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Hap Moran

This article is by Michael Moran.



Francis Dayle (Hap) Moran played eight seasons in the NFL from 1926 to 1933. He stood 6'1 and his playing weight was 190 pounds. In 1926 he played for the Frankford Yellow Jackets, "World Champions" that year. In 1927 he started the season with Frankford but went to the Chicago Cardinals for their last four games. The Pottsville Maroons bought his contract in 1928 and when their season ended the New York Giants acquired him for their final game of the year. He stayed with the Giants for the next five seasons.

In 1930 he set the NFL record for the longest run from scrimmage, 91 yards against the Green Bay Packers. In 1931 he was the Giants scoring leader with 35 points and was named All Pro by Red Grange. In 1933 he set the NFL record for most yards receiving in a game against the Philadelphia Eagles, 114 yards. He retired after the 1933 championship playoff against the Chicago Bears, having played in 99 league games while scoring 166 points.

Moran was born on July 31, 1901 in Belle Plaine, Iowa. His father's Roman Catholic family came from Ireland in 1856 while his mother's Protestant family went back to the earliest English settlements in North America with first ancestor arriving in 1607. His parents married in 1899, with neither family approving of the inter-faith marriage. Tragically, his father was killed in a railyard accident in 1907, in and his mother moved to Boone, Iowa, to live with her parents. To help support his mother, Moran worked summers for the railroads swinging a heavy sledgehammer to repair damaged and worn rails. This hardship and severe manual labor had the upside of developing his mind and body for an outstanding athletic career.

At Boone High School, Moran won four letters each in football, basketball, and track. In 1920 he was captain of the Iowa All State Basketball team and named an All American at the interscholastic basketball tournament at the University of Chicago. In 1921 he won first place in the shot-put at the interscholastic All West Track Meet at the University of Colorado. He was captain of the Boone football team and was named to the Iowa All State team his senior year.

In 1922, Moran was recruited to attend Carnegie Tech. He was sidelined by a separated shoulder early in the season but returned for games against Penn State and Notre Dame. The Carnegie vs. Notre Dame game in 1922 was the first time Knute Rockne put together the backfield that would come to national fame as the Four Horsemen. Moran would face them again eight years later (as part of the New York Giants) in the last game coached by Rockne.

Moran left Carnegie and returned to Iowa to attend Grinnell College. His citation at The Grinnell College Athletic Hall of Fame reads: *At Grinnell, he starred in both*



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basketball and football where he was known for his incredible speed and versatility. An All-Missouri Valley Conference selection in football, Moran excelled at just about everything from rushing to returning kicks to passing. A run against Coe College got Moran mentioned in the Spalding NCAA Record Book of Famous Runs from 1873-1926.*

In July 1926, his football coach at Grinnell wrote a letter of recommendation to Frankford Yellow Jacket's coach Guy Chamberlin: Moran is a big, tall, 'rangie', backfield man. ... He really is a smart ball player. Defensively, he is not fooled. ... He is an excellent passer. ... He is an excellent man to kick off, or kick goals after touchdowns. ... The one thing you are going to like about Moran is that he loves to play football. He is just as willing to block as to run with the ball, as he does not seem to care about what his appointed duty is, just so he gets to play.*iv

Frankford gave him a contract and his first NFL game was September 25, 1926 against Akron, led by Fritz Pollard. Moran scored Frankford's only points of the day: *The first quarter was thrill-less with the exception of a 26-yard sprint by Moran. In the second period ... a forward pass, Smythe to Hap Moran, placed the pigskin on the 2-yard line, where, in the second play, Moran took it over.*"xv



The Canton Bulldogs came to Frankford on October 23. In the final period Moran broke away for a 38-yard "touchdown jaunt." Jim Thorpe was on the field that day for Canton; it was the first time Moran met the "the greatest athlete in the world," but not the last.

