

THE ROCHESTER JEFFERSONS TAKE THE NATIONAL STAGE

By Ken Crippen

Even though it had been attempted previously, 1920 saw yet another push to form a professional football league. Teams in the mythical “Ohio League” saw clubs from other parts of the country draw more fans to the games, which obviously translated to increased revenue for the teams participating. The fear was that more talented players would be drawn away from the smaller Ohio towns to other cities in search of larger salaries. Something needed to be done to keep the Ohio teams on a competitive level with organizations from outside of the Buckeye state.

The first step was taken on August 20, 1920, when four of the Ohio League teams met at Ralph Hay’s Hupmobile dealership in Canton, Ohio. Hay owned the Canton Bulldogs and was joined by his star player Jim Thorpe. Also at the meeting were Frank Nied and Art Ranney of Akron (Nied and Ranney were forming a team to replace the 1919 Akron Indians, who disbanded), Jimmy O’Donnell and Stanley Cofall of the Cleveland Tigers, and Carl Storck of the Dayton Triangles. Since no minutes were recorded for this meeting, the final outcome is a bit of a mystery, but a few things could be ascertained from media accounts of the event. First, the name of their new “league” was to be called the American Professional Football Conference and Hay was elected Secretary. Now, the focus could shift to the major issues facing those teams. Players were running from team to team to collect a paycheck. The members wanted this to stop and agreed to refrain from enticing players to leave their current club. Next, they needed to get player salaries under control, so they introduced a salary cap. Finally, they needed to address the increasing row between colleges and professional clubs with respect to undergraduate players. Colleges increasingly frowned on their players involving themselves in professional contests. The members of the league agreed to not allow these undergraduates to play on their squads. With that all of the major issues addressed, they needed to get outside clubs to join and agree to the aforementioned stipulations.

All of the work that came out of the meeting would be for naught if only the four attending clubs were members of the league. They needed to bring in the organizations they most feared would induce their players to leave. Hay was responsible for contacting top-notch professional clubs in the surrounding states to have them attend the next meeting. Before that, however, the league received letters from three clubs, expressing interest in joining. The first was from Leo Lyons of the Rochester Jeffersons. Actually, it is not absolutely certain that the letter was from the Jeffersons, but since they were by far the strongest Rochester team, it can be assumed that it was from the Jeffersons. Couple that with the fact that Leo Lyons attended the follow-up meeting to the August 20th affair, it is safe to say that the letter was from the Jeffersons. Leo had always pushed for a league and when he heard that there was the possibility of one forming, it is assumed that he jumped at the chance to participate and sent the letter. The second letter was from Buffalo. Again, since no meeting minutes were recorded, there is no way to be absolutely certain who wrote the letter, but it is assumed that it was the Buffalo All-Americans, who were essentially the 1919 Buffalo Prospects under new management. The third letter was from Hammond, but it is unclear as to which Hammond team sent the letter. The Hammond Pros

attended the second league meeting, but the Hammond Bobcats were also a strong contender in the area. The answers to these questions remain to this day.

The second league meeting was held September 17, 1920 in Canton. Hay and Thorpe were there, along with previous attendees Nied, Ranney, Storck, Cofall and O'Donnell. New to the meeting were Leo Lyons of the Rochester Jeffersons, Doc Young of the Hammond Pros, Walter Flanigan of the Rock Island Independents, Earl Ball of the Muncie Flyers, George Halas and Morgan O'Brien of the Decatur Staleys, and Chris O'Brien of the Chicago Cardinals. One of the first items to come out of this meeting was to change the name of the league to the American Professional Football Association (APFA). Next up was to choose the leadership. Jim Thorpe was elected as president, Stanley Cofall was elected vice-president and Art Ranney took the secretary-treasurer position. With the leadership in place, they could now get down to the details. Young, Flanigan, Storck and Cofall were responsible for drawing up a constitution and bylaws. It was also decided that each team would provide a list of all players used during the 1920 season and that this list was to be provided to Art Ranney (Association secretary) by January 1, 1921. This was in reference to teams enticing players to jump teams, the only of the three items that actually addressed the reasons why the league was formed. The league shaped up as follows: Akron Pros, Buffalo All-Americans, Canton Bulldogs, Chicago Cardinals, Chicago Tigers, Cleveland Tigers, Columbus Panhandles, Dayton Triangles, Decatur Staleys, Detroit Heralds, Hammond Pros, Muncie Flyers, Rochester Jeffersons and Rock Island Independents. All that was left was to play the games.

