The story is adapted from “Muzzy Field: Tales From A Forgotten Ballpark” by Douglas S. Malan, which chronicles the rich history, dating back to 1912, of this field in Bristol, Conn. With Yankee Stadium, it is one of the last fields still in use where both Babe Ruth and Vince Lombardi played.

**The Unknown Vince Lombardi**

By Doug Malan

Long before Vince Lombardi was a coaching legend and football icon, he was a lineman at Fordham—scrappy, diligent and known to his teammates as “Butch.”

A member of the famed Seven Blocks of Granite, he also was part of a class of talented young men from New England factory towns that formed some of the greatest Fordham teams under head coach Jim Crowley.

One of his classmates, quarterback “Handy Andy” Palau, hailed from Bristol, Conn., and the duo was primed for a spectacular end to their college football careers in 1936. Instead, the season ended unexpectedly in Palau’s hometown.

In 1935, the Rams stood among the top teams in the country before a loss to Purdue and ties against powerful Pittsburgh and high-flying St. Mary’s (CA) dropped them to eleventh in the national rankings following their 6–1–2 campaign.

The crowning achievement had been the traditional Thanksgiving Day battle against New York University. The Violet fielded a strong team in 1935, but Fordham shut them down, 21–0, in front of 75,000 fans at Yankee Stadium. Palau emerged into the national spotlight with a touchdown catch, two interceptions, impressive punt returns, and strategic punting; for his efforts, he earned the coveted Madow Trophy as the game’s MVP.

Not surprisingly, Fordham boosters and national pundits expected the Rams to challenge for national supremacy, and the cries of “From Rose Hill to the Rose Bowl” rang out across the
Bronx campus in the autumn of 1936.

In late October, the *Bristol Press* announced that Fordham would appear in a benefit game at Muzzy Field in Bristol the Sunday after Thanksgiving to raise money for a local toy drive. Palau’s connections were instrumental. The only thing that would change those plans was if Fordham was chosen to play in the Rose Bowl in Pasadena.

As the season progressed, the game in Bristol appeared jeopardized by Fordham’s success.

Lombardi was coming off a disappointing junior season in which he injured his shoulder early in the season against Vanderbilt and lost his starting job to Ed Franco. But the 1936 campaign featured sixteen top returning letterman and immense expectations, despite a difficult schedule that included Southern Methodist, St. Mary’s (CA), Pittsburgh, Purdue, Georgia, and New York University.

Franco and Al Babartsky had been moved from guard positions to left and right tackle in 1936 to make room for Lombardi at right guard and Nat Pierce at left guard. The center, future Pro Football Hall of Fame inductee Franklin “Alex” Wojciechowicz, anchored the line with Leo Paquin and Johnny “Tarzan” Druze at the left and right end positions.

They formed a formidable line and on defense shut down the high-flying St. Mary’s offense in October 1936, prompting Crowley to gush to the *New York American* that he had witnessed “the greatest defensive team” he’s ever seen.

Based on that performance, Fordham publicist Tim Cohane borrowed a nickname he remembered from a 1930 Associated Press photo caption and inserted it into the game program the following week against vaunted Pittsburgh. Thus, the timeless moniker “The Seven Blocks of Granite,” though not born that day, certainly was applied for posterity to the Fordham line and their stonewalling capabilities.

The Rams lived up to the hype, fighting Pitt to a scoreless tie in front of 57,000 at the Polo Grounds.

“Their attitude was typified by a custom the guards and tackles had of staring straight into the opponents’ eyes during that long moment of tension after the opening kickoff when the linemen crouched, ready to spring into action when the ball was snapped for the game’s first play,” Robert W. Wells wrote in his biography of Lombardi.
“There was no talk. There was just the open-eyed and menacing stare before the two lines crashed together, the opponents’ flesh and sinew meeting the Rams’ granite barrier. The Fordham stare was a psychological weapon that the players were convinced gave them an edge.”

