Gryphons' Lair Issue 78 – July 2023

The sun is shining, the warm weather has arrived, players are hard at work in their offseason training, all these things mean that it's almost time for the 2023 Gryphon Football season! Have you bought your tickets, Gryph Nation? You can purchase season tickets or single game tickets via the link. We can't wait to have the stands packed at Alumni Stadium, less than 60 days until the home opener on August 26th!

We look forward to welcoming our fans, community, alumni, and supporters to Alumni Stadium for the 2023 season!

Enjoy Issue 78 of the Gryphons' Lair and Happy Canada Day!





Toronto Argonauts in the Royal City

We kicked off the month of June with a CFL pre-season game between the Toronto Argonauts and the Ottawa Redblacks at Alumni Stadium.

We were thrilled to have the Argos back at the U of G for their Training Camp during May and June. For any of our readers that drove by the stadium during that time, you definitely would have seen their blue and white branding, from the Argos flag at Champions Corner, to the flags down College Avenue – we were proud to have them call our stadium home.

Over 2.000 fans came out to watch the action, we had spectators in the Business Club seating, the grandstands and in the North Endzone. We had 2 Gryphon alumni on the field that night, a special moment for them to return to their alma mater!

Representing the Ottawa Redblacks was <u>Eric Starczala</u>, and wearing the Argo's jersey was <u>Royce Metchie</u>.

It was a great game to kick of the start of the 2023 CFL Season and we look forward to cheering on all current Gryphon alumni in the CFL!

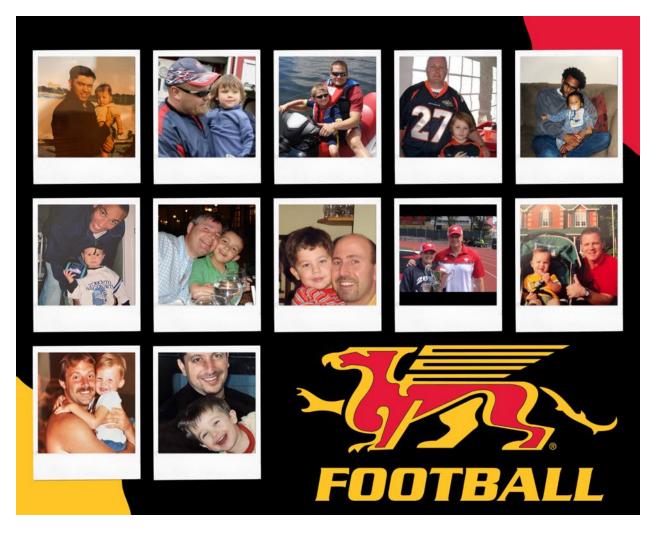




Gryphon Alumni Dan Crabbe, Nick Gallo and Kip Zavitz enjoying the North Endzone!

Father's Day

Check out these throwback pictures of our Gryphon Dad's that we shared on social media for Father's Day. Our players are fortunate to have such an incredible support system!



Juneteenth

Juneteenth (Monday, June 19th) commemorates the emancipation of enslaved African Americans.

Gryphon Alumni, Heron Tait sat down with current Gryphon Football Player, <u>Kobi</u> <u>Ofuokwu</u> for an important conversation about the history of this day and how we can educate ourselves.

Watch the full video here.





