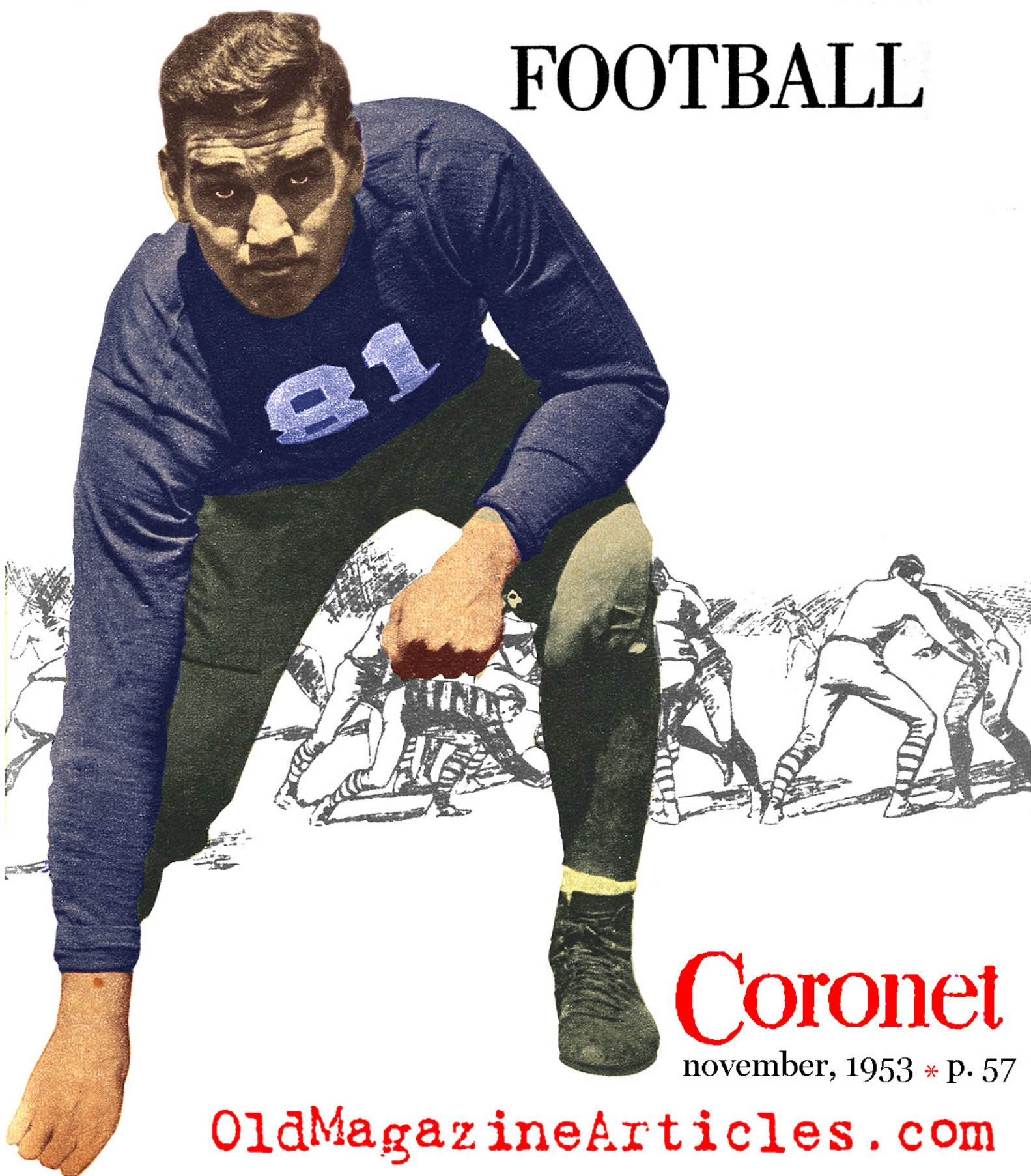


50

YEARS
OF
FOOTBALL



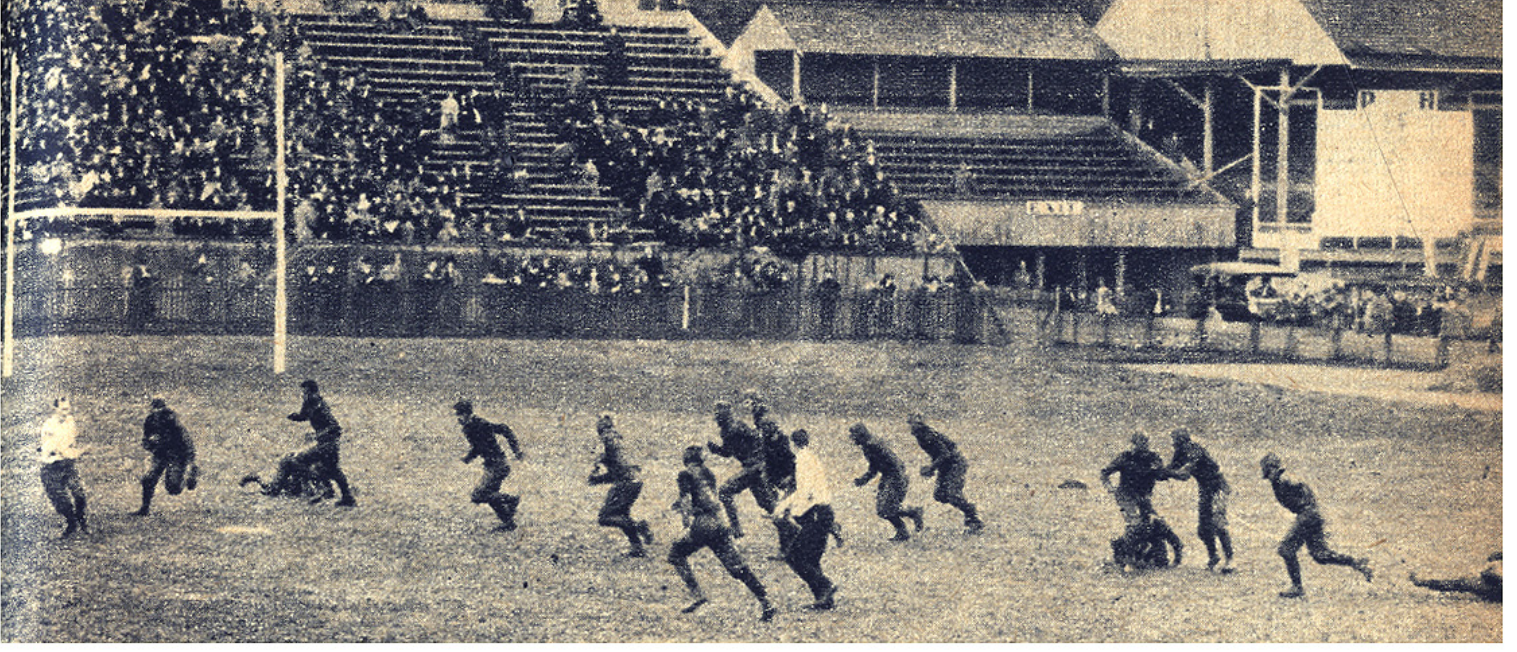
Coronet

november, 1953 * p. 57

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NO ONE IS certain how football came to America. There are those who say it has always been here in the guise of an Indian game like lacrosse; its resemblance to English Rugby is apparent. But the game we know today is uniquely American, its place on the American scene secure. From September until long after the snows fall, Saturday afternoon means the Big Game to millions; and to millions the names of Heffelfinger, Grange, Harmon, Kazmaier and other gridiron greats will never lose their luster. This year, more than 15,000,000 Americans—old grads, subway alumni and just plain football fans—will turn out to see their favorites do battle in a game that bears little resemblance to the scrambling, uncoordinated melees of 50 years ago. This is the story of how football grew up, of its heroes, and of the great games of yesteryear.





