25-24-20	61-	33-33-33				
22-	3- 9-14	42-	5-29-14	62-	36-36-36				
23-	21-22-21	43-	21-22-21	63-	21-22-21				
24-	29-24-20	44-	3-11-14	64-	5-29-14				
25-	7-21-21	45-	7-21-21	65-	7-21-21				
26-	28-28-20	46-	27-28-20	66-	3- 6-14				

SOM

BLM

HT: 6:03  
WT: 215

DARYLE LAMONICA

POS QB  
RUN 25B  
PASS 15  
IX M2  
FUMBLE 0  
NO PASS 3  
NP-RUN 21

GAYLE SAYERS

Halfback

RUNNING CARD

CHICAGO BEARS

LINEBUCK			OFF TACKLE			END RUN		
Right	Wrong	Keyed	Right	Wrong	Keyed	Right	Wrong	Keyed
			2. +10	+70	+5	2. +9	+28	+8
			3. offensive	offensive	+1	3. offensive	offensive	-2
			inside	inside		inside	inside	
			G +2*	G +2*		G +3*	G +5*	
			+5 or 0	+6 or +1		+4 or -1	+7 or +2	
			4. +7	Short gain	+6	4. +6	Long gain	+5
			5. F +1	F +8,	F 0,	5. F +2,	F +8,	F 0,
			2-6	2-6		2-6	2-6	
			+1,7-12	+8,7-12		+2,7-12	+8,7-12	
			6. +3	+8	+2	6. +3	Short gain	+2
			7. +1	Short gain	0	7. -1	+9	-2
			8. 0	+5	-1	8. 0	+5	0
			9. offensive	offensive	-2	9. offensive	offensive	-3
			inside	inside		inside	inside	
			T -1*	T +6*		end 0*	end +6*	
			+5 or -2	+9 or +3		+4 or -2	+9 or +1	
			10. +5	+9	0	10. +2	Short gain	-2
			11. offensive	offensive	-2	11. offensive	offensive	-3
			inside	inside		inside	inside	
			end 0*	end +1*		T +2*	T +1*	
			+4 or -1	+8 or +3		+5 or 0	+8 or +3	
			12. +9	Long gain	-2	12. -3	+34	-4

## 1967 RUSHING RECORD

AVERAGE	LONGEST	TOUCHDOWNS
4.7	70	7

## TABLE FOOTBALL cont'd.

For gamers interested in an usual and well-designed football game this is a real find.

(No. of games played for review - 3.)

**STRATO-MATIC FOOTBALL** (Retail, or 46 Railroad Plaza, Glen Head, NY)

If you are looking for a football game to play with someone else, looking for a game that pits one mind against another, this is your baby, for SOM Football is the best two-player game available. It is not the best game, however, for it does have drawbacks.

SOM uses the same system for its Football game as for its baseball game - 3 dice, reading 2-12 on two of them for results and 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6 on the third to determine whether the result is on the offensive or defensive card. This, of course, splits the game down the middle: 50-50 offense/defense. This is probably more accurate in football than it is in baseball, and it seems here to detract little from what is basically good statistical accuracy. Running ratings are on the runners' cards, fairly straight-forward, and on the defense v. run card, reflective of a team's success against that kind of run. Passing is the same, except that the receiver's card is used for the gain only about 1/4 of the time. The receiver's gain stats are thus subject to fluctuation, as they have less number of chances to work themselves out. This is only a peripheral drawback, though. However, SOM's specialty ratings are quite simplistic - and this is the worst area of the game. The kicking is good, but interceptions are handled solely by the passer's card, to the greatest extent - although higher rated defensive players have better interception chances. Players are not rated individually for interceptions or return ability.

Defensive Players are rated one of three ratings (4, 5, or 6) and come into play when a play result depends on whether the defensive Player's rating is higher than the die (4, 5, or 6). There is a similar system for offensive lineman. All of this then is carried to the field board, where the defensive player sets down little markers representing his players'

ratings in the areas that player covers. The defensive player may then move his players around in home-made formations to try to a) guess the play, b) cover his weaknesses, and c) exploit the offensive player's faults. The offensive player is calling either 3 running plays or a series of look-ins, quick passes, mediums or longs. Double-coverage, blitzes (teams are rated for pass-rushing and protection) quasi-stunting, etc., (players can use their imagination here) are all included. This idea works exceptionally well, and games between teams that have great strengths and glaring weaknesses are lots of fun, as each player tries to outguess the other; but it is the best-balanced teams that will win consistently.

SOM is not a complicated game, in that it has few (if any) mathematical computations to perform. Results are read right off the card. Thus, once mastered, the game plays quite smoothly. There are several options that are a bit confusing, and it takes a while to learn how to use the defensive playboard to satisfaction. Worst of all, the game is downright unsatisfactory solitaire. To be sure, it has special rules for solo play; but they are purely stopgap, a sop to the buying public. But if you want to go one on one on your kitchen table, this is your game.

(No. of games played for review: Approx. 75 since 1970.)

**STATIS-PRO PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL GAME** (Box 484, Waterloo, Iowa 50704)

Statis-Pro is a game looking for a system. That it is the best solitaire game on the market is without doubt - it is designed with that in mind. But Jim Barnes, S-P's affable designer, was unhappy with a great number of things in his old game - not least of them the excessive demands of the rather poorly-run NFL Players Union. The result of all this has been a distillation of the old Statis-Pro game, with solid doses of elements of the successful S-P College game.

I was a big fan of the former Statis-Pro game, especially with the changes introduced in '75. It was accurate and it was fun - especially

Cont'd. next page

## TABLE FOOTBALL cont'd.

for solitaire. And, best of all, its playing time was about half that of most other games. The reason for this was that most of the decision-making process was built into the game — even to the point of having an automatic receiver check-off system! This was what made the game so eminently playable solo (and not too bad face-to-face either!). Virtually all players were included, and all departments were handled well and with an element of flair.

All that, however, is past. And Statis-Pro is just a shadow of its former self, albeit a large shadow. The game seems to be less of the old Statis-Pro and more of a combination of S-P College Football and good old Negamco. Statis-Pro still retains individual ratings for all blockers and defensive players, but offensive ratings are by number — from 1 to 16, as well as a letter Breakaway Rating. Passers are given a similar rating, but for Short-Medium-Long. The ratings are actually used only 50% of the time as most of the plays use a Master Board. I. e., no matter who the runner or defender the result is the same. This is not as bad as it seems — most plays (especially running) gain approximately the same yardage (all those 3–4–5 yards plays, etc.) The Master Board covers those. Only when the Master Board indicates using the offensive or defensive player's card are they resorted to.

The result is, of course, simplicity. The game plays in under an hour! Even with scoring — which is some feat. Of course, you don't have to think too much, but for some of the people I know that's a blessing. What is missing from the game is good specialty ratings. Passers are **not** rated for interceptions or sacks! Runbacks are only fair, and forget individual fumbles, etc. As a matter of fact, with only 16 running ratings, runners tend to look the same after a while. The statistics are good — but not great. You **do** get every player, which is something few games do. But there is little flair here. Statis-Pro's main advantage is that it is designed to play solitaire; that it does exceptionally well. But I still mourn for the old game — now **that** was a game!

(No. of games played for review. Old game — 30+ New game — 2.)

### TSG 1 PRO FOOTBALL GAME (Box 1531, Vernon, TX 76384)

TSG makes me uneasy for some reason — and that's not good. There's a lot in the game, but I don't seem to be able to get much out of it.

Superficially, it bears quite a strong resemblance to THE. They both use a 2–28 triple-dice readout, and the defensive ratings of both games have a similar ring to them. In addition the Master Play Charts look like they had been designed by the same person on different weekends. This is rendered even stranger by the fact that both games are sold by the same company, a fact which I have been informed — and I truly believe — is sheer coincidence.

In any case, despite the obvious similarities, TSG is nowhere near the game THE is, and for some very good reasons. TSG has done a good job with its running ratings; they are, if anything, slightly better than THE's. But its passing game commits what I consider the cardinal sin in table football games: virtually all pass gains are computed via the passer's card. The receiver is present in general rating only, and so a receiver that catches 30 passes for a 11.5 average is treated virtually the same as one who catches 30 for a 15.0 average. That might not bother some people (obviously it didn't bother the designer here); it does me.

That is not TSG's only problem, however. Its rules are poorly organized; some of them are in the mediocre rules booklet — others are on a series of instructional cards. Lose a card and you can forget it. TSG is also one of those games where you have to make a series of numerical calculations at the beginning of the game to determine the game-ratings for various offensive-defensive match-ups. Here TSG is actually better than the similarly-oriented THE; the system is a bit easier, and general ratings are on the team cards, having been worked out by the designer.

In the Special ty area, TSG is woefully weak. Interceptions are on the QB's card and have little to do with defenders' ratings. What happens to the mediocre defensive backs who make 5–6 interceptions simply because of reckless play? How do you rate those people? In addition, the system for penalties, fumbles and injuries is totally unsatisfactory, given the systems used in other games. In TSG, every time you roll a three on one of the die (so marked) you have a chance

of a penalty, fumble or injury. Now there's a simplification that becomes simplistic in its effect. In a game at this level of sophistication that kind of generality just won't wash.

There has been some effort to make the game enjoyable solitaire, and, to some extent, it works. But there are 10 offensive plays and 12 defensive — and games that use this type of matrix system (See THE's review; both work the same way in this area) suffer when going solo.

A lot of work has been put into this game, and some of it has paid off. But there are too many areas that seem to have been totally abandoned. And as a result, TSG is an incomplete game.

(No. of games played for review — 4.)

### T.H.E. PRO FOOTBALL GAME (Box 1531, Vernon, TX 76384)

I like T.H.E. — like it in spite of its faults, for it is a flawed game. But it does so many things that other games do not do that it is well worth your while to examine this item.

Unprepossessing physically (all ratings are on a huge sheet of paper — one per team), the game has so many different things to do that it is easily one of the more complex games on the market. Unfortunately, this complexity often seems to be for the sake of complexity only, and, as the basic game system is quite simple, these "extras" often produce a glazed effect in the player. In essence, this is a game that plays infinitely better with repetition; for the first-time player the experience can be numbing.

