

# Ed Danowski

Mr Ed Danowski, who passed away on February 3, 1997 at the age of 85 in East Patchogue, New York, was a gridiron star at Fordham University in the early 1930s where he was Grantland Rice's choice for the All-America second team fullback of 1933. Born and raised on Long Island, Danowski played for Riverhead High School before he starred at Fordham from 1930-1934. He was the inspirational leader of "Iron Major" Frank Cavanaugh's 1931 and 1932 Fordham teams (12-3-2) and also captained "Sleepy Jim" Crowley's first Ram team in 1933 (6-2-0, including a stunning upset of an Alabama team that featured "Bear" Bryant, Don Hutson, Tom Hupke and Dixie Howell).

During the years of 1934-1939, and again in 1941, Danowski was a superb passer-punter and linebacker for Coach Steve Owens' New York Giants. During his pro football career, Danowski led the Giants to two National Football League titles. Playing halfback (actually tailback), Danowski led the Giants in passing from 1935 through 1939, and also led the league in this offensive category in the 1935 and 1938 seasons. In 1935 he completed 57 of 113 pass attempts for 795 yards and nine touchdowns; and in 1938 he posted 70 completions in 129 tosses for 848 yards and eight touchdowns. In both 1935 and 1938 Danowski was named tailback on the 11-man NFL All-League First Team

Danowski was also a participant in the famous NFL title game on December 9, 1938 against the Chicago Bears: the contest usually referred to now as the "Sneakers Game". With the gridiron of New York's Polo Grounds frozen solid, the Giants found themselves trailing 10-3 at halftime as neither team was having much success maintaining solid footing. Just before the halftime intermission, the Giants sent equipment managers to nearby Manhattan College to borrow sneakers for their players. At halftime many of the Giant players switched to the non-cleated shoes, including Danowski, and in the second half the Bears couldn't cope with the better maneuverability of the New York team, and the Giants ended up winning the title by a 30-13 score. In the second half Danowski ran for one touchdown, threw a scoring pass for another tally, and intercepted a pass on defense.

Four years later in the championship game of 1938 against the Green Bay Packers, the Giants were trailing 17-16 when Danowski threw a 23-yard touchdown pass to Hank Soar to clinch the 23-17 win for the New Yorkers. When asked in 1952 to select his all-time New York Giants squad, Owens named Danowski as one of his quarterbacks. "Danowski was one of the finest passers the Giants ever had, and one of the most accurate in football history."

After World War II service as an officer in the United States Navy, Danowski coached at Haverstraw High School in New York, and then became the head coach at Fordham for the seasons of 1946-1954 when the football program had become vastly de-emphasized. He and his assistant coach Vince Lombardi had to face teams that would have been formidable foes for the Rams even in the peak pre-war days of the "Blocks of Granite". Nevertheless, Danowski's teams won 29 games, including a spectacular upset of Syracuse in 1949 by a score of 47-21. When Fordham University dropped intercollegiate football after the 1954 season, Danowski worked as a coach and teacher in the East Meadow, Long Island school district until his retirement in 1977. Danowski, who also had a degree from Teachers College at Columbia University, was inducted into the Fordham Athletic Hall of Fame in 1975.

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