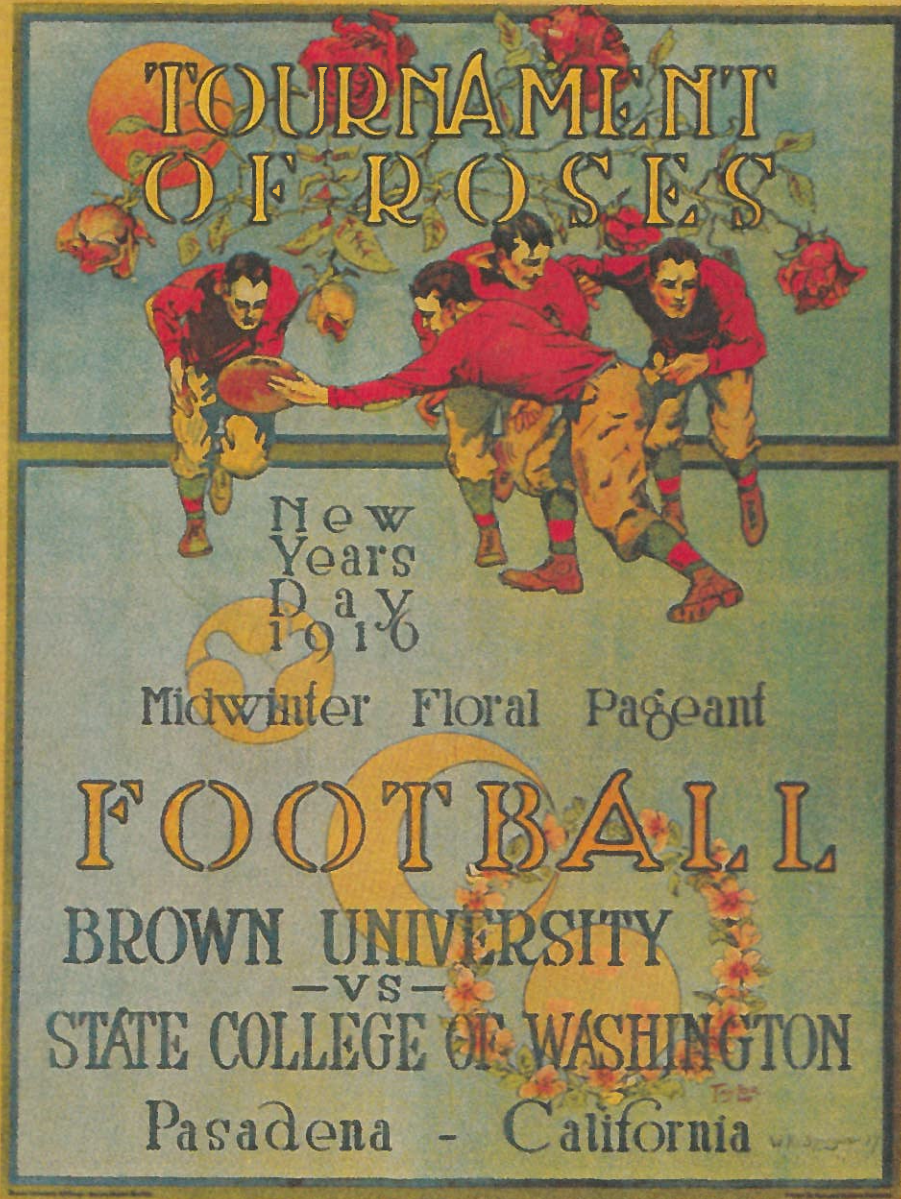


1916



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DEPARTMENTS

HERE & NOW 4

CARRYING THE MAIL 6

STUDENTSIDE 15

A Writer's Life
By Michael Lukas '02

SPORTS 24

The Buck Stops Here
By Scott Cole and Norman Boucher

IN CLASS 30

Eating for Life
By Lori Baker '86 A.M.

BOOKS 32

Nonfiction by psychiatry professor Katharine Phillips and Hugh Pearson '79; fiction by Gustaf Sobin '57 and Andrew Greer '92.