T.H.E. gives you everybody — everybody! I'm surprised the water-boys aren't rated for time-out efficiency. All non-runners/passers, etc., receive numerical ratings which are used to determine the rating of the matchups. E.g., The Off-Tackle Right play matches up the ratings of the offensive RT and RG minus the Defensive LT and LE. Thus each play has a different column (–4 to +4) on the Master Chart under which the play result is determined. In addition, the Play Variability Chart cross-references the Offensive Play (4 runs, 8 passes for each side of the field with the 16 defenses), producing a modifier (+ or – a number) for the above mentioned columns. There are three dice, added together (3–18); the thrown number is checked on the player "card," a number (or sometimes direct result) is obtained and that number correlated to the Master Chart under the proper column for the play result. That's a lot of numbers to work with to get one play number...but the results are quite accurate and often interesting. Specialties (interceptions, fumbles, runbacks, et al) are handled very well and there are even Unusual Plays, if they happened to a team that year.

Thus everything is reproduced down to the nth degree, and I fear that the game is sometimes too accurate — a fear, I should add, that is only peripheral and not borne out by actual games. What is a problem is the number of numbers, ratings, and formulas that abound in the game. Set-up and match-up determination take quite a long time, a problem that could be easily solved with only a minimum of ingenuity by the designers. I also feel that the game is too much work — there are too many things to do just to get a play going. This is something that would probably pass with increased familiarity, but the feeling does lurk in the back of my mind. In addition, the rules are not as well written as one would like, a common fault in most of these games.

T.H.E. is basically a two-player game, but it does have a solitaire system that is better than most — and uses an additional die. Still, the game loses some of its flavor solo.

In all, T.H.E. is a solid buy, and should be of major interest to those gamers looking for accuracy and intricacy. It is fairly complex, but it is well worth the effort.

(No. of games played for review — 2.)

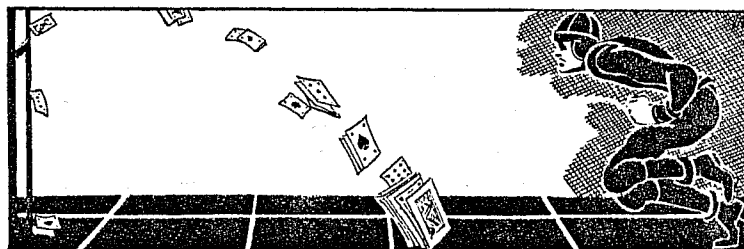
### SUPER BOWL FOOTBALL (G.B. Games, Box 4553, Mesa, AZ 85201)

This game is based on a premise that I just do not buy: that gamers would want to replay past Super Bowl games based on stats culled from **only** those games! That someone actually thought of this idea comes as no surprise (you sit around doing nothing you can come up with some pretty ludicrous ideas); that the idea was followed through was unfortunate.

S-Bowl is not a bad game — although it's not a good game; but that is not the question here. The question is why anyone would want a game with such a narrow approach. Take Super Bowl IX. (They provide 5 games: I, III, V, VII and IX, perhaps a hint to avoid the Super

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## PLAYING-CARD FOOTBALL

A REALISTIC and exciting game of football may be played as described herein, the only apparatus required being one full deck of ordinary playing cards and a board or sheet of paper on which the progress of the ball can be represented. The "playing field" used by the inventor is similar to a cribbage board but with 100 holes in line. An auxiliary marker 10 "yards" long is necessary to indicate when a first down has been made.

Rules for playing the game are as follows:

Possession of the pack of cards represents possession of ball. Number of spots on card represents yardage. (Jack counts 11, queen 12, king 13.)

Red cards are favorable, black cards unfavorable, to side with ball.

The pack is used four times, once for each quarter of the game. When cards are exhausted at the end of a quarter and the ball is still in play, additional cards are used to finish the play, after which the entire pack is reshuffled for the next quarter.

### (a) The kick-off

Player kicking off places marker on own 40-yard line, takes the pack and deals five cards, counting the total spots. The ball is advanced on the board accordingly. He then hands the pack to his opponent, who will receive the ball in accordance with rules for same.

### (b) Receiving the kick-off

Defending player takes the pack. If the ball has reached his ten-yard line or beyond, he may announce, "Let it roll." He then turns up a card. If this is red (favorable to him) ball is considered to have crossed the goal line, and he may put it in play on own 20-yard line. If card is black (or unfavorable) ball is advanced 5 yards toward receiver's goal and there put in play by the receiver.

If ball has advanced anywhere

short of 10-yard line, receiver must "catch" it, as follows: He turns one card. If red, he has caught the ball and advanced it by yards indicated toward opponent's goal. He then has privilege of turning additional cards, one at a time. As long as these are red, he continues to run with the ball. Eight successive red cards, regardless of size, take him length of field to a touchdown. The first black card dealt renders ball dead, in receiver's possession. If, however, the first card is black, receiver may be in trouble. He deals one more card. If this second card is red, receiver takes ball and runs it, but may not score a touchdown on the play, regardless of number of red cards dealt. If second card is black, the ball is loose on the field (fumble). The receiver deals a third card to show which team recovered the ball. In this case the ball is dead, and cannot be run with.

### (c) Punt

Offense player so announces and deals five cards in the same manner as for kick-off, except that if first three cards are black, the kick is blocked and color of fourth card indicates who recovers. In this case ball is moved back toward kicker's goal a distance equal to sum of the spots of the black cards and is recovered at that point. Otherwise, punt proceeds exactly as does the kick-off.

### (d) Receiving punt

See *Receiving kick-off*. Rules are exactly the same.

### (e) Line plays

Offense player announces, "Hit the line!" and deals one card. If this is red, advance ball yards indicated and count one down. If black, play fails. Deal a second card: If red, no loss on the play. If black, lose number of spots, but not more than 5 yards.

### (f) End run, or off tackle plays

Offense player so announces and

deals out two cards.

If both red, play succeeds. Gain sum of the spots and continue to turn over cards, one at a time until a black card renders ball dead. All spots after second card are doubled in value, and eight successive red cards, any size, make a touchdown.

If first card is red, second black, no gain, and one down is lost.

If first is black, second red, lose 1 down and yards equal to spots of black card, but not over 5 yards.

If both cards are black, lose 1 down and yards equal to sum of spots, but not over 15 yards.

### (g) Short forward pass

Offense player so announces and deals one card. If this is red, advance ball as indicated and pass completed at that point. Run with ball by dealing additional red cards. First black card renders ball dead in offense possession.

If first card is black, advance ball number of yards indicated, and deal a second card.

If second card is red, pass is incomplete. If second card is black, pass is intercepted at point indicated. Surrender the pack. Opponent now runs with ball by dealing red cards.

Eight successive red cards always take the ball the length of the field when it is being run with.

### (h) Long forward pass

Player so announces and deals out three cards. In order for this pass to succeed, one of these three cards must be red and their sum must be at least 25 yards. If the conditions are met, a fourth card must be red, in order to complete the pass.

Other conditions are as follows: If sum of cards is less than 25, pass is incomplete. If all three cards are black, passer is tackled behind his line, but not over 15 yds.

If pass is satisfactory in length but fourth card is black, pass is intercepted at point indicated, and opponent takes the pack and may

Cont'd. next page

run the ball back (or may elect to say that he knocked the pass down, if that is to his advantage).

#### (i) Field goal

Cards are allowed and kicks blocked according to table below. For a successful goal, first card of kick must be red and length of kick must equal distance from spot ball is in play to goal line. Otherwise the kick is handled exactly like a punt.

Ball on	Deal	Blocked if
7-14	two	both black
15-21	three	1st 2 black
22-28	four	1st 2 black
over 28	five	1st 3 black

#### (j) Point after touchdown

Deal one card. Red, successful; black, unsuccessful.

#### (k) Penalties

Penalties occur when certain penalty cards are dealt as the first card of any play except kick-off or point after touchdown, or when a card is turned simply as an indicator. The player who will be benefited by the penalty card must see the penalty card and call it before the play is completed, otherwise there is no penalty.

In addition to the regular penalty cards, any card turned or exposed by a player, as when card is turned over before he specifies play he is going to make, is a 5-yard penalty.

Table of penalty cards

Card	Penalizes	Distance
♦ 2	offense	5
♦ J	offense	5
♦ Q	offense	15
♣ 2	defense	5
♣ J	defense	5
♣ Q	defense	15

#### (l) Scoring as in football

Special rules or plays may be devised by players as desired. Decisions as to touchbacks, safeties, etc., should be made in accordance with standard football practice.

The reader will note that certain plays are reasonably safe but offer small gains; others give tremendous gains if successful, but entail serious risk of heavy loss in yardage or loss of ball. The rules endeavor to effect about the same balance between all these as exists in the real game.

The clever player will try to remember the approximate numbers of red and black cards which have been used. He may then adjust his game to take advantage of possible long runs of red or to minimize his losses should he be plagued with a succession of black cards.

Further, the total number of cards remaining represents time, which is all-important, and plays may be selected accordingly.

#### SHOW AND TELL cont'd.

Left - TSG

Center - SPORTS ACTION

Right - T.H.E.