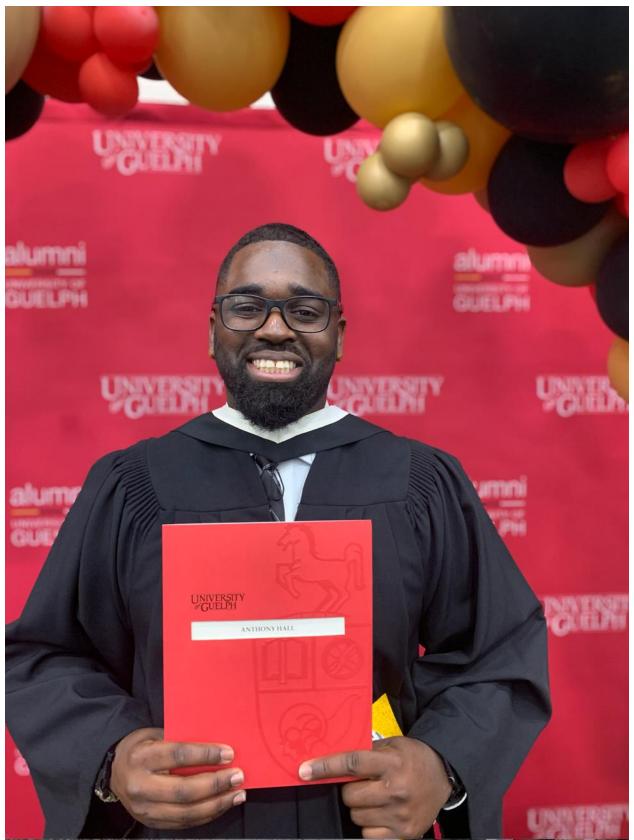
CELEBRATIONS

U of **G** Convocation

Congratulations to all U of G students who crossed the stage at convocation! Almost 4,000 students have joined the Gryphon Alumni Family and we wanted to give a special shoutout to the players from our 2022 roster who have now graduated!

-<u>Anthony Hall</u>, Bachelor of Arts -<u>Evan Spangenberg</u>, Bachelor of Science -<u>Connor Burke</u>, Bachelor of Arts -<u>Richard Morris</u>, Bachelor of Arts -<u>Kwame Osei</u>, Bachelor of Commerce -<u>Eric Stranz</u>, Bachelor of Commerce

Our Gryphon Football alumni family continues to grow, and we look forward to staying connected with these newest additions. #ForeverAGryphon



Pictured: Anthony Hall



Pictured: Eric Stranz



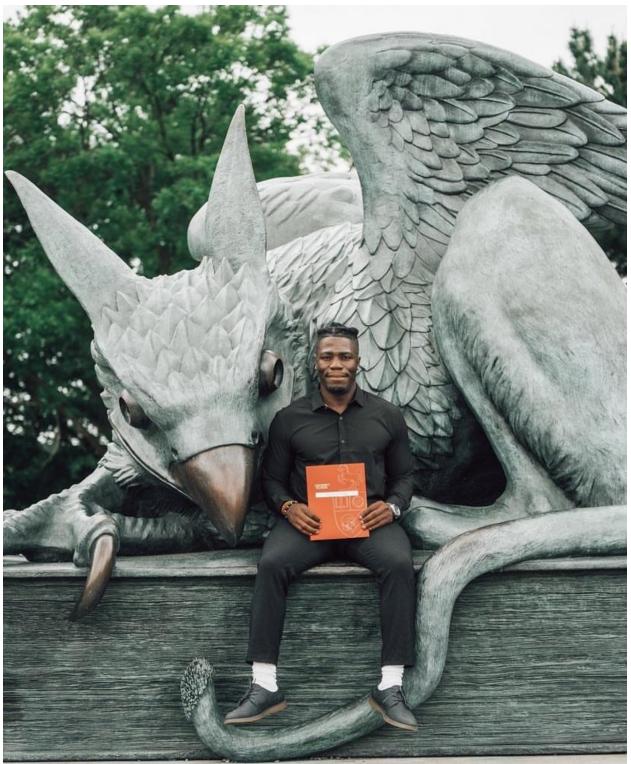
Pictured: Connor Burke



Pictured: Evan Spangenberg



Pictured: Kwame Osei



Pictured: Richard Morris

And that saying #ForeverAGryphon has a very special meeting to Gryphon Football

Alumni and Wildman Recipient, Dave Hume. As some background information for our readers, all students receive their hood at convocation on stage. Once their name is read, they are given a hood that reflects the colours of their degree program.

Dave Hume was able to hood his grandson, Sawyer at his convocation ceremony. It was a very special moment, as Sawyer is a 5th generation U of G graduate.

Congratulations, Sawyer! What a special moment to be officially welcomed into the Gryphon alumni family by your grandfather!



Pictured left to right: Brian Hume (Sawyer's Dad) Dave Hume, Sawyer Hume

Gryphons in the CFL The 2023 CFL season officially kicked off in June and we're proud to have strong Gryphon representation across the league!

