AAFC Player Profile: Ray Flaherty

Raymond Paul Flaherty (September 1, 1903 – July 19, 1994) was an American professional football player and coach who spent 18 total seasons in the National Football League (NFL) as both a player and a coach. He played college football for the Gonzaga Bulldogs and played for the Los Angeles Wildcats of the American Football League (AFL) and the New York Yankees and New York Giants of the NFL. The Giants retired his jersey number 1, the first in NFL history, upon his playing retirement in 1935.



Flaherty was head coach of Gonzaga's football and basketball teams in 1930 and 1931, the NFL's Washington Redskins from 1936 to 1942, and the New York Yankees and Chicago Hornets of the All-America Football Conference (AAFC) in the latter half of the 1940s. He was a member of three NFL championship teams, one with the Giants in 1934 and two as Redskins head coach in 1937 and 1942, and was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1976.

Among his innovations on offense, Flaherty is credited with inventing the screen pass in 1937.

1946 -1948 AAFC.

Flaherty served as an officer in the U.S. Navy during World War II, then returned to pro football in 1946 as a head coach in the new All-America Football Conference (AAFC). With the New York Yankees,

he won division titles in each of his two full seasons at the helm, but lost to the Cleveland Browns in the title games. After a poor start in 1948, owner Dan Topping relieved Flaherty of his duties in mid-September. Several months later he was hired as head coach of the AAFC's Chicago Hornets, known as the Rockets in their three previous seasons. He was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1976 for his contributions as a coach.