In 1913, Harvard played Princeton in a grandstand setting that looks quaint today.



BEFORE imaginative coaches like Alonzo Stagg and Pop Warner opened up the game with forward passes and trick plays, “The Flying Wedge” was football’s basic formation. The ball carrier hid inside a human wall that bore forward with bruising momentum and impact.



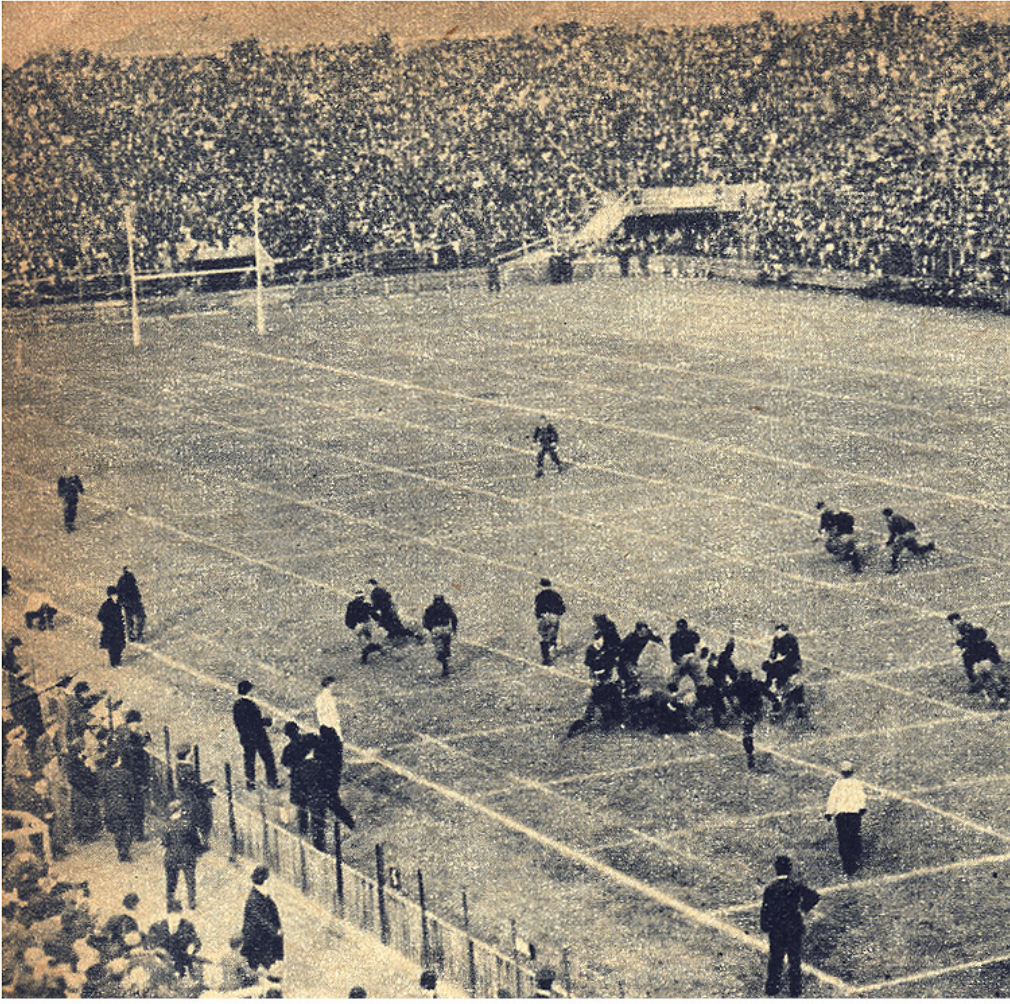
The end of the wedge made room for skillful defensive play. Tackling dummies were hit hard in practice, as was the opposition on Saturday.

THE CLASSIC Army-Navy series began with a Navy triumph in 1890. The Cadets roared back and won their share of games until 1906, when Coach Dashiell taught his Middies to pass. The result: Army was confounded and Navy won, 10-0 (*right*).



