

1949 AAFC Player Profile: Buddy Young

Claude Henry K. "Buddy" Young (January 5, 1926 – September 4, 1983) was an American professional football player and executive in the National Football League (NFL). A native of Chicago, he was Illinois state champ in track and field in the 100-yard dash. The 5'4" Young, also known as the "Bronze Bullet", had exceptional quickness and acceleration. He is one of the shortest men ever to play in the NFL; he was drafted in the 1947 AAFC Draft in the Special Draft by the New York Yankees. As a track star at the University of Illinois, he won the National Collegiate Championships in the 100 and 220-yard dash, tied the world record for the 45 and 60-yard dashes (6.1 in the latter event), and was the Amateur Athletic Union's 100-meter champion.



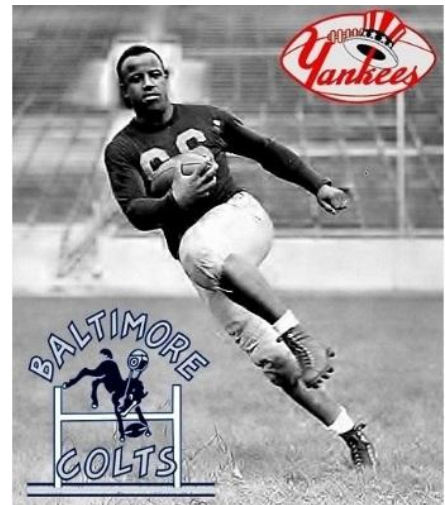
Young was as impressive on the gridiron as on the track. He received scholarship offers from several schools, including the University of Michigan, Drake University, Marquette University and the University of Illinois. He chose Illinois and established himself as a star immediately. In his first game for the Illini, he scampered 64 yards for a touchdown on the first play from scrimmage. On his second carry, he ran for a 30-yard touchdown. In all, in his debut he gained 139 yards on 7 carries, an average of 19.7 yards. Before the season concluded, he scored 10 touchdowns equaling the Big Ten Conference record established by the immortal Red Grange in 1924. These unusual early successes brought the freshman running back national attention. "Not since the days when Red Grange was

ripping up the sod...for Bob Zuppke and the Illini has there been so much pigskin excitement on the University of Illinois Campus."

Sportscaster Bill Stern called him "The fastest thing in cleats and the runner of the year." Ray Eliot, Young's coach, referred to him as "The best running back I have ever seen." Only a freshman, Young was named to several All-America teams.

1946 - 1949 AAFC.

Young played ten years in pro football. He was one of the special selections awarded to the New York Yankees in the 1947 AAFC Draft. In 1950, Young, along with many of the other Yankee players, joined the New York Yanks of the National Football League when the AAFC folded.



Post- AAFC.

Young was recognized with an honorable mention for the Associated Press' 1951 All-Pro Team at safety.

Young was the first Colt to have his number retired, 22. In 1964, he was hired by the NFL, joining their scouting and public relations department and becoming the first African-American executive hired by a major sports league. He was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 1968.