The offense was not shabby, either, with captain and fullback Frank Mautte working in the backfield with Palau, who told Lombardi biographer David Maraniss that Lombardi’s motivational exhortations in the huddle often forced Palau to tell him to quiet down so he could call a play. Fordham’s attack centered, not surprisingly, on a shift-heavy scheme taken from Crowley’s alma mater.

“As the quarterback in Crowley’s Notre Dame box formation, Palau lined up a few yards behind center, then shifted to the left or right before the snap, often ending up behind the right guard,” Maraniss wrote. “On many plays, he and Lombardi had the same blocking assignment, pulling out to double-team an opposing guard or tackle. Vin hit from inside, Andy the outside. Palau was 165 pounds, 20 less than Lombardi. Palau said Lombardi was a brilliant blocker, a determined perfectionist.”

After the tie against Pitt, Fordham entertained Purdue at the Polo Grounds and disposed of the Boilermakers, 15–0; thinking a Rose Bowl berth in easy reach, the Rams got too cocky against Georgia the next week and played to a 7–7 outcome. Despite a 5–0–2 record, Fordham still had a shot at Pasadena if they could beat out New York University in the mud and sleet in Yankee Stadium on Thanksgiving Day. But as the Rams ruined a good NYU season in 1935, so too did the Violet derail Fordham’s planned trip west in 1936. Palau, knocked out of the game with an ankle injury, was not on the field at the end of the surprising 7–6 loss.

As it turned out, Palau was not the only Ram not playing at full strength that day. For several weeks during the season, some players were joining semipro teams in New Jersey on Sundays to earn extra money under fictitious names.

Dick Healy, an end for Fordham, told Maraniss that “several of the guys were hurt in the semipro game the Sunday before the NYU game. Ed Franco was hurt in that game. But they covered it up.”

Palau corroborated the story to Maraniss, but exonerated his close friend.

He said, “Sure, it’s true. Ahhh, jeez! It’s true. Three linemen and one back. Can’t say who. Not
Vinnie. That’s probably why we lost. Yeah. Ah, Jesus. Some of the players were banged up. And they were pooped and it’s a shame. A shame! I was sure pissed off when I found out about it. A chance to go to the Rose Bowl and they screwed it up. Ahhhhhhh!”

Though the Rose Bowl turned down the Rams, the Orange Bowl in Miami extended an offer, “but it would’ve been humiliating to settle for second best and Fordham turned them down,” Wells wrote.

So instead of heading to Pasadena, Fordham readied for a trip north to Bristol for, ironically, a Sunday game against a semipro team from the West End Athletic Club of Bristol. Actually, the first scheduled stop was New Bedford, Massachusetts, that Saturday, but when the team arrived in town, Paquin noticed that the game’s advertisements touted them as the Fordham Rams instead of calling them the Fordham Collegians as they did in Bristol.

Paquin pulled the squad from the field in New Bedford where thousands of fans had come to see them play. “We had no license to use the school’s name and we didn’t feel as though we should risk the chance and get tossed out of school,” Paquin told the Bristol Press. “If they had advertised us as they did here in Bristol, everything would have been satisfactory.”

Fordham’s game against WEAC was the first college-semipro game ever played in Bristol, and the Rams arrived in town with three of the Seven Blocks of Granite: Paquin, Pierce, and Lombardi.

The Bristol Press acknowledged the Brooklyn native toward the bottom of its pregame story. Lombardi often was an overlooked member of the team. “No. 40 Vincent Lombardi, the right guard, is Fordham’s work horse—steady and deadly effective on close-up plays,” the paper reported, listing Lombardi at 5-foot-11, 188 pounds.

Palau was one of his closest friends, often bringing him to his parents’ home in Bristol across the street from Muzzy Field where Palau’s mother gave him food. As the two friends grew into adulthood, Palau said in a 2004 interview that Lombardi visited frequently, enjoying his time with Palau and his parents, Helen and Gustav.