THE CLASSES 54

CLASSIFIEDS 68

OBITUARIES 73

FINALLY 80

Hollywood Calling
By Ariel Sabar '93

Before Your Eyes

36

Jonathan Klein '80 left a vice presidency at CBS News to start an Internet company that lets you watch only the news you want. Critics say his success has disturbing implications for democracy.
By Jane Spencer '99

The Road to Pasadena

42

Most football fans know about the Bears' trip to the Tournament of Roses game on New Year's Day 1916. But what about the field goal against Yale that got them there two months before?
By Casey Shearer '00

The Advocate

48

Jails are full. Executions are on the rise. No wonder public defenders like Kris Allen Kerr '82 are overworked: it's their job to protect penniless bad guys who are probably guilty anyway.
By Chad Galts

COVER: Photograph of Jon Klein by James Salzano

Volume 101 • Number 1
September/October 2000

The Road to Pasadena

The toe that did it!" proclaims the postcard. Covering the toe is a black leather, high-top shoe with thick football cleats on the sole and white laces tied into a double knot. The shoe belonged to a five-foot-ten-and-a-half-inch, one-hundred-and-sixty-one-pound, blond-haired college senior with wide shoulders and a large forehead. His name was Harold P. "Buzz" Andrews, the captain and right halfback of the historic 1915 football team, which on New Year's Day 1916 played in the first annual Rose Bowl game. The story of that game, a 14-0 defeat, is well known in Brown sports circles; less familiar is the game played against Yale almost two months earlier, on November 6. It was in that defining contest that the toe of Buzz Andrews '16 launched Brown on the road to Pasadena.

Although the 1916 Tournament of Roses game marked the beginning of the New Year's Day tradition still observed today, it was technically not the first-ever Rose Bowl game. That was played fourteen years earlier, in 1902, as a sidelight to the Tournament of Roses, which had been founded in 1890 by Pasadena's Valley Hunt Club. Most of the club's members had migrated to southern California from the East

1915

THE TOE T



BY CASEY SHEARER '00

ena

The route to the first annual
Rose Bowl game passed
through New Haven, where,
eighty-five years ago,
the Bears pulled off one of the
sweetest victories in
Brown football history.

HAT DID IT

and Midwest, and the tournament was a way of showcasing for the folks back home the region's mild winter weather. In addition to a parade, the first tournaments included foot races, polo matches, and tugs-of-war on the town lot (later known as Tournament Park.) Officials then tried to draw more people to the events by experimenting with such novelties as ostrich races, bronco-busting, and a race between a camel and an elephant. (The elephant won.) In 1902, officials attempted something new by staging a football game between Stanford and the University of Michigan, but after Michigan's 49-0 embarrassment of Stanford, the idea was tabled in favor of Roman-style chariot races.

In 1915, though, allegations of race fixing and a series of gruesome crashes convinced tournament officials to drop the chariot races and give football another try. The purpose of the Rose Bowl game (actually it was the Tournament of Roses Association game until 1923, when it took on its more familiar name) was to pit the best college team from the East against the best from the West. Since 1947 this has meant a contest between the Pacific Ten and Big Ten champions, but before that year the choice of who would play in the Rose Bowl was much more arbitrary.

This was particularly true of the 1916 game. The tournament selection committee had the loose goal of picking a team that was "representative" of East Coast football and one that was "representative" of Western football. The real football powerhouse in the Northeast back then was Yale. The Eli reputation for tough play had spread throughout the country and even, it seems, to Pasadena. Yale's excellence was certainly well known on College Hill. Over the pre-

During the week leading up to the Yale game, excitement built to a fervor. The senior class organized a train to take Brown fans to New Haven at a reduced price. Signs were posted around campus exhorting students to make the trek to the Yale Bowl. People walking across the Green saw painted posters urging, "On to New Haven: Do It for Brown!" and "We've Got Yale's Goat." The campaign worked: more than 350 men signed up for the train.

On the Tuesday before game day, R.H. "Pinky" McLaughlin, the president of the previous year's senior class, gave a rousing speech in Sayles Hall. "Brown has been among the first few in every brand of athletics," he said to the assembled students. "Brown has been able to hold this place . . . not by the size of her undergraduate body, or the abundance of men from which she is able to pick a winning team; nor by the support of a closely organized alumni. They have done it by their spirit and their fight. The alumni say this fight isn't in us anymore. The attendance at the mass meetings and other public gatherings consists of the same small groups of men . . . Show Eli and our alumni where the real heart of the college is and that the old spirit is still there."

In an intrasquad scrimmage at football practice that week, the starters pummeled the reserves in a manner they hadn't done all season, and the practice ended with Buzz Andrews drop-kicking two successful field goals. Noting this, a *Journal* sportswriter wrote: "If worse comes to worst [Brown] may have another form of scoring to resort to."

