

Needs two TD passes

Tarkenton nears record

Associated Press
BLOOMINGTON, Minn. — Professional football's version of the Georgia Peach is packing up all of the game's passing records for shipment to his home state, where many of baseball's hitting records already are enshrined.

Francis Asbury Tarkenton needs only two touchdown passes to surpass the record of 290 held by John Unitas. That record could fall by next Sunday during Minnesota's game at Detroit.

The 35-year-old minister's son from Athens, Ga., throws the way the original Georgia Peach, Ty Cobb, used to hit.

"Francis is going to set some records that never will be broken," says Unitas, who spent 18 years establishing his brilliant totals.

Tarkenton already has surpassed Unitas' completions mark by 58 this season, while establishing a Minnesota record of 230 completions in a season with two games remaining. He has passed for 2,622 yards and 23 touchdowns, while being intercepted 11 times in 355 attempts.

With 32 more passing attempts — a mark he seems certain to reach in the next two games — Tarkenton will have thrown more passes than anyone else. He remains 1,771 yards shy of Unitas' lifetime standard of 40,239 yards passing.

Minnesota Coach Bud Grant says Tarkenton's 15th pro season is his best. "Francis is setting career records while he is at the very top of his profession," he said. "He has all the qualities of greatness and enthusiasm, but most important is his durability. Francis is always ready."

Tarkenton never has missed an NFL game because of an injury. He still plays with the exuberance of a 21-year-old, which he was when he passed for 1,997 yards and 18 touchdowns in his rookie season.

After six stormy years under Coach Norm Van Brocklin at Minnesota, Tarkenton asked to be traded and spent five seasons with the New York Giants before being reacquired by the Vikings in 1972.

"Football is a lot more fun when you're on a winning team," said Tarkenton.

Tarkenton, rapped as a scrambler in his early years, has given respectability to that frenetic activity. Grant likes to say Tarkenton's elusive maneuvers "buy time" for the quarterback and the receivers.

Tarkenton also has rushed for more yards than any other quarterback in the game's history, with

3,627 yards on 608 carries. That averages just less than six yards per run.

Tarkenton still has one year remaining on his present contract with Minnesota, and physically appears capable of playing for a number of seasons after that.

"I want to play as long as I'm healthy and have the right attitude about the game," said Tarkenton. "And I still get excited about this game."

SWC revises television schedule for UH entry

Associated Press
DALLAS — The Southwest Conference has announced a change in the first game of its 1976 televised basketball schedule, Houston making its SWC debut Tuesday, Jan. 6, against Arkansas at Fayetteville. The telecast will start at 8 p.m. with tipoff at 8:10.

The game was originally scheduled for a night earlier, but was postponed due to a network program in which President Ford will participate at the same time on Jan. 5.

SMU and TCU will move up their conference opener from that Tuesday night to 7:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 5 at TCU's Daniel-Meyer Coliseum.

The Jan. 6 opener is one of three games scheduled for weeknight prime-time airing as Eddie Barker

and Associates of Dallas will produce the SWC televised package this season for the first time. Frank Gleiber will handle the play-by-play as ten regular-season games and four during the first SWC Post Season Tournament will be aired.

Also for the first time, five games will be selected for airing during the course of the season to insure that viewers will have the opportunity to see games involving champion contenders.

The 1976 SWC basketball television schedule:

Tuesday, Jan. 6-Houston at Arkansas, 8 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 10-Texas at SMU, 2 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 17-Texas A&M at Texas Tech, 3 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 24-Game to be

selected, 3 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 31-Baylor at Rice, 3 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 7-Texas Tech at TCU, 2 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 14-Game to be selected, 3 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 17 or Wednesday, Feb. 18-Game to be selected, 8 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 21-Game to be selected, 3 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 24 or Wednesday, Feb. 25-Game to be selected, 8 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 28-Post-Season Tournament double-header, 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.

Friday, March 5-Post-Season Tournament semifinals, 8 p.m.

Saturday, March 6-Post-Season Tournament finals, 8 p.m.

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