It is unclear as to exactly when the Rochester Jeffersons were formed. Current research has them playing games as early as 1902, but a curious article appeared in 1925. According to an October 22 article in the *Appleton Post-Crescent*, "Way back in 1898, the Rochester Jeffs started making professional football history in New York State. That year, several of the University of Rochester Gridders gave too much attention to the pigskin and not enough to midnight oil. As a result, university authorities suggested to them that they take the air while the going was good." The article continued to say that the players went to the Jefferson Club to start a football team. The club agreed to back them and the Jeffersons were born. Independent research has not been able to confirm this story. Regardless, the Jeffersons became a prominent part of the Rochester football scene over the next couple of decades, including winning the state championship in 1916. The 1920 season would be different, as the Jeffersons finally reached their goal of playing on a national stage as a member of the APFA.

After starting the season with easy victories over All-Buffalo (10-0) and Ft. Porter (66-0), as well as a scoreless tie against the Utica Knights of Columbus team, Rochester was still not ready to take on an APFA member and instead met up with the Syracuse Stars for a final warm-up game before taking on a league opponent. It did not start well for the Jeffersons. Rochester had the ball and was driving, but unfortunately, fullback John Barsha fumbled and Syracuse recovered. Cooper and Mike Purdy combined to move the visitors toward the Rochester goal and the drive ended with Lewis catching a Mike Purdy pass for the score. Rochester battled back to score two touchdowns in the second quarter with halfback Jim Laird involved in both. The first was a run and the second was a Jim Laird pass to end Harold Clark. Halfback Bob Argus sealed the game with a run for a score in the third quarter to give Rochester the 21-7 victory.

With four games under their belt and a 3-0-1 record, the Jeffs finally felt that they were ready to take on an APFA opponent: The Buffalo All-Americans. This turned out to be a bad decision as Buffalo had their way with the Jeffs. Buffalo scored seventeen points in the first half, while Rochester was only able to muster two field goals the entire game. Buffalo took the opening kickoff and proceeded to drive down the field. They were stopped short, but were able to kick a field goal for the initial score of the game. Rochester's opening drive was less than stellar as they lost the ball on downs. Buffalo took over and continued where they left off on the previous drive. Persistent runs drove the ball to the Rochester three-yard line, where John Weldon took it over for the touchdown. Buffalo again scored in the second quarter, when guard Swede Youngstrom blocked a Rochester punt. Red Quigley was punting from his own endzone when Youngstrom broke through the line for the block and guard Bill Brace recovered for the score. This turned out to be the only APFA game that the Jeffs played that year. While the desire to play on the national stage was there, the talent was not and it was readily apparent that the Jeffersons were not ready to play the best clubs in the country. This 16-7 loss proved that fact.

The previous meeting between the Jeffs and the Utica Knights of Columbus resulted in a scoreless tie. The rematch, however, was not even close. Two of Rochester's scores were the result of blocked punts. The first score happened when the Kaycees were punting from their twenty-five yard line. The Jeffersons broke through the Utica line to block the kick and guard Jimmy Woods fell on it in the endzone. The next Jefferson score came when Rochester received a Utica punt at midfield. Halfback Jim Laird tossed a pass to end Carl Thomas and he took the ball to the five-yard line. At that point, halfback Bob Argus ran off tackle for the score and a 13-0 lead at the half.

The Utica offense started to click in the third quarter, but even though they were able to drive to the Rochester goal line, they were still unable to score until the fourth quarter. Utica drove down to the Jefferson goal line, but lost the ball on downs. Laird was brought in to punt, but his kick went out of bounds at the Rochester fifteen-yard line. It took Utica three plays to score; the first being a forward pass followed by two runs, the last being by Wilcox. The Jeffersons scored two touchdowns in the last five minutes of the game. Hank Smith punted deep into Utica territory, but the Kaycees fumbled the kick. On the next play, Wilcox intercepted a Rochester forward pass. This drive would be short-lived, as Thomas intercepted a Utica forward pass on the next play. Laird proceeded to toss a pass to Thomas, who brought the ball to the Utica goal line. Fullback Mike Purdy finished the drive by running for the touchdown. The final Rochester scoring drive came when the Jeffersons blocked a Utica punt. A couple of plays later, Purdy again took the ball over the goal line for the score and the 27-7 victory.