THE GAME came under attack from those who pointed grimly at the growing list of gridiron fatalities—18 in 1905. Rules were haphazard and unenforced. While some players wore men-from-Mars noseguards, others perversely scorned all protective devices, including helmets. For a few dark months, it looked like intercollegiate football would die a-borning. Then President Teddy Roosevelt, an ardent sports advocate, called a White House conference. The outcome was a series of reforms and rules codification that cleared the way to a cleaner and infinitely more popular game.





Checkerboard fields enforced the ban on center rushes.



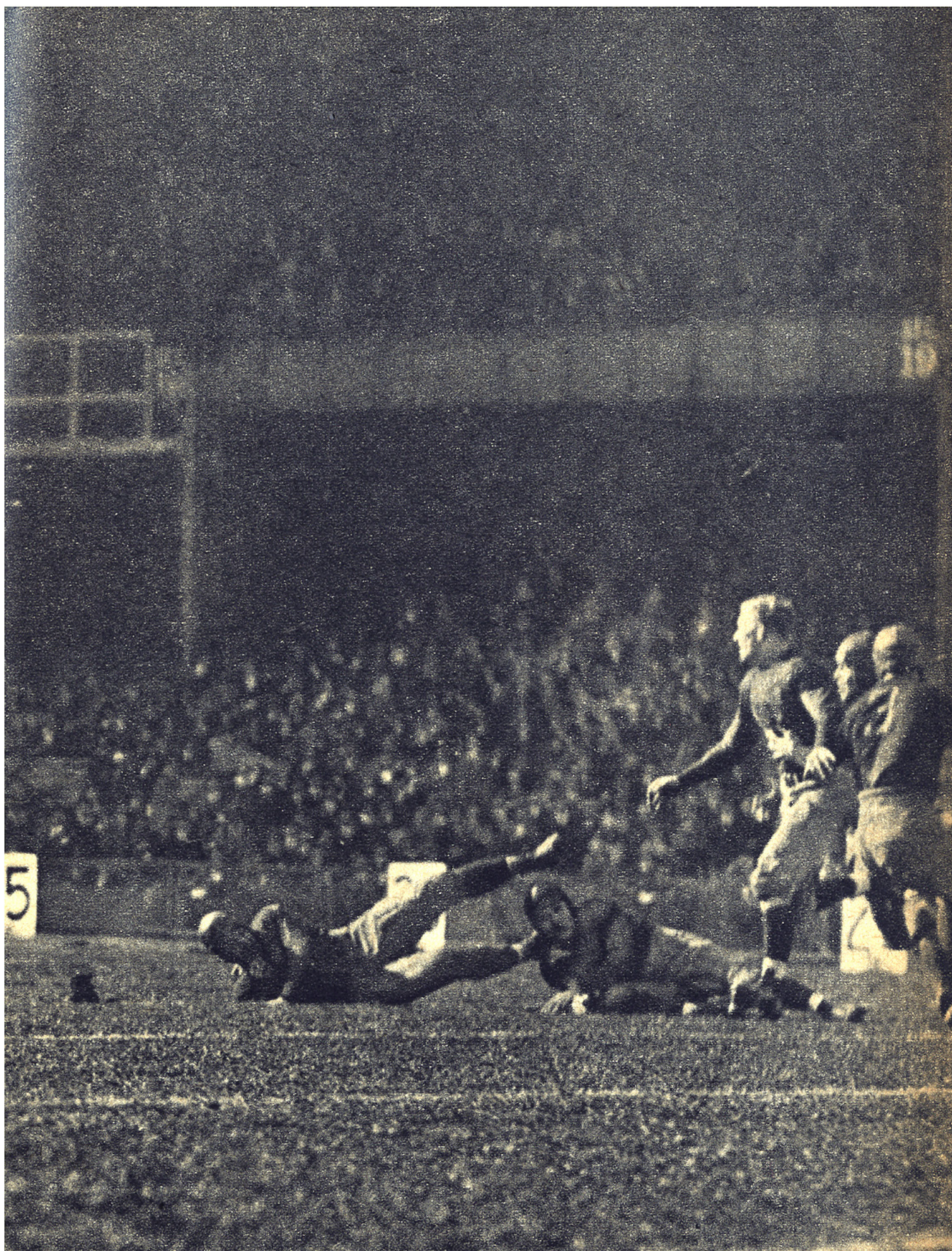
AS THE FOOTBALL fervor spread from the Ivy League to the Midwest, the kicker came into his own. Long before Charley Brickley of Harvard beat Yale, the educated toe of Pat O'Dea had made Wisconsin a football power. The dark-haired Australian could punt for 80 yards and drop-kick from any angle. Once, against Minnesota, he stood at midfield and kicked a perfect field goal. This so stunned the Gophers that Wisconsin won going away.



