



## Player Profile: Ox Emerson

### INTRODUCTION

Ox Emerson was a dominant guard in the 1930s. He earned six consecutive first team all-pro nominations on his way to becoming a member of the Pro Football Hall of Fame's All-Decade team of the 1930s.



Grover Conner "Ox" Emerson was born December 18, 1907 in Douglass, Texas. He played high school football before joining the University of Texas, starting on the team in 1929 and 1930. He was the freshman co-captain in 1927. He earned All-SWC honors after the 1930 season. He was declared ineligible to play in 1931 after having played two games with the varsity team in 1928. He instead went to play for the Portsmouth Spartans (now called the Detroit Lions).

He helped lead the Detroit Lions (the Spartans moved to Detroit and were renamed the Lions in 1934) to a defensive feat of only allowing 59 points in 13 games. They had seven straight shutouts that year. Emerson also helped the Lions to the 1935 NFL Championship. In 1936, the Lions set the rushing record with 2,885 yards. That record stood for 36 years, when the 1972 Miami Dolphins needed a 14-game season to break the record set by the Lions in only 12 games.

After retiring in 1937, Emerson briefly was the line coach for the Brooklyn Dodgers, but came out of retirement to play for the Dodgers that season (dual role of player and coach). He officially retired from playing football after the 1938 season. In 1939, he started coaching at Wayne State University, but left to serve in World War II. Emerson served in the Navy.

After being discharged from the Navy, Emerson coached at both the high school and junior college levels. In 1951, he coached the freshmen at the University of Texas. That lasted until 1956, when he returned to coaching high school football.

Emerson passed away November 26, 1998 in Austin, Texas.

## FILM STUDY AND ANALYSIS (By Ken Crippen and Matt Reaser)

Plays well in all three aspects of the game: offense, defense and special teams. Has a real nose for the football and is in on almost every play. On offense, he was able to get to the second and third levels of the defense. The team ran well to his side. He was quick off the snap and had excellent explosion. A hard hitter.

On defense, he could stuff the run and was alert. His motor never stopped. He stopped runs up the middle and was quick enough to get to runs on the outside. Good pursuit on plays downfield. He was able to quickly disengage from blocks.

On special teams, he was not afraid to make a play.

Overall, he had excellent competitiveness and instincts.

## STATISTICS

Team	Games Played	Games Started
1931 Portsmouth Spartans	12	9
1932 Portsmouth Spartans	12	12
1933 Portsmouth Spartans	11	10
1934 Detroit Lions	13	13
1935 Detroit Lions	7	7
1936 Detroit Lions	10	3
1937 Detroit Lions	10	6
1938 Brooklyn Dodgers	11	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>67</b>

## HONORS

Emerson was named to six consecutive first-team All-Pro teams in his eight seasons with the Spartans/Lions. That is the same number of first-team All-Pros as Barry Sanders, Lou Creekmur, Dutch Clark, and Jack Christainsen. All are Hall of Famers, except for Emerson.

-Pro Football Hall of Fame All-Decade Team: 1930s

-Texas Longhorn Hall of Honor (1966)

### All-Pro:

-1932: Consensus First Team (United Press, Red Grange for *Collier's Eye & Baseball World Magazine*). Honorable Mention (Poll of seven NFL Coaches and released by Associated Press. This was considered the official all-pro team by the NFL.).

-1933: First Team (United Press, Chicago *Daily News*, Red Grange for *Collier's Eye & Baseball World Magazine*). Honorable Mention (Poll of ten NFL Coaches and released by Associated Press. This was considered the official all-pro team by the NFL.).

- 1934: Consensus First Team (United Press, Chicago *Daily News*, Red Grange for *Collier's Eye & Baseball World Magazine*, Patsy Clark for the Portsmouth *Times*). Second Team (Poll of nine NFL Coaches and released by Associated Press. This was considered the official all-pro team by the NFL.).
- 1935: Consensus First Team (United Press, Chicago *Daily News*, *Collier's Eye & Baseball World Magazine*, Green Bay *Press-Gazette*). Second Team (New York *Journal*, Poll of nine NFL Coaches and released by Associated Press. This was considered the official all-pro team by the NFL.).
- 1936: Consensus First Team (United Press, Ray Flaherty in the Boston *Herald*, Milwaukee *Sentinel*, Poll of nine NFL Coaches and released by Associated Press. This was considered the official all-pro team by the NFL.). Second Team (*Collier's Eye & Baseball World Magazine*).
- 1937: First Team (International News Service). Honorable Mention (Poll of ten NFL Coaches and released by Associated Press. This was considered the official all-pro team by the NFL.).
- 1938: Honorable Mention (Poll of ten NFL Coaches and released by Associated Press. This was considered the official all-pro team by the NFL.).