On Friday the buildup continued as the students held a mass meeting in the auditorium of the Brown Union. President William H.P. Faunce, former player

Brown had lost fifteen of the eighteen games it had played against Yale. In eleven of the games, Brown had failed to score a single point.

vious eighteen contests between the Brown and Yale football teams, the Bears had prevailed in exactly one and had tied the Bulldogs twice. In eleven of its fifteen defeats, Brown had failed to score a single point.

But the 1915 Brown team was special. It featured a solid core of returning veterans, including Captain Andrews and a star freshman left halfback named Fritz Pollard, who in later years would become the first African American named to the Walter Camp All-American team. Led by these two stars, the Bears played impressively in the early season, outscoring their opponents in the first six games by a margin of 117 to 13. Buoyed by this early season success, students and alumni began thinking of those rivals in New Haven. "Chance for Victory over Elis Brightest in Years," proclaimed a *Providence Journal* headline.

"Hoppie" Hunt '99, Professor of Modern Languages Courtney Langdon, and assistant coach W.E. "Sprack" Sprackling '12 (the hero and quarterback of the 1910 team, which had the one victory against Yale) gave stirring speeches. Songs and cheers drove the crowd to a frenzy.

Meanwhile, down the road in New Haven, Yale students and alumni were no less aware that this game with Brown was a battle over dignity and pride. The Bulldogs had already lost three times that season. A victory over Brown would mean redemption. Yale brought in former Eli star Tom Shevlin and sixteen other former players to coach the team into regaining its lost stature. The *Providence Journal* commented that, on both the Yale and Brown campuses, "graduates and undergraduates are discussing nothing else but football and great things are hoped for."

Mark Farnum slipped behind the Yale defense and started running. Quarterback Purdy lofted a perfect pass to him for a twenty-yard gain – the only successful forward pass of the game.



Brown's 1916 Tournament of Roses team: in the backfield (standing, left to right) were Clair Purdy '19, Harold Andrews '16, Harold Saxton '16, and Fritz Pollard '19; on the line were Joshua Weeks '19, Mark Farnum '18, Wallace Wade '17, Ken Sprague '17, Edgar Staff '16, Ray Ward '17, and John Butner '18.

Game day brought perfect, sunny football weather to New Haven. As the game got under way, the presence of Shevlin and the other Yale coaches appeared to have made a difference. Bulldog captain Alec Wilson caught the opening kickoff on the Yale fifteen yard line and ran it to the thirty. Wilson then took a handoff and ran seven yards through left tackle. A few plays later, Yale left halfback Bingham sprinted around left end for a twenty-eight-yard gain. The ball was now at the Brown thirty-three yard line.

Yale continued its relentless power game, making the Bears look like "a cork on a storm-tossed sea," according to a *Providence Journal* writer, and moving the ball all the way to the Brown four yard line. In the huddle Buzz Andrews reminded his teammates of their task, imploring them to hold the line. Goaded by Andrews and the loud contingent of Brown fans, the Bear defense dug in. Three times Yale tried to push into the end zone. Three times the Brown line held. Now it was fourth and goal. If Yale did not score on the next play, the Bears would take over possession of the ball. Back then field goals were far less common than today, and so it was no surprise that the Bulldogs opted to go for the touchdown.

The Yale players set in the traditional T formation. The quarterback barked out the signals. The

center snapped the ball, and the quarterback turned and pitched it to his fullback. The Yale line pushed downfield, while the Brown linemen surged upfield against them. The runner was smothered at the six yard line for a two-yard loss.

Brown's ball. Buzz Andrews chose to punt from his own goal line, but Yale fumbled and Brown recovered on the Bulldogs' thirty-five yard line. For the rest of the first half, Brown limited Yale to only ten yards of offense. But the Bears also failed to move the ball themselves. The first half ended with the score 0-0.

At halftime, Brown coach Ed Robinson lauded his players' efforts and announced a change to a more open game plan, one that used a tactic new in college football: the forward pass. Buzz Andrews reassured his teammates they would come out on top.

The second half began with Yale kicking off to Brown. Fritz Pollard, the Brown freshman halfback sensation, received the kick at the Brown eighteen yard line and returned it ten yards to the twenty-eight. Brown then chose a series of running plays. Pollard burst through right tackle for a seven-yard gain. Quarterback Clair Purdy '19 then ran four yards up the middle for a first down. Next Purdy picked up three yards through right tackle, and Pollard scooted around the left end for four more. Now Andrews ran – again through Yale's vulnerable right tackle – for three yards

Three times Yale tried to push into the end zone. Three times the Brown line held.

and another first down. The Bears were now in Yale territory.

