

Gryphons' Lair
Issue 65

We are just a few weeks away from the first day of Summer, which means that the 2022-2023 Gryphon Football season is less than 100 days away. It has been great to see more people and action around campus, and we can't wait for the first tailgate at Alumni Stadium to kick off the OUA football season.

Alumni stadium has been a busy spot over the past month, from soccer to football games. The Junior Gryphons Football team has been out on the field, and we are pleased to welcome back the Guelph United and Guelph Union soccer teams to the stadium for their home games. This is the second season for these semi-professional soccer teams in the Royal City.

And, of course – we are thrilled to welcome back the CFL-based Toronto Argonauts back to Alumni stadium for training camp in early May. We look forward to a pre-season match-up between the Toronto Argos and the Hamilton Ti-Cats on June 3rd. Watch the action from a special endzone party put on by FOGF. All are welcome! This endzone will be licensed, with alcohol and snacks available for purchase. Rumour has it that a gryphon branded zero gravity chair is a part of a giveaway for anyone in the North Endzone – [buy your tickets now!!!](#)



As we begin to enter the Summer, we still have a few Gryphon Football players who are looking for summer work. If you have any available positions, please connect with Head Coach, Ryan Sheahan via email at rsheahan@uoguelph.ca

Thank you for your support of our players and enjoy Issue 65!

What Happened in May?

Virtual Gala Pick Up

Although our gala in April was virtual, we were able to offer in-person pickup for the silent and live auction items. Thank you to everyone that stopped by to pick up their prize, it was so great to see the winners in person! The 11th annual gala raised over \$42,000 for the Gryphon Football program and we have already begun the processing of planning for next year!



Pictured left to right: Rob Mitchell, Randy Dimitroff and Brian Cluff

East West Bowl

Congratulations to the 5 Gryphons who competed in the East-West Bowl in Hamilton on May 7th. Team West came out on top with an 11-8 victory over Team East.

Team West

[Clark Barnes](#) SB

[Juwan Jeffrey](#) RB

[Siriman Harrison Bagayogo](#) DB

[Justin Lauzon](#) LB

Team East

[Spencer Masterson](#) OL

Read the game recap [here](#).



Pictured left to right: Mark Surya, Justin Lauzon, Juwan Jeffrey, Siriman Harrison Bagayog, Spencer Masterson, Donovan Carter, Stevenson Bone

Poker Night Success!

We had a great turnout for our FOGF Poker Tournament on May 7th. Thank you to those who attended and supported our event. A special thank you to Dan Crabbe and Frank Tersigni for organizing the entire night and for all your efforts to plan and run the poker tournament. Money raised from this event will be donated to charity.



Pictured left to right: Heron Tait, Dan Crabbe, Bill Brown

Celebrations

Stu Lang Inducted into Gryphon Hall of Fame

As we mentioned in the April Newsletter, we are very excited to share the news that former Gryphon Head Coach, Stu Lang is being inducted into the Gryphon Hall of Fame in the builder category.

Read the official announcement of induction [here](#).

If you would like to attend the event on June 25th, you can purchase tickets using this [link](#).



Chris Rossetti Joins New York Giants as Director of Pro Scouting

Very excited to share the news that Gryphon Alumni, Chris Rossetti has been hired by the New York Giants to be the Director of Pro Scouting. Congratulations, Chris!

Read the full press release [here](#).

CFL Draft

Congratulations to [Kiondre Smith](#), [Jared Beeksma](#) and [Jeremy Kapelanski](#) for being selected in the 2022 CFL Draft and to Simon Chaves for signing with the Winnipeg Blue Bombers. We look forward to watching you all compete at the next level. Good luck in the 2022-2023 season!

Name	Position	Team	Round	Overall
Kiondre Smith	Receiver	Hamilton Tiger-Cats	4 th	37 th
Jared Beeksma	Linebacker	Hamilton Tiger-Cats	5 th	46 th
Jeremy Kapelanski	Defensive Line	Winnipeg Blue Bombers	6 th	56 th

Read the full press release [here](#).



X



4

ROUND:

37

PICK:

**KIONDRE
SMITH**
HAMILTON TIGER CATS





X



JARED
BEEKSMA
HAMILTON TIGER CATS





6

ROUND:

56

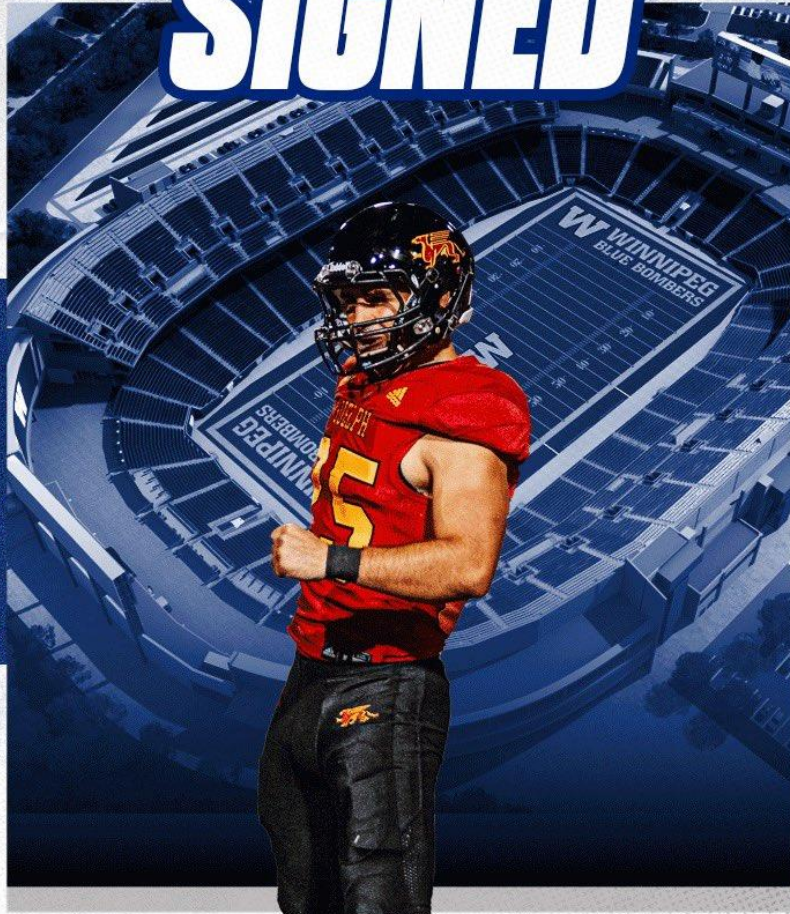
PICK:

JEREMY
KAPELANSKI
WINNIPEG BLUE BOMBERS





SIGNED



SIMON
CHAVES
WINNIPEG BLUE BOMBERS



Gryphon Alumni Makes a Difference

If any of our readers purchase Royale toilet paper, chances are you saw Gryphon Alumni John Rush's dog on the packaging!

John Rush is a Gryphon alumnus who went on to have a career in the CFL with the Winnipeg Blue Bombers and since has built his social media [platform](#) of over 25,000 followers. John is passionate about animals and currently has 2 rescue dogs.

This campaign is part of the Home for Every Pet Project and proceeds will go towards supporting dog shelters. Congratulations, John – we are so proud of the work you have done within your community! Thank you for using your platform to make a difference.

Read the full story [here](#).



Featured Player

Each Gryphon Football player has a unique story about their journey to the U of G. And this month's feature is no exception. The player feature for the month of June is [Stephen Taylor](#), a 4th year Linebacker from Maryland, USA.

When we connected with Stephen over Zoom for this interview, about 75% of the conversation was spent talking about his journey to the U of G, and the challenges he faced to get to where he is now. The saying 'it's more than just football' really rang true in this interview, as we chatted about the bond and connection that Stephen made throughout his time at the U of G, and how he was thankful to have those supportive coaches and teammates in his circle to help him with a huge life decision that he recently had to make. More to come on that later in the article, but for now let's dive in!

Stephen's first passion in sports was actually soccer. He grew up playing soccer, but he came from a football family; his uncle played D1 at the University of Richmond and his cousins played football at their respective schools and often won back-to-back championships. After his dad bought him a weight set as a Christmas present in Grade 7, Stephen spent the year improving his fitness and building his strength to be able to try out for his high school football team.

He made the team during his freshmen year and spent his first year of high school playing organized football. Although he was physically fit and could complete, his football IQ was not up to speed. Something clicked the summer going into his sophomore year, because Stephen had 10-11 sacks in his first 3 games.

"I got pulled up to varsity in my second year of high school, I became obsessed with the game. I loved the contact and the physicality of the sport. I loved the competitive nature of going to battle with your teammates. Football is just one big game of chess and involves so much strategy."

Stephen's father was born in Toronto, and moved to Fergus, Ontario at a young age. At the age of 12, Stephen's dad moved to Baltimore and still lives in Maryland today, but his mother (Stephen's Grandma) moved back to Canada and currently resides in Picton, ON.

"Every few years, my family and I come up to visit my Grandma for Caribana. During the summer between sophomore and junior year, my parents were chatting with Kian Schaffer-Bakers' mom who was a mutual connection. She had asked about my plans for college, but being in Grade 10, it wasn't really on my mind. She mentioned that her son played for the Guelph Gryphons, and that I should consider coming to Canada for school."

Stephen went through the process of receiving his dual citizenship and ended up touring a few Ontario Universities during his junior year. At that time, the pavilion was currently under construction and the coaches were working out of a portable office that was a few hundred metres away from what was to become the brand new football pavilion.

“During a campus tour, my dad and I noticed that there was a sign on the door labelled ‘Football’ so we knocked on the door and chatted with a few of the coaches. I ended up showing them some of my game highlights and talked about the possibility of playing football at the U of G. It was a great conversation, but at the end of the day I was still convinced that I was going to play football in the US at a college.”

Stephen’s senior year didn’t have the storybook ending he was hoping for. In Week 2 of the season, he tore his labrum in his shoulder. But being the stubborn 17-year-old that he was, Stephen refused to end his season early and continued to play through the pain. Unfortunately, that didn’t last long as he dislocated his shoulder in Week 4 after making a big tackle. Stephen knew he couldn’t end his football journey this way, so ended up getting surgery later that spring and made the decision to attend a post-secondary institution in the US.

In the fall of 2018, Stephen ended up going to James Madison University (JMU) in Virginia – his parents’ alma mater. Coming off injury and joining a team with a full roster at JMU, his first semester wasn’t exactly what he had pictured. JMU’s head coach ended up leaving the college program at the end of Stephen’s first semester. Interestingly enough, fall 2018 also happened to be a year the Gryphons made a Yates Cup appearance.

Stephen had mentioned in the interview was that he was constantly thinking ‘What would have happened if I had gone to the U of G?’ Flashforward to January 2019, Stephen transferred to the U of G and within 2 weeks of arriving, a brand-new coaching staff was announced.

“I remember meeting Coach Sheahan for the first time, and he said to me ‘I hope you’re ready to work.’”

Well, that is exactly what Stephen did. He felt that he needed to work twice as hard to prove himself to the new coaching staff. He showed up 15 minutes early to every meeting, never missed a practice or a workout - his work ethic was extremely impressive.

“It was important to me to work hard. My football talent wasn’t the top of the charts, I wasn’t the ‘Kiondre Smith’ of the team, but it was my work ethic that carried me through this program and led me to have the experience that I did. Being a member of this team taught me a lot. There were days I didn’t want to get out of bed. There were days that I definitely didn’t want to go to practice. But I learned that I wasn’t doing it for myself, I was doing it for my teammates. Football taught me how to be selfless.”

Starting a new school, and a new program is challenging no matter what, but joining a team halfway through the school year after a football season adds a whole other level. But Stephen felt that he was a part of the Gryphon family the moment he stepped on campus.