Feeling confident after their win, the Jeffersons took on the strong All-Tonawanda Lumberjack team. Rochester played the Lumbermen tough, driving to the one-yard line in the opening quarter, but Tonawanda held and Rochester went away empty. Both teams continued to battle, but it was not until the third quarter before the scoreless tie was broken. Rochester was on their own ten-yard line when they lined up to punt. Red Quigley fumbled the punt and the Lumberjacks recovered. Tonawanda halfback Ziggy Hasbrouck capitalized on the miscue and took the ball over for the only score of the game. That was the first home loss of the season for the Jeffersons, dropping their record to 4-2-1.

In the first of three meetings in 1920 with their in-town rival Rochester Scalpers, the Jeffs took the game 16-0. Scoring was difficult in the first half as the Jeffs were only able to get a safety on the tough Scalper squad. The second half of the game was a different story, as the Jeffs were able to score two touchdowns in the final quarter to put away the game. Jim Laird tossed a pass to Carl Thomas for the first touchdown. The second came on a Laird run.

In their rematch, the All-Tonawanda Lumberjacks again defeated the Jeffs. As with the previous meeting, Tonawanda was able to take advantage of Rochester miscues, scoring twice on turnovers. In the second quarter, Ziggy Hasbrouck caught a tipped Rochester pass and ran it twenty yards for the score. In the fourth quarter, Red Quigley fumbled a punt that was recovered by Tonawanda quarterback Frank Primeau, who picked up the ball and ran it in for the score and the 14-3 victory. The Jeffersons were 5-3-1 for the season and had two games against the Rochester Scalpers left on their schedule.

The second matchup between the Jeffs and Scalpers almost never happened. Several players were calling for a strike over wages paid to players from outside of Rochester. Jim Laird refused to suit up for the Jeffs and went to play for the Buffalo All-Americans. Red Quigley (team captain) did not show up for the game. An unknown player (some believe that the unknown player was Butch Clark, but research has not been able to confirm this rumor) tried to get the rest of the team to go out on strike. It was not until Bob Argus stood up and said, "There's a big crowd out there waiting to see a football game, not a strike! And I'm going to go out there and play like hell!" before cooler heads prevailed and the game was played. Even with the absence of star players and the theatrics before the game, the Jeffs were still able to barely beat their long-time rival. The difference happened to be a failed extra point on the part of the Scalpers. The Jeffs were able to score in the second quarter on a Bob Argus run. The Scalpers answered in the final quarter, when Hunt took the ball over for the touchdown, however, Arnold missed the kick, preserving a narrow 7-6 victory for the Jeffersons. A rematch with the Scalpers was set for the following week.

As a result of the potential strike the previous week, it was agreed that players would only play the third and final matchup of 1920 between the Jeffs and Scalpers with players from Rochester. The Jeffs roster was decimated as most of their regular players were out. The game was ugly...the field was ugly...and neither team would come close to scoring and the game ended in a scoreless tie. With the way that the season played out, it was fitting. That was the last meeting between these two clubs, which ended a twelve-year rivalry.

That would also mark the end of the first year of the APFA. Even with their best efforts, the league was not able to stop the three things that forced them to create the Association in the first place: skyrocketing salaries, team jumping and the use of college undergraduates. In fact, it was as if the Association did not even exist. The end of the 1920 season still called for the formation of a pro football league, even by members of the Association!! Regardless, the APFA decided to continue and had a meeting on April 30, 1921. Thorpe and Cofall did not attend, so Art Ranney took charge. Other attendees included Joe Carr, Leo Conway (Union Athletic Association), George Halas, Ralph Hay, Lester Higgins (brother-in-law of Hay), Charles Lambert, Leo Lyons, Frank McNeil, Frank Nied, Chris O'Brien, Morgan O'Brien, Carl Storck and Doc Young.

First on the agenda was to vote for the “champion” of the association. Carr nominated the Akron Pros and it was approved. Akron was able to rack up an impressive unbeaten 8-0-3 record, playing tough opponents. This is what carried them to the “championship,” even though Decatur tied Akron (and thought that would be enough to get them the championship) and Buffalo tied Akron and beat Canton. Regardless, Akron won the championship based on the vote of the membership. Next would be the appointment of a new leader. After a short discussion, Joe Carr was elected the new Association president, replacing Jim Thorpe. Morgan O’Brien was elected vice-president and Carl Storck secretary-treasurer.