Local Celtic club members opened their homes to the Collegians, and undoubtedly many, if not all, of them composed the record-setting crowd of 4,300 fans at Muzzy Field for the two o’clock kickoff.
Also suiting up for Fordham were left tackle James Lawlor, center William Cronin, right tackle William Ney, right end Healy, Palau at quarterback, left halfback Warren Mulrey, a right halfback named McDermott (who was either William or Frank), and fullback Joseph Dulkie.

Fordham took little time to show their mettle and prove that they were not simply going through the motions. In the first drive after the kickoff, Dulkie sprinted 37 yards to the WEAC 28-yard line before McDermott hit Palau with a 27-yard pass. Dulkie then bulled his way in from a yard out, Palau added the extra point, and Fordham led, 7–0, an advantage that held through halftime.

WEAC struck back in the third quarter with its efficient passing game when Charlie O'Keefe hit Jimmy O'Brien on a 35-yard scoring play. A missed extra point, however, kept WEAC at bay, 7–6. Fordham then salted away the contest when Pierce intercepted a pass near midfield.

McDermott then rushed down to the seven-yard line, and on fourth and goal, Dulkie pushed across another touchdown before Palau missed the extra point.

The precision blocking of Lombardi and two of the Granite Blocks proved too much for the host club, and the thousands of fans rejoiced the return of Palau.

Little did they know that the bulldog-tough lineman was to become a football immortal.

That night, a banquet was held at Cadillac Grille on North Main Street with Bristol mayor Joseph Harding, and the Fordham players received watches from a local watchmaker. The season was complete.

Palau and Lombardi became inseparable in the ensuing years. When Palau’s baseball career fizzled in the New York Yankees farm system, he took a job in 1939 replacing former teammate Pierce as football coach at St. Cecilia, a small Catholic high school in New Jersey.

The first coach he hired on the staff was Lombardi, who earned seventeen hundred dollars a year—not much, but it was more attractive to Lombardi than working on the waterfront for his father, working for a finance company’s collection agency, or joining the priesthood, which were all considerations at the time. Lombardi turned to coaching and shared a boardinghouse room and king-size bed for $1.50 a week.

They developed a rivalry in chess and gathered empty beer cans after dinner and tried to outsmart each other with formations. Palau also taught
During Christmas break and off-season vacations, Lombardi was a frequent visitor to Bristol and the Palau family, Palau said. He was then a young man just starting his journey and was always receptive to a plate of Helen’s pierogi.

“He liked my father’s wine, too,” Palau added.

By 1942, the two had parted ways. Palau, the college star, soon ceded the limelight to Lombardi, the onetime backup who achieved unrivaled greatness.

* * * * *

The following originally appeared in the January 1992 issue of the College Football Researchers Association; and is used by permission of Rich Topp, who submitted it for that publication and is now a member of IFRA.

**The New York Hearld**

The Sun
280 Broadway

New York, December 30th, 1921

President Walter Dill Scott,
Northwestern University,
Evanston, Ill.

Dear President Scott:

Our man has been hobnobbing with the football coaches. He asked Knute Rockne about the rumor that he was going to Northwestern.

Rockne told our man that Notre Dame said they would not let him go. That they had offered him fifteen thousand. That he had never worked at a co-educational school.

That otherwise Northwestern would be very attractive, because he wanted very much to show what he could do in the Conference. The Conference as I take it is the big lure.

I pass this on for what it may be worth.

Sincerely yours,

Edmond Ridgway

President Scott’s reply:

January 6, 1922

Mr. E.J. Ridgway
New York Herald
280 Broadway,
New York City

My dear Mr. Ridgeway:

We are not quite sure how to size up the action taken by Mr. Rockne. He stated because he was going to New York that he personally was ready to sign a contract with Northwestern, but
had promised to see two men in New York before signing and must hold off, because of that formality.

We appeared to take up the matter of finding a house in Evanston and he had gone into the matter thoroughly of schedule for next year.

Day before yesterday he telephoned that everything setting for Northwestern and made an appointment to meet yesterday with several of us in Chicago. At eleven thirty, he yesterday, he wired that he had signed up for next year at Norte Dame.

