

# The Beginnings of Fantasy Football

compiled by Ron "Modar" Knight

Many things that revolutionize the way in which we live, work and play have their origins lost to the mists of time. Even those concepts whose early development we know something of, can often have essential details debated by researchers and scholars. This is usually the result of no documentation being done at the time of inception, and thus specifics vanished thanks to the ravages of time and memory.

It is into this last state that the dawn of fantasy football falls. Little was documented at the time of it's beginning, but we do know that the concept that would become known as fantasy football is attributed to Wilfred "Bill" Winkenbach. The meeting that would spawn the concept dates to around Halloween of 1962...thus either late October or early November heard the cries of birth coming from a Manhattan, New York hotel room.

Winkenbach introduced the idea to Scotty Stirling (*Oakland Tribune* reporter) and Bill Tunnell (Oakland Raiders P.R. representative). Shortly thereafter George Ross (*Oakland Tribune* writer) and others were involved. Rules were developed and the first league was formed (composed of eight teams). News of this game spread and other began to play as well. Originally the game was not known as "Fantasy Football" (that term would evolve later), but was called GOPPPL. This title was derived from the name of that first league, known the *Greater Oakland Professional Pigskin Prognosticators League* (GOPPPL).

Amongst some of the players in the early years were Andy Mousalimas (*Kings X* sports bar owner), John Madden (NFL coach & commentator), Bob Lyons, Father James Kelly, Hal Wells, Bob Blum, Tom Culligan Jr, John Ford III, George Glace, Phil Carmona, Ralph Casebolt, Ron Wolf, Tom Schalich and Tommy Moran. The game that became known as fantasy football would slowly grow in popularity through the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. In the 1990s, however, it really took off. Today hundreds of thousands of men and women throughout the world play various fantasy sports games and fantasy football appears to be the most predominate amongst them.

For further reading into the origins of fantasy football, check out these articles:

*Fantasy Football: Craze's Roots Go Back To Oakland* by Glenn Dickey

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2004/11/27/SPG10A29D61.DTL>

*A Nod (and a Wink) to the Founders of Fantasy Football* by Bob Harris & Emil Kadlec

<http://www.fspnet.com/wink.pdf>

*The Birth Of Fantasy Football* by Luke Esser

<http://www.fantasyindex.com/Birth.html>