After the game against the Chicago Cardinals on November 6, the newspapers highlighted the play by Moran with high praise: A player by the name of Moran, the star of the entire game, was unstoppable. He was different from what went before ... like a star let down from the planet Mars with plays that the poor fish of the earth knew nothing about. We are certainly pleased to tell our many readers of the wonderful addition this player has made to the team and the spirit he put in the rest of the players.**

The Green Bay Packers arrived at Frankford Stadium for a Thanksgiving Day game. Moran was forced out of the game with injuries and the Yellow Jackets entered the final period down 14-13. With time running out, Hust Stockton threw a pass to Two-Bits



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Homan to secure a 20-14 victory. That same combination would prove critical in what newspapers called the championship game against the Chicago Bears on December 4. xix

Moran's injuries kept him on the sidelines most of the game against the Bears. Neither team scored until the final quarter when the Bears made a touchdown, but missed the extra point. With less than two minutes left, Stockton again connected with Homan for a touchdown, and Tex Hamer nailed the extra point to give Frankford the victory.** Championships then were determined by winning percentage at the end of the season and a loss of any remaining game could cost Frankford the title. The Providence Steam Roller were beaten by the Yellow Jackets on December 11. The arch-rival Pottsville Maroons came on December 18. The program carried a photo of Moran as one of the "Jacket Cripples Who Will See Action Against Pottsville Today."** But there wasn't much action and the game ended in a scoreless tie – which gave Frankford the "World Championship" of 1926. A fine white gold Illinois watch was awarded to each player for that accomplishment.**

When Moran returned to Iowa after the 1926 football season he played on a semi-pro basketball team. His NFL connection with Thorpe led to an invitation to fill in for an injured player on Thorpe's barnstorming basketball team called "The World Famous Indians." It was the twilight of Thorpe's athletic career, but an unforgettable memory for Moran. xxiii

Frankford did not renew Guy Chamberlin's contract after the 1926 season. Chamberlin went to the Chicago Cardinals and Frankford hired Charles Moran (no relation to Hap) as head coach. The "Yellow Jacket Buzz" did its best to encourage the fans: We are glad to see so many of our football favorites back - and who won't be thrilled to see "Hap" Moran diving through that line again. Surely everyone recalls the shouts of last season, "Put Hap Moran in," and how Hap did respond. Just like gasoline, those cheers seemed to put pep in his motor."

Whatever chemistry the team had in 1926 was replaced by confusion in 1927. Moran was the scoring leader for Frankford, but, after appearing in six games, he was released to go to the Cardinals for the last four games of the season. He scored one touchdown against the New York Yankees.**xv

In 1928, Moran signed with the Pottsville Maroons. The 1928 Pottsville team had three future Hall of Famers: "Fats" Henry, Walter Kiesling and Johnny "Blood" McNally. But even with that star power the results were miserable; Pottsville won only two league games. Moran had touchdown passes against the Packers, the Bears, and the Giants. The Giants remembered that Steve Owen had knocked himself out trying to tackle Moran, "xxvii" and when Pottsville's season ended they bought his contract and put him in the backfield to replace Bruce Caldwell who had been released after teammates complained about his unwillingness to block for them. "xxviii"



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In July 1929, the Giants purchased the Detroit Wolverines in order to acquire Benny Friedman, xxix the greatest passer in that era. In 1929 Friedman threw 20 touchdown passes, shattering the previous NFL record. Moran caught four of Friedman's touchdown passes, ending the season with 30 points. He had a great game against Frankford when he ran back an interception 50 yards for a touchdown, caught a Friedman pass in the end zone, and passed for a touchdown to Mickey Murtagh. Hap Moran ... was the cause of the Yellow Jackets defeat. For one period the Yellow Jackets stood up toe to toe with the Giants until this fellow Moran appeared. He put a shot of new life into the Giants the moment he entered the game. From there on it was easy sailing. XXXI



The key game of the 1929 season was the Green Bay Packers at the Giants on November 24. Both teams entered the game undefeated with the championship on the line. The *New York Daily News* reported: *Pro football's irresistible force met the game's reputedly immovable object at the Polo Grounds. ... The answer was Green Bay Packers 20, New York Giants 6, undisputed first place in the league for the great Wisconsin scoring machine.* Next to the article was a photo of Moran with the caption: *This play gave the Giants fans one of their few opportunities to cheer. Here's Moran (No. 48) leaping to catch a pass from Friedman in the second quarter march to touchdown.* xxxii

