

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 030438)

RESOLUTION

Urging the National Football League to name the Pottsville Maroons League Co-Champions of 1925.

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia was the proud home of the Frankford Yellow Jackets, a franchise in the National Professional League that played professional football; and

WHEREAS, During the mid-1920's, specifically in 1925, the National Professional League (later evolving into the National Football League) was still trying to market itself as the new American Pastime in sports entertainment; and

WHEREAS, In 1925, shortly after the Frankford Yellow Jackets decisively shut out the Pottsville Maroons Football Team 20-0 at Frankford on Saturday, November 14, Frankford's record wins/losses placed it as the top eastern team in the League, so the Yellow Jackets' management entered into a contract with a Philadelphia promoter requiring the leading eastern team to play a football game against a group of the beloved former Notre Dame starts in Shibe Park in December, 1925; and

WHEREAS, As the 1925 football season progressed, the Pottsville Maroons rebounded back into the winning column and returned the favor to Frankford by shutting out the Yellow Jackets 49-0 on November 29 at the Maroons' home stadium at Minersville Park which suddenly caused the Maroons to become the top team in the east; and

WHEREAS, The following week of December 6, 1925, the Pottsville Maroons traveled to Chicago to play the powerhouse Cardinals, a game which the Maroons won 21 to 7 and immediately afterward the Maroons were declared by many in the media as the "League Champions"; and

WHEREAS, What happened next is the subject of controversy, as the terms of the contract and the sequence of events are shrouded in mystery and legend. The Yellow

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Jackets allegedly withdrew from the contract to play the Notre Dame All-Stars at Shibe Park and the Maroons allegedly agreed to take their place. Upon learning of the Maroons' decision to play Notre Dame, the Yellow Jackets protested to the league that Pottsville intended to violate their territorial rights, arguing they had a game scheduled with Cleveland at Frankford Stadium on the same date, attendance at their game would be hurt. That game may have been a last-minute arrangement concocted to shore up their territorial claim, as Pottsville supporters later charge, but Frankford was certainly within its rights to schedule a league game at its own park. League President, Joe Carr, supported Frankford's protest and ordered Pottsville to cancel the Notre Dame game. The Pottsville Maroons decided to play the game and defeated the Notre Dame All-Star Team 9-7 which caused Maroons' supporters to claim a title of "World Champions," in addition to the title of "National Champions," earned the week prior from the victory in Chicago; and

WHEREAS, Although the game played on December 12, 1925 between the Pottsville Maroons and the Notre Dame All-Star Team at Shibe Park was clearly within the territorial franchise of the Frankford Yellow Jackets, and provided grounds for a protest by the owners of the Frankford Yellow Jackets; and

WHEREAS, It would have been within the reason for the League to at least expressly reprimand the Maroons, or at worse hand down suspensions of the individuals involved and/or assess some monetary fines, the League took the totally unexpected approach to remove the Pottsville Maroons from further competition or any championship within the National Professional League; and

WHEREAS, The net result was that the Chicago Cardinals scheduled two additional games, winning both handily, and then statistically had a higher winning percentage than the Pottsville Maroons who remained suspended; and

WHEREAS, When the leaders of the Chicago Cardinals were named as the 1925 Champions, the Cardinals ownership decided that they would not accept the Championship and in actuality, the League to this day never awarded the 1925 Championship to a team that accepted the title; and

WHEREAS, As the National Football League knows from its familiarity with the various geographic market places of its franchises over the years, local pride in a fan base is a tremendous asset that is not only good for the business, but great for the love of the sport and also general civic pride; and

WHEREAS, As the League developed over time through the present, strengthening itself and its relationship with franchisees, the situations encountered in 1925, including allow individual teams to hurriedly schedule different games in an effort to recoup the expenses of owing a team, have changed which has resulted in a deeper

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understanding among sports fans, team organizers and the League itself in order to promote good faith competition and appreciation of the wonderful sport of football; and

WHEREAS, Just as the National Professional League rescinded penalties such as it levied in 1925 to the Chicago Cardinals who had been fined \$1,000.00 and put on probation for suiting up high school boys to help fill out the opposing team on one of its games, and lifting the lifetime ban placed on a Cardinal player who admitted procuring the high school boys for that game, the 1925 National Professional League/National Football League Championship should be awarded to the Pottsville Maroons who earned the right to be called champions based on their successful play on the field; and

WHEREAS, Although the Frankford Yellow Jackets were a forerunner of the Philadelphia Eagles, it was clearly not the same franchise, so awarded the 1925 title to Pottsville will in no way diminish the great history of the Eagles franchise; and

WHEREAS, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania, home of the Pottsville Maroons, has earned its limited place in the history of the National Football League through the play of the Maroons, and since no co-championship was awarded for the year 1925, the recognition of the Pottsville Maroons as the 1925 League Co-Champions would be no undertaking to rewrite NFL history, but rather simply clarify the record; now therefore

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, This Council finds that the Pottsville Maroons are the team deserving of the 1925 National Football League Co-Championship. This Council urges the National Football League to name the Pottsville Maroons League Co-Champions of 1925.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the twenty-ninth of May, 2003.

Anna C. Verna
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Patricia Rafferty
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember O'Neill and Mariano

Sponsored by: Council President Verna, O'Neill, Mariano, Krajewski, Goode, DiCicco, Kenney, Tasco, Ortiz, Blackwell, Nutter, Cohen, Reynolds Brown, Rizzo, Clarke and Miller