Backdrop - STATIS-PRO

it Guard

Right Tackle

Tight End

Split End John Stallworth 2 Reggie Garrett 1	Left Tackle Jon Kolb 3 Gerry Mullins 3	Left Guard Jim Clack 6 Sam Davis 4	Center Ray Mansfield 4 Mike Webster 3	Right Guard Gerry Mullins 5 Sam Davis 4	Right Tackle Guy Gravelle 4 Gerry Mullins 3	Tight End Larry Brown 3 Randy Grossman 3
--	--	--	---	---	---	--

WASHINGTON					
7					
JOE THEISMANN					
22	45.5	4.36	1		
10	13.6	9.6	30		
RPg 1	PPG 2	QB 2			
S	M	L	X	P	
3	30i		8	8	3
4	15	12	26s	13	4
5		30i	15	20r	5
6	16	8a	12b	24s	6
7	7	X		15r	7
8	9	15	14		8
9	X	X	X	25s	9
10		X	X	27i	10
11	X	16	X	28i	11
12	10	X	X	13r	12
13	12	11b	X		13
14	X	13	30i	10	14
15	17	14	16	11r	15
16	14		9a	8	16
17	18	30i	10	8r	17
18				10	18

Terry Hanratty 1 1 R

Passer	Attempts	Quick	Short	Long
Terry Bradshaw	286	22	22	15
Joe Gilliam	48	22	19	7
Bobby Walden	3	22	22	22
Terry Hanratty	0	12	11	1

Ht: 5-9		Wt: 175		Age: 23							
Johnny RODGERS											
Wingback — WR (-6)											
RUN:						PR:					
IN	NC	OUT	+1	A=	2	B:	NC	-3	-2	-2	
		1	2	3	4	5		S	M	L	
2	5	15	25	35	53		2	13	26	TD	
3	3	12	15	17	21		3	7	16	35	
4	2	8	13	20	23		4	6	13	32	
5	0	0	0	0	8		5	8	17	25	
6	0	3	7	11A	13A		6	5	18	29	
7	-2	-2	-2F	-1N	0		7	3	21	27	
8	1	6P	9	14	16		8	9	14	33	
9	-3	-1	3	9	11		9	3	10	24	
10	-6	-4	-4	-2	-1		10	1	20	28	
11	0	4	10	16	18		11	4	19	36	
12	2	13	20	28	38		12	10	23	39	
1974 RECORD											
TC	NET	AVE	LG	TD		NO.	YDS	AVE	LG	TD	
87	492	5.7	53	4		60	1024	17.1	70	7	

#### Flanker

Lynn Swann 4  
Reggie Garrett 1  
Donnie Shell 1

#### Short

#### Terry Bradshaw - QB

Q-D	S	L	Run
3 X	1	15	-5yds
4 X	RUSH, F	RUSH	16yds, 0
5 I, P	15	13	-5yds
6 C	RUN	RUN	21yds
7 C	4, P	19	9yds, 0
8 C	6	RUSH	3yds
9 I	8	16	-1yd
10 C	11	9	7yds
11 C	10	12	2yds
12 C	13	5	0yds, 0
13 I	RUSH	14, P	8yds, 0
14 C	20	RUN	-2yds
15 I	RUN	RUSH	16yds, 0
16 C	RUSH	20	-5yds
17 C, P	17	[s]	21yds
18 X	RUSH	17	8yds, 0

Passer - 180 Att.

## TABLE FOOTBALL cont'd.

Bowl in even-numbered years.) The actual game was fairly exciting (at least for me, I had a few bucks on the Steelers), considering nothing was happening. Now this was the game where the Vikes were held to 17 yards in 21 carries and didn't do much better passing. Despite the fact that each of the team cards are purportedly based on the stats for the game, the Viking card does not bear that out. As a matter of fact, in the game I played between the Steelers and the Vikes the Vikings gained 54 yards on the ground in the first half alone! Then on the first play of the 2nd half they ripped off a long gainer. And, like the long gainer, had I actually paid for this I, too, would have felt ripped off.

The game system itself is not bad, and it probably could be put to better use. All team information is on charts (individual players are used only in the advanced game and do not have that much effect on the outcome), and two dice are combined in a rather unusual — and artificial — way to produce 16 different readouts for each of the 5 or 6 columns under each play. There are 28 offensive plays and 10 defenses; they are all cross-referenced to produce a Play Result Letter. Thus a Look-In to the TE against a Stacked Man-to-Man produces the Letter B on the chart; the player now rolls the dice under Play 19 (The Look-In), Column B and gets the result. The idea thus combines the Play-Calling Matrix idea (used originally by Avalon Hill) with dice-produced results. Interestingly done, but attached to little substance.

Super Bowl is thus a decent game system with a few stats thrown in to beef up the ad campaign. As the stats themselves are somewhat suspect (at least based on my replays) the game is relegated to the status of curiosity. I wouldn't recommend it as anything more.

(No. of games played for review — 2.)

### NEGAMCO PRO FOOTBALL GAME (Same address as BLM)

My antiquated and well-used edition of Negamco (1966-vintage) was recently destroyed in a Florida Hurricane, where it was in well-earned storage. Thus my recollections of this nice little game are from memory only. If absence makes the heart grow fonder and other such forays into cliché land apply then you'll forgive me for perhaps overpraising the game.

Negamco is a game that aspires to simplicity; it is aimed to sell cheaply and provide the bare bones of pro football. That it does, and does it admirably well. I played about 2/3 of a full NFL season using Negamco's team-card system, and the overall results and stats were quite nice. In the key areas of passing and running, accuracy was well within hoped-for parameters for the majority of players. Specialty areas were handled a bit more loosely, especially in the interception region, but it was nothing to complain about.

Actually, Negamco is a lot more sophisticated than you would be given to believe from its price. The money is saved on printing costs — ratings are on team charts, as in Statis-Pro. The game uses a letter rating system (A to Z, or something like that) with a spinner used to get results from the ratings on a Master Chart. There wasn't too much defensive play that I can remember, and thus the game plays quite well solitaire.

It plays quickly and smoothly, and I don't think it takes more than 10 minutes to learn the game by heart. Of course, there is very little system sophistication here — but that is not what the designer has intended. At the level for which it is designed — simple play, adequate simulation — it works quite well and is worth looking into if this is the sort of thing you want.

(No. of plays for review — 40–50 (10 years ago.)

### PAYDIRT! SPORTS ILLUSTRATED PRO FOOTBALL GAME (Retail, or through SI ads)

This game is much more fun than it has any right to be. It certainly is attractive, if over-packaged. (I have the older, smaller box: more convenience, but small boxes don't sell, fellas.) Components are the main feature here, however. Teams are rated for team effectiveness at a certain play; I guess SI doesn't want to cough up to the NFL Players for individual ratings, for which I don't blame them. I don't think SI updates the charts too often, either. I have the '72 season edition (I think that's what it is), and I remember looking in a box two years ago and seeing the same edition. Now the boxes are shrink-wrapped, so I was thwarted in my efforts at the local store to discover any more info along these lines.

The game is quite simple — and a lot of fun, if you are not looking for great complexity or nitpicking accuracy. The dice give a 1–40 read-

out, and there are 4 of them. Both players throw two each and achieve a result on their respective offensive or defensive charts. The results are all color-coded in the boxes (nice reds, greens, blacks, etc.), so that the two separate results are cross-indexed to determine which result takes precedence. And that's it.

There are about 12/15 offensive plays and a bunch of defenses. Each is cross-referenced for a specific result for one play versus the other. Specialty plays are simplistic, but fit in with the general tenor of the game.

It's all quite simple, but it's easy to play and can be quite a bit of fun. I remember a very exciting game where the Lions beat the "great" Dolphins 17–16 when they completed a 45yd pass play on the last play of the game! Considering that both of us had consumed an ample quantity of local beverage and it was 3 in the morning, the result is not surprising. The price of the game is a bit high for what you get, but you could do worse — plenty worse. It's fun — but nothing deep.

(No. of games played for review — 5.)

### THE VINCE LOMBARDI FOOTBALL GAME (Research Games, Inc. — No longer available, except as loss leaders in cut-rate stores.)

This was one of the earliest games, and its life was mercifully short. It changed its name several times — used to be Fran Tarkenton's game, etc. — mostly to protect the innocent I would assume. This company also had the Kiss of Death — literally: it seemed that half the time they'd name a game after somebody he would pass on. E.g., this game, Gil Hodges Pennant Fever, etc. Made you wonder when you bought it.

Actually, it should have stopped you from buying it. It's been years since I played this (altho the scars still remain), but fondness is not what I remember it with. It was advertised with Complete Abandon, which is how it was often treated a week after purchase. The components were printed on semi-recycled paper and the information they imparted was not much better. Again, it's been a long time since my last look at this item, but if I'm not mistaken each player had one rating (similar to Negamco, Statis-Pro). After that, memory gratefully fades away. I do remember clearly that it was bad.

(No. of games played for review — 2 (10 years ago.)

### FOOTBALL GAME RATING CHART

Game	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
APBA (\$18)	9	7	6	7	5	4	8	4	4	8	5	NO
BLM (\$15)	7	6	6	7	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	YES
SPORTS ACTION CFL (\$12)	9	7	7	6	4	7	8	8	8	6	7	YES
S-O-M (\$15)	8	8	7	6	3	8	8	7	8	5	7	YES
STATIS-PRO (\$10)	6	7	4	9	9	3	6	6	6	5	6	YES
TSG (\$13.95)	6	6	7	6	5	6	8	6	6	6	6	MAYBE
T.H.E. (\$10.95)	6	6	8	5	5	7	8	8	6	8	7	YES
SUPERBOWL (\$9)	7	7	5	8	4	5	5	5	3	5	4	NO
NEGAMCO (\$8)	5	7	4	9	7	4	6	6	4	5	6	YES
PAYDIRT/SI (\$11)	8	8	5	8	7	4	6	6	3	5	6	YES
LOMBARDI/RGI (\$6?)	4	6	4	8	6	4	6	5	4	5	3	NO

### EXPLANATION OF LETTERED COLUMNS IN RATINGS CHART

(Scale of 1–9, 9 is Best)

- A — Physical Appearance of the Game
- B — Clarity of the Rules; how well they are written
- C — How Complex is the Game (Not is the complexity good, etc.)
- D — Ease of Play; how well/smoothly does the game play
- E — Solitaire Playability; how well — in comparison to the two-player version — does it play solp.
- F — Level of Coaching Skill Required; how much "thinking" does the game require.
- G — Running Accuracy; how well is the running game portrayed, both statistically and for general feel.
- H — Passing Accuracy; same as above
- I — Defensive Element; how important is defense in the game, and how well is it integrated into the system
- J — Specialty Plays; how well does the game reflect interceptions, fumbles, kicks, returns, etc.
- K — Overall Subjective Rating (Not dependent on above ratings)
- L — Do You Get Your Money's Worth?

which rates no teams before 1971 and omits 1973 the best are: (1) Miami 1972 (112 pts.), (2) Dallas 1971, Miami 1974 and Oakland 1975 (111 pts.), (5) Miami 1975, Pittsburgh 1974 and Oakland 1974 (110 pts.).

From these rankings three teams emerge as superior in all three games — the 1962 Packers and the 1972 and 1973 Dolphins. (Pittsburgh 1974 is close.) No other teams have the overall team strength to rise to the top in the diverse ratings of the three games. I believe these results are significant for they are not limited to the particularities of one rating system. Isolated teams may come to the top in one game, but only a superior team will come to the top in all games. In THE, Oakland of 1973 is the top rated team, but in APBA with only 82 points, they do well to make the top 30.