The Giants ended 1929 in second place behind the Packers. This would also be the result in 1930, although the race took a very

different route to the finish line. Friedman was again the marquee star but in the game against the Cardinals the newspaper headline read: *Moran Steals Friedman's Thunder - Hap Moran, half back from Carnegie Tech, assumed the hero role for the Giants. Moran sailed a 35-yard pass into the arms of Campbell, New York end. Moran then faked a toss, and swept down to the Cardinals 15. Wilson cut through right tackle for 8, picked up 5 at the other side of the line, and Moran crushed over for the winning score.* xxxiii

In November 1930, the Giants acquired Chris Cagle, All American from Army. He made his pro debut when the Packers came to the Polo Grounds on November 23. Ten minutes into the game Cagle was injured and Moran went in. Early in the third quarter, the Giants were on their own 8-yard line and in deep trouble. "Lining up in punt formation, deep man Hap Moran, a deceptively fast 190-pounder, faked a kick, picked up a block, cut around his right end, and headed for the sidelines. Finally, after a record 91-yard run, Moran was pulled down from behind on the Packer 1 by end Lavern Dilweg."*xxxiv



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Outside the gates of the Polo Grounds a Great Depression was taking shape. New York Mayor James J. Walker had put together a committee, including Giants owner Tim Mara and Giants president Dr. Harry A. March, to raise money to "alleviate suffering brought about by an industrial depression." One of the major events they promoted was a game between the Giants and the Notre Dame All Stars, featuring the Four Horsemen. **xxxv**



The opportunity to go up against Knute Rockne caused Giants coach LeRoy Andrew to lose his focus on league contests. The Giants lost two games in a row and Andrew lost the confidence of his players. Tim Mara was furious and fired Andrew and installed Friedman as player/coach. **xxxvi* Those losses caused the Giants to slip behind Green Bay in winning percentage and cost Moran and his teammates a championship. But there was some redemption in the meeting with the Notre Dame All Stars. The Giants dominated every aspect of the game and won 22 to 0. Moran threw the final touchdown pass of the game, the last points ever scored against a team coached by Rockne. After the game Rockne told his All Stars, "That was the greatest football machine I ever saw. I'm glad none of you got hurt." **xxxxvii

In the summer of 1931 Dr. Harry March purchased a World War I submarine chaser and sent Moran to St. Louis to bring it down to New Orleans and then to Florida. Moran was to pick up other teammates along the way including Marion Broadstone, Glenn Campbell, and Dale Burnett. They left the boat in Miami with Captain A. A. Tanos with instructions to bring it up the coast to New York, then boarded a train to get north for the football season.

In 1931 the Giants dropped to fifth in the NFL standings. But it was not all bad news - the great Mel Hein joined the team, Steve Owen was named head coach, and Moran was the scoring leader for the Giants and was named to the second All Pro team by Red Grange. **xxix** Moran was fourth in the league in field goals and third in points after

touchdown. He scored touchdowns rushing, passing, and receiving. He also did some of New York's punting. In a game against Green Bay he threw a 54-yard pass to Ray Flaherty and then kicked a 27-yard field goal.^{xl}

When the football season ended, Captain Tanos and the Kingfisher had still not reached New York, so Dr. March sent Moran down to Miami to investigate. Moran uncovered that Tanos had stolen the boat and was involved in a plot to smuggle Chinese Nationals and their gold (and opium^{xli}) out of Mexico. The plot also involved an airplane owned by aviator Bill Lancaster and aviatrix Jessie Keith-Miller. They were famous for long distance flying





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records before the Depression hit. Now, desperate for cash, Lancaster left Miller in the company of Haden Clarke to ghost-write a book for them while Lancaster flew his plane to the Mexican border. When Lancaster returned, he discovered Keith-Miller and Clarke were having an affair. Five days after the newspapers reported that Moran had uncovered the smuggling plot, the headline was that Haden Clarke had committed suicide. Lancaster was later charged with murder and the trial attracted worldwide attention. Moran went back to New York designing and installing industrial heating and cooling systems until the 1932 football season began. Lancaster was later charged with murder and installing industrial heating and cooling systems until the 1932 football season began.

In 1932 the team dropped the first three games, all on the road. Their opening home game, against Brooklyn, seemed to turn the tide. The 20-12 victory included a 71-yard touchdown run by Moran. Then another tie and two losses made a disastrous 1-5-1 start. Steve Owen brought back Jack McBride, the scoring leader for the Giants in '25, '26, and '27. McBride led the Giants to victories over Stapleton and then over undefeated League Champion Green Bay. The 6-0 win over the Packers was the major upset of the season, and Moran caught a 16-yard pass as part of the touchdown drive.