“The thing that I love about Guelph is the atmosphere. I felt accepted even though I wasn’t from Canada; everyone treated me like a brother. I knew that I had found my home coming to the U of G.”

Stephen is currently in his 4th year of Leadership and Organizational Management at the Lang Business at the U of G. When he went home for Christmas break this past December, he had some conversations with his mom about his next steps after graduation, and what he was going to do career-wise.

“My Mom encouraged me to get to know my professors and to start having conversations about my options. The one conversation that changed everything was with Kate Cooper, a Career Advisor within the Lang Business School. I had such a genuine conversation with Kate, and she helped me understand who I was as a person. Kate provided me with networking opportunities, which led to a snowball effect of building my network. I got connected with OUA alumni, football alumni and business professionals.”

“One of the organizations that I got connected with was the [Black Talent Initiative](#). It is an organization based in the GTA which spotlights BIPOC mentors, minority organizations, and resources that are doing great things and providing opportunities for those who are looking for internships and job opportunities.”

Stephen was directed to an internship with Adidas, for a role in Project Management. Their mantra of ‘Through sport we have the power to change lives’ is something that Stephen is passionate about.

The application process was quite intense, and the final portion of the interview was a group case study. The final 16 candidates had to work in groups of 4 to review the case and build a Powerpoint presentation and present to senior management.

Stephen received a call 20 minutes after the case competition and was offered one of the internship opportunities. He was ecstatic.

So far, this outcome seemed perfect. Stephen was a standout on the football field, he had landed his dream summer job and was about to enter his last season as a Gryphon Football player. However, the internship with Adidas is supposed to end on August 27th - which happens to be the date of the first game of the 2022-2023 Football Season.

“I was so excited for this opportunity, but what took away from that was realizing that I had a conflict in my schedule. Training camp usually starts early August and so if I wanted to be a part of it, I would have to leave the job one month early. There were 8,000 candidates across North America that applied for this internship, and only 50 were accepted. I couldn’t walk away from this internship. But at the same time, I put so much blood sweat and tears into this football team. How could I walk away from this sport?”

After many emotional and tough conversations, Stephen made the decision to pursue this internship and step away from the Gryphon Football roster.

“I had many conversations with my family, my teammates, my girlfriend, and my coaches. I think I chatted with Coach McPhee for over an hour about my decision to not be a part of the roster for the 2022 – 2023 season.”

“I got have this incredible experience and got the chance to get connected to a family of brothers. I’m not leaving because I was forced out, got injured, or failed out of school. I am leaving on my own terms to better myself as a professional. Ending my football career was inevitable, but as Coach Sheahan reminded me, I get to leave on my own terms and this decision was my choice, it wasn’t made for me.”

At the time of our conversation, Stephen had been in his role with Adidas for a little over 3 weeks. He mentioned that he can confidently say this position and working with this organization is his passion. He has the opportunity to make a difference. He’s found his purpose and something that is driving him to be better.

Stephen, the entire Gryphon Football community is extremely proud of you and wants you to know that our door at the stadium is always open. We look forward to hearing about your professional career and wish you all the best with your internship at Adidas.

Thank you to Kate Cooper for your support with our Gryphon Athletes, and for sending us a quote about Stephen for this article!

What impressed me about Stephen was how he applied the same dedication and work ethic he demonstrated throughout his football career to his job search. He took the initiative to learn how to strategically job search, bravely reached out to strangers and followed through on the advice he received from the contacts he made. Stephen landing the job at Adidas wasn’t luck. He consistently put himself out of his comfort zone, worked hard to build relationships and authentically demonstrated his drive and passion along the way.

-Kate Cooper

Career Advisor, Business Development Centre – University of Guelph



Pictured: Stephen Taylor and Head Coach Ryan Sheahan



Featured Alumni

From Burnaby, British Columbia, to Guelph, Ontario, and now to Germany – Theo Landers is taking his skills as a QB internationally!

This month's alumni feature is [Theo Landers](#), who spent 5 years playing for the Gryphons in the QB position from 2015 – 2020.

Theo is originally from Burnaby, BC and attended Notre Dame Regional Secondary School. He played for the U18 provincial team and was recruited by former Gryphon Head Coach, Todd Galloway.

“I met the coaches at the U18 tournament and they talked to me about the winning culture of the Gryphon Football program and highlighted that the people and the city really care about the program. After seeing game film, and pictures of the atmosphere on game day in Guelph, I could tell that the city really cared about the team and that was important to me.”

Theo visited Guelph for the high school football camp during his summer going into grade 12. This visit solidified his decision to become a Guelph Gryphon. Theo studied in the Bachelor of Science Program, completing a major in Human Kinetics and a minor in Nutrition and Nutraceutical Sciences.

The U of G is extremely well known for their science program, and one of the highlights is the cadaver lab that students in which students can participate during their 3rd year. The U of G is the only university in Ontario to offer this lab at the undergraduate level.

“To this day, that was one of my favourite classes I have ever taken. It was so different from just reading a textbook. The lab was such a comfortable atmosphere, the teachers were so open and knowledgeable, and it really helped me increase my knowledge of anatomy.”

Although that lab was one of Theo’s standout moments off the field, one of the best moments he had on the football field was the Homecoming game against Queen’s in 2019.

“Although we didn’t win – it was an important game because it was the first game that my mom was able to see in person. It was really special for my mom to be able to fly in from Vancouver and watch me play.”

A moment for Theo that ended in a victory, was the semi-final win against Ottawa to take them to the Yates Cup.

Let us set the stage for you and describe this game. It was a dreary November day, and the weather was a mixture of snow, hail and freezing rain - not ideal playing conditions. The Gryphons were down 18 – 0 at the half.

But something changed in the second half, with the Gryphons scoring 17 points in the final 8:45 of the 4th quarter. The score was 22-19 in favour of the Ottawa Gee-Gees. The Gryphons had the ball and all they needed to do was get into a position for all-star kicker, Gabe Ferraro, to be able to score a Field Goal to tie the game. But, QB Theo Landers saw an opportunity to win the game right then and there and he threw a 59-yard touchdown to [Thomas Bresciani](#) with just 48 seconds left on the clock. Bresciani held off the defense and scored a touchdown to lead the Gryphons to victory.

