

# THE HERALD-PRESS Sports

Paul Siegfried  
Editor/356-6700, ext. 113

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## Before Chicago had Rex, Huntington had Rex

By PAUL SIEGFRIED  
Sports Editor

When Rex Daniel Grossman III leads the Chicago Bears into Sunday's NFL playoff game against the Carolina Panthers, he'll represent three generations of family football heritage, a legacy that extends all the way back to Huntington.

Grossman's grandfather, the original Rex Daniel Grossman, was a standout player for Huntington High School, later for Indiana University and then into the professional ranks. He is still the only player from Huntington to play in the NFL.

Rex Daniel Grossman Jr., who goes by his middle name, also played football for IU, then became a prominent eye surgeon in Bloomington, where he raised his family, including Rex III.

Dan Grossman says Huntington was always part of who his father was.

"We would come to Huntington and he

showed us where he lived and where he went to high school, where he had his paper route. He was very proud of being a Huntington Viking, I can tell you that," he says. "When Huntington went to the state basketball finals in 1964, I guarantee we

that averaged 41.5 points a game and finished with a 9-1 record.

Grossman, who played fullback, teamed with half-back Ray Overmire.

The duo was dubbed the "Touchdown Twins," with Overmire scoring 150 points and Grossman 143.

Ivan "Kaiser" Wilhelm, who played football at Huntington High School following Grossman in the mid-1940s, remembers the way Grossman played.

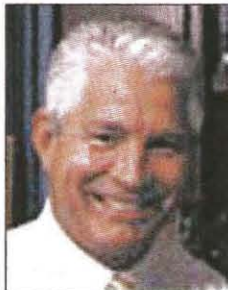
"He was a good footballer, about 210 or 215 pounds, and he had speed and power. He was hard to bring down," says Wilhelm. "They had what they called an inside runner and an outside runner. Ray Overmire ran outside and Rex would run inside. When he'd come inside, he'd run over you."

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### THREE GENERATIONS OF GROSSMANS



