

## SPORTS

### Computer Advice Tells Cards To Rush First and Pass Later

Why are the St. Louis Cardinals suddenly a power team in the National Football League? The Cardinals, mired in mediocrity for years, play the Minnesota

#### About Pro Football

Vikings in tomorrow's Monday night football game and they are something to behold, victors in seven of eight games this season. They went from mediocre to magnificent in a hurry.

Bud Goode, a computer analyst based in Los Angeles, can tell why with figures. Joe Sullivan, director of operations for the St. Louis club, is generous enough to credit Goode with helping the Cardinals to find their identity.

Two schools of thought have blended here. Obviously the team with the best players wins the most games. When the distinctions among the National Football League's 26 teams become obscure as to which has the best because all are so even, then other factors come into play. They would be coaching, of course, and the front office as to creating a happy environment. But the man with the numbers causes reflection and reinforcement.

Sullivan, who goes back half a decade with Goode, and Don Coryell, the St. Louis coach, listened to the computer man, who describes himself as a football doctor, and ranks as the best numbers person in the business.

"A lot of people knock down statistics," said Sullivan. "That's all right. But you pay attention to Bud's stats. Maybe they can give you that little edge. And we are all looking for the edge."

As for tomorrow night's game, Goode rates the Cardinals as one-point underdogs to Minnesota if Terry Metcalf

can play and three points down if Metcalf, the star running back trying to heal a sprained knee, cannot play.

Where the St. Louis team has come from (4-9-1 won-lost-tied record last season) stands examination. It changed from a pass-oriented club to one stressing the run. The reasons for the change were three-fourths personnel and one-fourth philosophy shift, thanks in part to Goode.

After eight games, Goode's figures state that the Cardinal running game is 25 per cent improved in yards gained, that it has jumped from 25th, or next to last, to eighth in the league in that statistic. The Cardinals average 37 running plays a game compared to 29 last year.

"That's only seven more running plays," says Goode. "It may seem insignificant but look at the other factors." He enumerated them.

The Cardinals always had trouble about interceptions. They have cut them way down this season, an improvement of 65 per cent. They had trouble with sackings. Jim Hart, the quarterback, was in peril of being dropped for big losses while attempting to pass. Not any more. He has been dropped only four times, an improvement of 68 per cent.

Although the Cardinals are passing less, the air game is still effective for them. Their average gain for each pass attempt has jumped to 6.8 yards, one of the highest figures in the league and an increase of 20 per cent. Furthermore, they have almost doubled their effectiveness in another favorite Goode category, percentage of touchdowns for each pass attempt.

The figure is 7.5 per cent, up 98 per cent from last year.

That ranking is No. 1 in the league; a touchdown for every 7½ passes thrown.

What does it all mean? Goode has put in resolute figures concerning something most coaches have known for a long time: run first, pass second.

Darrell Royal, the University of Texas coach, made famous this remark. "When you pass, three bad things can happen and only one good. So don't pass." The bads are an incompleteness, meaning loss of down and nothing gained; a potential sacking; or an interception.

Goode, reflecting his history as a Hollywood publicist, adds, "Royal should have counted on both his hands. There are eight valid statistics about the pass and seven are bad.

"When a team runs the ball a few times more good things begin to happen. If you can do it, you hold possession. You don't have to expose your defense if it's weak like the Cardinals'. You eat up the time. And you make your passing more effective. You complete the circle."

"He's absolutely correct," said Sullivan. "Of course that's new thinking. But Goode reminds all of us what this game is about. And he can prove it."

Late last season St. Louis had lost Hart through injury and played Atlanta with a rookie at quarterback, Gary Keithley. "We didn't have much choice," said Sullivan. "We ran the ball. It worked. We won. Then Bud told us why. So we traded for Ken Willard, a tough fullback, to get another running back and began to think about run first. I have to give Bud credit for getting us to think right. He is the very best."