News Release

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Tacoma becomes ‘Super Bowl City’ with Gridiron Glory at Washington State History Museum

Tacoma, WA – From all-time greats to contemporary stars, football fans will score big when Gridiron Glory: The Best of the Pro Football Hall of Fame kicks off at the Washington State History Museum (WSHM) in Tacoma. Gridiron Glory is the largest, most comprehensive traveling exhibition ever created about America’s favorite sport. The 6,000 square foot multimedia experience opens Saturday, May 27 (Memorial Day weekend) and will be on view through Sunday, September 10, 2017.
“For 15 weeks, Tacoma will be a ‘Super Bowl City’. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for many people in our region to experience the incredible collections from the Pro Football Hall of Fame,’” said Jennifer Kilmer, Director of the Washington State Historical Society. The traveling exhibit has been featured in every Super Bowl host city since its 2012 debut, and WSHM will be the only place in the Pacific Northwest to see it.

“Many of us have vivid memories of watching high school or college games in the crisp fall weather with friends and family, and lively gatherings in our homes to watch pro games on TV. Some of us have experienced the thrill of seeing pro games in person. Football is part of our culture,” Kilmer added. She also announced a special feature: “A section of the exhibit is dedicated to our Seattle Seahawks’ role in football history. We’ve just learned that we’ll be able to bring in the Lombardi Trophy from Super Bowl XLVIII when the Seahawks defeated the Denver Broncos 43 to 8. It will be on view until early July when they need it back, and at that point Hall of Fame will supply another Super Bowl trophy.”

A close-up view of the Super Bowl XLVIII trophy will be one of many memorable moments for visitors who will be surrounded by hundreds of the most iconic pro football artifacts of all time. Gridiron Glory tells the story of 125 years of professional football history, from the 1892 accounting ledger noting football’s first paid player (regarded as pro football’s “birth certificate”) to a locker vignette with gear from Seahawks players.

“We are excited to help bring this unique exhibit to the area for 12s from all over the region,” said Mike Flood, Seattle Seahawks Vice President of Community Outreach. “It is a great opportunity for fans to visualize how the Seahawks fit into the historical context of the NFL, including honoring our own Hall of Fame members.”

Inspirational stories of the game’s pioneers, great players, coaches and circumstances will unfold through playbooks, videos, spectacular NFL footage in the Champion’s Theater, and more. The storylines tackle everything from football’s cultural impacts to the science behind the game. Visitors will re-live the great moments, honor the great players, be awed by the dynasties, explore the road to equality, examine record-breakers, and bask in the glory of the game.
The exhibit gets physical, too. "How would you like the chance to be the referee and make a tough call? You get to try that in an authentic Instant Replay Booth. Dynamic components help guests learn and have fun. It is definitely hands-on!" said Molly Wilmoth, the museum’s program manager. Visitors will be able to slip on a helmet rigged up with coach-to-player communication; measure up to a pro by lining up their body size to that of an NFL player; and try on reproduction vintage uniforms and compare it to today’s lightweight yet rugged equipment.

Wilmoth added, “We have our own winning playbook of special events coming up throughout the summer, including Friday Football Flick nights, a youth Gridiron Gauntlet day, and a 21-and-over tailgate-inspired night called Two Pint Conversion. We’re also talking about sports and safety at our To The Limit panel discussion.”

Washington State History Museum will post ongoing updates, special appearances, and events at www.WashingtonHistory.org. Some events are ticketed with limited capacity and expected to sell out. Tickets are currently available for Kickoff to Glory, the VIP preview gala on Thursday evening, May 25. WSHM is partnering with the Tacoma Athletic Commission for the VIP event, honoring TAC’s 75th anniversary and celebrating the civic organization’s dedication to youth and sports. During its history, TAC has raised over six million dollars to support youth athletics and the athletic achievements of Pierce County citizens. Proceeds from Kickoff to Glory will benefit TAC scholarships and the nonprofit WSHS.

The museum’s neighbors are also excited about the exhibition have partnered with WSHS for a Gridiron Glorious Weekend in Tacoma package, offering an itinerary of local favorites for the May 27-29 exhibition opening weekend. Buy two or more WSHM tickets in advance and receive weekend discounts including 15% off your room rate at beautiful Hotel Murano; two-for-one entrées at The Harmon Restaurant and brewery (Sunday/Monday); half-off a kayak or motor boat rental at Point Defiance Marina; and $2.50 off admission plus free popcorn at the historic Grand Cinema. Check WSHM’s website for a special Gridiron Father’s Day Membership package too.

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Media are invited for a Press Tour: Tuesday May 23, 2017, 11 a.m.

Washington State History Museum,
1911 Pacific Avenue, Tacoma, WA 98402

Confirm attendance at julianna.verboort@wshs.wa.gov

Gridiron Glory is sponsored in part by your Seattle Seahawks.
Image credits, top to bottom:

A view what visitors can see at the exhibition, including a Vince Lombardi Super Bowl trophy, image courtesy of the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Image of Lombardi Trophy from Super Bowl XLVIII, courtesy of Seattle Seahawks.

