

= Don Kindt =

Donald John " Don " Kindt , Sr. (July 2 , 1925 ? May 5 , 2000) was an American defensive back and halfback who played nine seasons from 1947 to 1955 for the Chicago Bears in the National Football League . Kindt played college football for the University of Wisconsin Badgers primarily as an halfback from 1943 ? 1946 , missing the 1944 and half of the 1945 season because of World War II . He was the starting halfback for the Badgers for most of his college career .

Kindt decided to forgo his senior season at Wisconsin in order to be eligible for the 1947 NFL Draft . He was selected with the last pick of the first round (eleventh overall) by the Bears despite having an history with injuries , and recovering from an off @-@ season knee surgery he suffered while playing a basketball game at Wisconsin . After playing dual positions in his first few seasons with the Bears , Kindt was used primarily on defense for his last six seasons in the league . Considered to be a defensive standout during his playing career , Kindt was selected to participate in one Pro Bowl , and led the team in interceptions several times .

His son Don Kindt , Jr. also played in the National Football League , as a tight end for the Bears during the 1987 season .

= = Early career = =

Kindt was born in Milwaukee , Wisconsin . He played football for Washington High School in Milwaukee where he named to the All @-@ City squad . He also played guard for Washington 's high school basketball team .

= = = 1943 season = = =

After graduating from high school , Kindt received a scholarship to the University of Wisconsin . He became the starter at right halfback in his first year , while fellow freshman Clarence Self started at left halfback . In the season opener against Camp Grant , Kindt scored his first career touchdown on a six @-@ yard run in the fourth quarter , which tied the game 7 ? 7 . Wisconsin went on to lose the game 10 ? 7 after Camp Grant scored a field goal with five seconds left . In his third game , Kindt became a " hero of the game " for his playing tactics against the Iowa Hawkeyes . He scored the only touchdown of the game , a two @-@ yard run , and managed to force the Hawkeyes to score a safety with time expiring when he did a quarterback kneel , and purposely fell down in the end zone , getting an Iowa defender to touch him for the safety . It prevented the Hawkeyes from potentially scoring a game @-@ winning score as the Badgers won the game 7 ? 5 . Wisconsin temporarily managed to be in first place in the Big Ten conference play standings , though it was the lone highlight of the season for the Badgers , as they lost all their remaining games , mostly by blowouts and finished with a 1 ? 9 record . After his first three games Kindt was impressing Wisconsin 's coaches with his " ball carrying and defensive abilities " , while scoring two of Wisconsin 's three touchdowns so far for the season . In the next game against the University of Illinois , head coach Harry Stuhldreher named Kindt as the captain of the team . He missed the next two games due to a leg infection suffered prior to a game against the University of Notre Dame . He returned for the homecoming game against Northwestern University , where he played a " couple of minutes " as he was still recovering from his injury . He came back to full form against the University of Michigan . Overall , Kindt scored four of Wisconsin 's six touchdowns of the season .

= = = World War II and 1945 season = = =

Kindt was drafted into the United States Army in 1943 while at Wisconsin , in the mist of World War II . He reported to active duty on February 1 , 1944 , receiving basic training at Fort Wolters , Texas . After training , Kindt was assigned to the Army 's 10th Mountain Division . He missed the 1944 season and half of the 1945 season while participating in the Italian Campaign . He was rewarded with two Bronze Stars , and a Victory Medal for his actions in Italy . Kindt returned to play for the

Badgers in October 1945 . In his return , Kindt shared the halfback position with Ben Bendrick , and Jerry Thompson . Kindt only managed to play three games that season , mainly because of a late release he received while returning from the Army . When Kindt returned to the squad , one journalist took it as far as hailing Kindt 's return as a " godsend " who inspired the Badgers with his " inspirational play " . He scored two touchdowns against Iowa upon his return . In the season finale on November 24 against the Minnesota Golden Gophers , Kindt scored three touchdowns despite being used as a " blocking back " in a 26 ? 12 win . The Badgers finished the season with a 3 ? 4 ? 2 record .