The results of each game's ratings are open to scrutiny, even if their formulas cannot be analyzed. Why can APBA rate the Washington team of 1942 as the second best of all time? They may have been good, but probably had nothing in the way of a defensive secondary to compare with today's teams. Surely their rating for pass defense, when compared with the number of passes and the quality of quarterbacks which they saw, should not be top-rated as it is. Oakland of 1973 is top-rated by THE, even though they lost four games during their season. Granted that Stabler replaced LaMonica early in the season and they greatly improved, but were they deserving of such a rating? One feature of both THE and TSG is that it is possible to get a high rating based on statistical offense and defense even though the team may have lost several games. This serves to properly evaluate the strength of a team, particularly when the statistics are compared to the strengths of their opponents. However, winning is also a proper element in evaluating a team, and THE and TSG may be weaker at this point.

THE and TSG are better equipped to handle the complexities of the current game and should with a little work be able to go back in time and properly evaluate past teams. THE has made a good beginning in the rating of the 1962 Packers and the 1958 Colts. It needs to include many more teams from 1941 to the present to take the lead in normalization. TSG has only reissued teams from early editions and has not tried to go back in time. Before the game creators attempt it, they need to be more particular with their ratings. Their game is an interesting strategy and tactics framework for head-to-head play, but I find it least able to simulate the results of previous seasons' results. Time and again I have taken average teams and beaten much better teams, merely by careful management. That should be possible, but it should be less likely than the previous season's actual results.

Who is the all-time best? David Urban reported in **Scoreboard** (Sept. 1973), using APBA's best, that Green Bay of 1962 beat Baltimore of 1959 in his finals with Oakland of 1969 and the New York Giants of 1956 losing out in the semifinals. Richard Hargraves says (TTS, Summer 1976) that the Bears of 1963 beat the 1962 Packers in the old Earnie Lombardi game in the finals of his tournament and then did it again in APBA. I've seen Oakland of 1973 beat Miami of 1972 and 1973 in THE and then lose to Green Bay of 1962. In TSG a privately over-rated Green Bay of 1962 with 121 points still lost to Miami of 1972. How can we solve this question of who is the best? I'd say let all of us get busy matching up those best teams in whatever game we have, and then send the results to me for totalling and comparison. Meanwhile, I'm going back to Green Bay, Miami, Pittsburgh and Oakland in THE for some round-robin play until Steve Keplinger turns out some more past teams to prime my interest. I'd like Oakland and Kansas City of 1969 and Baltimore and New York of 1959 next, Steve.

	Play- ability (33%)	R&A (16%)	S/T (16%)	Normali- zation	Final Rating
THE	B	A	A	B	B+
TSG	B-	A	A	C	B
APBA	B	A-	B	B	B

R&A — Realism and accuracy  
S/T — Strategy/Tactics

## Table Top News

compiled by Larry Green and Jerry Faulk

**Big League Game Company** is issuing BLM ratings for All Stars of the sixteen original franchises. Available soon.

**Sports Mania**, producers of HOOP MANIA, is bringing out a baseball game. The game will have old-timers and the 1975 rosters, all on individual cards. Their Hoop-Mania has been enlarged to include pro teams also, both team and individual ratings. For more info write them at Box 68, Temple, Arizona 85281.

**TRUCO BOXING** has just been released by **Statis-Pro Games**. It contains 60 heavyweight fighters and fast action cards. If the 1956 baseball card set sells well, they may release the 1961 and 1967 seasons also.

**APBA** has let it be known that they will be introducing a new product in January. They are also expected to provide master symbols for the 1949 and 1930 seasons. A hockey game is also in the works.

A hockey game is also on the drawing board at **Strat-O-Matic**, probably for release in Fall 1977.

New baseball games seen include **INSTANT ACTION BASEBALL** from **Arend Engineering**, 6137 Marlowe, Portage, MI; **CALCU-BALL BASEBALL** from **Mid-America Marketing**, 6318 S. Ave, Middleton, WI; and **SIMCO BASEBALL** by **Simulations Company**, 4218 Wayne Trace, Ft. Wayne, IN. All will be reviewed in TTS.

**Gamecraft Company** has just released its new hockey game **POWER PLAY!**

Tell them you heard about it in TTS!

### FROM THE READERS cont'd.

about journalism except from the seat of my pants, and my closest contact with such things as Foreign Policy has been as a former subscriber to **Poland China World**, which, for you city sophisticates, is a hog magazine.

If I must be compared, please compare me to mere mortals, not to people like Ben Weiser.

I didn't really say APBA's following was unwarranted. Charlie said that. I just sort of implied in a round-about way that I agreed with him; in a round-about way because I didn't want to be accused of not being an impartial editor, even though that's what I am. My effort was futile, of course, since you and Tom Trainor (next letter) have already jumped me. So I'm going to promise not to be partial or antagonistic toward any sports table game in the future — starting in the next issue. Before I quit, however, I'm going to reply to your and Tom's letters and get in a few jabs.

**Mystique?** Yes, indeed. How do you get it? It's easier than using a scientific method because there are no "incorrect" ratings. If you have no ironclad formula by which to achieve a number, who can say your number is wrong? You get mystique simply by taking 85% logical mathematical choices, top it off with 10% illogical choices, and add dabs of guesswork and just pure whim. Conduct a season replay with a game with "mystique," and you get "mystiquey" results. They're about 85% correct and about 15% something that, I guess, is "concentrated mystique."

Conduct a season replay with a game based upon precise formulas and you get accurate replays. With a base of preciseness to work with, you can vary situations to fit your imagination with confidence that the results are meaningful. Manage a team differently, play a 1967 team against a 1933 team, whatever. The point I am trying to get across is this: What's the use in conducting any type of hypothetical contest such as the above, if, when you try to recreate something that actually did happen — such as a season of play — you end up with batting averages that are 7% off on the average, ERA's that are 22% incorrect, and other similar figures?

Enough jabbing. The above is just my personal opinion — not very well informed, at that. It's born out of a lifelong disgust with fads and

Cont'd. p. 16

# TSG I: Pro Football Newsletter

Game Designer: *Jim Hall*  
Game Statistician: *Jed Duty*

T. M.

T. M.

FROM THE DESIGNER/Jed Duty

## RECENT ADVANCES IN TSG:I

As the years have passed many refinements in the original TSG:I Pro Football game have taken place. This year was certainly no exception. Of course, some of these additions will further complicate the game, but we at TSG personally feel this will be more than compensated for by the increased realism achieved. Let's explore some of the features, the hows and whys.

One group of changes for quarterbacks — blank spaces, s and i symbols — are really there for the draft leaguer. They maintain a certain balance in quarterback performance which could swing too widely, especially in draft leagues. This is not to say that team strength will not affect performance, but it will not be affected to such great degrees as having all interceptions become sacks against some teams or vice versa against others. For that same reason a certain per cent of all incompletions can't be changed into completions or sacks, regardless of the circumstances. Separation of these various parameters has all but eliminated the possibility of strange statistics in some draft leagues.

The decision to divide the placekicking into field goal attempts and extra point attempts was made necessary by the wide differences in success rate of some kickers' short field goals and extra points.

Another group of ratings will be favored by the purist and that is the RPG and PPG group of ratings. Until this year runners' and passers' performances were "averaged" to a degree if they had scanty statistics. This was done so that inadvertant overuse did not produce ridiculous results. This year "averaging" has been all but eliminated except in **very** extreme cases. Instead a lid has been placed on useage which I feel is reasonable and not too restrictive.

However, to digress here a moment and expound on one of my pet peeves. Football is a dynamic game and circumstances will always arise in **any** replay game which did not occur in the actual game. To simply rate an individual on what did happen and not what might happen in a replay could lead to some severe problems in replay. Let's take the example of kick off returns. Every team has one player capable of of returning a kick off for a touchdown. If only one permutation of TD is plotted on his KR column and he returns 21 kick offs each year he theoretically would only return one for a touchdown over a 10 year period. Yet if your team is down by 7 points or less and it's the last possible play of the game, isn't it nice to know you have even the remotest chance of victory?

For those who specialize in replay leagues using the teams intact, two changes are sure to delight them. First, the use of roster cards will help speed up play by containing all performers in a certain category on one card (eg. punt returns). No longer will one have to sift through his team looking for the appropriate return man. Of course, TSG favors this change as well from an economic standpoint, but this savings has been passed along to the consumer. There are more players at a cheaper price with redundant information kept to a minimum. Just compare the useful information on a TSG card with that found on most APBA cards. You may get individual cards for each player but you sure get a lot of absolutely useless information and column headings that are often meaningless. Draft leaguers probably consider this consolidation a drawback, but the cards can be cut and reunited easily on a couple of 8½ by 11 sheets for each draft team. Secondly, statistics have been added which many people asked for and again will help as guidelines for proper useage in replay games.

In summary, I would like to say we will continue to make changes in the game in the coming years based to a great degree on comments from you, the fan. You'll find no other game as responsive or willing to make changes.

## GUEST COLUMN/John T. Chandler

TSG Pro Football has been my favorite sports table game since its inception. Truthfully, the one year that it was not marketed virtually broke my little heart.

One of the major problems for table game addicts is finding regular opponents. (Gamecraft could aid in this by selling an opponents wanted list.) TSG appears complex even though it really is not. To convince others to play one needs to systematize everything so that a new opponent's first encounter with the game will be one where he can concentrate on coaching rather than paperwork and referral to the rules. Here are some basic things which I do, and many of you probably do also.

First, as soon as you get your game, fill out those team rosters completely. To save time, when a player appears on the offensive or defensive starting unit, you need place only an "s-" on the special team platoon on which he appears at the same position. Refer to the rules for the players who can appear on the special platoon positions and make a referral chart on a 4x6 card. (E.g., on the punting platoon, in the TE position write "any player.") With this chart in hand, you need never refer to the rules again in making up your rosters.

On the defensive platoon roster, the rating of the MG against the run should be noted in parenthesis by his name. This should be done also for the defensive backs and right safety against the pass. A new opponent, or an experienced one, may be turned off by having to search for those ratings when he fills in his scoresheet.

The 1976 edition's format poses a playcalling problem. This is due to not having receiver cards and due to having more than one running back per card. In addition to play cards one now needs position cards. The remedy is to purchase a set of blank player cards and type positions for the six ball carriers on them. Then, merely use two cards (play and position) when calling plays.