1906 football helmet, image courtesy of Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Playbook belonging to Bill Belichick (head coach for New England Patriots), image courtesy of Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Additional Exhibit Information

Exhibition Sections:

- The Great Moments – A stirring video experience by NFL Films
- The Great Players – American legends, such as Johnny Unitas, Jim Brown, Joe Namath, Lynn Swann, and Seattle Seahawks Hall of Famers
- The Dynasties – The teams too tough to beat from every era
- The Road to Equality – The inspirational story of the rise of black athletes
- The Pioneers – Homage to the early days of football
- The Science of Football – An interactive exploration of science, technology and innovation at work through football
- Records are Made to be Broken – Priceless artifacts recounting many milestone events
- Football as a Way of Life – How the sport has impacted life in America
- Football in the Media – Its impact on pop culture as seen through TV, film and other media
- Champions – A look at championship games and teams through mementos
- Hometown Team – Dedicated Seattle Seahawks section with player lockers and more

Events:

- VIP Preview Event “Kickoff to Glory” – Thursday, May 25, 6:00 – 8:30 p.m. Hosted at the Washington State History Museum in conjunction with Tacoma Athletic Commission. Get an exclusive first look at Gridiron Glory! Purchase tickets in advance; limited quantity. Tickets
- Gridiron Glory Opening Day – Saturday, May 27, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Be among the first to see this multimedia exhibition with 125 years of football history! Buy tickets in advance with the Gridiron Glorious Weekend in Tacoma package and get opening weekend discounts.
- Friday Football Flick, Brian’s Song – Friday, June 23, 7 p.m. Flash back to the 1970s with this classic tale of friendship and bonding between NFL players in the face of heartbreaking circumstances. Starring James Caan and Billy Dee Williams. Tissues provided! Rated G with a crowd-pleasing 92% on Rotten Tomatoes. See it in the History Museum’s auditorium. Pay what you can; concessions available for purchase.
- Football 360: An All Angles Look at the NFL Experience – Thursday, June 29, 7 p.m. This panel discussion will explore what it’s like to be part of the NFL. Learn about how to get drafted, the team experience, trading, refereeing, health and fitness. Included with museum admission, or $5 for program-only admission.
• **Two Pint Conversion – Thursday, July 13, 7 – 10 p.m.** This adults-only tailgate-style party at the History Museum includes two beverages from a local craft brewery, a collectible beverage cover, indoor lawn games and other fun activities, plus an opportunity to explore the exhibit! Capacity is limited, purchase tickets at the museum's website.

• **Friday Football Flick, Invincible – Friday, July 28, 9 p.m.** Gather in the outdoor amphitheater for some Gridiron Glory exhibition trivia and then get inspired by the story of Vince Papale, a lifelong football fan and bartender whose wildest dream comes true when he becomes a Philadelphia Eagle! Rated PG. There's nothing quite like superstar Mark Wahlberg on an outdoor movie screen on a summer evening! Pay as you can, concessions available.

• **Gridiron Gauntlet: An NFL Youth Combine Day – Saturday, August 5, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.** This NFL Youth Combine Day for kids will test their athleticism and agility through football-related activities. Families will participate both on-site at the History Museum and at the University of Washington Tacoma's Y Student Center. Partners include YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, and Big Brothers Big Sisters. Free!

• **To the Limit: Health and Safety in a High-Impact Game – Thursday, September 7, 7 p.m.** Panel discussion focused on the evolution of safety in sports, particularly football. Included with museum admission, or $5 program-only admission.

About The Washington State History Museum

1911 Pacific Avenue, Tacoma, WA 98402
10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month. Admission: Free for members; $12 for adults, $8 for seniors, students and military veterans with ID, free for children under 5. Patrons with a Washington Quest card can attend for $1 per person or $2 per family. Admission is free after 2 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month when the museum stays open until 8 p.m.

WSHM is located in Tacoma's downtown core along Pacific Avenue among a thriving restaurant and craft beverage scene. WSHM is one of six downtown museums, and is walking distance to Tacoma Art Museum, the Museum of Glass, and Children's Museum of Tacoma. WSHM is also within blocks of the recently renovated Marriott Courtyard and boutique Hotel Murano, making for an ideal vacation or staycation. Consider the Tacoma Museum District Pass, offering discounted admission to all six of Tacoma's major museums.

About the Pro Football Hall of Fame

Located in Canton, Ohio, the birthplace of the National Football League, the Pro Football Hall of Fame's mission is to honor individuals who have made outstanding contributions to professional football; to preserve professional football's historic documents and artifacts; to educate the public regarding the origin; development and growth of professional football as an important part of the American culture; and to promote the positive values of the sport. For more information, please visit profootballhof.com; @ProFootballHof on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.