In 1933 the Giants acquired Harry Newman and Ken Strong. Moran was alternating in the backfield with Strong at the beginning of the season and played a major role in the Giants 54-0 win over the Eagles. In that game he set an NFL record for the most yards receiving in a single game - 114 yards on three catches. The record stood until 1937.xlvii

That victory helped the Giants win the divisional title. For Moran, his touchdown against the Eagles was his last score as a New York Giant. The Giants played the Bears for the NFL Championship but lost 23-21. Sitting on the bench Moran saw Red Grange tackle Red Badgro and break up the Giants last hope for a win in a game where the lead changed hands six times. **Iviii*

Moran wasn't much for sitting on the bench. As his college coach had written, "he does not seem to care what his appointed duty is, just so he gets to play." It was time to move on.



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In 1934, Moran played one season with the Paterson Panthers of the American Association and then kept a hand in football by coaching. He'd done some coaching when the Giants sponsored a football team inside the walls of Sing Sing Prison in 1931. In 1936 he took the Panthers to an 11-3-0 record.

In 1937 the papers had upbeat stories about Moran signing on to coach a new football team in Jersey City, NJ. ^{li} The team was not able to gain a lease for the newly constructed Roosevelt Stadium and played only three games – all away against Providence, Brooklyn Bay Parkways, and Fritz Pollard's Brown Bombers. ^{lii}

Also in 1937, Moran married Lucille Beberstein and moved to Sunnyside, Queens. Shortly after he moved, two boys knocked on his door and asked him to coach their football team; he coached the Sunnyside Mustangs from 1938 until the outbreak of World War II. IIII



Beberstein had been a schoolteacher in Flint, Michigan. In 1927 she moved to New York and took a management position with Schrafft's Restaurants. Then the Great Depression hit. Working for a restaurant meant no chance of going hungry, and Beberstein brought her mother and two sisters to live with her. Her mother's grandfather had been a prominent Amish bishop in Illinois and later a

founder of the Defenseless Mennonite Church, ^{Iv} but in Queens she and Moran joined the Sunnyside Reformed Church where he served as a Deacon and Elder. Moran also served many years as Cub Master, Scout Master, and Executive Committee member of the Queens Council, BSA. ^{Ivi}

After football Moran worked for the Federal Government in procurement. In 1942 he was hired by Western Electric, the supply arm of Bell Telephone. At different points in his career he was responsible for buying all the telephone poles, safety equipment, office supplies, wood, canvas, and cleaning supplies for the Bell System. He retired in 1966.

The Morans had two sons, Mark born in 1940 and Michael in 1947. Mark had a career in the United States Army, rising to the rank of Lt. Colonel after two tours in Vietnam as an Airborne Ranger and combat engineer. Michael was an ordained minister and Senior Pastor of the First Congregational Church in New Milford, Connecticut. In 1990, the Moran's moved to New Milford where Lucille died January 8, 1992, and Hap on December 30, 1994. Harry Newman wrote Michael: It's not without reason your dad was called Hap, he always had a smile on his face. [Viiii]

In the summer of 1992 the Giants sent a video crew to New Milford to interview the 91-year old Moran in honor of his 91-yard record run in 1930. The interview was broadcast on the pre-game show *Giants 1992*. In 2005, after 75 years, that record was finally broken by Tiki Barber. As noted in a 2006 profile of Moran in *The Duke*, Moran's run was the longest-held mark in the Giants record book."

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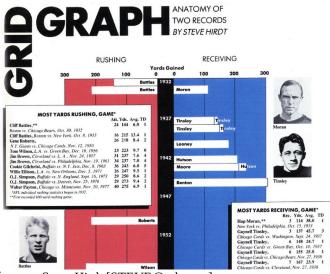
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LONGEST RUN FROM SCRIMMAGE-

- 85 Pete Stinchcomb, ChiS-Cle, 11-20-21
- 91 Hap Moran, NYG-GB, 11-23-30 97 - Andy Uram, GB-ChiC, 10-8-39
- " Bob Gage, Pit-Chi, 12-4-49
- 99 Tony Dorsett, Dal-Min, 1-8-83
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From: Steve Hirdt [STEVE@esb.com]