Thousands now turned out to cheer their favorites on.

EARLY DAY forward-passers were not the specialists we know today. They had to run, block, tackle, and they had to do it for 60 minutes of every game. Substitutions were virtually unheard of, and unless a man was carried from the field, he stayed on it until the final whistle ended the game. Pass technique was a basketball-type push shot or a lobbing toss that rarely went more than ten yards. The day of the 60-yard-passer was still ahead.





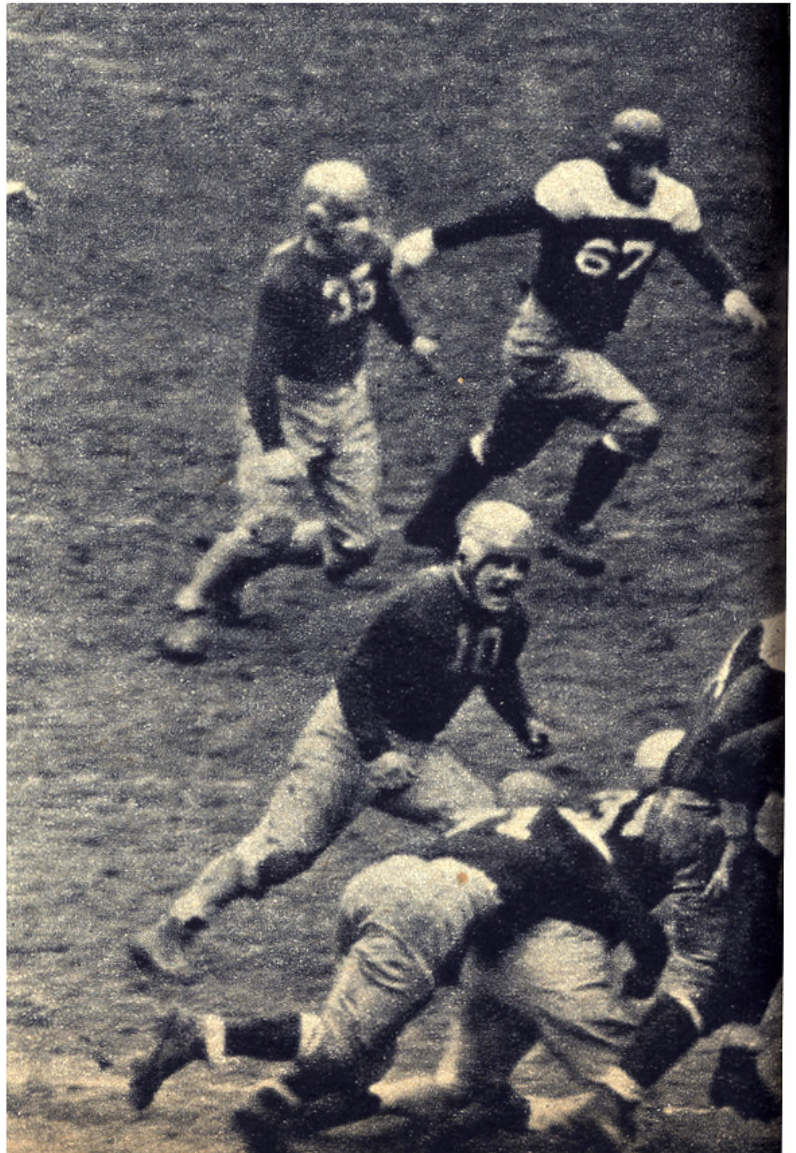
The Syracuse-Pittsburgh game of 1923 was held in Yankee Stadium, a practice to be followed for other big games. Undefeated Syracuse won through in a tight contest.