Toronto Argonauts <u>Royce Metchie:</u> Defensive Back *Special congratulations to Royce for being named to the CFL Honour Roll for Week 2. Read the full story <u>here.</u>

Saskatchewan Roughriders Kian Schaffer-Baker: Wide Receiver AJ Allen: Linebacker Kosi Oneyka: Defensive Back

Winnipeg Blue Bombers Johnny Augustine: Running Back <u>Mike O'Shea:</u> Head Coach <u>Kyle Walters:</u> General Manager

Hamilton Ti-Cats <u>Kiondre Smith:</u> Wide Receiver <u>Coulter Woodmansey:</u> Offensive Line <u>Jarryd Baines:</u> Receivers & Pass Game Analyst (Staff) <u>Charlie Taggart:</u> Assistant Special Teams (Staff)

Calgary Stampeders <u>Clark Barnes:</u> Wide Receiver

BC Lions Siriman Harrison Bagayogo: Defensive Back

Ottawa Redblacks Eric Starczala: Offensive Line

Read more about the Gryphons in the CFL here.

Ted Wildman Trophy Visit

Each January, the Football team hosts the 'Wildman Awards' event to highlight the individual achievements from the previous football season. Awards are given out to individuals from various positional groups, our seniors are recognized, and we hand out the prestigious Ted Wildman Memorial Trophy.

This award is given to a senior or graduating player who has exemplified to the highest degree the traits of sportsmanship, leadership, gentlemanly conduct, and who has maintained good scholarship.

Ted Wildman graduated from the Ontario Agricultural College in 1926. He was a popular figure on campus, showcasing his athleticism as both a champion wrestler and a star football player.

A few weeks ago, Head Coach Ryan Sheahan received a phone call from Jeff Philips, the great-nephew of Ted Wildman. Jeff had never been to the U of G campus before and wanted to come see the Ted Wildman Trophy.

On June 28th, Jeff was able to stop in for a tour of the facilities and was able to share some stories with our coaches and a few of the previous Ted Wildman Trophy Recipients about his Great-Uncle.

Thank you, Jeff, for reaching out and for taking the time to learn more about our program and its history. We hope you can visit again soon!

"It was great hosting Jeff Phillips at the football pavilion so that he could see the trophy named after his great uncle. I want to thank Jeff for reaching out and taking the time to share stories with us about his family. It was a special 'Wildman' experience seeing him interact with some past recipients that came by to meet him." -Head Coach, Ryan Sheahan



Pictured left to right: Dan Cornwell, Steve Stewart, Jeff Phillips, Dave Hume, Mark Brown



FEATURED PLAYER

"I always knew I was going to choose the U of G and play football for the Guelph Gryphons."

<u>Ethan Pyle</u> aimed to continue playing for the Gryphons in university after being part of the Junior Gryphon team during his grade 9 year.

After 2 years at Bishop Redding Highschool and 2 years at Football North, Ethan was able to fulfill his high school vision of committing to the University of Guelph in 2020.

4th year Offensive Line player and Milton native, Ethan Pyle is this month's newsletter feature.

He joined the team in 2020 with a passion for the atmosphere at the University of Guelph and a long-standing connection to the coaching staff. He was coached by Gryphon alumni Andrew Pickett for a high school camp and knew Coach Mark Surya through Canada Cup and Team Ontario.

As a Sport and Event Management student pursuing a Bachelor of Commerce degree, Ethan is not only passionate about his sport but also about his education. The combination of both will provide him with a well-rounded skillset that can be applied to his future career. In our conversation with Ethan, we chatted about all the planning, strategy and preparation that goes into executing a successful game day at the U of G. For any of our readers that have been to a U of G game, we are sure that you've interacted with an event staff, which are typically U of G students who work part time for the Athletic Department. Many of those students are studying Sport and Event Management, and working a football game, or any other varsity sport game is the perfect opportunity to take what they have been taught in the classroom and put it into practice.

Like many other students, Ethan had to adjust to his first year of university classes being online due to the pandemic.

"I lived at home during the Fall 2020 semester and then I had the opportunity to live in Solstice, which is an off-campus apartment unit for the Winter 2021 semester. As restrictions began to be lifted, I was able to train with some of my teammates. It was great to be able to get to know some of the guys on the team before Training camp kicked off in August."

Ethan had an impressive start to his rookie season, where he started every single game in 2021. A notable moment and highlight from that season was a victory on home turf against the Western Mustangs.

"I was quite young compared to the players on the Western DL, and I remember the game was a lot more physical than I was used to. It was great to come out of that game with a win, and I found my footing after that and felt more comfortable out on the field."

