

= 1920 APFA season =

The 1920 APFA season was the inaugural season of the American Professional Football Association ? renamed the National Football League in 1922 . The league was formed on August 20 , 1920 by independent professional American football teams from Ohio , all of whom had previously played in the Ohio League or New York Pro Football League (NYPFL) . At the meeting , they first called their new league the American Professional Football Conference . A second organizational meeting was held in Canton on September 17 , adding more teams to the league . At the meeting , the name of the league became the American Professional Football Association . Four other teams also joined the Association during the year . Meanwhile , Jim Thorpe of the Canton Bulldogs was named the APFA 's first president but continued to play for the team .

Scheduling was left up to each team . There were wide variations , both in the overall number of games played and in the number played against other Association members . Thus , no official standings were maintained . In addition , football teams in the APFA also faced independent football teams not associated with the league . For instance , the Rochester Jeffersons played a schedule consisting mostly of local teams from their local sandlot circuit and the NYPFL , not the APFA .

The Akron Pros ended the season as the only undefeated team in the Association . Despite this , two one @-@ loss teams ? the Decatur Staleys and Buffalo All @-@ Americans ? who both tied Akron that year made cases for a co @-@ championship . At the league meetings in Akron on April 30 , 1921 , the Pros were awarded the Brunswick @-@ Balke Collender Cup for the 1920 season , the only year the trophy was used . According to modern NFL tie @-@ breaking rules , the 1920 Buffalo All @-@ Americans would be co @-@ champions . They would be tied with the Akron Pros in win percentage , 9 @.@ 5 wins to 1 @.@ 5 losses (.864) , both teams beating out the Staleys , who would have a season that counted 11 wins to 2 losses (.846) .

Of the 14 teams that played in the APFA / NFL 's inaugural season , the Chicago Cardinals , now named the Arizona Cardinals , and the Decatur Staleys , now named the Chicago Bears , are the only teams that remain in the league .

= = Formation = =

Prior to the APFA , there were several other loose , professional organizations ; most of the APFA teams were from either the Ohio League or the New York Pro Football League . On August 20 , 1920 , a meeting attended by representatives of four Ohio League teams ? Ralph Hay and Jim Thorpe for the Canton Bulldogs , Jimmy O 'Donnell and Stan Cofall for the Cleveland Tigers , Carl Storck for the Dayton Triangles , and Frank Nied and Art Ranney for the Akron Pros ? was held . At the meeting , the representatives tentatively agreed to call their new league the American Professional Football Conference , introduce a salary cap for the teams , and not to sign college players nor players under contract with another team . According to the Canton Evening Repository , the purpose of the league was to " raise the standard of professional football in every way possible , to eliminate bidding for players between rival clubs and to secure cooperation in the formation of schedules , at least for the bigger teams . " The representatives then contacted other major professional teams and invited them to a meeting for September 17 .

At that meeting , held at Bulldogs owner Ralph Hay 's Hupmobile showroom in Canton , Ohio , representatives of the Rock Island Independents , the Muncie Flyers , the Decatur Staleys , the Racine Cardinals , the Massillon Tigers , the Chicago Tigers , and the Hammond Pros agreed to join the league . Representatives of the Buffalo All @-@ Americans and Rochester Jeffersons could not attend the meeting , but sent letters to Hay asking to be included in the league . Team representatives changed the league 's name slightly to the American Professional Football Association and elected officers , installing Thorpe as president , Cofall as vice @-@ president , Ranney as secretary @-@ treasurer . Under the new league structure , teams created their schedules dynamically as the season progressed , so there were no minimum or maximum number of games needed to be played . Also , representatives of each team voted to determine the winner of the APFA trophy .

= = Schedule = =

The regular @-@ season schedule was not fixed but was created dynamically by each team as the season progressed . The following table was formed by NFL History , which used contemporary newspapers . The first game that counted in the standings occurred on September 26 , when the Rock Island Independents beat the St. Paul Ideals 48 ? 0 ; the final game was a 14 ? 14 tie between the Racine Cardinals and the Chicago Stayms on December 19 , 1920 . The Decatur Staleys and the Canton Bulldogs played the most games in the season (13) , while the Muncie Flyers played the fewest (1) . The Buffalo All @-@ Americans scored the most points all season (258) , and the Akron Pros allowed the fewest points (7) .

= = Final standings = =

Awarded the Brunswick @-@ Balke Collender Cup and named APFA Champions.Note : Tie games were not officially counted in the standings until 1972 .

= = Postseason and legacy = =

As there was no playoff system in the APFA until 1932 , a meeting was held to determine the 1920 Champions . Each team that showed up had a vote to determine the champions . Since the Akron Pros never lost a game , the Pros were awarded the Brunswick @-@ Balke Collender Cup on April 30 , 1921 . The trophy was a " silver loving cup " , donated by the Brunswick @-@ Balke @-@ Collender Company . This decision , however , would arise with controversy . The Staleys and the All @-@ Americans each stated that they should win the award because they had more wins and were not beaten by the Akron Pros . Each player from the Pros was also awarded with a golden fob ; this was in the shape of a football and inscribed with " 1920 " , " WORLD CHAMPIONS " , and each player 's first initial and last name . The Pros did not officially celebrate their championship season until the following year . In October 1921 , most of the team was invited to the Elks Club of Akron , which was labeled as " a grand homecoming celebration for the world 's champions " . Pollard was congratulated during an Akron Merchants Association of Colored Business Men 's meeting .

The Pros were the first team in the history of the APFA to complete a non @-@ modern " perfect season " . Only four other teams have accomplished this feat : the 1922 Canton Bulldogs at 10 ? 0 ? 2 , the 1923 Canton Bulldogs at 11 ? 0 ? 1 , the 1929 Green Bay Packers at 12 ? 0 ? 1 , and the 1972 Miami Dolphins at 17 ? 0 ? 0 . In 1972 , the NFL changed the rules so ties count as a half @-@ win and a half @-@ loss . If this rule had applied in 1920 , the All @-@ Americans and the Pros would each have had an .864 winning percentage . Even though the Pros were given the trophy in 1920 , the league lost track of the event and for a long time published in its own record books that the 1920 championship was undecided . It was not until the 1970s that the NFL remembered its early vote on awarding the Akron Pros the championship .

= = Awards = =

= = = All @-@ Pro = = =

Bruce Copeland , sportswriter for the Rock Island Argus , compiled the All @-@ Pro list for 1920 . He used the games played in Rock Island , other newspapers , and his own memory to determine the first- , second- , and third @-@ team All @-@ Pro list . Pro @-@ Football @-@ Reference.com uses this list as the official All @-@ Pro list of 1920 . Twenty of the players were from Illinois and thirteen were from Ohio . The Rock Island Independents had the most players on the list (9) , and Racine Cardinals had the least (1) .

= = = Hall of Fame = = =

As of 2012 , 10 players have been enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame who played in the 1920 APFA season . One non @-@ player , Joseph Carr , the owner of the Columbus Panhandles in the 1920 season and league president from 1921 ? 1939 , was also elected to the Hall .