Making good on the promise from the previous meeting, members of the Association had until May 15th to submit a list of all players that played on their squad the previous season. These players were not allowed to be enticed into leaving until the club management released them from their contract. This was to address the team-jumping issue that plagued clubs of that era. Finally, the Association was taking a hard stand to clean up the sport.

Another point that needed to be addressed was players playing for more than one team in the same week. This hit home with Conway and McNeil, as both teams were guilty of this practice. McNeil’s Buffalo All-American players suited up for Conway’s Union team on Saturdays and then returned to Buffalo to play for the All-Americans on Sunday. This was pretty much overlooked up to this point, but the situation would boil toward the end of the 1921 season.

Another Association meeting occurred on June 18, 1921 at the Hollenden Hotel in Cleveland. The main purpose of this meeting was to start establishing schedules and to approve a new constitution (it looked like one was never written, as promised in the 1920 meetings). Leo Lyons never attended this meeting, but representatives from Akron, Buffalo, Canton, Chicago, Columbus and Dayton all made the trip. There is no official record of Buffalo ever being admitted to the Association in 1920, but it was brought up at this meeting. Also attaining membership at this meeting was Cleveland, Detroit, Rock Island and Toledo. Even though Rock Island was a member in 1920, there seemed to be an issue with whether they were still members at the end of the 1920 season. It is unclear as to the exact reason, but the Independents played a team from Washington and Jefferson at the end of the season, a frowned-upon offense.

As if the first two meetings were not enough, a third meeting was held August 27, 1921 at the LaSalle Hotel in Chicago. Leo was able to make it to this meeting, which also included members of the Akron, Buffalo, Canton, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton, Decatur, Detroit, Evansville, Fort Wayne, Green Bay, Louisville, Minneapolis, Rock Island and Toledo squads. Coming out of this meeting was an agreement that any organization receiving a request to have a college player suit up for their team, must notify university officials. There are no records showing that any club followed through with this agreement. Also, Buffalo was officially admitted to the Association, along with Minneapolis, Evansville, Tonawanda and Green Bay. The Washington Senators and Brickley’s New York Giants were not admitted at this meeting, but were admitted before the beginning of the season.

Rochester Jeffersons manager Leo Lyons had high hopes for the 1921 season, but he still faced an uphill battle. His team failed to beat a league opponent and had trouble competing against local aggregations. Granted, they could beat some of the lesser teams, but Leo wanted to compete on a national level. He also had another problem. With his increased use of non-

Rochestonians, he was not able to attract the attention of the local fans, as they were more interested in local players. Without the support of the local fans, he could not get the necessary gate receipts to keep his team afloat. Other Rochester teams took over the spotlight. Leo Powers' Regals (19th Ward team) started playing in 1920 and continued in 1921. Romney Farrell pushed his Oxford team hard, practicing five nights a week. This paid off, as he was able to generate a star team in the 1922 season. The Russers (Dutchtown) would also catch the eye of local fans. Max Russer was a local wrestler who became interested in football and regularly watched the team practice at School No. 21. He decided to back the team and continued to do so for years. *These* teams captured the hearts of the local fans, not the "outsiders" that played for the Jeffersons. Not to be deterred, Lyons took his team on the road, playing only four of his nine games at home. Since the stronger league teams did not want to play in Rochester (due to the diminishing gate revenue as fans were attracted to home-grown talent), the Jeffersons did not have a choice. That problem plagued Lyons throughout the remainder of the Jeffersons' existence and hastened their downfall.

The Jeffersons' first game was against All-Buffalo. Rochester received the opening kickoff, and Jim Laird and Jerry Noonan quickly moved the offense for first downs, with Laird on the receiving end of a high pass, turning it into a twenty-yard gain. Buffalo subsequently was held on downs and McGraw punted. Laird and Noonan continued the Rochester drive and Argus ran for three yards, bringing the Jefferson offense to the Buffalo one-yard line. Buffalo held and McGraw quickly punted to Laird. Noonan ran for ten yards, who then tossed a long pass to Lowery for the first score of the game.

