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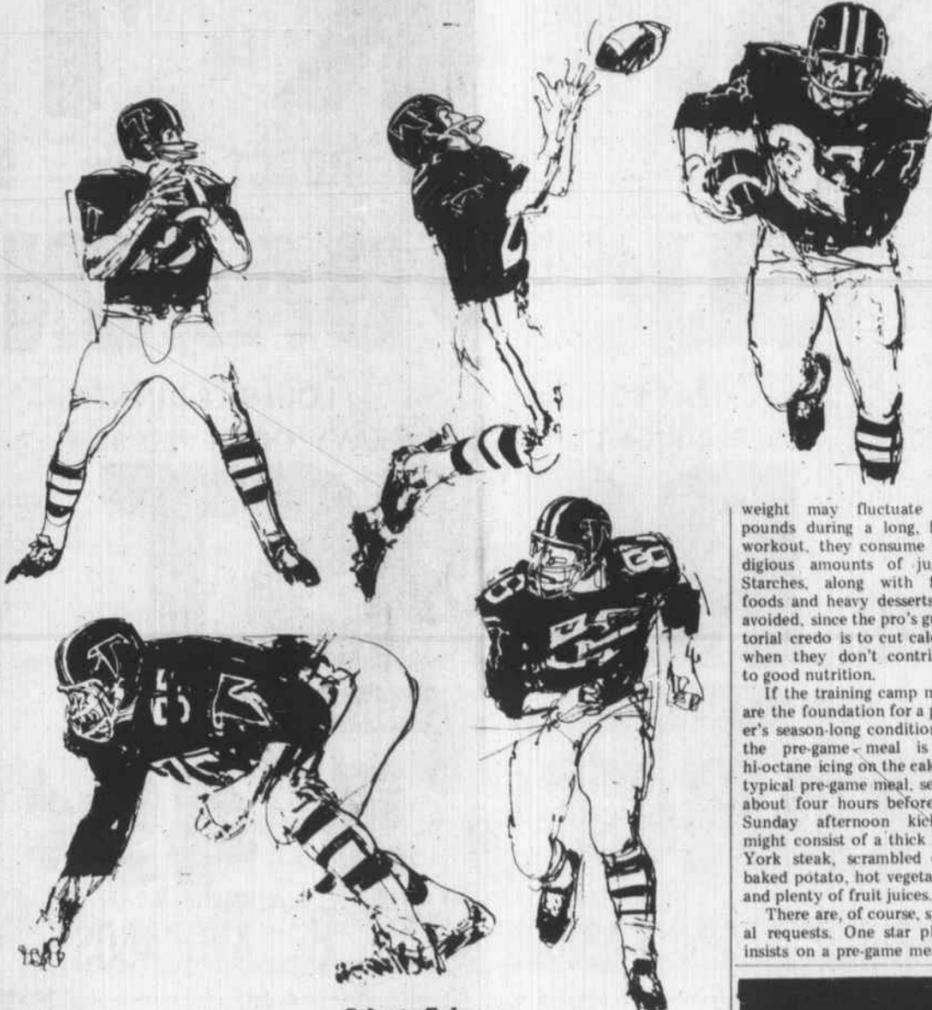
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Nutrition Is Their Goal



Atlanta Falcons

A well balanced diet plays an essential part in every National Football League team's overall fitness and game-time performance, as well as in every family's health and well-being. Drawing courtesy of National Football League Properties, Inc.

New York (NAPS) Supply half a ton of meat, nearly 200 dozen eggs, over 30 crates of fresh fruit, and 170 gallons of fruit drink, and what have you got?

The answer? The training table menu of a typical National Football League team for an average week during pre-season training. Fueling a professional

football team may involve some staggering statistics—both individually and collectively—particularly during the training camp period, when the teams eat three meals a day together. But underlying the quantity story is a great concern for the quality of nutrition.

Today's pros know that their performance on the field is directly linked to their physical condition, and this means more than just exercise—it means proper nutrition as well.