The best dice shakers are pill containers (transparent plastic cups) with a polyethylene cap. Felt may be obtained inexpensively at a variety store and glued into the top and bottom to deaden sound. The containers may be obtained at most pharmacies. The shakers should be large enough for five dice. Keeping the dice enclosed in their shakers saves time otherwise caused by gathering thrown dice for the next roll. Also, buy enough dice and shakers so that each player may have his own.

Dice: each player needs five. He will need three white ones, a gree one, and a red one. The green die is referred to on pass plays only as it activates the secondary receiver chart. The red one activates the PFI system.

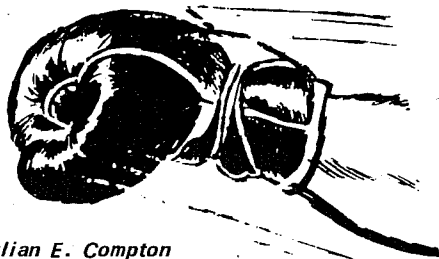
A third dice container is needed for the PFI finder charts. It should contain two white dice, plus one green and one red one. If a PFI occurs, roll the finder dice. The red one will tell you whether a penalty, fumble or an injury has occurred. If it is a penalty refer to the three remaining dice to find the outcome; the same for a fumble; and if an injury has occurred, the white dice will indicate the exact position and the green one will indicate whether the offense or defense has been injured, referring to the appropriate column.

Play charts. I have two complete sets per player so that one side only need be referred to. By cutting down the size, each chart may be placed in a document protector. The PFI chart is a problem, and I admit to cutting it down and pasting it for photocopying purposes.

The Chart of Effects should be likewise given one per player, with the extraneous solo defense chart cut away. I used a green border to separate the run oriented defenses from the pass defenses. This enhances readability, especially for the new player to whom the chart may, at first glance, seem incomprehensible. I advocate having the publisher place the secondary receiver chart near the chart of effects for accessibility.

## DATA BOXING NEWSLETTER

Game Designer: *Julian E. Compton*



FROM THE DESIGNER/Julian E. Compton

### THE BEST POUND-FOR-POUND BOXER OF ALL TIME?

One of the real thrills for this game player is to see the stars of the past come alive in a game structure. Usually these will be names that are familiar, but ever so often an unknown will rear his head in a bid for greatness. In the boxing world two questions seem to persist: 1) Who is the greatest boxer of all time?, and 2) Who is the best pound-for-pound boxer of all time? The first question is usually answered by naming a heavyweight — Louis, Dempsey, Ali Marciano, etc. The second question is left for all the other divisions and the cliché answer is that "Sugar Ray" Robinson was the best pound-for-pound boxer of all time. Into this second question I would like to interject the name of an unknown — Harry Greb.

Harry Greb, "the Pittsburgh Windmill," was middleweight champ from 1923–26. He fought 290 recorded bouts over thirteen years, winning an overwhelming number by decision. He suffered two early KO's and then went from 1916–26, when he retired without being stopped. If you consult Gene Tunney's record you'll find only one 15-round loss — to Harry Greb. Greb, though outweighed ten pounds, won at least twelve rounds cutting Tunney's eyes and drawing blood from the nose and mouth. It was said Tunney had a "broken face" after the bout. Tunney later revenged the loss, but Greb's reputation was made. It was rumored that Dempsey, the heavy champ, would not meet Greb, who was only a middleweight. Greb was a swarming, buzzsaw, rough-house boxer with no KO power, but he could hold his own with middleweights, light heavies, and heavyweights. In DATA BOXING Greb has a card rating for each of the three divisions. You can match him with Louis or Dempsey, or lightheavies such as Archie Moore or Bob Foster, or with "Sugar Ray" and other middies — and you may be surprised with the results!

### A QUESTION FROM RINGSIDE

I'm particularly puzzled by what appear to be fractions (TKO rating points: 1/3, 2/3, 3/3, etc.), and their relationship to the offensive power reduction percentage. H. S. Baskerville, Philadelphia, PA

The key to advanced play is each boxer's TKO RATING. Practically everything is keyed to it as indicated on the Declining Ability Chart. The fractions on the Declining Ability Chart refer to that percent of the boxer's TKO rating (ex. 30) that has been scored against him to that point: (1/3 of 30 10, 2/3 20, 4/3 40 pts.). If a boxer rolls a KO on offense which is matched by a KO on defense at a time when 16 points have been scored against him by his opponent, he is in the 11% category (anytime between 10 and 19 pts). A third dice roll on the Power Reduction Chart at the 11% level says a 4, 5, or 7 roll would nullify the KO. Any other dice roll and the KO occurs. (20–29 pts. puts you in the 22% level.)

Notice that with a TKO rating of 30, when the opponent scores that many points against a boxer (3/3): Power, A(Aggression) or Strategy Factors and TKO Resistance all start declining. TKO Resistance starts at 15 pts. (1/2 of 30) and remains there until (3/3) 30 pts. are scored against the boxer at which time it drops (–3) to 12 pts. At (4/3) 40 pts. it drops (–4) to 11 pts. etc. Detailed explanation is available from Gamecraft. Send a self-addressed, legal size envelope.

### CORRECTION

Earnie Shavers (H) should have an N1 W on his defensive side.

### THE FUTURE

In the next edition of DATA BOXING some fifty of the all-time best in all the remaining divisions will appear including Willie Pep, the great featherweight. Updated and new current boxers will also be included.

### MORE FROM RINGSIDE

Thanks to Julian E. Compton and GAMECRAFT for DATA BOXING. This is a first-class game and I have been absolutely delighted with first four fights. In fact, I've been so involved with DATA BOXING that my EXTRA INNINGS game is getting a rest. (But not for long!) Keep up the good work and thanks again.  
Ron Gallo, Wyoming, Del.

### TSG cont'd.

The foregoing commentary concerns the more mundane aspects of providing good game organization. There are many more such ideas floating around in my head which Jerry Faulk may care to have me communicate. The reader should contribute his ideas as well. We will all benefit.

Also in my head is a potpourri of ideas concerning how to better implement some of the game rules. Some of these will probably rate your approval; some will not, but in either case your comments are encouraged.

Use of the fifth defensive back can be abused. For instance, the rule provides that all pass receivers will be reduced by one grade, and all runners will be increased by one grade. If the team already is a weak running team, say with a "D" running index, and a "C" passing index for most if not all receivers, by putting in the 5th DB you paralyze the passing with only marginal effect on the running. To remedy this, when a 5th DB is in the game raise the running index to "A." This makes sense because, in effect, you have no MG, or at least, you have a DB who would function no better than a MG with a rating of "2", and probably worse. In the alternative, you could consider raising the running grade by three grades (usually to "A"), but at least two. Your comments on this will be appreciated.

As for bringing in two tight ends, the standard rule is fine. However, sometimes I compute the grade of the 2nd TE versus the RCB and reduce that by one grade, leaving other grades in tact.

The fullhouse backfield can be a useful tool. For passing, compute the third RB's passing index by matching him versus the LCB and then reduce that grade by one.

I once complained to TSG designer, Jim Hallo, that the FS blitz was too effective against the run. I still think so and we have ceased using it in my neck of the woods, although some experimentation may be done under controlled conditions. On this I would like your comments.

Another experiment is under way. That is the use of the change of play at the line of scrimmage. This is allowed on two defenses only: short yardage and pass prevent. If the defense calls a short yardage defense on first down, then the offense has the option to change the play by so stating, although he may bluff and keep the same play. The defense then calls his defensive set again. Remember, this can be done on first down only. It cannot be done on any other down nor can it be done in the last two minutes of the half or game.

If the defense has called the pass prevent defense, then the offense may change its play call, or bluff that it will do so. Again, however, the play may be changed on first down only, and never in the last two minutes of the half or game.

The only other time a play can be changed by the offense is if a time out is taken. In the alternative, the offense may choose to take a delay of the game penalty in order to save the time out for a more critical time.

Hopefully, playtesting will indicate whether this rule detracts from or adds to the realism and/or playability of the game. Perhaps each side should be limited to a set number of "audibles" per game. I also increase the fumble index after each audible called by two points for that play to reflect the confusion that sometimes results. Comments.

Solo play defenses continue to be a sore spot for most tabletop gamers. However, I have devised some very accurate defensive play call charts which allow virtually all the defenses to be called in a realistic manner. The goal is to allow the offense to call any play it wants

Cont'd. p. 16



# T.H.E. PRO FOOTBALL NEWSLETTER

Game Designer: *Steve Keplinger*

## CONFUSION CORNER/Steve Keplinger

On this page we have reprinted a letter from Mel Patterson which we found very interesting. Mel makes some comments that we feel were very creative.

We were especially intrigued by his first suggestion regarding player use. This could be helpful to many of you. We're sure you solitaire players have your own rules regarding player use. Some of you have probably become so ingrained in your play calling for each team that you find no extra system is necessary. You reach a point where you can limit a player's attempts without even thinking about it.

Where Mel's system may be even more helpful is in head-to-head competition. Middle linebacker key or no middle linebacker key, some people will still get carried away in a single game situation. Some of you probably have experienced this problem in the past. Mel's suggestion could be very necessary in these type games.

The one situation that he did not mention is the use of players with one or two attempts. The guy who runs one time for five yards can cause a problem if not considered before gametime. We feel that this type of player should be limited to use on first and second downs, along with not being used inside the 18 yard line or so. However, any rule that is decided on by both players before gametime would be fine. Just make sure it is considered.

Of course, the other thing that would reduce and possibly eliminate this problem is the cutting of rosters. Many players never bother with reducing their rosters to 40 or 43 players. In a solitaire situation this may not make too much of a difference, but in the heads up game, it definitely would. We still feel this is very important to "proper" game playing.

So before heading into that titanic struggle for supremacy in your area, take that little extra time to consider these areas. Your game will be much better off for it.

Dear Sir: I have thoroughly enjoyed T.H.E. Pro Football the past year. I have given the game some of my own rules to make it more enjoyable for me. I have listed these additional rules below because I'm sure you may find them interesting. I recently received my '75 charts and great teams and I feel other teams that should be issued are 63 Bears, 64 Browns, 66 Packers, 68 Jets, 69 Chiefs, 70 Colts, 71 Cowboys, all of which were world championship teams. Thanks for a great game. Constructive criticism such as mine to follow should be looked at carefully to improve your game so it will remain number one.