“The play that we had called, I was very comfortable with it. Quite honestly my goal was not to score, but once I got out of the pocket, I was just looking for someone. We just needed to get close enough for a field goal opportunity. I kept thinking to myself ‘don’t turn the ball over, just get into field goal position.’ Turns out this play worked in our favour and we won the game.”

During our time with Theo, we watched back the video of that incredible pass to Thomas.

“It is memories like that, celebrations with the boys, the comradery with my teammates, the conversations we had in the locker room, those are the memories that I am very fond of.”

Theo has been making some great memories overseas, playing football in Europe for a few different teams.

“After graduating in 2019, Coach Sheahan sent me an email about an opportunity to play overseas for the [University of the West of England](#), in the United Kingdom. I did pursue this and ended up playing QB for this team while completing my Masters in Rehabilitation.”

Theo had a standout season with the team and led them to win a National Championship. He has since moved to Germany to play for [Frankfurt Universe](#), the Pro team in Germany which is part of the GFL 1 league. Theo will be completing the second half of his degree online and will be graduating in June 2023.

What a journey it has been for Theo with regard to football and, in the final moments of our conversation, we talked about one pivotal moment of his playing career.

In 2017, Gryphon QB, [James Roberts](#) got injured in the homecoming against McMaster. Theo was the backup QB and had his number called.

“It was unfortunate to go in under those circumstances, with James being hurt. But I had to be ready on the sidelines as the backup QB. It was a rough game for me personally, but those types of moments have built who I am as a person and as a player. If I can keep my head high after a game like that, I have no shame in anything. It’s important to bounce back, learn from watching the game film and move on.”

Being an out-of-province recruit, we asked Theo to share some advice to future recruits who aren’t local to Ontario.

“It’s important to see University as an opportunity to learn a lot about yourself, get out of your comfort zone and your shell. I recommend going to a place where you will have the opportunity to play if you put in the work and to go to a place where football matters.”

Thank you, Theo for taking the time to connect with your alma mater! We look forward to cheering you on across the pond and can’t wait to welcome you back to Alumni Stadium one day soon.



Pictured: QB Theo Landers playing for Frankfurt Universe

Time to spread the word



Pictured: Theo calling his parents after the semi-final win against Ottawa in 2018

Featured FOGF

This month's FOGF spotlight is a double feature with Gryphon Alumni twin brothers, Shane and Matt Bryans, who recently joined the FOGF membership program.

Shane and Matt grew up in Mississauga and played 5 years for the red, black, and gold from 2002 – 2006. Both are Bachelor of Arts graduates, Matt majored in Sociology and Shane majored in Political Science.

It can be common for siblings to attend different universities and live in different cities than each other, but for the Bryans brothers, Shane mentioned that it was always an interest of theirs to attend post-secondary together.

“We played football together growing up. Matt being a QB and me being slotback/wide receiver it was just a natural combination. We enjoyed playing together and were looking for schools to play together at. Guelph presented an opportunity to play right away, and Bill Brown's recruiting trips were legendary. We loved the campus the moment we saw it. We fell in love with the U of G and choosing to be Gryphons was certainly something that we don't regret.”

Call it what you want, but that twin instinct was prominent throughout their playing days. Matt shared a memory of his first pass in the OUA.

“My second game as a Gryphon, I was able to dress and got the opportunity to play. I remember being nervous, and often when you're nervous you typically resort back to something that you are comfortable with. For one of the plays, I remember seeing my brother go across the middle, so I threw it to him for a completion. That helped calm the nerves and it ended up being one of my best games as a Gryphon.”

A highlight memory for Shane from his days as a Gryphon was securing a victory against the University of Ottawa, who was a nationally ranked team at the time.

“If we were to look back at our years at Guelph, I would look at it as years of growth and years of building up the program. I think in second year was when we really began to be 'seen' in the OUA as a strong team and a team that could compete with anybody. We continually got better each year and I think that momentum has continued over the last 20 years.”

A turning point for Matt specifically in terms of growth and development was playing against his rivals, the Western Mustangs.

“The week prior, we played against Wilfrid Laurier and who went on to win the National championship, and let's just say we lost by multiple points. The following week, we had a game against Western and I remember having a conversation with my dad and he told me 'trust in your abilities and it's all going to work out.' It ended up being the best game that I played at the U of G, I started the game and we were a strong competitive team against the Mustangs. Even as life goes on, I still go back to that moment, of fighting through adversity, and the resilience that all

my teammates and I had. Any learnings that happened on the football field have applied to my family life, professional life, and personal life.

Many of our readers will be aware of the Guelph Gryphon and Western Mustang rivalry. And for the Bryans family, it was definitely prominent as Matt and Shane's parents both went to Western and their dad played for the Western Mustangs and ended up having a 5 year career in the CFL.

“The schools in Ontario are excellent, Shane and I knew we were going to get a great academic experience wherever we went. But when we toured Guelph, there was just something about the student life and the community feel that made us want to attend the U of G and play for the Gryphons. Looking back on our time now, being a part of that program was something really special and it was exciting to be a part of the development.”

Matt and Shane are continuing to support the development of the program, as they recently became FOGF Members. Shane is especially looking forward to the upcoming golf tournament on [July 22nd](#).

“A big pull for the FOGF membership was the entry into the gold tournament, we wanted to get together with some of our buddies and play a round of golf, and so the FOGF golf tournament is a great opportunity to do that. Aside from the golf tournament, I had been seeing information about the FOGF membership for a while and kept saying to myself that I need to be a part of this program. Gryphon Football was such an integral part of my life, one that helped form me as a person, so any chance to give back was important. I appreciate the work Bill Brown has done to keep the program going.”