I will not pressure to explain his action.

Yours very truly,
President Walter Dill Scott

Rich added “Imagine Rockne vs. Stagg!”

*   *   *   *   *

We now have 63 subscribers to The College Football Historian—keep passing the word...THANK YOU!!

*   *   *   *

WHICH TEAM IS THE BEST?
COLLEGE DIVISION
(1958-1974)

By Patrick M. Premo

In the previous issue, we saw 1961 Florida A&M capture the HBCU (1956-2007) all-time best crown. 1961 Florida A&M then battled the NAIA I Champ from 1970-1996, 1976 Texas A&I, but lost 35-45. 1976 Texas A&I (the all-NAIA Division I champion) continued to advance in the Champions Round. This issue will feature College Division teams from 1958 through 1974. As I stated previously, I am using Tex Noel’s rankings to pair these champions, with the proviso that no individual school is represented more than once in each tournament.

THE FIELD:

1. 1962 Florida A&M
16. 1973 Louisiana Tech
8. 1964 Wittenberg, OH
9. 1961 Pittsburg St., KS
5. 1975 Texas A&I
12. 1959 Bowling Green
13. 1974 Central Michigan
4. 1969 North Dakota St.
3. 1971 Delaware
14. 1960 Ohio University
6. 1968 San Diego St.
11. 1970 Arkansas St.
7. 1973 Tennessee St.
10. 1963 Northern Illinois
15. 1958 Southern Mississippi
2. 1964 Cal. St.-LA

ROUND ONE:

1973 Louisiana Tech, the 16th seed, pulled off a shocker as it beat the number one seed, 1962 Florida A&M, by scoring a touchdown (after a fumble recovery) with time running out and winning 38-34. 1961 Pittsburg St., KS, put away 1964 Wittenberg, OH, 39-24. In somewhat of an upset, 1975 Texas A&I fell to 1959 Bowling Green, 24-41. 1974 Central Michigan was no match for the number four seed, 1969 North Dakota St., which won 37-27.


ROUND TWO:


ROUND THREE:

1969 North Dakota St. had little trouble with 1961 Pittsburg St., KS, winning 42-28 and advancing to the Championship Game. In a very exciting game, the number three seed, 1971 Delaware, scored a safety late in the fourth quarter and then got a touchdown to tie 1964 Cal. St.-LA, 51-51. Delaware won the coin toss and allowed Cal.St.-LA to get the ball first. Cal. St.-LA then fumbled the ball and Delaware recovered. All Delaware had to do was score and it would win the game. 1971 Delaware got a touchdown to win 57-51 and clinch its place in the championship.

THIRD PLACE:

In a nail biter, 1961 Pittsburg St., KS, kicked a field goal as time expired to defeat 1964 Cal. St.-LA, 45-42, and win third place.

CHAMPIONSHIP:

1971 Delaware found itself in another overtime game. This
time, 1969 North Dakota St. scored a late touchdown to tie the game, but then had the extra point blocked by Delaware to send the game into overtime deadlocked 34-34. Amazingly, neither team was able to score in the first overtime. In the second overtime, Delaware got a field goal. However, North Dakota St. was able to score a touchdown to win 40-37 in the second overtime.

**CHAMPIONS ROUND:**

1976 Texas A&I, the NAIA Division I champ, was a slight favorite over 1969 North Dakota St., the College Division winner. The game pretty much played out that way as Texas won 34-28 to continue on in the Champions Round.

In the next issue we shall feature the NCAA Division I-AA teams from 1978 through 2007. And the winner of that tournament will take on 1976 Texas A&I, which is proving to be a very tough opponent indeed. The following issue will begin the tournaments of the Division I teams.

See you then!

Remember, if you were to conduct these tournaments again using my **FAST-ACTION COLLEGE FOOTBALL BOARD GAME**, your results will most likely vary. Just as in real life, when two teams play one another twice (or more) in the same season, the results are not always the same.