(1) **Player use** — I use the following guideline to insure true realism as noted in your rule book. QB, RB, and Rec. should be put in a starting lineup for those used most frequently. Limitations on player use would be as follows: QB — 10% of Att +10; for example, 1975 Steelers Bradshaw would be starting QB since he had most attempts, 10% of his attempts (286 att) is 28.6 rounded off to 29+10 equals 39. So 39 pass attempts would be the maximum use for one game for Terry Bradshaw. RB rushing attempts 10% att+5 so Franco Harris (262 att) is 26.2+5 equals 31 rushing maximum. Receivers is 10% receptions +2 so Lynn Swann 49 catches 10% is 4.9 (rounded to 5) +2 equals 7 receptions maximum in a game for Swann. Reserves usage is a straight 10%. This usage is relatively simple, gives realism to the game by putting limitations on players. My chart looks like this:

### Player use

Starters — QB — 10% +10, RB — 10% +5, Receivers — 10% +2  
Reserves — QB, RB, and Rec. equals 10% for category

The exceptions to this rule are that when a starter is injured his reserve may use the starter's maximum and also in an overtime period there is no limit on player use. I play a lot of solitaire, but even without it, the line has to be drawn somewhere to get true realism and not to fudge by using a player a little too much. I recently played 1958 Colts and Lenny Moore's rushing max is 13 attempts. He ran 13 times for 79 yards in one game and 10 times for 145 yards in another game. If he were allowed 30 attempts, you can imagine what might happen. The amounts I came up with (10% +) seem to work well for me and still allow enough leeway so one wouldn't know which play is coming next.

Note: I do allow reserves to be used as starters if the other player does not exceed twice the amount in the category, i.e. 1972 Miami—Morrall 150 att, Griese 97 att. Morrall's 150 does not exceed Griese by twice so Griese can start. He would have 20 att maximum and Morrall would have 15 att maximum since he is a reserve.

(2) **First downs - goal line** — This is a rule I have used for a long time including other games prior to issuance of your game. When yardage comes to exact yard line needed for First down, I have what I call a "measurement," simply a roll of three dice with offense rolling first — Highest roll wins. If offense has high roll it is a first down or if defense has highest roll it is not a first down. Example, it is 2nd and 5yds to go and play goes for 5yds, proceed to roll for measurement. If this play is not a first down and the next play goes 0yds (only on run, not pass) then there would once again be a measurement. I also use this procedure for approaching the goal line. I feel this rule adds excitement to first downs and goal line stands besides the realism it gives to the game. In a real football game the yardsticks are brought in for the same type of instance, first downs, and also you do see the ball as close as 6 inches to the goal line. For statistical purposes, if a player scores a TD from the 0yd line, I credit him with a one yd run for the TD.

(3) **Solitaire play - (Key Play)** — This is a must for the serious solitaire player such as myself. Enclosed is a variation of your solitaire list that came with the game. The major difference is where you see **Key Play**. This is a defense alignment set up to stop opponents of-fensive strengths. Once the defensive plays have been picked they can be changed **only** at the end of any quarter. Number 1 should be the main stopper because number 2 does not appear in all selections. This solitaire rule allows for defense to play more a part of the game. Against a team — say, Buffalo — you would maybe want to select MLB Key — O.J. Simpson for a quarter, half, or even the whole game or against Pittsburgh you may want to MLB Key — Harris or F.S. Double Team Swann. Most solitaire games I play I don't key on a certain player but when I do, I use number 2 since it appears only in the first and 2nd down situations. Against a team that is more passing oriented or rushing then the proper defense game plan can be implemented. I make my notations in **comments** on the score sheet and would look something like this say for Buffalo vs Miami.

### Buffalo Defense (Key play)

1 — 4-4  
2 — short yardage

### Miami Defense (Key play)

1 — 4-4  
2 — MLB Key — Simpson

I am thoroughly enjoying your game as there is no game on the market that is close to the realism and wide variety of plays that your game offers. If you have any questions or comments concerning this letter, I would much enjoy receiving them.

Sincerely, **Mel Patterson, Seattle, Washington**

See chart on next page.

## CORRECTIONS

The corrections for 1976 T.H.E. Pro Football charts are as follows: Norm Bulaich, MIAMI, should be an RB, not an FB; Bert Jones, BALTIMORE, long pass column on number 16 should be a 20, not 26; Harold Hard, OAKLAND RB, number 9 on power play should be 3y, not 3; Golden Richards, DALLAS, should have a 25 at number 11 in the Q column, not a 2. In the instruction booklet, the timing for all returns should be 10 seconds, not 30 seconds.

1st Down & 10 Yds or less

- 1 - Key Play
- 2 - Key Play
- 3 - Run
- 4 - 4-4
- 5 - Pass
- 6 - LB Drop

2nd Down & 7 Yds - 11 Yds

- 1 - Key Play
- 2 - Key Play
- 3 - Run
- 4 - 4-4
- 5 - Pass
- 6 - Bump & Run

3rd-(4th) dn 4 Yds - 7 Yds

- 1 - Key Play
- 2 - Run
- 3 - 4-4
- 4 - Pass
- 5 - Bump & Run
- 6 - Zone

2 Minutes or less in halfPass Prevent DefenseAny Down 25 Yds or more

- 1 - Key Play
- 2 - Zone
- 3 - Pass Prevent
- 4 - Pass Prevent Wide
- 5 - Pass Prevent Wide
- 6 - OnS. Pass Blitz

1st Down & 15 yds or more

- 1 - Key Play
- 2 - Key Play
- 3 - Run
- 4 - Pass
- 5 - Bump & Run
- 6 - LB Drop

2nd Down & 12 yds or more

- 1 - Key Play
- 2 - Pass
- 3 - Pass
- 4 - Zone
- 5 - Pass Prevent
- 6 - OnS. Pass Blitz

3rd-(4th) dn 8 yds or more

- 1 - Key Play
- 2 - Pass
- 3 - Zone
- 4 - Pass Prevent
- 5 - Pass Prevent Wide
- 6 - OnS. Pass Blitz

2nd Down & 6 yds or less

- 1 - Key Play
- 2 - Key Play
- 3 - Run
- 4 - 4-4
- 5 - Short Yardage
- 6 - Pass

3rd-(4th) dn 3 yds or less

- 1 - Key Play
- 2 - Run
- 3 - 4-4
- 4 - Short Yardage
- 5 - Goal Line
- 6 - OnS. Run Blitz

10 Yd Line or less (Goal)

- 1 - Key Play
- 2 - 4-4
- 3 - Short Yardage
- 4 - Goal Line
- 5 - Goal Line
- 6 - OnS. Run Blitz

**CORRECTIONS**

The corrections for 1976 TSG Pro Football cards are as follows: The columns and the headings on the Terry Metcalf and Jim Otis card are switched; the three columns under Metcalf should be moved under Otis and vice versa. Clarence Davis, RB Oakland, should have a PCR rating of 0\* on the team card (same as on his running card), not 9\*; Grossman, Offensive Substitute, Pittsburgh, should be a TE2; Charley Johnson, Denver, should be a 4 on the team card as on his quarterback card.

**TSG cont'd.**

without being able to count on the results. That is, the defenses are designed to stop the kind of team its utilized against without giving the offense too much advantage in the percentages. At present, defenses have been devised for use against teams which have an evenly balanced running and passing attack, for use against teams which rely more on the pass, for use against the run oriented team, and for use against teams which rely almost exclusively on either the run or the pass. Believe me, it's a good feeling to be able to get realistic results in solo play. More on this at a later date.

Many of you may have found, upon close scrutiny of your statistics, that you are getting too few ball control plays. In the past the NFL got around 60 ball control (run or pass attempt plays) per game per team. In 1974 this figure climbed to 63.1 plays per team per game. This past season it was 66.2. I find TSG to average out at about 60, give or take 1 play. I think the problem lies in too few out of bounds plays, especially on plunge and off tackle plays, but on circle passes and other plays.

One answer, although the result has not been tested by me, is to allow, in the last two minutes of the half or game, the quarterback to throw an incomplete pass to stop the clock. Let's say that the team with the ball has just made a first down by running which took a whole play. The offense may choose to have the QB throw an incomplete pass which, instead of being counted as another half play, will be used to erase a half play of the just completed full play. Also, remember to stop the clock any time during the game that the ball changes possession. Note that an incomplete pass may not be used to erase a half play. It only applies if the previous play was a full play.

In the past TSG produced too many penalties. The amount produced in TSG usually exceed 6 per team. However, in 1975, the actual NFL average 6.1 per team per game. Enough said on this for now.

Ed., John T. Chandler is an old friend of TSG starting back with the first edition. We have asked him to write a column now and then about his experiences with TSG - his modifications, his improvements, and even his gipes.

**FROM THE READERS cont'd.**

the followers of such, even though, if I were placed under the microscope, I would probably be found guilty of having the same fault.

More along these lines in reply to Tom's letter.

Dear Jerry, Thank you for taking the time to send the info I requested. Be assured I will credit TTS in my correspondence.

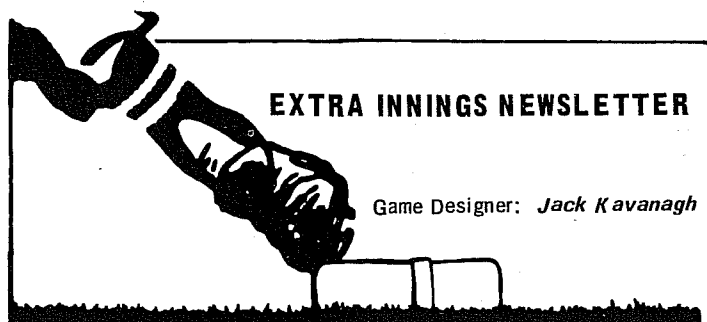
Enclosed please find \$1.60 for your Spring issue. Even though I am not familiar with most of the products discussed I find TTS quite interesting. I would be a subscriber if it were not for my vanity. You see I feel a bit uneasy about paying even \$1.00 to hear myself and my friends called "Meatheads" because we enjoy APBA Co.'s table games. I won't get into comparisons, suffice it to say uneducated slander irks me.