The diet for players on each of the 16 NFL clubs is closely supervised by trainers, team physicians, and food directors or dieticians. The result is a combination of calories, vitamins and proteins that enables the pros to sustain the hard knocks and all-out drives that make up the game.

Of course, while everyone doesn't have the nutritional requirements of a 280-pound tackle, a well-balanced diet nevertheless plays an essential part in every family fitness program.

The pro players themselves, for the most part, are well aware of what's good for them. They have learned to follow good food habits during the off-season as well as during the season. At training camp, however, conditions are designed and controlled for maximum nutritional benefits.

Calories are watched by pro footballers just as avidly as by non-gridders—but often for a different reason. In most camps, there are more players trying to gain weight than lose. Consequently, there is plenty of food available—and calories may range from 900 to 6,000 per day. The average pro consumes about 3,000 calories daily. But they aren't wasted. They're what the players need to keep charging through long workouts.

Training table diets may be adjusted to fit the needs of individual players. Some teams have separate "fat man's" tables for overweight players. These get skim or instant nonfat milk, no rich desserts, and smaller portions, to help them achieve their ideal playing weight.

With players on any given team coming from a score or more of states, there naturally are food-preferences and prejudices. But without exception the teams rely heavily on meat, cheeses, and wheat cereals for protein; fruit juices, vitamin-fortified drinks, fresh and dried fruit, and light desserts for energy; and a variety of vegetables and salads for needed vitamins. Because the players'

a plate of scrambled eggs, dry, with a side order of two raw eggs. Others stipulate liquid foods only before a game.

"There's a lot of psychology involved in the pre-game

meal," explains one NFL team physician. "There are a lot of fetishes and folklore tied up in athlete diets. A lot depends on where he's from, where he went to school, and what his high school coach may have told him. We just

see that they get what they want, and lots of it."

All this, he adds, is to insure that the players go onto the field as mentally and physically prepared as possible.

At home or on the road, the pros occasionally indulge in their special favorites, which may run the gamut from seafood to Italian diners. They, like any home-maker, know that variety is the spice of life when it comes to food.

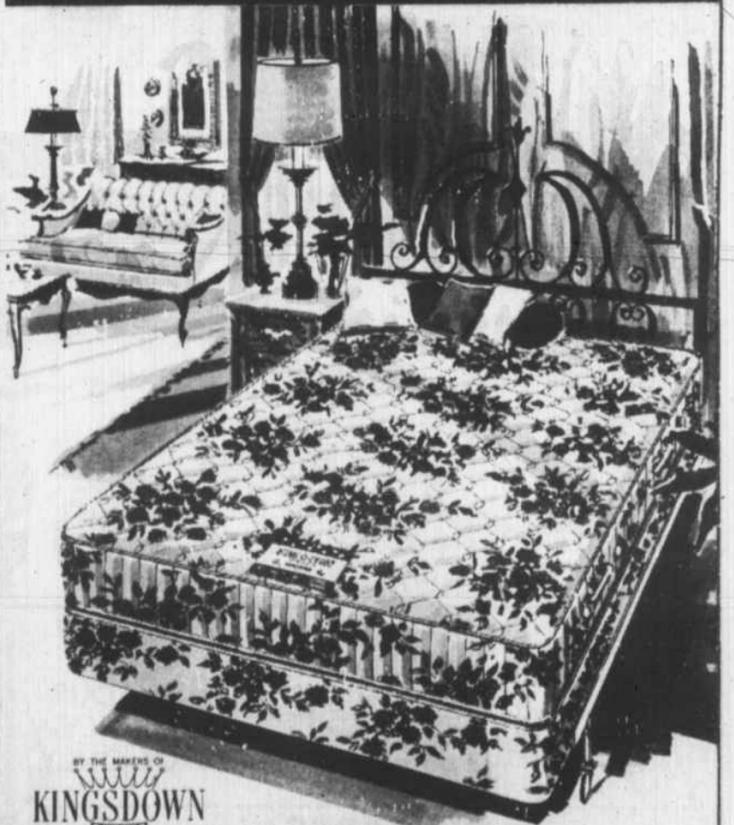
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