

For Public League sports

Neil Milbert

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Bears benefit squad game July 25

By Neil Milbert

THE BEARS will hold an intrasquad game Monday, July 25, in Soldier Field to raise money for the athletic departments of Public League high schools.

Bear Owner George Halas made the announcement Tuesday at a press conference called by Mayor Bilandic.

Halas said he hopes the game will become a mid-summer fixture, filling the void created by the discontinuation of the College All-Star Game.

Skyrocketing costs—particularly players' insurance premiums—forced Chicago Tribune Charities, Inc., to terminate sponsorship of the All-Star Game after the 1976 contest.

"THE IDEA OF our game is to raise as much money as possible for athletics in the public schools," said Halas. "Football, of course, is the focal point. But we'd like to fill Soldier Field to the brim and give the spectators a good show other than football."

No seats will be reserved. Mail orders for the \$4

tickets are now being accepted. They will go on sale over the counter at the Bears' office at 55 E. Jackson Blvd. on Wednesday, July 6.

"Every sport, not just football will benefit from the generosity of the Chicago Bears," Mayor Bilandic commented. "We're also speaking of physical education for both boys and girls and for handicapped youngsters.

"Mr. Halas is very much aware of the plight of high schools in other cities. We've seen what happened in Rockford where youngsters were deprived of an opportunity to participate in athletics and other worthwhile activities last year. On a number of occasions on referendums, Rockford voters elected not to have athletic programs rather than pay higher taxes.

"WE AREN'T FACED with that kind of situation in Chicago. But you don't have to wait for a crisis situation to work for solutions."

A 1912 Crane Tech graduate, Halas said he proposed the intrasquad game to the Bears' board of directors to prevent what happened in Rockford from ever hap-

pening in Chicago.

"We'd like to have the entire community back this project," said Halas. "We would hope companies would give us ticket-buying help, advertising and promotional considerations, sponsor some fireworks and other entertainment, and support the game program.

"The more involvement, the bigger the pot. If we're successful, all of us will have had something to do with improving and insuring high school sports in the city."

THE INTRASQUAD GAME won't be part of the season-ticket package, Halas said.

Coach Jack Pardee's plans call for the equivalent of a full game. It will be the only scrimmage the Bears participate in from the time they open camp July 18 until their July 30 preseason opener against the New York Jets at the Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio.

In addition to fireworks, the entertainment package will feature the debuts of the Honey Bears, a 28-member song and dance group, and Ben Arden's Big Bear Band.