Unfortunately for Ethan, he was a part of the injury reserve list during the 2023 season. In Game 7 against Laurier, he suffered a MCL sprain on the 3rd play of the game. This play ended his season and he had to shift his focus to rehab and physical therapy.

"It was frustrating being injured and not being able to finish the 2023 season. However, I did enjoy going through the process of learning how the muscles and ligaments work and how to rehab it. It helped me fix my squat form and I got to learn how to keep my joints healthy. It was a process of not being able to walk on it and adjust my training but the coaches were able to change up the off-season training program for me so I could do upper body training."

Overall, Ethan's story is one of perseverance and dedication. His passion for his sport and education, as well as his commitment to taking care of his body, make him a wellrespected member of the team and a role model for others.

Ethan is a part of the leadership group, which consists of approximately 15 players who serve as a bridge between the team and the coaching staff and are involved in making decisions that affect the team. Ethan noted that it's a great opportunity to be a part of the conversation and be included in many conversations about many aspects of the football program, such as giving input about the practice schedule, getting to help with the clothing order, and provide suggestions for team bonding opportunities.

Being part of the offensive line unit is important to Ethan, not just for the sport, but also for the comradery that is fostered both on and off the field. A unique tradition that the OL take part in each week, is a trip to Dairy Queen after Friday walk-through. Only mediums can be ordered, and it's worth noting that Ethan has the record of 43 seconds for the fastest time to eat a blizzard.

It was heartwarming to hear about the post-walk-through Dairy Queen tradition, which only goes to show that the team is more than just a group of players - they're a family. This kind of bond is what makes sports so special and it's clear that Ethan cherishes his role in this tight-knit community.

As we look ahead to the 2023 season, one game in particular that Ethan has marked on his calendar is the home opener against U of T. His brother is about to enter his last year playing for the Varsity Blues and Ethan is looking forward to some friendly competition out on the field.

Thank you, Ethan for taking the time to chat with us! We look forward to seeing you and your family at the home opener at Alumni Stadium on August 26th.





FEATURED ALUMNUS

"I can't speak highly enough of my time at the University of Guelph, sports gave me an opportunity to get an education and create my own path. As a teacher, I want to inspire someone else to change their predetermined route in life and become what they want to be."

Recently, Gryphon alumni Zack Silverthorne, got to watch our newest commit, Tyler Foster sign his LOI (Letter of Intent) and become a University of Guelph Gryphon. A special moment for Zack, as Tyler is the first West Niagara High school student to commit to Zack's alma mater.

3 individual high schools, South Lincoln, Beamsville and Grimsby Highschool recently came together to create *West Niagara High School*, and they are known as the Wolfpack. You can see in the picture below, that their logo has the 3 wolves within their logo, and colours from each individual school.



Zack is a proud Gryphon alumnus and is currently a teacher and Football coach at West Niagara. With the recent commitment of running back, Tyler Foster, we thought it was the perfect opportunity to feature Zack as the alumni in this month's newsletter.

Zack played for the red, black, and gold from 1995 to 1999, and he found his passion and home at the University of Guelph. Originally from Smithville, Ontario, he toured the campus during Spring Camp in 1995 and immediately knew that he wanted to choose the U of G for his post-secondary education. While pursuing his degree in Fine Arts and Art History, Zack became a 1996 Yates Cup Champion.

"In 2016, I got to come back and celebrate the 20th anniversary of the 1996 Yates Cup Championship with my teammates. I was pleasantly surprised to see how well we kept in touch after graduation. I'm so appreciative of the lifelong buddies I have, and the 'forever' network that I was able to create, all because of being a part of the football team. To be honest, I am completely blown away by how tight knight the Gryphon alumni family is." In addition to coaching at the high school level, Zack is a coach for the Niagara Junior Spears. Fellow Gryphon alumni Jeff Finley is currently the Defensive Line Coach for the Niagara Senior Team.

"Even though Jeff and I played for the Gryphons during different decades, we still have this bond, all thanks to the Gryphon football brotherhood."

Zack continues to keep in touch with his teammates, and he wishes he could have been at the recent Gryphon Gala, where Jeremy Oxley was celebrated as the Honour Jersey Recipient. Zack was in NYC at the time with his high school students, for an arts and culture trip.