In the second quarter, Buffalo was able to complete a beautiful pass (Gene Dooley to Henry McDonald), but was unable to capitalize on the gain. They punted to the Jeffersons, who started their drive with gains by Bob Argus, Jim Laird and Ziggy Hasbrouck. Noonan followed with a twenty-five yard run, but on the next play Hasbrouck fumbled and Buffalo recovered the ball. Buffalo immediately punted, putting the Jeffersons at midfield. Two Noonan runs later, Rochester scored their second touchdown to take a 14-0 lead.

In the second half, the Jefferson offense continued to roll. Noonan ran for a thirty-yard gain, followed by a Laird ten-yard run and an Argus one-yard run. This put Rochester at the Buffalo four-yard line. Rochester fumbled on the next play, but Argus fell on the ball. Argus then ran for no gain, but Noonan was able to break free for a score on the next play. The next Rochester drive started when Laird returned a Buffalo kick ten yards. He then broke through the line for a twenty-five yard gain. Noonan tossed a ten-yard pass to Witter and Laird ran the final yards for a score. Rochester was up 27-0.

Buffalo started showing some signs of life in the final quarter. Sherman was able to break through the line for a few nice gains and Dooley tossed a pass to McPherson for a twelve-yard advance. This brought Buffalo to the Jefferson twenty-three yard line. Unfortunately for Buffalo, Noonan intercepted the next pass and ran it seventy-five yards for a score. In the last minute of play, Noonan tossed a pass to Laird, who ran it thirty yards for the final touchdown. The Rochester lines had difficulty all day in their first game of the season, but were still able to help move the offense to a 41-0 victory over All-Buffalo. Buffalo sustained numerous injuries and

were hampered by repeated offsides penalties. For Rochester, however, it was a good start to the season.

In the first of three consecutive road games, the Jeffersons took on the mighty Chicago Staleys. The first half was evenly played, with the Jeffs scoring first on a Howard Berry twenty-three yard field goal. The Staley's tied it up when Dutch Sternaman kicked a thirty-yard field goal. The second half was definitely more interesting, with Chicago driving down to Rochester's ten-yard line. The Staley's tried twice to advance, but were stopped both times. On the third attempt, Berry intercepted the Chicago pass and ran it back eighty-five yards for the score. The Staley's would not be deterred and they put together another offensive drive, taking it deep into Rochester territory. Again, a turnover would prove costly as Chicago fumbled the ball away to the visitors. Rochester immediately tried to punt, but it was blocked. Fortunately for the Jeffs, Berry was able to recover. He tried again to punt, but George Trafton blocked it and Ralph Scott fell on it in the endzone. In the fourth quarter, Berry kicked another field goal for the visitors, but Ken Huffine was able to put the Staleys on top for good by running in a score for a touchdown. Even though the Jeffs pulled out in front in the third quarter, the Staleys were able to come from behind and grab the 16-13 win over the visitors. Rochester was 1-1 for the season, but their only league game was a loss.

Next up would be fellow American Professional Football Association (APFA) member and western New York rival Buffalo All-Americans. The All-Americans easily handled the Jeffs, as they scored in each of the first three quarters, while the Jeffs could not muster up a single point. Buffalo spent most of the game in Rochester territory. Their first two drives took them deep into the Jefferson zone, but on the third drive, they were able to finally cross the goal line. Ockie Anderson got the ball on the Rochester fifteen-yard line, started to one side, but reversed his direction and ran around the opposite end and into the endzone. Heinie Miller scored the second touchdown on a pass from Anderson. In the second half, Buffalo continued their offensive dominance when Johnny Scott took the ball over to make the score 21-0. Later in the third quarter, Bob Nash blocked a Rochester punt and Bill Ward picked up the ball and ran it in for the final touchdown.

Rochester finished their three-game road trip with a meeting against the 1920 APFA champion Akron Pros. The Pros were still a dominant team, competing with Chicago and Buffalo – Rochester's two previous opponents – for the 1921 title. The Jeffs missed the presence of Howard Berry as Akron had little difficulty in defeating the visitors 19-0, even though they looked out of sorts in the first half. As a result, Akron coach Elgie Tobin benched Paul Sheeks and Tobin took over as quarterback. The team started to come together and Rip King was able to toss a couple of long passes to Scotty Bierce to finish a drive with a touchdown. Their running game also seemed to improve, as Carl Cramer was able to take the ball over twice in the final period.