On the whole you are running a first class operation. I wish I could say the same for APBA Journal. AJ would do well to take a few clues from TTS and expand their coverage to include all statistical games. The freebie game is a great idea, the same type coverage of commercial games would be even better. Julian Compton's work in the rating field is well developed. I feel he places too high a premium on simplicity but to his credit he presents his ideas so lucidly that the reader is not misled by Mr. Compton's personal preferences...a rare talent indeed! By the way I was impressed by your column, pg. 4 TTS. The field of brilliant editorials is not overpopulated with frank, humble writers. In case you didn't notice "Good Will" doesn't exist in every corner of our society. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely yours, Tom Trainor, Lancaster, PA

Tom, I was being facetious when I referred to Ron Gold as a "meat-head." I was doing it in my role as the designer of a game competing with APBA and I meant it entirely in fun. Remember, it was in the designer's column - not in the editorial. Irregardless of the diatribe that I let flow forth in my reply above, I have no grudges against APBA players. I consider both you and Ron to be my friends. My discussion above was nothing but my personal opinion and probably has no valid place in the editorial and letter reply section of a supposedly unbiased

Cont'd. p. 16



Jack wrote me this letter last March. I filed it away in my personal correspondence and forgot about it. This summer (late) I happened across it again within a day of receiving a letter from Jack asking why I had never run it in TTS. So here it is.

### FROM THE BENCH/Jack Kavanagh

Dear Jerry: Congratulations on the appearance of "Table Top Sports." This compliment applies two ways: the physical and graphic look and the fact that I got my Winter 1976 issue before the robins reappeared. Now that you have achieved that level of timing I'm sure you'll maintain it.

Which leaves me wanting to react to Julian E. Compton's rating system. It is an excellent piece of work. However, Mr. Compton has introduced a prejudicial factor which distorts the effort to achieve impartiality.

I agree with his dividing the values to be measured into three areas: Playability; Realism and Accuracy; Strategy and Tactics. However, when he assigns 50% of the composite value to Playability he is weighting the equation to reflect that which is either of major importance to him or he believes is the dominant reason for adopting table gaming as a hobby. In this last point he might be right. But, you'd have to support this with substantial motivational research.

The next difficulty with Mr. Compton's approach is that "Playability" is a subjective evaluation. This is defined only as "flow or method." The Level 2: Simulation games are, to the best of my knowledge, all games which use some kind of an activator (dice, cards, spinners, etc.) and charts to interpret the action. I don't know what Mr. Compton's idealized concept would be. But, I'd argue it derives from that with which he is most comfortable according to his initial satisfactions.

I created "Extra Innings" without prior knowledge of other table game sports forms and virtually none of such standards as Monopoly. I had a brief exposure to APBA. Rosters, rather than individual cards, were used to provide specific data because I didn't want to take the time to write up single cards. As a result, I became quite comfortable with rosters and eventually evolved a playing method which suits me. I keep the dice in a small glass jar held in my left hand. I hold a pencil in my right hand. The charts are tacked to a bulletin board at eye level as I sit at a desk placed against the wall. The team rosters are beside the score pad with much of the key information transferred to the score sheet for the game I am playing. I move right along. Shake dice with left hand, read the result, translate to action, record in score book. I don't use a miniature playing field; don't move markers around; don't adjust a score board, etc. That detail is already recorded in my score book.

After a half dozen years of this style of play, I find having to turn over individual cards for an APBA, SOM, etc. game an interruption to the flow I have developed. Yet, we know that those who have cut their table gaming teeth on games which use individual player cards have difficulty in relating to data contained on single sheet rosters. One approach is not definable as superior to the other; it's a matter of what you first found comfortable and familiar. My daughter can't cope with a stick shift car; she learned to drive with automatic transmission.

I can't understand Mr. Compton's rationale in dealing with Strategy and Tactics. This, in baseball, would seem to include all possible strategy and tactics available on an optional basis. How can he give Strat-o-matic an "A;" Extra Innings a "B;" APBA a "B?" Would you please ask him to clarify this? I can't think of a single form of strategy possible for a manager to employ that isn't included with "EI." The absence of a full roster of players in SOM and APBA certainly

limits the strategy possibilities. The "automatic" stolen base attempt in APBA reduces the optional range in this area.

Of the three areas, only "realism and accuracy" are measureable. Even there, "realism" begs some definition. If the game plays to the official rules of the sport, that should be "realism." Again, a subjective component can creep in. If the evaluator considers a game postponed because of rain as a realistic factor and the game designer has set his objective as reproducing season long stats based on "official games" only and doesn't want to risk playing four innings only to have a dice roll literally and figuratively "wash out the effort," then the evaluator might downgrade the product on "realism."

Mr. Compton's effort is laudable. However, it smacks of efforts to judge the quality of a sonnet by measuring it with a computer. My reaction to the judgments passed on "EI" are these: Since we are supposedly dealing with "real life" games, accuracy (reproduction of the statistics on which ratings are based) deserves equal value to other characteristics. I'd suggest he review his own criteria for strategy and tactics and take another look. What is "sufficient?" Is it sufficient that the surrogate manager is limited to manipulations of a less than full squad?

Frankly, there's no way to evaluate games of these kinds except for accuracy in reproducing statistics. I think each game deserves to be reviewed in the fashion of Robert Jones' review of Sherco-II Baseball in the Fall, 1975 issue of TTS. That gives a potential purchaser a realistic appraisal of the values and demerits of the game under consideration.

Mr. Compton's approach has a definite value but its application should be qualified. It does a disservice to the designers of games. Each of us is trying to satisfy too wide a variety of values held by an almost infinite number of table gamers. We must, therefore, aim at some specific element which means the sacrifice of others. "EI" strives most for accuracy. As a result, there are two dice rolls so that, after the variables of hit batsmen, wild pitches, error designations, etc. are disposed of, the games player can deal with the two absolutes which produce batting averages and power factors: hits and outs. To seek Mr. Compton's approval by restyling the game according to what I believe are his criteria would be to sacrifice accuracy. That he accords this value only 25% of the total is tempting. However, I didn't design "EI" for the Comptons, I designed it for myself and anyone who shares my view that table baseball is a substitute for the real thing, not part of a mystic cult who would rather analyze games than play them.

### FROM TABLETOPS HERE AND THERE

We have a large backlog of EI Replays — most of them partials — that we need to print. Unfortunately, we just don't have the room this issue. We'll save them for the Winter issue and run a special — four pages of "EI" material. In the meantime, here is a nice letter from Dave Jenkins, White Bear Lake, MN:

Dear Gamecraft, I have enclosed \$7.00 for your "Kegler Kings." I can hardly wait for Earl Anthony to start rolling along. I've been playing EI throughout most of the summer and have had lots of fun. I've completed a 60 game season with the NL WEST Division. The Reds ran away with it, beating the Dodgers by 11 games. The stats were very close, and yet there was variation. Ken Griffey led the league in hitting with a mark of .347. Randy Jones was the ERA champ, finishing at 1.87 although his record was only 7-5. Ron Cey and Johnny Bench led the league in homers and RBI's with 16 and 50 respectively. Joe Morgan was voted the MVP award on account of his 45 runs, 40 RBI's, 21 SB and hitting mark of .316. I was especially pleased with the ERA's, all the games I've played until EI, couldn't quite capture that realism. I have started a new league also, this one being an All-Star league. I've played 27 games for each of the four teams thus far. Thanks again for EI and please rush me "Kegler Kings!"

We'll finish up time time with a short excerpt from a letter from Don Singleton, Albert Lea, MN:

....I just finished a 1975 replay of the Royals and the A's and was impressed by the accuracy in the pitching statistics. For example:

BUSBY	IP	H	ER	BB	K	CG	ShO	W-L	ERA
EI	257	201	86	78	174	17	2	17-10	3.01
Real life	260	233	89	81	160	18	3	18-12	3.08



## NEWSLETTER

Game Designers: *Jerry Faulk*  
*Larry Davenport*

### FROM THE DOCTOR/Jerry Faulk

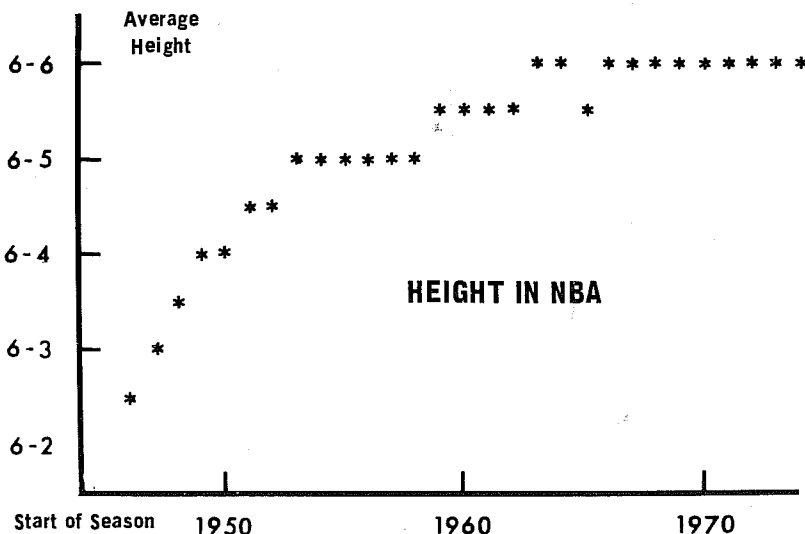
I haven't had much of a caseload this summer; in fact, it has been so light I'm now shooting in the high seventies on the local golfcourse. So I'll use our appointment for this quarter to tell you of the newest developments in the field of good, healthy basketball statistics, particularly for Great Teams of the Past.

As mentioned last issue, we've added college teams to BASKETBALL PRO-STYLE and changed the name to REAL/LIFE BASKETBALL. We've also added several Great Teams of the Past. Therein lies quite a problem. How would the 1950-51 Lakers compare with the 1975-76 Celtics? Our opinion here is that the Celtics would blow them right off the court. It would be a slaughter. Are we right? Who is to say? You can't use playing statistics. They are useful only for comparing teams that played against one another. You have to make a judgment at some point and we did. However, having made that judgment at a certain point, the remaining teams were assigned power ratings according to a mathematical scale. And that scale was based upon the average height in the NBA.

