



Steve Owen
All-Pro Football Player, Professional Football Coach (New York
Giants),
Son of Homesteaders
1898-1964
Cleo Springs, Oklahoma

Steve Owen was born April 21, 1898 in the Cherokee Strip area of Oklahoma. His father had claimed land when the Strip was opened to settlers, and his mother was the area's first schoolmarm. As a child, Steve's first athletic ambition was to be a professional jockey, but he soon grew much too large for that profession. Standing 6 feet, 2 inches, he weighed about 260 pounds during his best professional football playing years. He entered Phillips University in Enid, Oklahoma in 1916 and a year later was the football team's star defensive tackle and team captain. After finishing at Phillips, he coached there for one year, worked in the oil fields, and even wrestled professionally under the name "Jack O'Brien." In 1924, he became a professional football player with the Kansas City Blues (later Kansas City Cowboys) of the new National Football League. After a league restructure forced the Kansas City franchise out of the NFL in 1926, "Stout Steve" Owen ended up playing for the New York Giants. Behind Owen, the 1927 Giants went 11-1-1 and won the NFL championship.

In 1931, Owen was named the new head coach of the New York Giants, a position he held for the next 23 seasons. His agreement with the Giants for his entire tenure there was not by way of a contract, but rather a simple handshake. Owen's Giants won their first division championship in 1933 and their first league championship a year later. During his 23 years as the New York coach, his teams compiled a 153-108-17 record, winning two NFL championships and eight divisional titles. Owen is now regarded as one of the most innovative coaches in professional football history. Among his most well known original ideas were the A-formation offense, the umbrella defense, and the two-platoon system.

Owen retired from coaching the Giants in 1953 and lived until May 17, 1964. In 1966, just two years after his death, Steve Owen was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio. He rose from humble beginnings as the son of homesteaders to become one of the most successful and revered athletic coaches in American history.