



# Pro Football's Hall of Fame

NATIONAL FOOTBALL MUSEUM • NATIONAL FOOTBALL LIBRARY

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR • CANTON, OHIO 44708 • PHONE (216) 456-8207

FROM DON SMITH

HALL OF FAME TOP TWENTY PASSERS

FOR USE ANY TIME

(Fourth of a series)

CANTON, Ohio -- Johnny Unitas and Y.A. Tittle continued to rank one-two in the Pro Football Hall of Fame's Top Twenty passing display during the 1971 season. Unitas may have a permanent hold on his spot and Tittle should hang on to his runnerup position at least one more year.

But John Brodie of the San Francisco 49ers, who passed by the injured Sonny Jurgensen into the No. 3 spot in 1971, is threatening Tittle and could pass the legendary Hall of Famer by passing for 3,554 yards in the 1972 season. Brodie has been near this single-season figure three times in his 15-year career.

The Top Twenty display, created three years ago, features in attractive, three-dimensional chart form the leading lifetime pro players in rushing, scoring, passing, and receiving statistics. The display differs from other similar presentations in that play from all leagues, including the All-America Football Conference, is included.

Because of the physical limitations of the display, the Hall's passing rankings differ from the established pro football formula in that passing yardage only is considered. Regular pro football passing rankings are computed by combining percentage of interceptions, percentage of completions, total touchdown passes and average gain per pass play.

After 16 seasons, Unitas now has passed for 38,657 yards and, at that level, he is more than three miles ahead of Tittle and more than five miles ahead of the nearest active passer, Brodie. Tittle, with 33,070 yards gained in 17 years, is the only other pro passer who has surpassed the 30,000-yard mark.

But both Brodie, with 29,517 yards, and Jurgensen, with 29,502 yards, are nearing the exclusive 30,000-yard club.

Inasmuch as 10 of the 20 players listed in the Top Twenty passing display were active in the 1971 season, there was considerable movement "in the ranks". Fran Tarkenton, with the New York Giants in 1971, crept up two places to No. 5. Inasmuch as his 28,484 passing yards have come in only 11 seasons, the star who introduced the word "scramble" to the game of pro football actually is racking up yardage faster than any other pro passer in history.

In addition to Brodie and Tarkenton, John Hadl, Len Dawson and Roman Gabriel advanced in the Top Twenty ratings in 1971, but it was San Diego's Hadl, recently named the 1971 NFL Man of the Year in recognition of his civic involvement as well as his athletic ability, who made the biggest strides.

Hadl moved past Sammy Baugh, Babe Parilli, Otto Graham, Norm Van Brocklin and Norm Snead during the season to gain the No. 9 spot. Hadl, in 10 seasons, has passed for 24,489 yards.

The 200-touchdown club added two members -- Brodie and Dawson -- in 1971 to run the number in this elite circle to seven. The leader, of course, is Unitas, but Tittle, Jurgenson, Tarkenton, and Blanda are also 200-plus touchdown passers.

Of the 10 retired passers in the Top Twenty, five are now members of the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Besides Tittle, Hall of Famers include Bobby Layne (5th place), Van Brocklin (10th), Graham (11th), and Baugh (15th).

Earl Morrall, now with the Miami Dolphins, is only 56 yards shy of entering the Top Twenty and Joe Namath, Charley Johnson and Daryle Lamonica all have a shot at entering the Top Twenty in the 1972 season.



LEADING LIFETIME PASSERS

(At Conclusion of 1971 Season)

Rank	Player	Pre-1970 League	Yrs.	Att.	Comp.	Yards	TD
1 (1)	Johnny Unitas *	NFL	16	4953	2708	38,657	283
2 (2)	Y. A. Tittle	AAFC-NFL	17	4395	2427	33,070	242
3 (4)	John Brodie *	NFL	15	4187	2301	29,517	202
4 (3)	Sonny Jurgensen *	NFL	15	3891	2200	29,502	236
5 (7)	Fran Tarkenton *	NFL	11	3797	2075	28,484	216
6 (6)	George Blanda *	NFL-AFL	22	3985	1904	26,804	234
7 (5)	Bobby Layne	NFL	15	3700	1814	26,768	196
8 (8)	Bart Starr *	NFL	16	3149	1808	24,718	152
9 (14)	John Hadl *	AFL	10	3270	1634	24,489	186
10 (9)	Norm Snead *	NFL	11	3403	1722	24,448	158
11 (10)	Norm Van Brocklin	NFL	12	2895	1553	23,611	173
12 (11)	Otto Graham	AAFC-NFL	10	2626	1464	23,584	174
13 (16)	Len Dawson *	NFL-AFL	15	2960	1664	23,483	212
14 (12)	Babe Parilli	NFL-AFL	15	3330	1552	22,681	176
15 (13)	Sammy Baugh	NFL	16	2995	1693	21,886	186
16 (15)	Jack Kemp	NFL-AFL	10	3073	1436	21,218	114
17 (20)	Roman Gabriel *	NFL	10	2990	1540	20,196	142
18 (17)	Charlie Conerly	NFL	14	2833	1418	19,488	173
19 (18)	Tobin Rote	NFL-AFL	13	2907	1329	18,850	148
20 (19)	Billy Wade	NFL	13	2523	1370	18,530	124

\*Active in 1971 season.

NOTE -- These rankings are by total passing yards only. Regular pro football rankings are by a combination of percentage of completions, percentage of interceptions, touch-down passes and average gain per pass play.

Number in (parenthesis) indicates rank at the start of the 1971 season.