Zack earned his teaching degree in Buffalo and has been teaching in Niagara since 2001. One of his main motivators for teaching and working with kids, is that he wants to provide opportunities for students to create their own individual story. He shared with us that he loves talking about his time at the U of G and sharing his Guelph stories, so he hopes that he can help students have that same opportunity to attend post-secondary and have their moment.

And what a story it is for Tyler Foster, the first official West Niagara recruit to join the Gryphon Squad. Tyler and his family lived in Grimsby before moving to Texas for about 10 years. When living down south, Tyler played Offensive Line, and then his family ended up moving back to Canada in the recent years. His focus was basketball and track, but he was convinced to play for the high school football team in Grade 12. He had never played at the running back position until this past season. Gryphon recruiter, John Casasanta was at a game and after seeing Tyler play, he told Zack 'We want him on our team next year.'

"Tyler is extremely athletic and very coachable. He was recently named 'Senior Boys Athlete of the Year' and I am excited that he is bringing his talent to the U of G. I am forever grateful and thankful for what the U of G did for me, and I am thrilled that Tyler is about to embark on his journey and create his story."

Thank you, Zack being this month's newsletter feature! We can't wait to have you back at your alma mater for a game to watch Tyler run across the field wearing Gryphon colours!



Pictured left to right: Zack Silverthorne and Tyler Foster



FEATURED FOGF MEMBER

Brett McCallum



Current Career:

BRETT IS CURRENTLY A FIREFIGHTER FOR THE CITY OF HAMILTON.

Favourite FDGF Event:

IT'S DIFFICULT TO PICK A FAVOURITE FOGF EVENT AS I REALLY ENJOY ATTENDING ALL OF THE EVENTS I'M ABLE TO. THE GOLF Tournament is always a fantastic time and the gala is a wonderful celebration of past alumni and always a special night for catching up with other fogf members and alumni. Game day fogf events are also great for catching up with alumni members while cheering for the future alumni still on the field.

Reason for joining the FOGF Membership Program:

I JOINED THE FOGF VERY SIMPLY BECAUSE "ONCE A GRYPHON, ALWAYS A GRYPHON". AS THE YEARS HAVE GONE BY I REALIZE More and more how much of a privilege it was to be a member of gryphon football and what a pleasure it is to share the company of other alumni at games and events, while supporting the continued success of our team.

FOGF FEATURE GRYPHONS' LAIR







Welcome to GFB – 100. Welcome back to the Summer School Edition of 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 <u>jcasasan@uoguelph.ca</u>. 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.

For this month's lesson we will continue with our pictorial retrospective of Gryphon Football. July's focus will be the 1984 Vanier Cup Champions. Let's begin with a quick synopsis of that magical season.

"The Gryphon Football team appears powerful on paper, but unfortunately, the game is played on grass. Unfortunate? Yes indeed, for the Gryphons 1984 opponents. A new coach replaced a man that took a 2-5 to four straight playoff berths and a 1983 no. 2 National ranking. Opponents will have to be wary of the Gryphons this year, as Guelph could be a powerhouse." This was published in the Ontarion September 4th,1984, previewing the upcoming season. The Gryphons were 5-2 in 1983 and were defeated by U of T in the playoffs a disappointing end to a promising season. With the success of the 1983 season as inspiration, the Gryphons were ready to win it all in 1984.

Unfortunately, the Gryphons got off to a slow start, with a season opening loss to York and a week 3 loss to U of T the Gryphons started the season 1-2 and were barely hanging on to a playoff spot. October 13th, 1984 was a crucial date in Gryphon history. In front of raucous crowd at Alumni Stadium the Gryphons were down 27-7 to the Western Mustangs, with 10 minutes to go. A loss to Western would have made making the playoffs almost impossible, dashing any hopes of a National Championship for one of the most talented Gryphon Football teams of all time. As discussed in an earlier lesson the Gryphons rallied late and defeated Western 29-27 keeping their playoff hopes alive. Now one would think with the momentum of this miracle comeback the 1984 Gryphons would have run the table to win the National Championship. The 1984 Gryphons liked to make things interesting for their fans and lost their final game vs McMaster. Making their road to the Vanier extremely difficult and finishing the season with a 4-3 record.