Matt is looking forward to connecting with previous teammates and meeting the other members of the program and especially being able to tour the updated state-of-the-art facilities.

“There is something to be said about the charm of the campus and the stadium. Even back in 2002, it was still one of the best places to play in the OUA. The atmosphere was something special. A few years ago, I brought my son, who was 3 at the time to check out the campus, and I think he thought Shane and I were playing some serious US college or Pro Football based on how nice the facilities were.

It should be noted that Shane chimed in with the comment “As long as Landon (Matt's son) doesn't have to see his dad play in the Glory Bowl, it will be all right.”

Not only was U of G the place where Matt and Shane built lifelong friendships, but it also happens to be where Matt met his wife, Emily.

It was quite evident when chatting with Shane and Matt that the feeling ‘Once a Gryphon, always a Gryphon’ runs true and that they are excited to be a part of the FOGF program to keep engaged and connected to the Gryphon Football family.

Thank you, Shane and Matt for being a part of the FOGF program and we look forward to seeing you at the Golf tournament on [July 22nd](#)!



Pictured: Matt Bryans and family

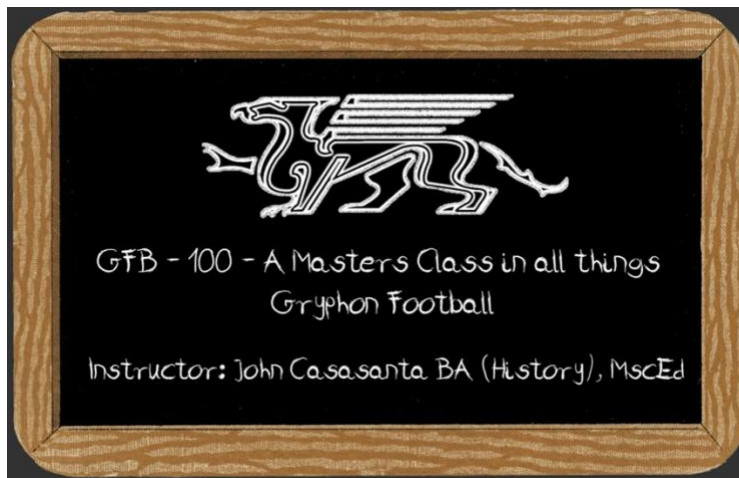


Pictured: Shane Bryans and family



Senior Day Picture for the Guelph Gryphons (Matt Bryans #10, Shane Bryans #74)

Gryphon History Lesson



Welcome to GFB - 100. I am your instructor John Casasanta, your resident Gryphon Football historian. GFB -100 is a master's class where we will delve into interesting and historical facts about all things Gryphon Football. Each month I will provide you with an interesting fact about the Gryphon Football program. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any of your own facts or stats to add to this segment each month. Forward any information, stat, story, or correction to me

at jcasasan@uoguelph.ca. The monthly goal is that you find this section informative and educational. I look forward to sharing with you all, so without further ado let's begin.

This month's lesson is part 4 of 4 of the greatest comebacks in Gryphon Football history. When researching these games, one constant had stood out over all others, these comebacks all led to an appearance in the Yates Cup and in today's case, a Vanier Cup. I hope you enjoy these lessons in Gryphon history as much as I enjoy teaching them. Mr. Rob Pavan ('84 Vanier Cup Champion) please be sure not to let Dudley Brown ('84 Vanier Cup Champion) distract you during class. He's a bit of a talker and loves to tell stories. Mr. Brown there is a time and a place to tell stories but not during my class. Ok let's get started.

Today we will focus on the final instalment of our series of the *Greatest Comebacks* in Gryphon Football history. Before we get into it, let's take a moment to relive some of the biggest stories of 1984. Apple aired their iconic Super Bowl ad changing the way we looked at home computers forever. Canadian Alex Trebek began hosting Jeopardy. The artist formerly known as Prince released Purple Rain, the number one album of that year. The Soviets boycotted the Summer Olympics. The HIV virus was identified. Michael Jackson set his hair on fire for Pepsi. The Space Shuttle Discovery blasted into outer space for the first time, and everyone was calling the Ghostbusters. But most importantly to the Gryphons and all their fans across the country, 1984 was the year we captured our first National Championship and to this date the only National Title in the history of our program.

When planning today's lesson, I had the great fortune to gather research and speak with some great Gryphons associated with this '84 team. Coach John Mussleman, Brian Cluff, and Pat Tracey were all great primary sources providing me with firsthand accounts of the greatest season in Gryphon History. I know the focus is comebacks in a single game, but when you look at the '84 season, it felt like the whole season was a comeback. From losing Coach Dimitroff to the CFL in January of '84, to the late signing of Coach Mussleman in the Spring of '84, to the loss of some key recruits due to the uncertainty surrounding the team months before the start of training camp, one could argue that the deck was stacked against a very talented and determined group of Gryphons.

Coach Mussleman was expected to take this group to the next level but at the same time he was trying to get an understanding of the program and his new players. Each week the Gryphons started to improve; their talent was always on display, but they had yet to put a whole game together. Coach Mussleman recalls 'if we could get these guys to play a full 4 quarters, no one could touch them.' Each week they grew as a team and each week they began to gain confidence and a new hero emerged. It was one of those seasons where the top athletes were great but there were unsung heroes along the way, and more players began to contribute.

But our focus does need to shift to a specific game and when speaking with these three great Gryphons, one game in '84 stood out as the turning point and set the Gryphons onto their path to winning the National Championship. October 13th, 1984, game 5 at Alumni Stadium vs the Western Mustangs.

The season started poorly. The talented Gryphons dropped the opener to York and then dropped game three to U of T, leaving them with a record of one win and two losses with a difficult schedule ahead of them. Game 5 was at home vs Western. Coming into this game the Gryphons were ranked 9th in the country. Up to this point in the season a talented offence led by Parri Ceci was still trying to get their feet on the ground, trying to find a consistent rhythm. The combination of the two Randy's, Dimitroff and Walters, was slowly coming together. "Our defense were the ones who were keeping us in the game most of the time," commented Ceci in the October 16th edition of the *Ontarion*. The defense, led by Rob Pavan, Jeff Yanchus and rookie Phil Reynolds, had made all opposing QB's feel pressured and under fire up to this point in the season. This group would be called on time and time again in this game to help complete this miraculous comeback.