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**NOTE:** As I mentioned in the last issue, after 40 years of designing and distributing sports board games, I have decided to discontinue operations. Annual updates will no longer be prepared. My web site features a half-price close-out sale (except the computer games) that will be on a first-come, first serve basis. Some games are in very short supply; in fact, the Major League Baseball game is already sold out. My web site address is: [members.tripod.com/newaction](http://members.tripod.com/newaction). If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at pmpremo@gmail.com.

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**The Galloping Ghost: Red Grange, An American Football Legend** (Houghton Mifflin) spins the remarkable story of Red Grange, the fleet-footed college football player who inspired poetry and dazzled fans as he felled opponents on the field, and who, aided by his unscrupulous and utterly brilliant manager, the notorious Charles "Cash and Carry" Pyle, helped launch professional football, changing American sports forever.

Journalist Gary Andrew Poole draws on exhaustive archival
research and interviews to evoke the 1920s and the golden age of sports in all their splendor and outrageousness. He transports readers from college football rallies to barnstorming tours, from the locker room to the White House and Hollywood, as he recounts Grange's rise and ultimate, tragic fall.

The book is available for pre-order on Amazon.com. It will be available in bookstores on September 10. For more information, visit Poole’s Website: www.garyandrewpoole.com

* * * * *

Steve Greene has submitted the following:

October 22, 1917 (New Brunswick, N.J.) Daily Home News

Parke H. Davis, the Princeton football authority and statistician, acted as head linesman, through the request of Coach Sanford.

Both Lafayette and Rutgers had agreed on Eberle of Swarthmore as the head linesman, but when the game was started, Jake Besas detected that Mr. Bruce, the Lafayette track coach, was going to officiate in that position.

Coach Sanford thought a more neutral official would be preferable and with Lafayette’s consent, held up the game until Mr. Davis was located in the stands and called down to act in the emergency.

While Mr. Davis has followed football for years, it was the first time he has officiated in 12 years. It is a coincidence that he came back in an official capacity on the same field where he last officiated.

Mr. Davis remembers his last appearance distinctly, as he was attacked and given a bloody nose by one of the Villanova players, after being called on to render a delicate decision against that team.

The game was played October 20, 1917 Rutgers 33 Lafayette 7 at March Field, Easton, PA

Penalty for hitting the referee...2 points – intentional off-side and slugging the referee (awarded to offended team in 1885 season only).

Patrick Garbin writes to inform IFRA members on the availability of his books on the University of Georgia and its football history.
Hello, everyone. I’ve had several of you express interest in my two new books on Georgia football.

The latest books *The 50 Greatest Plays in Georgia Bulldogs Football History* and *About Them Dawgs! Georgia Football’s Memorable Teams and Players* were both released within the last few weeks.

Both books are available within the state of Georgia at most local bookstores for $24.95 each.

They can also be ordered online from numerous sites or you can order one or both from me at a discount. I’m selling each book for $18 plus shipping or both for $34 plus shipping. If interested, please contact me at the following email: book@patrickgarbin.com with your request. Also, if you would like the book(s) signed, please let me know.

Also, I still have a few copies of my first book available, *Then Vince Said to Herschel... The Best Georgia Bulldog Stories Ever Told*. This book sells for $22.95 in stores but can be purchased for $16 plus shipping.

For information regarding my books, please visit my website at www.patrickgarbin.com.

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*Outing, by J. Parmly Paret... 1898 December (as is)*

**PRINCETON, 6; YALE, 0.**

The annual game between Yale and Princeton was held this year at Princeton, November 12th, at the new Brokaw Field, and resulted in a victory for Princeton by 6 to 0, exactly the same score as that of Yale on her home grounds last year.