After Purdy picked up three more yards, disaster struck. A lineman was called for tripping a Yale player, earning the team a fifteen-yard penalty. It was now third and long. Bears fullback Harold Saxton '16 ran up the middle but was stopped for no gain. It was now fourth and twelve. Time for a gamble. Quarterback Purdy approached the line and barked out the signals. Center Ken Sprague '17 snapped the ball. The Bulldogs surged forward. Purdy ran back and to the right, as though about to sweep around the right end. As the Yale defenders rushed into the Brown backfield, right tackle Mark Farnum '18 slipped behind the Yale defense and began running. Seeing the open Farnum, Purdy lofted a perfect pass to him for a twenty-yard gain – the only successful forward pass of the game. (This was before the rule making linemen ineligible receivers.) More importantly, the Bears now had a first down at the Yale fifteen yard line.

Purdy next ran for a one-yard gain around left end. On the next play, Andrews went to the other

side and picked up four yards. The Brown rushing attack was losing steam. It was time for another gamble: Coach Edward North Robinson called for a field-goal attempt.

As the Bears broke their huddle, Andrews, his blond hair partially visible underneath his leather helmet, stepped far behind his teammates, all the way back to the twenty-two yard line. He stood directly behind the ball and almost dead center between the goalposts. This field goal try would be almost straight on.

Sprague, the Brown center, snapped the ball the extra-long distance back to Andrews, who calmly caught it in his big hands. He then dropped it to the ground, and as the ball bounced upward, Andrews's toe connected with it, kicking the pigskin straight and true toward the goalposts. The perfectly executed drop-kick split the uprights.

It was the only field goal of Andrews's football career.

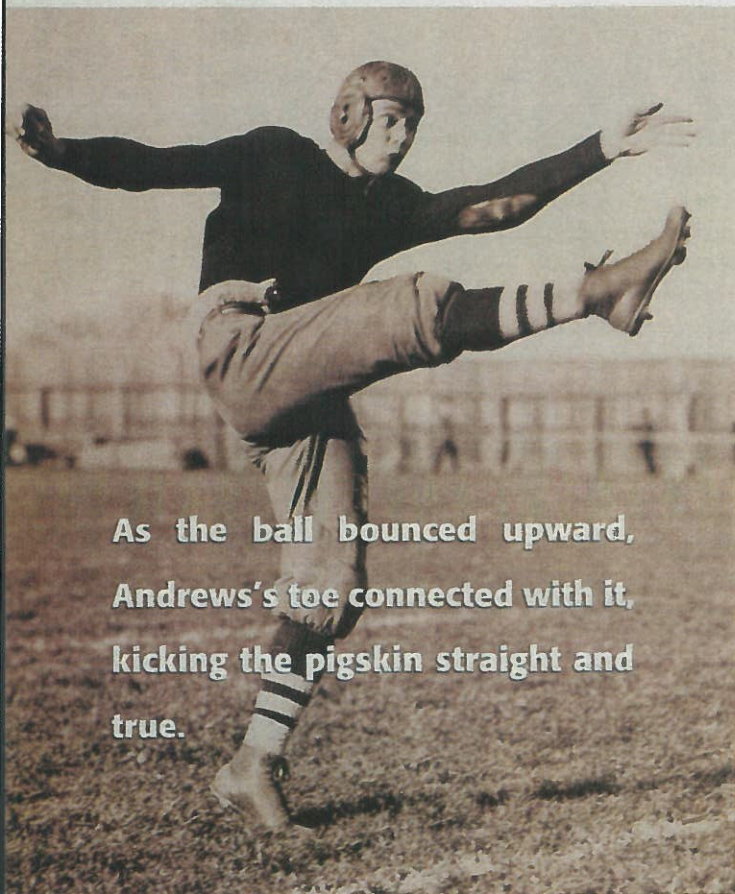
Brown 3, Yale 0.

And so the score stood for the remainder of the game as the two teams did little more than exchange punts. When the final whistle blew, the Brown fans who had made the trip from Providence rushed onto the field and carried Buzz Andrews to the dressing room on their shoulders. The fans tossed derbies over the goalposts, cheering and singing the alma mater. According to the *Providence Journal*, the crowd, led by Professor Courtney Langdon, "gyrated" into a "serpentine dance."

Back in Providence, all the Brown students who had not gone to the game met at the Brown Union and paraded downtown to the train station, snake-dancing under a shower of Roman candles and a scattering of signs and banners. A band played as the Brown fans from New Haven returned. Twenty minutes later the team arrived and the crowd cheered with joy, carrying every player through the station and putting them into a horse-drawn bus. Then all paraded back up the hill to campus, where a bonfire was lit and speeches were made.

