

WORLD CHAMPIONS

Good day everyone...it's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.

One of the least known football facts of Pennsylvania sports history, is that back in 1903, Franklin, Pennsylvania won the World's Championship of football at Madison Square Garden in New York. The date was December 17. Totaling 462 points to none for their opponents, the Franklin Club, managed by Dave Printz, and including some of the best football and baseball players of the day on its eleven, beat Watertown, New York 12-0 in the game at the Garden. The team, from the Western Pennsylvania town, was wined and dined by some of the greats of sport. Lynn Sweet, Eddie Wood, Herb Davison, Edgar Wallace, Tiger McFarland, who were members of Connie Mack's Philadelphia Athletics in 1902, played football for Franklin in 1903. Famous wrestler and boxer Doc Roller was another team member. The McChesney brothers of Homestead, Teck Matthews, the Carlisle Indian, were other regulars. At the end of the regular season, Franklin had been unscored on. The Harrisburg Telegraph suggested a game to be played for the championship of Pennsylvania between Franklin and the Steelton YMCA. Both teams were undefeated to that time, yet I find no record of the game having been played. Sports Editor P. S. Egan of the Pittsburgh Times wrote that there was no club in the country which could defeat Franklin, especially since the Venango county team had beaten strong Syracuse 12-0, its closest score. In some games, against Youngstown and Niagara, for example, Franklin won 74-0. The New York World organized a tournament for December. Manager Printz, whose team would play the

Orange New Jersey AC in the semi-finals said his team was in great shape, averaged 204 pounds a man and predicted that he'd beat Orange 18-0, then take on Watertown, New York for the championship of the world and beat them 12-0. Franklin beat both clubs in the Garden by a 12-0 score. There were heavy bets on the games. After the championship was won, thousands called at the hotel to congratulate the Pennsylvanians, including Richard Crocker, and the famed William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer. James Gordon Bennett made the team a proposition--he'd take them to Paris provided they would play as the New York Herald team. The Franklin lads refused. They were guests of the New York Chamber of Commerce at a big dinner at the Waldorf in honor of their victory. And some enterprising spirits sold maps of Pennsylvania, with the town of Franklin underscored in red ink, to show blase New Yorkers where these football players came from. The World, Sun, Times, Wall Street News, Herald and others wrote praises for the team and especially for the town of Franklin for having produced it. When I first came across this story a few months ago, I mentioned it to a few sportswriters and they had never heard of the team or the world championship of football, 1903. But it happened, and I am indebted to postmaster Wayne Harton of Franklin for the follow up and research aid to the story. 462 points to nothing--that's some record today--it was even more so in 1903, when the Franklin AC, of Pennsylvania won the world football championship in Madison Square Garden and brought fame to the town in western Pennsylvania.

This is Pete Wambach. It's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.