The opening half was an abysmal start for the Gryphons offensively, with two turnovers to start the game, Guelph had given the visiting Mustangs a 17-0 lead going into the half. By the end of the 3rd quarter Mark Harrison, a lead writer for the *Ontarion* had seen enough and was ready to go home and begin writing the obituary to the Gryphons' '84 season. This was a pivotal game and with a third loss and the number one team in the country still on the schedule, the playoff picture looked bleak. Down 27-7 with ten minutes remaining in the 4th quarter most fans at Alumni Stadium felt the same way.

What they didn't realize was that the Gryphons weren't ready to give up and that the opening TD of the second half had provided them with an enthusiasm and a 'never die' feeling. On their first drive from scrimmage to start the half and with the ball on their own 22-yard line, Parri Ceci caught a 23-yard pass from Randy Walters for his first TD of the game. Providing the Gryphons with a much-needed spark in that third quarter. But to the untrained eye that spark seemed to die when the Gryphons failed to score a single point throughout the rest of the quarter. What the fans didn't know and what all former football Gryphons know is that the heart of a Gryphon can't be broken, and that spark turned into an inferno come the start of the 4th quarter.

The Gryphons were down 27-7 to start the 4th quarter and then the Brett Marshall and Parri Ceci show kicked into overdrive. Ceci's 2nd TD of the day early in the 4th made the score 27-14 and was described as an amazing turn of events. On 2nd and goal Randy Walters threw a two-yard bullet in Ceci's direction. A Western defender broke on the pass, but Ceci ripped the ball away from him and maintained possession to give the Gryphons another 6 points. The extra point was good, and the Gryphons began to feed on the momentum swing with the defense stopping Western in their tracks, forcing a punt. With the energy of Alumni Stadium reaching a fever pitch and with a newfound confidence, the Gryphons air attack struck again. Walters hit Ceci again for a quick 42-yard TD strike and now the Gryphons were down 27-21.

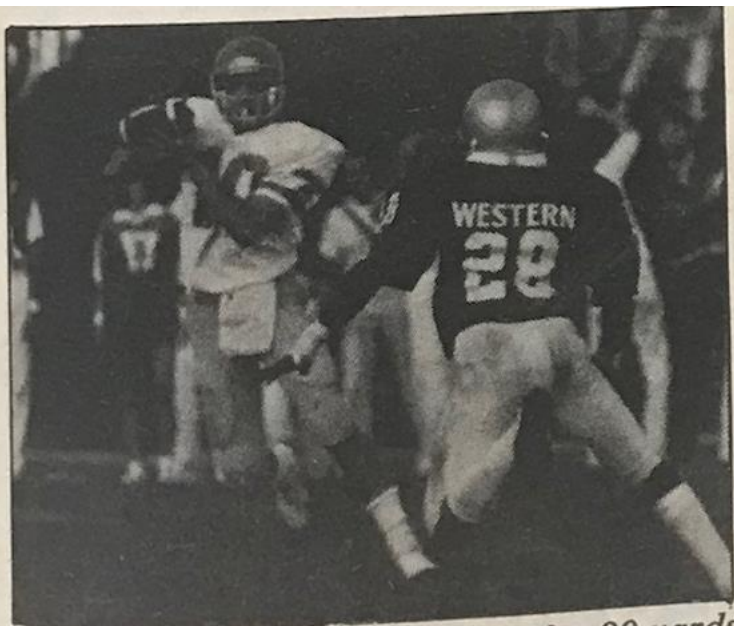
After a Rob Pavan interception, the Gryphons found themselves on Western's goal line with one minute remaining. Everyone in the stadium figured the ball was going to Ceci for his 4th TD of the day but instead on 3rd down and goal, with the game on the line, Brett Marshall ran a perfect crossing pattern and Walters delivered a tight spiral right before the goal post making the score 27-27. Tim Quirke hit the extra point to make the score 28-27 with under a minute remaining.

When talking to Brian Cluff about this game he mentioned the idea of everyone making plays at the most critical of times. Yes, the superstars made their plays but the character guys all followed suit and made plays as well. That's what made the difference when dealing with this championship team. Everyone believed and everyone contributed. It was an amazing sight to see Brett Marshall as the hero, especially with his two brothers on the other side playing and coaching for Western. Brett finished that day as the leading receiver with 80 yards and a TD. One of Brian's clearest recollections was the embrace between Brett and his older brother Greg, a position coach at the time for Western, he said it was an amazing sight that left him with goosebumps. "So happy for Brett to have had a game like that, especially vs his brothers and obviously vs Western."

Now some of you mathematical types like Ian McQueen ('96 Yates Cup Champion), Ryan Strom ('96 Yates Cup Champion), and Peter Partridge ('96 Yates Cup Champion) may be wondering how the final score ended up being 29-27? Well, let me tell you, the defense came up big again at the end of the game and forced another stop. The final point came with seven seconds remaining on a missed field goal, providing the final nail in Western's coffin and adding to an amazing comeback and final score of 29-27.

An unthinkable comeback and a game that had everything a fan could ask for was played at Alumni Stadium. Coach Mussleman started to see a change in his players, this game vs Western and this comeback made everyone believers. They felt like this was their season, this was the turning point and history tells us they were correct. The best part of teaching this class is talking to the people involved, Coach Mussleman, Brian Cluff, and Pat Tracey were amazing resources when collecting this information. One consistent idea shared by all these men was this idea of a whole team coming together and a whole team providing the spark needed to turn things around or to make the play that was the difference between winning and losing. The idea of being a Gryphon never ends, it is a brother hood and reporting on great Gryphon accomplishments each month is my ultimate pleasure I truly hope you enjoyed this series.