We looked into the possibility of using field-goal percentage as an indicator of average ability for different years, but the methods of play and the rules have changed too much over the years to make this a valid indicator — varying emphasis on defense, for example, and a narrowing of the center lane, adoption of the twenty four second rule, etc. Then we thought of free throw shooting. This skill has not been affected by changes in rules, but it turned out that neither had it varied all that much. Free throw percentage has fluctuated considerably year to year but the average today is not greatly different from that of twenty five years ago.

The only factor that we could find that had all the characteristics of 1) being important in basketball, 2) being unaffected by rule changes and style of play, 3) being measureable in quantitative form, 4) being available in records for all past seasons, and 5) agreeing with our own estimate of how basketball skill has improved in the NBA over the years, is — believe it or not — average height.

We're not going to say how we went about normalizing the Past Teams using average height. That's available in the instructions with the new card sets. We will present here, however, a graph from Appendix A of the game for those of you turned on by the subject of normalization. We compiled the data ourselves from individual heights listed in **TSN Guides**. We then found that the data was already available in yearly average from **Sports Encyclopedia: PRO BASKETBALL**. (A great book for stats.) Oh, well. Our usual luck.



\*\*\*\*\*  
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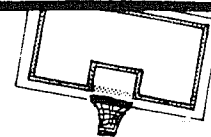
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### GAMECRAFT COMPANY

P.O. BOX 1531, VERNON, TEXAS 76384

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## Classified Ads

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**Rates for TTS subscribers:** Free for up to 30 words. No commercial ads. Subject must involve tabletop sports games. 5¢ per word over 30 words. Suggested categories: Wanted, For Sale, For Trade, Opponents Wanted, and League Managers Wanted. For Opponents Wanted be sure to also specify the game, your age, and — if you wish — your phone number.

**Rates for non-subscribers:** 5¢ per word.

**Rates for owners of Gamecraft games:** Free for Opponents Wanted or League Managers Wanted for these games: EI, TSG, T.H.E., or BPS. Paid otherwise.

**LEAGUE MANAGERS WANTED:** New EXTRA INNINGS Play by Mail League. Robert Arciero, 78 W. Surf Rd, Lindenhurst, NY 11757 or call (516-226-8454 after 6pm).

**LEAGUE MANAGERS WANTED:** Starting league with '60s and '70s teams only. Using EI with revised second roll chart and new method for hitting lines. Rick Teverbaugh, Anthony Apts. No. 40, Muncie, IN 47304.

**OPPONENTS or preferably LEAGUE MANAGERS WANTED:** Statis Pro Baseball 75 Baseball season and TSG Football for 74 Football season. Tim Rabe, 810 Acklen, Shreveport, LA 71104.

**LEAGUE MANAGERS WANTED:** Totally different mail basketball league now being formed by Gerald Bliss — 16-team draft setup split into two leagues with inter-league play, 76-game season, and financial system that takes everything into account — TV and Radio coverage, sound management, local name players, gimmicks. One league will use an improved GOAL! Basketball Game, the other a new game developed by Paul Freistat. Gerald Bliss, Box 446, Aurora, CO 80010.

**LEAGUE MANAGERS WANTED:** Play-by-league: REAL/LIFE BASKETBALL league just forming, using 1975-76 charts. Join now! Mike Daughan, Oakledge Rd, East Harpswell, Maine 04011.

**(Almost) FREE OFFER:** Automatic shot selection and distribution system for Statis-Pro Basketball. Send a No. 10 SASE and 25¢ for xeroxing to Mike Stephens, 312 Newton, Oakland, CA 94606.

**FOR SALE:** Negamco NFL-NFC Rosters 1959-72, 1 game box, rules, charts, etc. — \$10.00. Sports Illustrated NFL Game and 3 different years of team charts — \$6.00. CADACO ALL AMERICAN FOOTBALL GAME NO. 228 — \$2.00. Ted Plott, Box 7, Jackson Springs, NC 27281.

**FOR SALE:** 1969 APBA Football Game complete, mint condition. Submit bids to Larry Gillespie, 205 Ord Ave, Ft. Ord, CA 93941.

**FOR SALE:** 1971 season's cards for Statis-Pro Baseball (then, Midwest Research Baseball) plus original game box to the highest bidder. Minimum bid \$25.00. Don Holmes, 80 Osborne Rd, Albany, NY 12205.

**FOR SALE OR TRADE:** APBA Basketball, Football, Golf, Horse-racing, Master Baseball; Extra Innings, Replay, Statis-Pro Baseball; also have past card sets for above. George Kariger, 219 Yearick, Argos, Indiana.

**FOR SALE OR TRADE:** (1) TSG 72 and 74 Editions Football, (2) SOM Baseball and Football 73 and 74, (3) APBA Football 70, 72 and 73. Bill Guerra, 6005 West Fern Street, Tampa, FL 33614 or Phone 813-884-7743.

**WANTED:** Old Baseball Games G none that are on market now. Pre-1930 Baseball Guides. T-206 if in VG to Mint Condition. Complete set of '69, '70, '71 or '72 TOPPS. Gordon McGraw, 401½ West Main, Bushnell, ILL 61422.

**WANTED:** Gamers with which to exchange ideas on EI. Mike Robinson, Assumption College, Box 152K, 500 Salisbury St., Worcester, MA 01609.

**WANTED:** Complete 1974 edition ('72-'73 season) PTG Hockey cards. Send price and condition of set to: Steve Lorenz, Olde Carriage House Apts. No. B-1, Clinton, NY 13323

**FOR TRADE:** My table top game tips for yours so we both may have a greater knowledge and more skills while playing games. Also would like to buy SOM game sets from 60's and early 70's. Write: Robin Hager, Box 65, Ashland, ILL 62612.

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### FROM THE READERS cont'd.

publication. We don't intend for this to become an "anti-APBA" magazine. We will cover all sports table games and we will cover them fairly — our writers will see to that.

You may have noticed that most of the game companies tend to pick on APBA. Part of the reason is that APBA is the generally acknowledged sales leader, of course. But most of the reason is just plain dislike. APBA, for the most part, fails to recognize the existence of any other game company. They seem to have been offended that anyone would even offer another product in competition with their own. All such offenders are greeted with the "censure of silence."

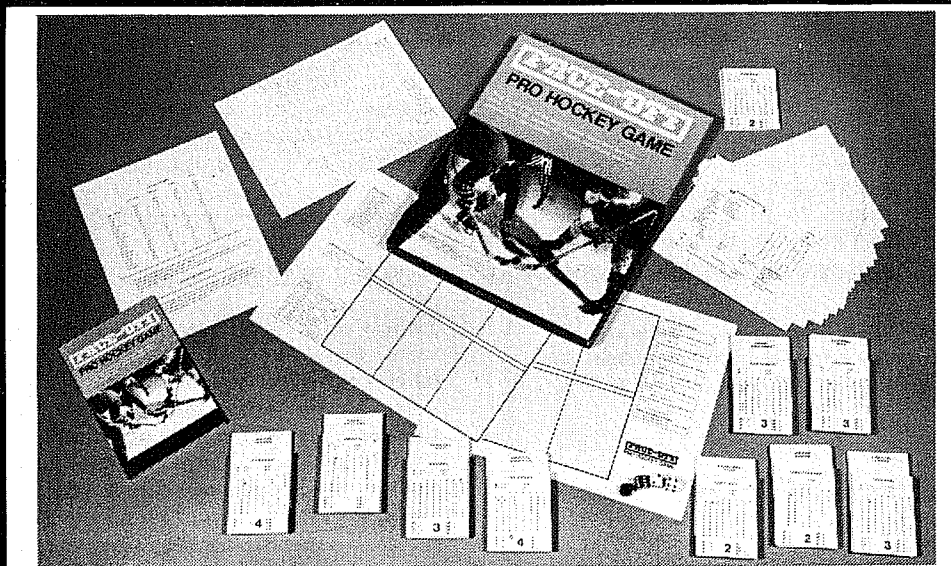
Example, Jack Kavanagh vacationed in Pennsylvania a couple of summers ago. He wrote J. Richard Seitz a letter asking, as one successful game designer to another, if he might drop by for a visit and short chat. Result: none — no reply at all. When we were rounding up games for the Spring issue basketball survey, we wrote all the companies, enclosing a sample copy of TTS that showed the types of surveys that we did, and asked that a complimentary copy of their basketball game be sent to Julian Compton. Results from APBA: None — no reply, no game. It doesn't bother me to be turned down on our request for a complimentary game. That's an ordinary business decision. But, I think we deserved the courtesy of a reply. I think Bob Hunter summed it up appropriately in his survey article for the Hamilton, Ohio, JOURNAL-NEWS (reprinted in Jan., 1975 TTS), with which APBA refused to cooperate: Bob characterized the company as having "...a marked lack of class."

You have indicated in a separate letter to me that you have always received a courteous response in any of your dealings with APBA. As you can see, we haven't. (Maybe it's because you live in Lancaster.) And you have said that you haven't received very informative responses from companies such as Mickey Games and Statis-Pro. That is very possible. I myself have failed to answer many inquiries about our games that would have required me to sit down and write a letter. All of the small companies have the same problem. When you are your own manager, printer, shipping-room clerk, planner, secretary, bookkeeper, and janitor, you don't have time for niceties. The cost in time and money now to write a letter makes it a losing proposition. One would have to be sure of making the sale to break even. In fact, if I had to write a letter for every sale I made, I'd go bankrupt within a month.

APBA is at the size where they can afford to hire someone to do nothing but answer letters. (I bet Seitz makes Fritz do it.) That's an efficient method of doing it. Until you reach that size, you have to improvise and that's what we're doing here. We are using postcards wherever possible. We're keeping tabs on the most often asked questions, so that we can revise our brochures to cover them. We're trying to be courteous in all instances, especially now that people such as yourself are giving us a picture of the view from the consumer's end. I collect all the correspondence containing questions for a week and then on a certain day (right now, it's Tuesday) I start with the top letter and write like hell. It takes the better part of the day. I hate it. I will be delighted when I can afford a secretary.

In summary, I think it is a ..... I think it is a matter of getting large enough to afford the luxury of consistently extending courtesy to customers and potential customers. We're just now approaching that point. It's also a matter of being smart enough to recognize the value of courtesy for building a loyal following. APBA obviously is, at least from your report.

At any rate, Tom, I promise no more anti-APBA haranguing from me.. ..you meathead.



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