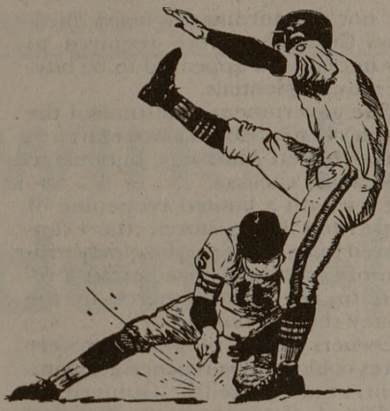


Crow recalls pro ball days, laments Cardinals move

By Tim Stanfield
Reporter



Although 23 years have passed since Texas A&M Assistant Athletic Director John David Crow donned a St. Louis Cardinal uniform, the former All-Pro halfback noted with regret that his former team is now the Phoenix Cardinals.

"When I heard that (club owner) Bill Bidwell had announced the team was definitely moving, many fond memories popped into my mind," Crow said recently. "Though (coach and scout) Larry Wilson are the men currently associated with the Cardinals who were there when I was there, Carolyn (Crow's wife) and I will have close friends that we made during our five years there."

"I played two years for the Cardinals in Chicago, but the move to St. Louis didn't bother me because we hadn't established any roots. Now I think I know how some of the older players felt then because we did feel at home in St. Louis."

The Cardinals also drafted another Aggie in 1958, Bobby Joe Conrad. Conrad played 11 seasons for them before finishing his pro career in 1969 with the Dallas Cowboys.

"I hate to see them move," Conrad said on March 16. "While I don't know all the facts, I do know that Mr. Bidwell went through proper procedures in order for the NFL to approve the move."

Conrad pointed out that Bidwell was the previous NFL owner to allow such a procedure when the Cardinals moved from Chicago.

"(Robert) Irsay moved the Colts from Baltimore to Indianapolis without asking the league's permission a few years ago," Conrad continued. "And Al Davis left Oakland for Los Angeles shortly after winning the Super Bowl in 1980."

NFL owners approved the move by a 26-0-2 vote with Davis as one of the two who abstained. The primary reason Bidwell sought to leave St. Louis was Busch Stadium's small capacity (50,000, the least of any stadium in the league). For the past several years the Cardinals have averaged less than 50,000 per game. City officials tried in vain to get Bidwell to await for financing a new stadium, but his patience ran out during this past season.

Curiously enough, the Cardinals hit two seasons from Chicago after the 1959 season for similar reasons. Their record during the '1950s was the worst among the 12 NFL franchises, with many of their home games played before small crowds at Soldier Field in 1958 and Soldier Field in 1959.

One NFL founder, George Halas, coached the Chicago Bears, who played their home games before large crowds at Wrigley Field.

Crow, who was the first pick of the

Cowboys' White may miss camp; injury could end lineman's career

DALLAS (AP) — Playing a 14th season in the NFL will be more difficult than Randy White had expected after completing one of the most fruitful years of his football career.

White has a damaged disk in his neck that might cause him to miss most of training camp and places his career in jeopardy. Trainer Don Cochren said he will suggest to coach Tom Landry that White not participate in contact work at training camp.

"If he starts butting heads out there with (offensive lineman) Nate Newton, we might not have him for the season," Cochren said.

The original diagnosis was a pinched nerve. White was often in instant pain after the third game of a season and said he lost consider-

able upper body strength because of the neck injury.

He was often replaced late in the season by rookie Danny Noonan. Although he will rarely talk about injuries, White said his shoulders sometimes were numb.

White hasn't even lifted weights since the end of the season. One of the strongest players on the team, White has usually been a fanatic weightlifter.

"Right now, all I can think about is getting back to 100 percent so I can make a significant contribution to the football team," said White, the Cowboys' first-round draft pick in 1975.

"Whatever it entails, I will do. If they want me to sit out some of training camp then I will do that, too."

No doubt, White will be chal-

lenged for his starting job by Noonan, who had a superb first season after missing training camp as a contract holdout.

Landry said: "I just think that what Randy faces is a timing thing. We will wait and see him work out and hope he gets better. You can have a disk problem and still not be critical. Randy will have to show us his improvement."

Could White skip camp and still participate in the 1988 season? "You wouldn't miss camp and still play in the season," Landry said. "He might just practice once a day."

The Cowboys have an age problem in the defensive line. White turned 35 in January and Ed Jones, 37, is the oldest player on the team.

Conrad set an NFL record for most consecutive games in which he caught at least one pass (93), surpassing the old mark (78) held by former Green Bay Packer star wide receiver Don Hutson. He, too, played in a Pro Bowl.

Both men were positive links between the Chicago and St. Louis Cardinal franchises. When Pittsburgh defeated Chicago 35-20 in December 1959, Crow scored the Cardinals' final touchdown with 1:05 to play in the fourth quarter on a 9-yard pass from former Rice quarterback King Hill.

Conrad kicked the extra-point, cementing the Aggie stamp on the game.

"I didn't realize that I scored the final Chicago Cardinal point," Conrad said. The St. Louis Cardinals opened the 1960 season on Sept. 23 at the Los Angeles Coliseum against the L.A. Rams. Conrad scored the franchise's first points, which came on a 12-yard field goal in the second quarter.

But it was left to Crow to put his initials on the first St. Louis touchdown, which came shortly after Conrad's first field goal on an 18-yard pass from Hill.

Crow came right back to score the Cardinals' second touchdown catching a 52-yard touchdown pass from former SMU quarterback John Roach in the third quarter.

Though Crow recalled a lot from his early pro seasons, he wasn't aware of his place in Cardinal history.

"I didn't know that," he said. "But I do recall that we had several players from Texas, including Don Gillis (Rice), Charley Jackson (SMU), Joe Robb (TCU) and two other Aggies, Ken Beck and John Tracy."

Crow was traded to the San Francisco 49ers after St. Louis defeated Green Bay in the 1964 Playoff Bowl. He played four seasons with the 49ers, retiring after the 1968 season.

"I had heard from another former NFL player that everyone in the league shouldn't play in the same place for more than five years," Crow said. "Even though I was a Cardinal for seven years, only five of them were in one place."

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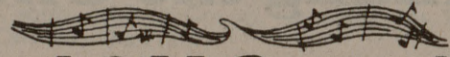


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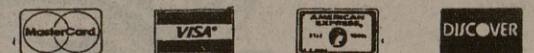
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