I want to thank Coach John Mussleman, Brian Cluff, Pat Tracey and Randy Dimitroff for their time and contribution to this month's lesson. Coach and Brian were gracious enough to spend some time with me and helped me re-live this exciting October day back in 1984. Pat Tracey provided me with amazing resources and information and is always a great source for everything Gryphon Football. As for Dimitroff, he's always good for a work break and providing a quick joke to help get through the pressure of meeting deadlines. It was great to catch up with these Gryphons and just get to listen to their stories and what they thought of that one moment in time where a group of athletes and coaches came together to change the landscape of the CIAU and to play out a season that has never been duplicated. This great group of Gryphons who, to this day remain close and share some of the greatest stories in Gryphon History, will return to the FOGF Golf tournament to celebrate one of their own, Rick Kohler. I hope to see you all there and I hope you all enjoyed today's class. I look forward to seeing you next time when we discuss all things Gryphon Football. Class is dismissed.



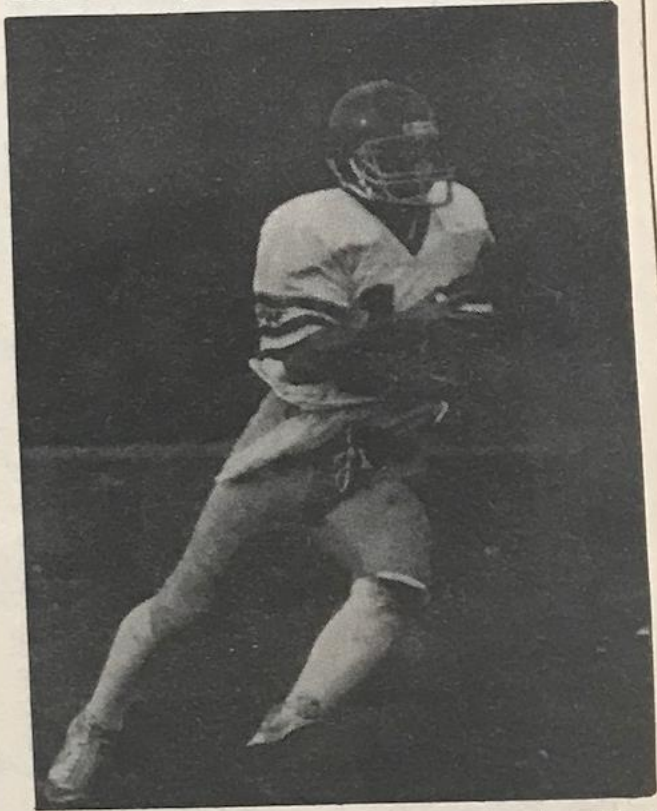
Brett Marshall caught 4 passes for 80 yards and one major

GRYPHON STATISTICS

Rushing	Att	Ydg	Avg	TD
John Godry	12	79	6.6	0
Jed Tommy	14	66	4.7	0
Randy Walters	6	23	3.8	0
Darrell Skuse	1	3	3.0	0
Mark Hurst	1	10	10.0	0

Receiving	Att	Ydg	Avg	TD
Brett Marshall	4	80	20.0	1
Parri Ceci	3	52	17.3	3
Dave Rogers	1	13	13.0	0
John O'Brien	1	12	12.0	0

Passing	c/a	%	Ydg	TD
Randy Walters	9 / 20	45	157	4
Randy Dimitroff	0 / 3	0	0	0



**Randy Walters, led the comeback with 4
TD strikes**

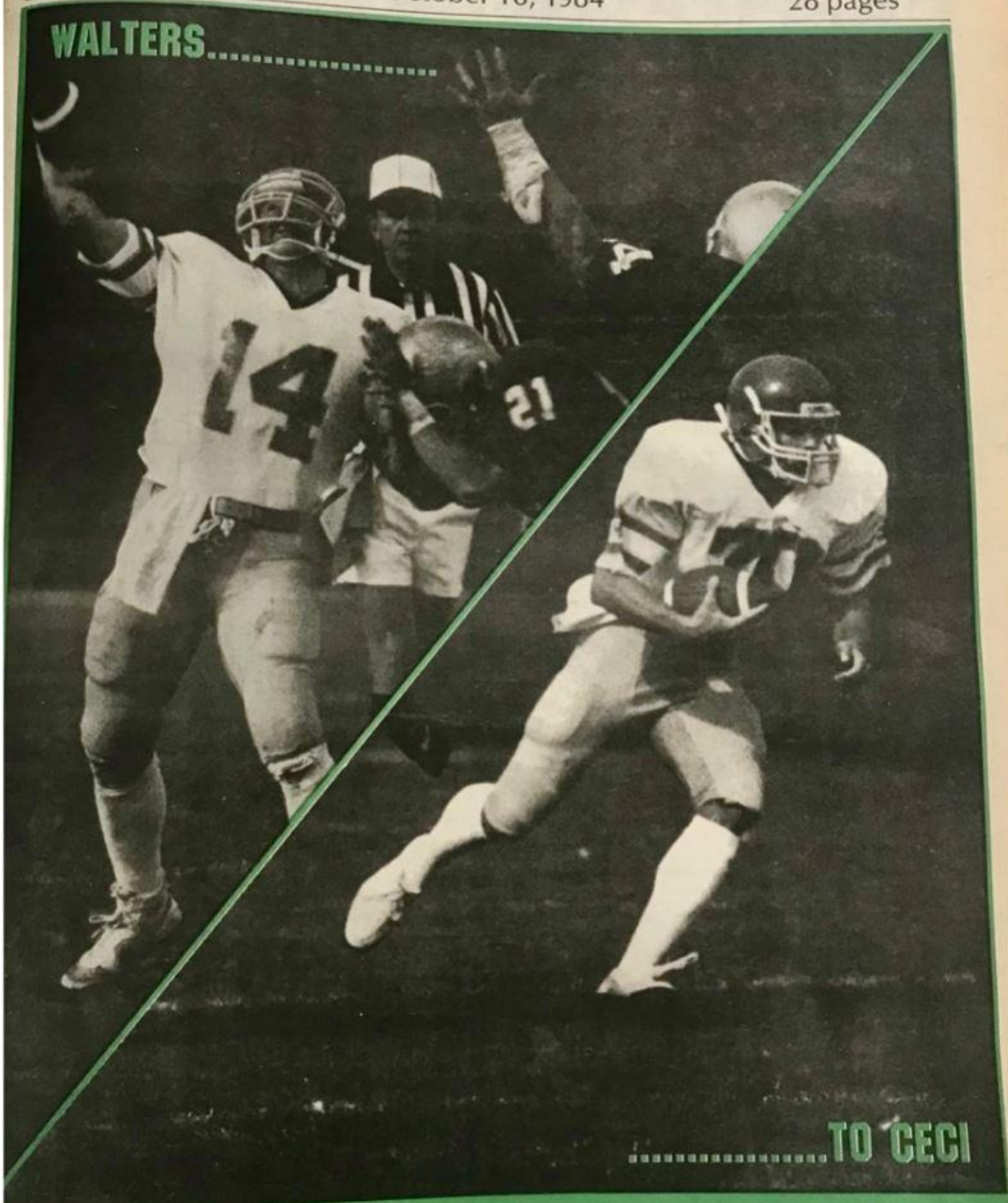
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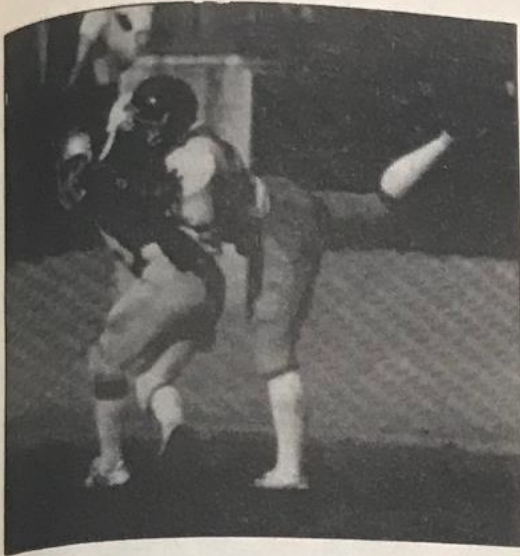
WALTERS



