



# The Columbus Panhandles: A Complete History of Pro Football's Toughest Team, 1900-1922

*Chris Willis*

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In 1901 workers at the Panhandle shops of the Pennsylvania Railroad in Columbus, Ohio formed a professional football team called the Columbus Panhandles. The railroad workers, mainly European immigrants, learned the game of football not on college gridirons, but on the sandlots of railroad yards during their lunch breaks. With the leadership of an innovative team manager and its tough physical play, the Panhandles went on to play for more than twenty years as one of the most successful teams in the rag-tag days of professional football.

Incorporating original interviews and actual newspaper accounts, Chris Willis recreates the largely forgotten story of this unique squad of men. In *The Columbus Panhandles: A Complete History of Pro Football's Toughest Team, 1900-1922*, Willis shows how team manager, future NFL commissioner Joseph Carr, used the perks of free railroad travel for employees and the gate attraction of the famous Nesser brothers to build pro football's most successful traveling team. Season by season, Willis provides a fascinating account of the team's spectacular triumphs and crushing losses.

Full of wonderful newspaper quotes, entertaining anecdotes, and many original photos, *The Columbus Panhandles* also profiles a number of principle figures in the team's history, most notably manager Joe Carr and the six Nesser brothers who comprised the heart of the squad for many years. Written to honor the legacy of the Columbus Panhandles, this book will be of interest to historians, sportswriters and general football fans eager to learn about the early days of professional football.

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