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George S. Halas Biography

George Halas, was a famous American footballer who was a very influential figure in the sports industry of the United States. He born in Chicago on February 2, 1895, and his parents were immigrants from Austria-Hungary. He was not only a famous footballer but also a coach and team owner. He was head coach, owner and founder of The Chicago Bears which is a professional football team based in Chicago. Being very famous and professional in American football, he was nicknamed “Mr. everything” and due to his team Chicago Bears, he was also known as “Papa Bear”. He was also one of the pioneer founders of NFL (National Football League) and was included in Pro Football Hall of Fame(Services, *Hall of Fame*).

George Halas joined Western Electric before beginning a regular career in football, and worked there for some time and later joined the University of Illinois after graduating from Crane High School based in his city, Chicago. He graduated from the University of Illinois in civil engineering and also played basketball and football (for Bob Zuppke) in that period. During 1919, he had been playing as an outfielder with the New York Yankees and specifically played 12 games with the club (Services, *George S. Halas*). He ended up having a severe hip injury and his baseball career ended effectively. George participated in World War 1 as an ensign which is a junior ranked commission officer and played football at Naval training station of Great Lakes for a team with the famous Jimmy Conzelman and Paddy Driscoll.

The peak of his professional career is not only characterized by his excellent playing skills and records but also as an outstanding coach and organizer. George Halas joined Decatur Staleys’ based in Decatur, Illinois and served there as an outfielder, player-coach and also a sales representative of the A. E Staley Company. After suffering from financial loss despite a compatible record, the company decided to give full control of the team to Halas in 1921. He moved the team to Chicago and later founded Chicago Bears and rest is the history. Halas made many significant records in the field including stripping the ball from Jim Thorpe and return it 98 yards after recovering the fumble which was a record and could not be broken until 1972. He actively left playing in 1930 (Davis).

George had an exceptional record in coaching leading 6 victories in APFA and NFL West. He made significant changes in the playing method especially as he introduced the concept of T-formation offense which resulted in a historic win of 73-0 against Washington Redskins in NFL West in 1940. Chicago Bears won the title again in the very next season in the 1941 NFL championship game indicating the huge success of new alterations and changes in T-formation and other aspects of play which other teams also started following. He retired from coaching in 1968 with a remarkable 40-year career in coaching. In all these 40 years, he only endured 6 losing seasons in American football which is a huge record.

 With the advent of World War 2, he again joined the US Navy in 1942 with a distinguished rank of lieutenant Commander. He worked under Admiral Chester Nimitz and served 20 months overseas supporting the recreational and welfare activities of the seventh Fleet(*Pro Football Hall of Famers Who Fought on D-Day - NFL.Com*). He met with Chief of Staffs of Navy, Army, and Air Force and proposed to set up a charity match every year hosted by Chicago bears with the intention of donating the money to armed forces relief operations. He was a patient of pancreatic cancer which resulted in his death in October 1983. By that time, he was 88 years of age and was the lasts of participants who formed the National Football League in 1920.

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