"Brown spirit is no longer a thing of the past," exclaimed the *Brown Daily Herald*.

In Pasadena, the victory further complicated an already difficult decision for the Tournament of Roses selection committee. During the 1915 football season, there were a number of particularly strong Eastern teams. Trinity had beaten Amherst, which had defeated Brown, which had toppled Yale, which had beaten Springfield, which had bettered Amherst. Yale had defeated Princeton, which had beaten Syracuse, which had vanquished Colgate



As the ball bounced upward,
Andrews's toe connected with it,
kicking the pigskin straight and
true.

and Brown, both of which had beaten Yale. Even the sportswriters couldn't agree on the top Eastern team. The *Providence Journal* sports section rated Brown seventh in the East; Yale was not even in its top ten. Joe Wilson of the *New York Evening Sun*, meanwhile, ranked Brown twelfth and Yale fourth.

Amid this atmosphere of uncertainty, and needing to pick a team before the final games of the season could be played, the tournament selection committee was forced to base its choice on reputation. After considering Syracuse, Michigan, and Carlisle, the committee members looked at Brown's hard-fought and innovative victory over Yale. They also considered Brown's strong play throughout its 5-3-1 season and were perhaps intrigued by the presence of Pollard, a rare African-American star in those days. Finally, the invitation went out to College Hill.

President Faunce received word two days after the Yale game. Yet he waited for more than a week to make the invitation public. The secret was so closely guarded that on November 15 the *Providence Journal* reported that the University of Nebraska had been selected to play the University of Washington in Pasadena. The next day, Faunce announced that Brown had accepted an invitation to play a game on New Year's Day as part of the Tournament of Roses. A few days later, tournament officials revealed that Brown's opponent would be Washington State College, the undefeated champions of the Northwest Conference.

As New Year's Day approached, each team and its supporters were confident that their side would prevail. East Coast newspapers proclaimed that old Brown would do to Washington State what Michigan had done to Stanford. As Brown right guard Wally Wade '17 recalled years after the trip, "I believe we had one of the most confident teams ever to play in Pasadena." By game time, the Easterners from Providence had become a 2-1 favorite over the Cougars from Pullman, Washington, who nevertheless had posted a 6-0 record, surrendering a mere ten points to opposition teams all season.

New Year's Eve brought a heavy rainstorm, and a drizzle fell all through New Year's Day. This unusual southern California weather transformed the field from a luscious green gridiron to a veritable mud-hole. Brown started the game well, but the conditions were not suited to Coach Robinson's open style of play. Fritz Pollard, unable to get his footing in the muck, managed only forty-seven yards on thirteen carries, far below his usual output. During the first half, Pollard was repeatedly dunked in puddles of mud; in one huddle he noted he might drown if he got trapped at the bottom of an extra-large pile.

Nevertheless, the Bears twice neared the Washington State goal line in the first half, once moving the ball to the Cougar four yard line. Alas, the Washington State line, which considerably outweighed



From the December 1915 *BAM*: "We reprint, from the *Providence Journal*, this cartoon symbolizing the Brown triumph over Yale. Before the game the slogan had been 'On to Yale!' The cartoonist changed the slogan a little after the contest."

Brown's, kept the Bears out of the end zone on both occasions, and the first half ended with no score.

In the second half, the superior size, strength, and skill of Washington State began to pay off. The Bears resumed a season-long penchant for fumbling, and the heavy Cougar line began to control the play from scrimmage. In the second half, the Cougars cracked the Bears defense for two touchdowns. The Brown receivers did not catch a single forward pass. The final score was Washington State 14, Brown 0. West Coast football had restored the reputation that had been so tarnished by Stanford's humiliating defeat back in 1902.

What's more, a new tradition had been launched. New Year's Day would forever be associated with college football. Today an estimated 425 million viewers in more than 100 countries tune in to the Tournament of Roses parade in Pasadena, many of them tuning in again later that day for the Rose Bowl game, the final indulgence of the Christmas holidays. Thanks to Buzz Andrews's magnificent toe, Brown was there at the start of it all. 🐻

A few months after submitting this story to the *BAM*, Casey Shearer collapsed while playing basketball on campus. He died four days later (see "A Joyous Life," *Obituaries*, July/August). In his memory, Shearer's parents have established a memorial fund at Brown to support student journalism, a yearly nonfiction writing award, and an annual lecture by a leading journalist.