# Red Grange and the Barnstorming Tour That Launched the NFL



### The First Star: Red Grange and the Barnstorming Tour That Launched the NFL by William Marshall

★★★★ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 1317 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 272 pages

Screen Reader : Supported



In the early 1920s, professional football was a struggling sport, played mainly by small-town teams with little national following. But all that changed in 1925, when a young running back named Red Grange embarked on a barnstorming tour that would change the face of the game forever.

Grange was a sensation at the University of Illinois, where he led the Fighting Illini to a national championship in 1923. He was known for his blazing speed and elusive running style, and fans flocked to see him play. In 1925, Grange graduated from college and signed a contract with the Chicago Bears, one of the few professional football teams in existence at the time.

The Bears were struggling financially, and team owner George Halas knew that he needed a big name to attract fans. He convinced Grange to join the team and then arranged a barnstorming tour that would take the Bears to cities across the country.

The tour was a huge success. Grange drew massive crowds wherever he went, and the Bears won most of their games. The tour helped to raise the profile of professional football and made Grange a national star. He was dubbed the "Galloping Ghost" by sportswriters, and his popularity helped to launch the NFL as a major professional sport.

The barnstorming tour also had a lasting impact on the game of football. Grange's success as a running back helped to popularize the forward pass, which was still a relatively new innovation at the time. The tour also helped to establish the NFL as the dominant professional football league in the United States.

Red Grange's barnstorming tour was a watershed moment in the history of professional football. It helped to launch the NFL as a major sport and made Grange one of the most famous athletes in the country. Grange's legacy continues to this day, and he is considered one of the greatest football players of all time.

#### More about Red Grange

Red Grange was born in Wheaton, Illinois, in 1903. He attended the University of Illinois, where he played football and track. He was a three-time All-American in football and led the Fighting Illini to a national championship in 1923. He also won the Big Ten Conference track and field championship in 1924.

Grange graduated from college in 1925 and signed a contract with the Chicago Bears. He played for the Bears for six seasons, leading them to two NFL championships. He retired from football in 1931 and was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1963.

Grange died in 1991 at the age of 87. He is still considered one of the greatest football players of all time and is credited with helping to launch the NFL.

#### **The Barnstorming Tour**

The barnstorming tour that Red Grange embarked on in 1925 was a series of exhibition games played against local teams across the country. The tour was arranged by George Halas, the owner of the Chicago Bears, and was designed to raise the profile of professional football and make money for the team.

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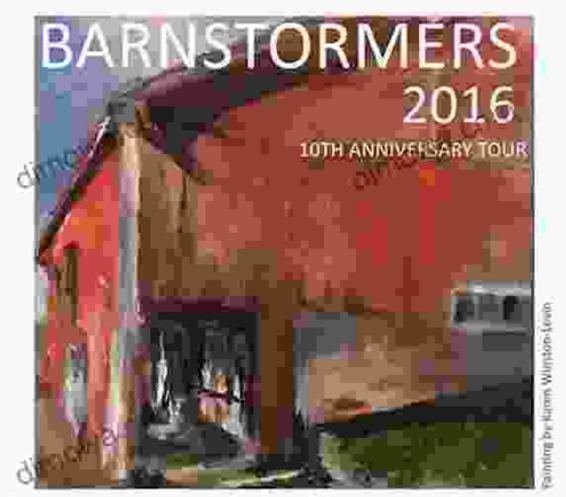
#### The Legacy of Red Grange

Red Grange's legacy continues to this day. He is considered one of the greatest football players of all time and is credited with helping to launch the NFL. He was a pioneer in the sport and helped to change the way the game was played.

Grange's impact on football is still felt today. The forward pass, which he helped to popularize, is now one of the most important plays in the game. The NFL, which he helped to establish, is now the most popular professional sports league in the United States.

Grange was a true pioneer and a legend of the game. He helped to make football the great sport that it is today.





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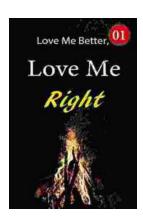
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