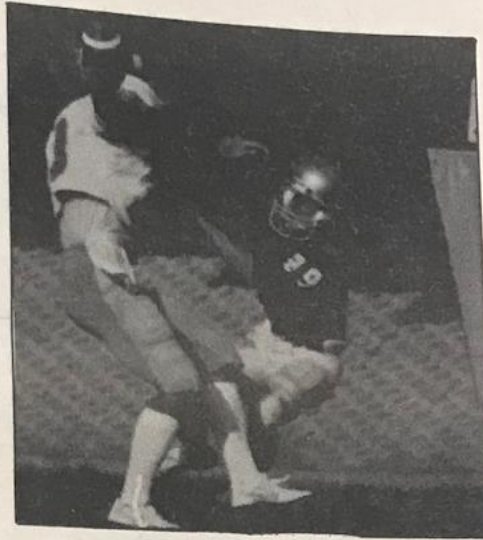
TO CECI

SENSATIONAL COMEBACK VICTORY

Gryphons stage miracle comeback



Parri Ceci snares Walter's pass...



...and spins away en route to six points

After Western
of downs, Ceci c
42 yards out th
six with 12 min

Western stage
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that dealt the t
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Headcoach
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in the second
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Did You Know?

If you have ever been to Alumni Stadium, you've probably seen the Gryphon Statue of a player holding a football. Fun fact - U of G alumni Robert Cram created this life-size statue to symbolize the common football play of the 'hand-off.'

Theo Landers, Gryphon alumni QB, was the model for this statue and worked with Cram on this piece. More information about the statue can be found [here](#).

Be sure to take a picture with the statue the next time you are on the U of G campus!



Gryphons Gone Pro

In honour of the CFL Pre-Season starting last week, we wanted to recognize the Gryphon alumni who are on the current CFL roster. We look forward to cheering you all on as you begin the 2022-2023 CFL season!

CFL TEAM	NAME
Toronto Argonauts	Jake Reinhart Royce Metchie
Hamilton Tiger-Cats	Coulter Woodmansey Curtis Newton

	Jared Beeksma Kiondre Smith Jarryd Baines (staff) Charlie Taggart (staff)
Edmonton Elks	Dotun Aketepe
BC Lions	Jacob Scarfone
Ottawa RedBlacks	Jaylan Guthrie Eric Starczala Andrew Pickett
Saskatchewan Roughriders	A.J. Allen Kian Schaffer-Baker
Winnipeg Blue Bombers	Johnny Augustine Simon Chaves Jeremy Kapelanski Kyle Walters (GM) Mike O'Shea (Head Coach)

#NextGryphon

We continue to add some new talent to the Gryphon squad – welcome, Julian and Ethan!

NAME	POSITION	HOMETOWN
Julian Iamundo	OL * <i>Transfer from Ottawa</i>	Hamilton, Ontario
Ethan Hough	DB	Ottawa, Ontario

Save the Date

FOGF Golf Tournament – July 22nd at Guelph Lakes Golf and Country Club

Purchase your tickets [here](#).

FOGF Gold & Black Members: Please refer to email from Bill Brown to access your code.



2022-2023 Gryphon Football Season [Schedule](#)

FOGF Memberships

Interested in becoming an FOGF Member? There are three different tiers to our memberships: Red, Gold and Black. To find out more information about our memberships and what is involved in each level, please click [here](#). For questions about the membership, please contact Bill Brown at brownw@uoguelph.ca

Share your News

If you have any news or updates, we would be more than happy to share them in our upcoming newsletter. Please reach out to brownw@uoguelph.ca for any celebrations, announcements, or bereavements that you would like us to share.