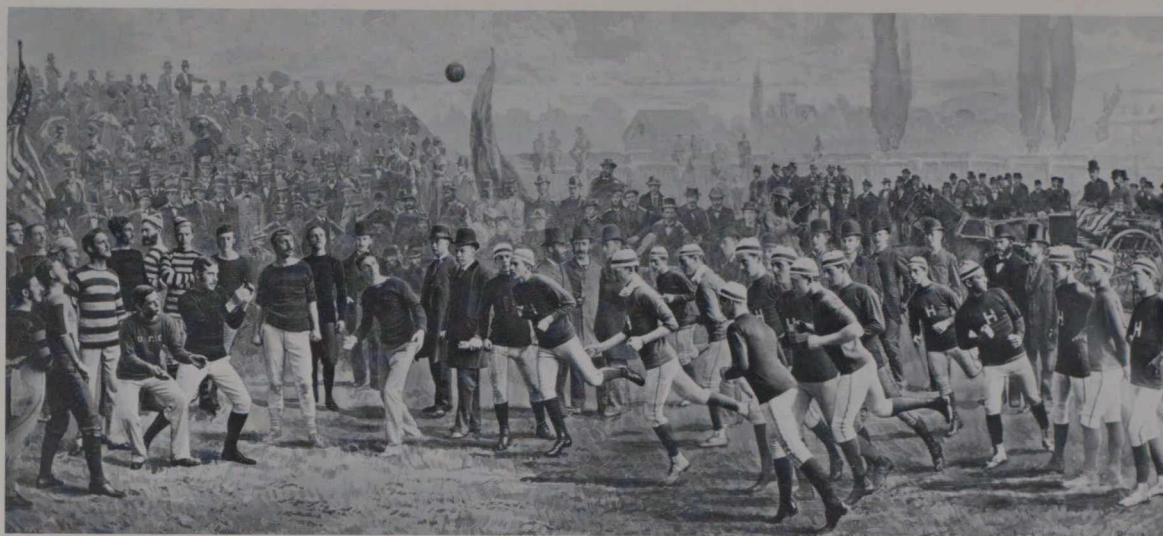




Harvard vs McGill.

Feet First

The first intercollegiate football game ever played in the United States was between McGill and Harvard in 1874. So was the second.

McGill had invented football as an offshoot of rugby. It played it with an elliptical ball and eleven men. Harvard had its own version, with a round ball and as many as fifteen players.

The first game was played under the "Boston Rules," but with eleven men. Harvard won 3 to 0. The second was played by Canadian rules, though with a round ball, and ended in a scoreless tie. After the games, Harvard adopted the McGill ball as well as the drop kick and the free kick. The following year Harvard played Yale and used the McGill rules *in toto*.

In the next two decades the Canadian and American games evolved separately. In the US the game opened up: the ball was snapped from centre, and each team had three downs in which to move it five yards forward. Americans were running, blocking and tackling. Canada began using a three-man scrimmage instead of the rugby scrum, but the ball still might remain stalled at mid-field more or less indefinitely. The kick was still the essential feature. Players developed the ability to pick up the ball between their ankles and work it backward out of the scrimmage. Once out in the open, a player could kick it toward the goal. If a member of the opposing team caught it on the fly, he was entitled to send it back with a free kick. It was a game for *prima donnas*, and a player would often seem to be playing for himself rather than his team.

In 1902 the Ontario Rugby Football Union adopted new rules designed to bring coherence to the game. Teams, which had expanded to fifteen players, were reduced to twelve. The end-

less scrimmage was eliminated, and the ball was snapped back to put it in play. A team had three downs in which to make ten yards. All goals — made by drop, free or penalty kick — were worth two points. The teams had six men on the scrimmage line and six backs.

In 1912 the McGill team got an American coach, Frank "Shag" Shaughnessy, a former Notre Dame quarterback. It was a move of permanent significance. Shaughnessy made McGill almost unbeatable by introducing exciting American tactics, such as the flying wedge. In 1919, in reaction to Shaughnessy, the rules were altered again: only linemen could block, and no back could run ahead of the ball carrier as he passed the scrimmage line.

The American influence continued nevertheless. In 1935, the Winnipeg Blue Bombers, using a kitty of \$7,500 put up by well-heeled fans, imported seven US players. They beat the Hamilton Tigers for the Grey Cup, the first time a western team had won.

At that time the western teams were coordinated by the Western Inter-Provincial Football Union, and the eastern ones, by the Canadian Rugby Union. After the Winnipeg triumph, the CRU ruled that no man could play in the Grey Cup competition unless he had been resident in Canada for a year and that no club could have more than five imports. The Calgary Bronks and the Regina Roughriders built up their squads with American players, and at Grey Cup time the Roughriders, the western winners, refused to bench their five imports and play.

The next year the WIFU showed further defiance of the east by adopting new rules that permitted backs as well as linemen to block and