Sent: Thursday, January 20, 2005 1:16 PM

To: revmoran@nmchurch.org

Cc: STEVE@esb.com

Subject: your father's NFL career

Rev. Moran:

Thank you for your kind letter regarding the Grid Graph that I did, many years ago, that mentioned your father. Unfortunately, I do not know what website contains that chart, and I believe that I did that work at least 10 years ago. Although the NFL began play in 1920, it didn't start keeping statistics in an organized manner until 1933. So it was that when your father caught three passes for 114 yards against the Eagles on Oct. 15, 1933, he was credited with the NFL's first "official" 100-yard receiving game.

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xix "Football Championship," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 3, 1926, 25.



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- ^{xxi} "The Jacket Cripples Who Will See Action Against Pottsville Today," *Frankford AA Official Program*, December 18, 1926, 45.



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xxiii Michael Moran, "Hap Moran: My Dad," *The Coffin Corner: Vol. XXI*, *No.* 6, 1999, 3. xxiv Moran Family Scrapbook.



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BENNY FRIEDMAN TO PLAY WITH GIANTS NEXT FALL New York, July 17—Benny Friedman, former University of Michigan gridiron here and one of professolnal football's outstanding stars for the past two seasons, will perform at the Polo Grounds this fail in the uniform of the New York Giants. Tim Mara announced the acquisition of the spectacular Jewish backfield ace today. In 1927 Benny ran his own team in Cleveland and last season piloted the Detroit eleven.

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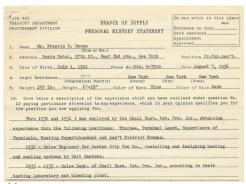
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xliii "Suicide Laid to Remorse at Love Theft," *The Miami Herald (Miami Florida)* April 22, 1932, 1.



xliv Ralph Barker, *Verdict on a Lost Flyer, The Story of Bill Lancaster*, (London, UK: George G. Harrap & Co., 1969), 128. xlv Moran Family Scrapbook



"Giants Pack Packers, 6-0," New York Daily News, November 21, 1932, 40.



xivii Steve Hirdt, Grid Graph, Anatomy of Two Records, Elias Sports Bureau, 1995.

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iii Moran Family Scrapbook clipping.

Mustangs Give Credit To Coach Moran
According to the Sunnyside Mustangs who average
about 160 and who finished the grid season undefeated,
they owe their success to the coaching of Hap Moran,
former Carnegie Tech and pro Giant football star . . .
The Mustangs, who have been beaten only once in two
seasons, defeated the Greenpoint Lancers, St. Mary's
(Bronz), the Jersey City F. C., Greenpoint Macons and
sats Sunday the Winfield Collegiates . . . Star of the
Mustangs is Johnny Morrison . . Aside to J. B. of
Flushing: Thanks very much and a Merry Christmas

liv "Lucille Ann Beberstein," Ancestry.com, accessed April 14, 2025

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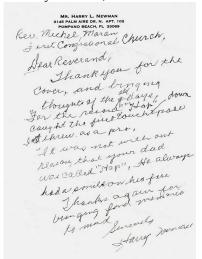
"The Giant' Moran," Thayer Highlights, Western Electric (New York, NY), Oct. 1966, 4.



Ivii Moran Family Scrapbook.

	MANAGEMEN	T SALARY PROGRAM	
	POSITIO	N DESCRIPTION	
Name F. 1). MORAN	Soc. Sec. No.	All of the
Company Divis	ion ADMINISTRATION	Company Loc	ation 222 Broadway
Org. No. 3	122	Occ. Code	0426
Title BUYER -	SUPPLIES	Rank DEF	APPMENT CHIEF
Reports to:		ASST. SUPT.	
	Name	Rank	Title
Write a capsu existence.	POSE(S) OF POSITION	ins the principal reaso	
Write a capsu existence. Example: "To		ins the principal reasons, provide facilities as wer diodes."	

Iviii Harry Newman, "Letter to Michael Moran," September 3, 1999.



"NY Giants 1992 Interview with Hap Moran," Hapmoran.org accessed April 12, 2005, https://www.hapmoran.org/

Ix Michael Eisen, "A Look Back at the Life of Hap Moran," The Duke, October 8, 2006, 15.