The Jeffs had now taken on three APFA members and only were able to compete with Chicago. This would not bode well for Rochester's hopes of becoming a national power, but fortunately for Rochester, Tonawanda was next on the schedule. In 1920, the All-Tonawanda Lumberjacks defeated the Jeffs twice, but it would be a different story when the Tonawanda Kardex (the Tonawanda Kardex was called All-Tonawanda in 1920. In fact, the team was still called All-

Tonawanda in the press. It was not until later research showed that the Kardex Company were sponsors that the team was given the new name.) would visit the Jeffs now that Tonawanda was a member of the APFA. The Jeffs trounced the Kardex 45-0 in what would be Tonawanda's only APFA game in their franchise history (The Tonawanda Kardex also played All-Syracuse on October 9, 1921. The game ended in a scoreless tie. Since All-Syracuse was not a member of the APFA, this game does not count in APFA standings, nor does it get mentioned in historical accounts of the Tonawanda Kardex. There was a third game scheduled for their season (Rochester Scalpers on October 30), but it was cancelled. Benny Boynton was the star of the game, as he threw two touchdown passes (one to Jerry Noonan and the other to Howard Berry), ran the ball for a touchdown, kicked a field goal and converted six extra points. Jim Laird was second in team scoring with two touchdowns.

Elsewhere in the league, things were getting tense between the Buffalo All-Americans and the Philadelphia Quakers (previously the Union Athletic Association). In 1920, Buffalo manager Frank McNeil failed to pay promised bonuses to his players, creating tension on the team. Before the 1921 season, Buffalo released back Johnny Scott. After Scott signed on with the Tonawanda Kardex, McNeil brought him back to the All-Americans. This did not play well with the already disgruntled players and just added to their frustrations. Buffalo was to take on Canton on November 20th. McNeil found out that the Quakers had a game scheduled with Canton for the previous day. Since his players were also playing for Philadelphia, McNeil felt that they would be too tired or injured to give Buffalo its best chance at beating Canton and informed the league of the situation. Once Joe Carr found out about the conflict, he cancelled the Philadelphia-Canton game. This infuriated Leo Conway, manager of the Quakers. The gate receipts for that game would have been huge and McNeil ruined it. In the fallout of all of this, Lou Little, Heinie Miller, Johnny Scott, Joe Spagna and Lud Wray left the All-Americans and stayed with the Quakers. Needing to fill roster spots, Buffalo raided the roster of the recently defunct Detroit Tigers; grabbing guard Moose Gardner, center Charlie Guy, tackle Steamer Horning, back Walt Kuehl and tackle/end Tillie Voss. With little practice time, the All-Americans were only able to squeek out a 7-7 tie with Canton.

Philadelphia was able to quickly schedule another game against an APFA opponent to make up for the Canton game that was cancelled: the Rochester Jeffersons. The Jeffersons and Quakers fought to a 3-3 tie, with both scores coming in the final period of play. Johnny Scott kicked the six-yard goal after rushes by Robb and Smith failed to gain much from the Rochester ten-yard line. Rochester answered with a goal of their own, as the Jeffersons were able to drive to the Philadelphia forty-yard line, where Rochester lined up for a kick. Jim Laird held the ball as Morrissey put it through the goal posts to even up the game. The tie gave Rochester a 2-3-1 record for the season (1-3-1 against league opponents).

The Jeffs were now able to go back home to take on the visiting Columbus Panhandles. Scoring twenty points in the final quarter was all the Jeffs needed to raise their win total versus APFA opponents to a staggering *two* for the season. Columbus scored twice in the first quarter, both coming off the foot of Emmett Ruh. In the second quarter, the Jeffs countered when they capped off a drive with a ten-yard run by Jim Laird. In the fourth quarter, Benny Boynton tossed a pass to Ben Clime, who took the ball to the opponent's fifteen-yard line, where Laird took the ball over three plays later. The Jeffs again drove deep into Columbus territory when Jerry Noonan

caught a Benny Boynton pass on the visitor's twenty-yard line. Noonan took the ball to the twelve-yard line before Boynton faked a pass and ran it in for another score. Columbus responded when Frank Nesser tossed a pass to Joe Mulbarger for a score. Rochester sealed the victory with a Boynton to Noonan pass from the Columbus twelve-yard line. The 27-13 victory evened their overall record at 3-3-1.

