

There's no curse like our curse

Feeling lucky, punk?

As the baseball season wound down, a lot was made of the so-called curses afflicting the Red Sox and Cubs.

I submit that you don't know the meaning of "cursed" until you consider the football Cardinals' dynasty of doom.

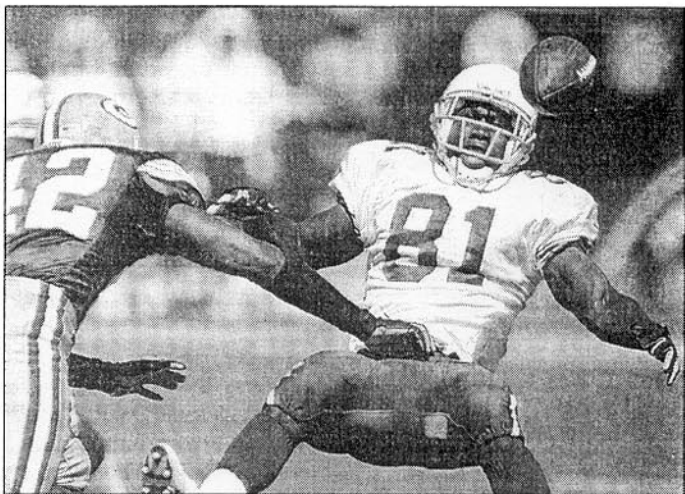
Our bemused NFL franchise started life in 1898 as the Morgan Athletic Club. It was subsequently known as the Normals, Racine Cardinals, Chicago Cardinals, St. Louis Cardinals, Phoenix Cardinals, and finally the Arizona Cardinals since 1994.

According to club records, it is the oldest continuously run professional football franchise in the nation. (I use the word "professional" only because that's what the Cardinals Web site calls it. I also took pause with the word "run.")

Yet in all that time — some 105 years — you would need only one set of nostrils to count the number of championships it has garnered. And that's giving credit for beating out (by .01) the feisty 1925 Pottstowne Maroons, who actually played two fewer games that season but managed to score 200 more points.

Let's take a look at some things that have come along since those halcyon days:

- Television.
- The interstate highway system.
- Sun Devil Stadium.
- "Peter Pan" collars for girls.
- Truman elected president.
- Death of Orville Wright.
- Aluminum foil.
- *Howdy Doody*.
- Long playing records (LPs).
- Velcro.
- Violet M&Ms replaced with tan.
- Reign of Chinese communism.
- Dodgers leave Brooklyn.
- Silly putty.
- Snoopy.
- Princess phones.
- Cleveland Browns — the new version.
- Phoenix: population 100,000.



The Arizona Republic

Whap! A right to the receiver's stomach. Boink! The ball heads for the helmet and not the hands. That's our Cardinals.

- Wallace & Ladmo.
- Sky Harbor Terminal 1.
- "Sheriff Joe."

Yes, it's true. The Cardinals who won the NFL championship on Dec. 28, 1947, lived in a world without velcro. They may have voted for Dewey for president. They enjoyed their 78 rpm records (none of those new-fangled 45s for them). If someone shouted, "Hey, kids — what time is it?" — you'd have probably gotten the time of day. A pair of women's shoes cost about six bucks. When a player woke up on game day, he picked up the funnies to read the latest hijinks of the Katzenjammer Kids. And when they wanted to get a message quickly to a loved one back home, they didn't need to fuss around with IMs or e-mail — well, they just sent 'em a telegram.

If the champion-era Cards had ventured into Phoenix by Desoto (they'd have to wait a couple of years to get a Nash Rambler) they would have found themselves in a sleepy little city the size of modern-day Gilbert with both Interstate 17 and Interstate 10 merely gleams in ADOT's eye.

Sad to say, the entire Cleveland Browns NFL franchise actually came and went without ever having to watch a Cardinals team fight it out at the end of the season.

Now, any team can have a bad season. In fact, you need a "rebuilding" season every



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Special for The Republic

now and then. And any team can have a run of bad luck for a few years, maybe a decade. But a bad century?

"Ah," I hear you tutting, "what about those occasional heroic victories they do pull off?" I say: Even a pig with a bad head cold can find a truffle if you drop the little porker in a truffle patch.

Fact is, our Cardinals are possibly the losingest team in the history of major sports franchises.

I can't really prove this, because it would involve tedious research and I've already exceeded my personal research budget looking up that cool Pottstowne factoid.

So the "Search for the Curse" is now officially on. Maybe we could send the Cards back to Chi-town in exchange for their goat.

I'd offer to trade Sheriff Joe — but they already have enough wind.

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