= = = 1946 season = = =

Prior to the 1946 season , Kindt was involved in a skiing accident when he fell down a flight of stairs , hurting his leg . He regained his job as the primary starter at the halfback position in time for the season opener . Kindt battled injuries with his ankle , leg and thigh throughout the season , which hampered his play at times . He rushed for 42 yards on 14 carries and one touchdown in a 20 ? 7 upset over 14th ranked Ohio State Buckeyes on October 13 , the first time Wisconsin beat Ohio State in football since 1942 . The next game , a 27 ? 21 loss against the University of Illinois , Kindt suffered a left knee injury after getting " kicked in the shins " during the fourth quarter and left the game , not playing on a regular basis afterwards . He rushed only for 21 yards on five carries in a 21 ? 7 loss against Iowa on November 9 . After the season , Kindt injured his right knee while playing a game of intramural basketball , requiring surgery at a time in which knee surgery wasn 't as technologically advanced as today .

During his career in Wisconsin , Kindt was considered to be the team 's best all @-@ around player , a person who could run , throw , and kick efficiently , as well as playing defense . He also punted and played safety for Wisconsin . Kindt was named to the Wisconsin Athletic Hall of Fame in 1988 and the University of Wisconsin Athletic Hall of Fame in 1997 .

= = NFL career = =

Kindt forfeited his last year of eligibility at Wisconsin after the 1946 season to play in the National Football League . It was reported that the Chicago Bears had Kindt as its top player in their draft wish list . By the time the 1947 NFL Draft was held , the Bears managed to get Kindt with the eleventh overall pick . He soon signed a three @-@ year contract at a reported \$ 25 @,@ 000 to play for head coach George Halas . After starting in a dual offensive / defensive role , Kindt decided to focus on playing only as a defensive back for the last few seasons of his career .

During his rookie season , Kindt joined a backfield which contained quarterback Sid Luckman and George McAfee , the primary starter at halfback . That season Kindt rushed for 266 yards and two touchdowns on 61 carries . One of his touchdowns was a meaningless three @-@ yard run while the game was out of reach , a 49 ? 7 blowout against the Chicago Cardinals on November 23 . The next season Kindt rushed for 189 yards on 54 carries and two touchdowns , as the Bears acquired former Heisman Trophy winner Johnny Lujack and Bobby Layne to join Kindt , Luckman and McAfee in the backfield . A highlight of the season happened against the Detroit Lions on October 17 when he had a 66 @-@ yard run for a touchdown in a 28 ? 0 Bears victory . After running for 118 yards on 41 carries , an average of 2 @.@ 9 yards per carry during the 1949 season , Kindt contributions to the offense were limited despite Layne getting traded to the New York Yanks , Lujack being injured and both McAfee and Luckman retiring . In his final six seasons , he only carried the ball 16 times for 13 yards and no touchdowns .

Kindt was a starter at defensive back for most of his career . An outspoken player , Kindt was the defensive captain of the team by 1952 . He was not afraid to criticize head coach George Halas on some of his coaching decisions , at times having to get separated from each other . One notable incident was during a 1952 loss against the Dallas Texans which Halas decided to start his second sting unit because the Texans were winless prior to the game . Kindt and Halas had to be separated after the final play of the game because Kindt " laughed " at something to his teammates after the

Texans won and Halas ran across the field and kicked him . He later blamed Halas for the loss stating " poor defensive strategy " . They had a similar incident during a game against the Green Bay Packers after Kindt miscalculated a play which led to touchdown and Halas kicked him in his knees . Kindt later claimed that Halas apologized for the incidents . He was selected to the 1954 Pro Bowl as a member of the West team , where he scored a safety after tackling Cleveland Browns quarterback Otto Graham during the second quarter .

In his career , Kindt appeared in 108 games with the Bears , intercepting 21 passes with 10 forced fumbles and one defensive touchdown . As a running back , Kindt had 172 carries for 586 yards and four touchdowns while as a receiver , he had 43 receptions for 506 yards and two touchdowns .

= = Later life = =

Kindt retired from football after the 1955 season to focus on a coaching career . In 1956 , Curly Lambeau named Kindt as one of the assistant coaches for his College All @-@ Stars squad , alongside future Hall of Famers Tony Canadeo , and Mike Michalske to play against the Cleveland Browns in an exhibition game . Again he was named as a coach for the College All @-@ Stars in 1957 . Kindt was the person in charge of the University of Wisconsin alumni varsity football game in 1958 . He was married for over 50 years , and had three children , one of whom , Don Kindt , Jr. also played for the Chicago Bears in 1987 . After his brief coaching stint ended , Kindt became a salesperson for the Badger Meter Company in Milwaukee , retiring in 1988 . Kindt also dabbled with an acting career , appearing in amateur plays in his hometown .