Game 1 of the playoffs was on the road against the undefeated, number 2 team in the Nation, McMaster Marauders, a rematch from the week before. The Gryphons marched into Hamilton and avenged the season ending loss by pounding the Marauders 27-15 to set up a Yates Cup vs the Mustangs at J.W. Little Stadium in London on November 10, 1984. The Gryphons came out of London with a 31-26 victory to win the 1984 Championship. Setting up a Central Bowl matchup vs the top ranked team in the country Calgary Dinos. November 17th, 1984, saw 8500 GRYPH-FANS cheer on their Gryphons to a 12-7 victory over the Dinos and punching their ticket to the programs first

National Championship berth vs. Mount Allison University. November 24th, 1984, in front of a sold-out crowd at Varsity Stadium the Gryphons overpowered the Mounties 22-13 to win their first Vanier Cup.

Thanks to the staff of the Ontarion for allowing us access to every issue beginning in 1952 with the OAC Aggies then Redmen and right up to today's Gryphons. I hope you enjoy this retrospective and for some of you I hope you enjoy seeing some of these great moments you were a part of. Enjoy.







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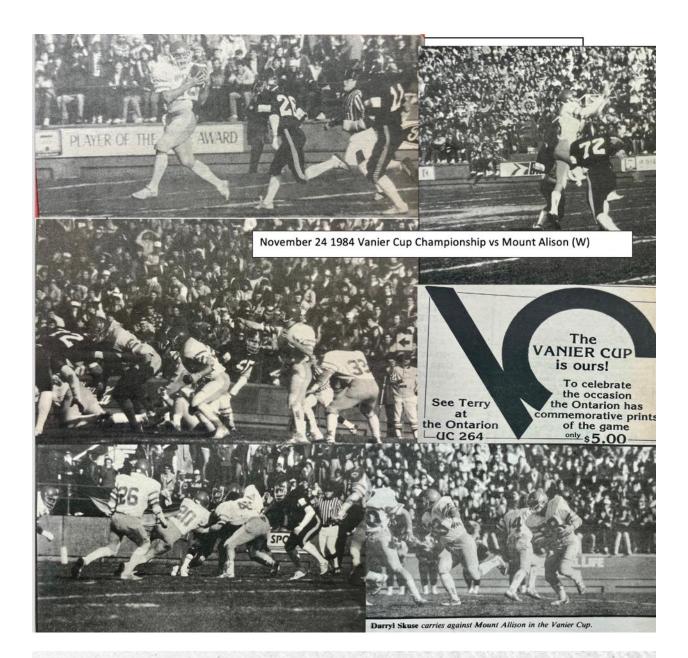
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GRYPHONS GONE PRO

This month's Gryphons Gone Pro is <u>Jacob Scarfone</u>. In 2016, He was drafted in the 6th round, 47th overall by the Hamilton Tiger-Cats. He was released in July and finished up his playing career at the U of G in 2017. Throughout his CFL career, he played for the Hamilton Tiger-Cats, Ottawa Redblacks and BC Lions.

Scarfone has retired from the CFL and is heading back to school to complete his MBA. All the best with your next chapter, Jacob!





#NEXTGRYPHON

We are adding the final touches to our 2023 Gryphon Football roster. Welcome to the team, Brock, and Tyler!

NAME	POSITION	HOMETOWN		
Brock Leaver	ATH	Belleville, Ontario		
Tyler Foster	RB	Grimsby, Ontario		



Did you Know that we have Gryphon alumni in the CFL, NFL and overseas in Europe? We are doing a review of our alumni database and want to make sure our records are

accurate. If you are a Gryphon alumni and spent part of your post-university football career playing overseas, please email Bill Brown at <u>brownw@uoguelph.ca</u> outlining the following information.

-Years played overseas

-Football position

-Team(s) and/or organization(s) that you played for



HOME GAMES -Saturday, August 26th @ 1 PM vs. University of Toronto -Saturday, September 9th @ 1 PM vs. Laurier -Saturday, September 23rd @ 1 PM vs. York (Homecoming) -Saturday, October 14th @ 1 PM vs. Queen's

AWAY GAMES -Sunday, September 3rd @ 7 PM vs. Windsor -Saturday, September 16th @ 1 PM vs. McMaster -Saturday, September 30th @ 1 PM vs. Waterloo -Saturday, October 21st @ 1 PM vs. Carleton

Season tickets and single tickets can be purchased at gryphons.ca/tickets



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



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