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IN ONE memorable afternoon against Michigan in 1924, Illinois' Red Grange scored five times in five attempts. Named All-American three times, he later put professional football on the map.

THE GAME had come into its own, a contest of hard-hitting linemen, agile backs. On the offense, few backs could run with Notre Dame's Four Horsemen, while Fordham's Seven Blocks of Granite were favorites to hold that line.



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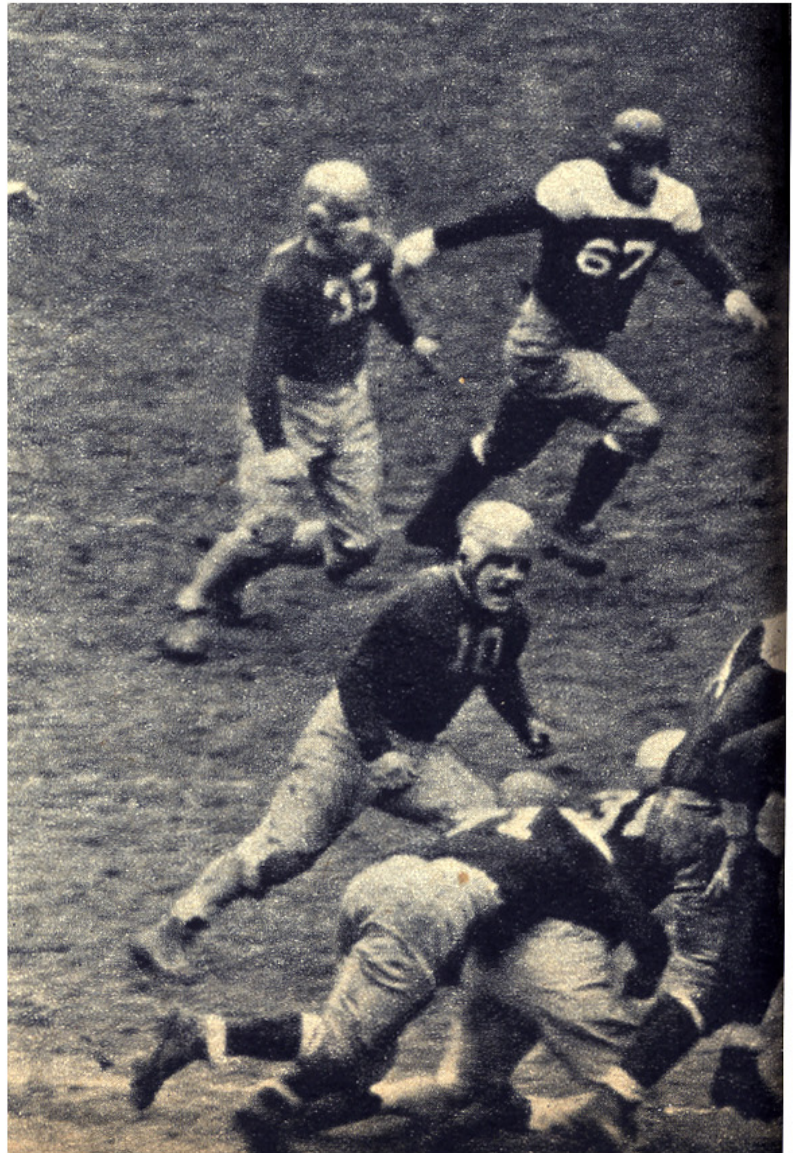