Arthur Poe, the right end of the Tigers, was the bright, particular star of the game, and the only score of the game was due to his quickness and a fumble by one of the Yale backs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Princeton</th>
<th>Positions</th>
<th>Yale</th>
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<tr>
<td>Poe</td>
<td>right—end—left</td>
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<td>Hillebrand</td>
<td>right—tackle—left</td>
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<td>Edwards</td>
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<td>Geer</td>
<td>left—tackle—right</td>
<td>Chamberlain</td>
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Crowdis. ................. left—guard—right ........ Marshall
Palmer .................. left—end—right ............. Coy
Duncan .................... quarter—back ............. De Saulles
Kafer ....................... right—half—back—left .... Durston
Beardsley .................. left—half—back—right .... Benjamin
Ayres ....................... full—back .................... McBriddle

Princeton substituted Mills for Crowdis, Hutchinson for Duncan, Black for Beardsley, and Wheeler for Kafer.

Yale substituted Ely for De Saulles, Townsend for Durston, and Corwin for Benjamin.

Referee—Edgar Wrighton, Harvard

Umpire—Paul Dashiel, Anapolis

* * * * *

Permission to use by Bruce Howard, Director of Publications and Communications, National Federation of State High School Associations

College Football Players that are also members of the National Federation of State High Association’s Hall of Fame.

Alan Ameche, 1986
The College Football Historian

Herschel Walker, 2003
Ron Waller, 1991
Paul Warfield, 1992
J. C. Watts, 2002
Charlie Wedemeyer, 2007
Byron “Whizzer” White, 1987

*          *          *

In Memory of …

Eddie Crowder, (77) who spent nearly half a century at the University of Colorado as a football coach, athletic director and mentor…Leo Elter, (78) who starred at Villanova… Dick Enderle, (60) Minnesota…Jerry Miller, (69) former Tarleton State (Texas)... Barry Moore, (60), North Texas... Rex Sebastian, a four-year letterman at Purdue…Gene Upshaw, (63) Texas A&I…Elmer Willhoite, (78) an All-American at USC

Lou Holtz will be honored this weekend, along with more than 70 members from his 1988 national championship team, during the dedication of a statue at Notre Dame. Elected to the College Football Hall of Fame in May, Holtz coached the Irish for 11 seasons and a record of 100-30-2.

A number of former players and coaches have been inducted into their respective school’s Halls of Fame.


2008 NJCAA Hall of Fame Inductees: PLAYERS—Archie Amerson, Dixie State College (ID), Gerald Beman, Fort Scott CC (KS), Richard Hayes, Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College and Frank Murphy, Garden City CC (KS)...COACH—A.J. Kilpatrick who was head coach at: East Mississippi CC from 1969-71; Northwest Mississippi CC, 1975-79; Holmes CC, 1980-81 and East Central CC, 1982 (career record: 94-87-4, 0.519)...SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR—Robert Maxwell, serving over 35 years with Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College…TEAM—1966 Kilgore TX College.
Kentucky placed a marker at its old Stoll Field football facility location to commemorate the first college grid contest in the Deep South in 1880.

Coach Dave Maurer will be honored with “Dave Maurer Day” on Nov. 1, coinciding with Wittenberg’s (Ohio) final regular season home game.

Jerry Jones (Arkansas) was awarded the Lamar Hunt Award - the highest honor given by the Dallas All Sports Association at its 2008 Banquet of Champions.

Connie Mack, as arranged a football game between Georgetown and Holy Cross, to be played at Philadelphia, October 29.

This is the first time these two leading Catholic colleges have come together on the gridiron, and the game will be played on Franklin Field.

Editor’s Note: Final Score: Georgetown 17—Holy Cross 4.
Georgetown was 4-1 going into the game; finished 8-1; Holy Cross entered the game 1-2-2 and finished 2-5-2.

And his anatomy Subtracts now, from the maximum Two broken ribs, a jointless thumb, And fingers—all but three.

But, oh! he wears a laurel crown, His pedestal’s near Heaven!

They stamp and shout, when he comes out, He’s pride of men, and pet of ten, The King of his Eleven.

--Anna M. Williams.

Have a great College Football Season—and hope that your team/alma mater does well!! If your alma mater wins the title—brag about it and tell us!