Rex Grossman, Sr.  
in 1942



Dan Grossman



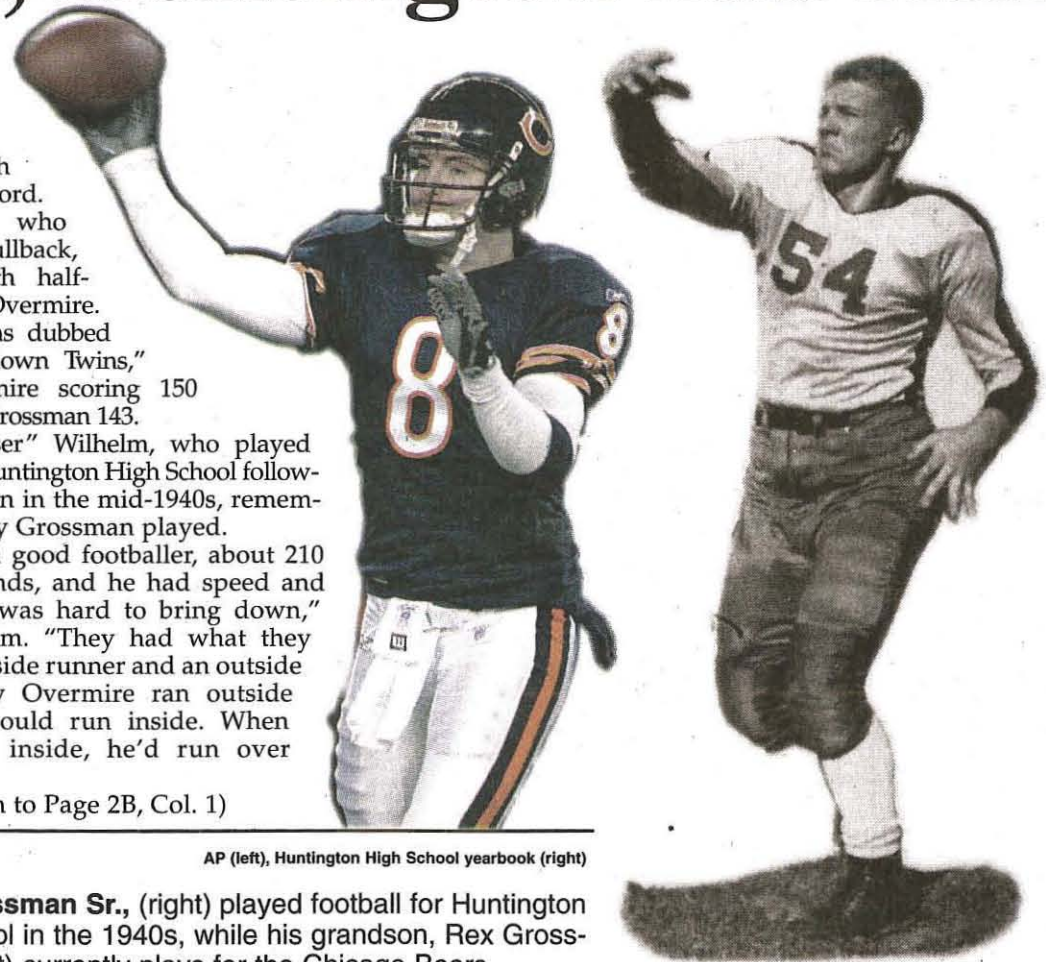
Rex Grossman III

were there. He was a big Mike Weaver fan. He was a Huntington fan to the day he died. He always loved Huntington."

The eldest Grossman was a top all-around athlete, but it was on the football field where Grossman made his mark as a four-year varsity player at Huntington High School.

In Grossman's junior year for the Vikings in 1940-41, he was part of a team

Rex Grossman Sr., (right) played football for Huntington High School in the 1940s, while his grandson, Rex Grossman III (left) currently plays for the Chicago Bears.



AP (left), Huntington High School yearbook (right)



# Before Chicago had Rex

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Grossman, nicknamed "Moe," also kicked, punted and occasionally threw the ball for the Vikings. In his senior year, Grossman and the Vikings got off to a good start, but Grossman was injured. Despite missing half the season, he was still named all-conference and all-state for the second straight year.

The 1941 HHS yearbook, "The Modulus," summed up Grossman's career:

"Playing his fourth and last year of Varsity ball at the full back spot, 'Moe' closed out one of the most brilliant football careers ever offered by an H.H.S. athlete," the write-up recalled. "His excellent punts, his accurate passing, and his terrific drives combined to make him the spearhead of the Norse offense for several years. His past record points to a shining college career in the future."

That forecast came to pass at Bloomington, where Grossman had a solid IU career, including one unforgettable moment. In 1947, he kicked the game-winning field goal in a 16-14 victory over Purdue. It was the final win for coach Bo McMillin, and the last win for Indiana over Purdue until 1962, which meant Grossman's field goal lingered in the minds of Hoosier fans for 14 years.

Grossman went on to play fullback, linebacker and kicker for the Baltimore Colts. In 1948, his rookie season, he led the All-American Football Conference in field goals.

The AAFC merged with the National Football League in



Huntington High School yearbook

**Rex Grossman (left) and Ray Overmire (right)** were dubbed the "Touchdown Twins" during the 1941 Huntington High School football season when the Vikings averaged 41.5 points a game, with Overmire scoring 150 points that season and Grossman 143.

1950, Grossman's final professional season. He started the year with the Colts but was traded to Detroit, where he finished the season.

In 1950, Dan was born, and the family moved back to Bloomington, where Rex Sr., his playing days over, started a construction company with his brother, Ren.

Dan also followed his father as a football player, quarterbacking an undefeated high school team, then going on to play for the Hoosiers. Dan's last season for IU was in 1972. He went on to the IU School of Medicine, then opened an eye care practice in Bloomington in 1980.

Rex Sr. instilled his passion for athletics and competition in his son.

"He coached me when I was growing up, in three sports, and I got to see his intensity. That's the word that jumps off my lips when I think of him as an athlete," says Dan. "I've gotten to know Bobby Knight pretty well and — in a little less profane way — my dad was as intense as Bobby Knight ever was. That's how he approached life, and that's the way he played, I'm sure."

Rex Sr., died in June 1980. He did not have a chance to meet his grandson, who was born in August of that year and was given his grandfather's name.

Dan was just 3 years old when his father taught him how to properly grip a football, holding it back toward the point, with the ring finger

on the laces and the others off to give the ball the best spin. Dan showed his son the same way at the same age.

"That's how I learned how to throw the ball," says Dan. "My dad taught me not only the basics of football, but the basics of life, and I've tried to pass that on to my son."

The youngest Rex went on to have an All-America high school career as a quarterback at Bloomington South High School, throwing 76 touchdown passes in two years. He bypassed his father and grandfather's alma mater to play ball at the University of Florida.

As a sophomore in 2001, he was second in the Heisman Trophy balloting, only the second sophomore to finish so high. He played his junior season for the Gators, then decided to forgo his final college season to jump to the NFL, where he was a first-round choice of the Bears in 2003.

Dan sees some similarities between his son and his father.

"My son is every bit as intense and every bit a competitor as my dad was," he says. "He has a little bit more of his mother's personality where he is not quite as boisterous. He's outgoing, but my dad was just great fun and lived life to the fullest."

"My son's a little more calm and collected, and that gives him an interesting personality as a quarterback. He's cool and calm when hell's breaking loose, and that helps in high-pressure situations, where my father and I would probably be jumping up and down."