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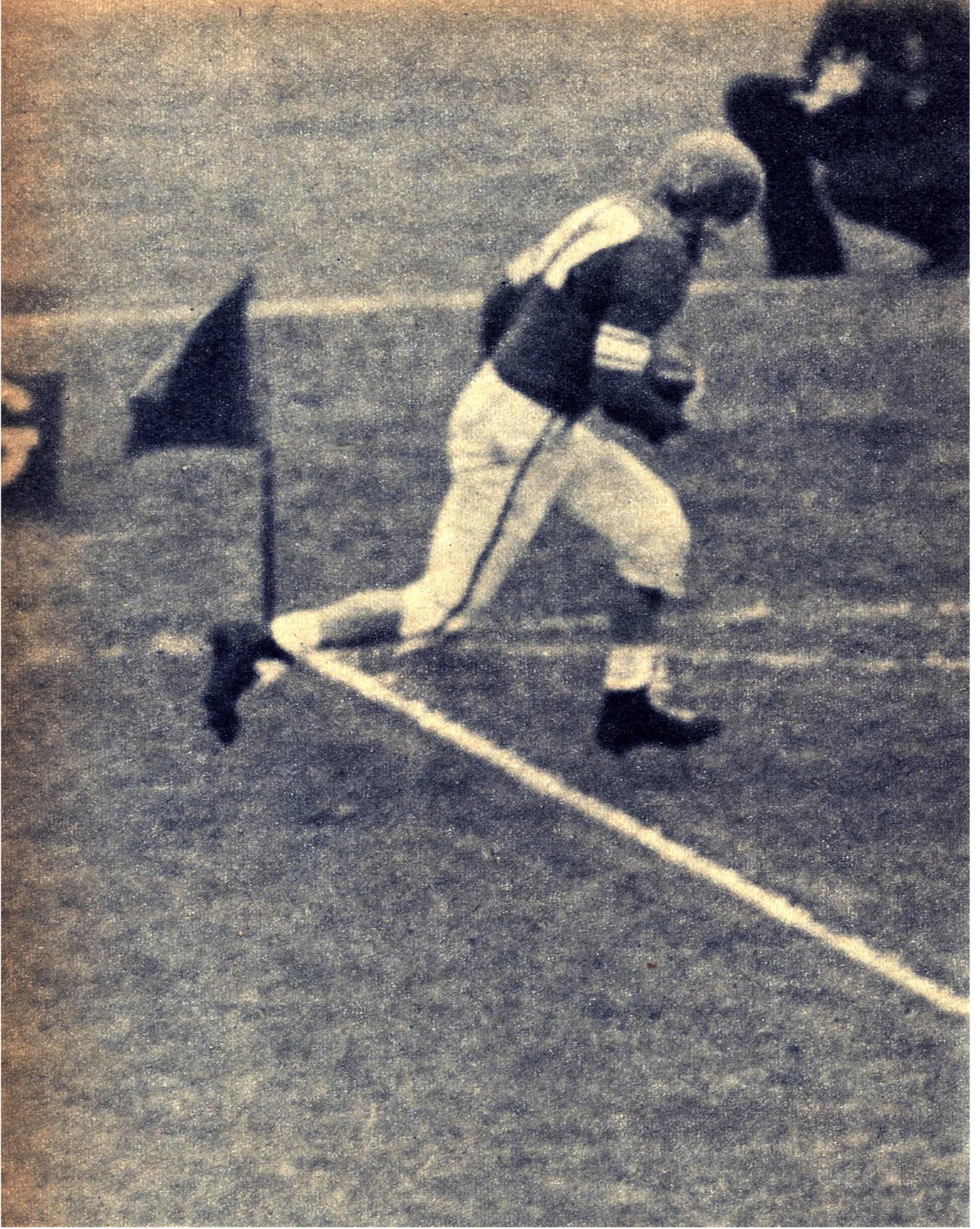


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Notre Dame's Four Horsemen: Miller, Stuhldreher, Crowley and Layden.





“**T**HERE he goes!” someone shouts, and all eyes swing downfield to watch the back who has broken free and races for the goal line. Men have given everything to defend that line; others have reached superb heights in crossing it. Today, modern football has truly become the All-American game.

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