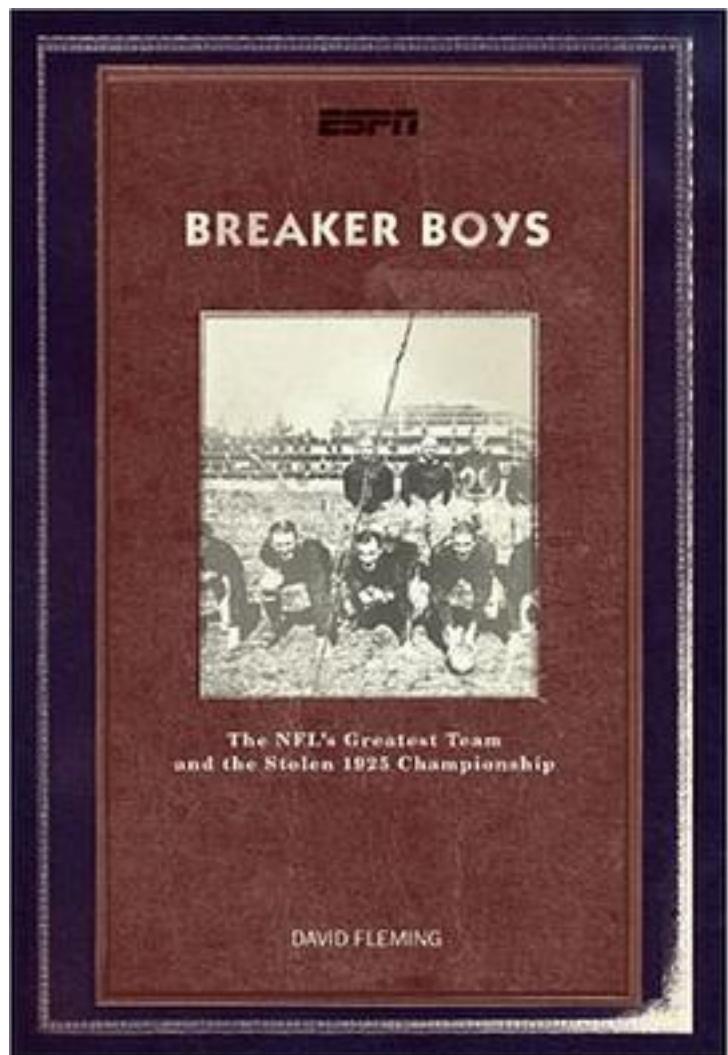


Breaker Boys



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In 1925, the Pottsville Maroons, a semi-pro football team from the heart of Pennsylvania coal country, joined the still young National Football League. Comprised mainly of hardscrabble miners (including several future Hall of Famers) and led by flamboyant player-coach Dick Rauch, the Maroons did the unthinkable and dominated the NFL. In the final game of that first season, the team traveled to Chicago to face the Chicago Cardinals, which had the best record in the league. Viewed by many as the championship game for 1925, the Maroons overcame a Windy City snowstorm to defeat the Cardinals 21-7. But fans wanted more. As news of their success spread throughout the country, a movement began to have the Maroons face a team of All-Stars from the University of Notre Dame that featured the Four Horsemen. On a neutral field in Philadelphia, the Maroons defeated the Horsemen and company 9-7. The shoe that Charlie Berry used to kick the winning field goal was bronzed for eternity. And the Maroons mistakenly thought the NFL championship awaited them. In February 1926, the NFL owners, citing league violations against the Maroons for their exhibition game, awarded the title to the Chicago Cardinals. Initially they refused it. For 80 years, Pottsville has fought to have its championship restored, and in *Marooned* their remarkable story is told at last.

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