On a wet and muddy field, the Jeffersons held what would be the final game of their season by taking on the Syracuse Saltines. Syracuse put up a fight and was twice able to stop the Jefferson attack while in scoring position. Syracuse and Rochester fought a tough battle in the first period, as neither team was able to advance the ball due to the rainy conditions. By the second period, Benny Boynton was able to get some footing as he ran around end for a twenty-yard gain. He followed this with a ten-yard pass to Doc Alexander. The Syracuse defense stiffened and Rochester failed to gain. Benny Boynton attempted a drop kick from the twenty-yard line, but failed. Delaney punted across midfield and Jerry Noonan returned it from the Jefferson forty-yard line for the score.

Rochester put together another drive in the third period, but was unable to score. Boynton tossed a pass to "Spin" Roy, who took the ball to the Syracuse thirty-yard line. Boynton then tossed a pass to Noonan, who was brought down at the twelve-yard line. Noonan ran down to the five-yard line and Boynton took it to the two-yard line before Rochester lost the ball on downs. In the final quarter, Noonan intercepted a Syracuse pass. Noonan then caught a pass and brought the ball to the Syracuse thirty-yard line. Boynton ran for ten yards, followed by tossing a pass to Alexander for ten more. Noonan ran for five yards and Boynton ran the final five yards for the score. Syracuse tried to fight back, as Lehr ran for twenty-five yards on the final drive for the Saltines, but it was not enough as time ran out. Rochester took the 12-0 win to put their record at 2-3-1 against APFA opponents and 4-3-1 overall.

In what turned out to be the first forfeit in league history, the Washington Pros/Senators "won" their game against the Jeffersons 1-0. Referee C.A. Metsler awarded the forfeit to Washington when according to the *Washington Post*, Rochester manager Leo Lyons refused to take the field due to weather. According to the *Rochester Democrat & Chronicle*, the Jeffersons players were willing to play the game as long as Washington paid Rochester \$800 in traveling expenses. According to the contract of the game, "if both teams have arrived on the field of play, and it is found that said field is too wet for play, the question of cancellation shall rest solely with the manager of the home team." Approximately 300 to 400 people showed up to view the contest and Washington manager Tim Jordan wanted to play the game. Rochester did not. During a heated argument that lasted a little over half-an-hour, Jordan wanted the Jeffersons to play for a percentage of the gate receipts (which would come to about \$200) and not the full \$800 requested by the Jeffersons. Rochester refused and threatened to take legal action against the Washington franchise, due to the failure of the home team to pay the visitor's traveling expenses (\$800). This matter was held over until the January meeting of the league.

The league changed its name from the American Professional Football Association to the National Football League at the January 28, 1922 meeting in Canton. This was just one item on the agenda. However, the number one item on Leo Lyon's mind was the reimbursement of the \$800 he felt the Washington Senators owed him over the "forfeit" at the end of the year. Lyons

pleaded his case that even though the weather forced his decision to keep his team off the field, that Washington still owed him the guaranteed \$800 for his team to make the trip. The league agreed and Washington was forced to pay the money for forfeit their franchise in the league. The problem arose in the fact that Washington did not attend this meeting, nor did they have any desire to continue playing in the league. Therefore, the threat was all but useless. Leo would continue to press for the money, but to no avail. With Washington refusing to continue with the league, the league really had no standing to force them to pay the money to Lyons.

The Jeffersons played three more seasons in the NFL, but failed to leave much of a lasting impact. Their inability to draw fans at home and the poor product on the field made it difficult for Leo Lyons to keep his team financially in shape. On July 10, 1926, the Jeffersons suspended operations (with league permission) for one year.

The National Football League was going through some difficulty by 1927. The feud with the rival American Football League had a financial impact on NFL franchises. As they tirelessly worked to prevent the AFL from getting any foothold and quickly expanded to compete in every AFL city, they subsequently weakened their own league. Something needed to be done. The weaker franchises were dragging down the stronger clubs, preventing them from making a profit.

February 5, 1927 was the date of the first league meeting to discuss what to do to strengthen the NFL. The AFL was pretty much history, so the focus of the owners shifted internally to the league. Clubs like Rochester, Akron and Canton were not strong enough to draw the crowds necessary for the bigger clubs to succeed. The league meeting would start with Dr. Harry March requesting that a committee be formed to design a reorganization plan. NFL Commissioner Joe Carr appointed representatives of the Chicago Bears, New York Giants, Frankford Yellowjackets, Kansas City Cowboys, Akron Indians, Columbus Tigers, Providence Steamroller, Pottsville Maroons and Green Bay Packers to this committee, with Charles Copen of the Providence Steamroller being named chairman. Chairman Copen reported back that the league should be divided up into two distinct sections: an "A" section and a "B" section. The "A" teams were the strongest teams in the league, while the "B" members were the weakest. This plan immediately drew the ire of the teams labeled under "B" and the meeting was adjourned to discuss other alternatives.

When the meetings the following day got back around to reorganization, chairman Copen was still unable to put forth a plan that was agreeable by the membership. The "A" and "B" concept would eventually be accepted, but the method of determining who belonged into what classification was still to be completed. Copen was again appointed to find a solution to this problem and he enlisted the help of Shep Royle of the Frankford Yellowjackets, Johnny Bryan of the Milwaukee Badgers, Jim Conzelman of the Detroit Panthers and Jerry Corcoran of the Columbus Tigers. The committee came back with the following designations: A: Providence Steamroller, Frankford Yellowjackets, Milwaukee Badgers, Detroit Panthers, New York Giants, Chicago Bears, Chicago Cardinals, Cleveland Bulldogs, Green Bay Packers, Buffalo Bisons and the Brooklyn Lions with the Duluth Eskimos, Kansas City Cowboys and Pottsville Maroons relegated to traveling teams.

B: Akron Indians, Canton Bulldogs, Columbus Tigers, Dayton Triangles, Hammond Pros, Hartford Blues, Louisville Colonels, Minneapolis, Racine Tornadoes and Rochester Jeffersons.

The next item up for discussion was how to dismantle the “B” franchises. Each team was resigned to their fate, but proper compensation needed to be established. Corcoran insisted that the “B” teams sell their franchises back to the league at the current rate of \$2500 each. The “A” teams immediately rejected that suggestion. It was now up to Carr to come up with a compromise and the league gave him until April 15 to make that decision.

Carr did not make his plan known until the April 23rd meeting at the Hotel Statler in Cleveland. Most of the “B” franchises did not show. The only representatives for those franchises were men who also held league positions; namely Jack Dunn (Minneapolis) who was NFL vice-president, Carl Storck (Dayton) who was secretary-treasurer, Aaron Hertzman (Louisville) and Jerry Corcoran (Columbus). They devised a six-point plan:

- 1) Any franchise that wished to suspend operations for the year may do so without having to pay the requisite dues. Any franchise that wished to sell their franchise back to the league may do so and will receive a pro-rated share of the monies in the league treasury at the time. This would be approximately a couple of hundred dollars.

- 2) If a club decided to suspend operations for the year, the teams could sell player contracts up to September 15, 1927. If the franchise decided to withdraw from the league, but still wanted to operate independently, the league will respect the rights of the players on that franchise.

- 3) If several franchises decide to operate independently and form their own league, the NFL would respect the rights of the players and the NFL would offer assistance in the operation and organization of the new league, including playing exhibition games with league members. Since Carr wanted a minor league with a close working relationship with the NFL, this was a pretty good option for him. He would have eliminated the weaker teams from his league, while still having a minor league from which to groom players for the NFL.

- 4) Any franchise that wished to suspend operations could sell their franchise for the current application fee. The downside was that the new owners needed to be approved by the league. Since the league did not want to expand, this was pretty much a moot point.

- 5) Any franchise that decided to resign from the league could not associate or participate in any other league without permission from the National Football League. This was to guarantee that the AFL would not come back.

- 6) Franchises had one year to make a decision before the league took more drastic action.

On July 16th and 17th, the league held another set of meetings to discuss scheduling. Obviously, the first item on the agenda was to determine who would remain in the league and who would resign. Brooklyn sold their franchise to Tim Mara, owner of the New York Giants. Milwaukee operated as an independent franchise. Detroit and Kansas City unloaded their rosters and Minneapolis suspended operations for a year. The Rochester Jeffersons suspended operations on July 16, 1927, but failed to re-activate or sell the team by the July 7, 1928 deadline indicated in the plan. Therefore, the franchise was cancelled. This put the final nail in the coffin of the Jeffersons.