

Gryphons' Lair
Issue 64

Intro Messaging:

April was a month of celebration! From the Wildman Awards Dinner to the 'Virtual' Gala, we were so excited to be able to honour many deserving people and recognize them for their accomplishments.

This month's newsletter marks our 64th edition of the Gryphons' Lair – thank you to our dedicated readers and welcome to the new subscribers who joined the email list this month. We value your feedback and want to hear your thoughts about what you enjoy about the monthly newsletter and what you think could be improved. Please fill out this [short survey](#) – we appreciate your time! All responses to the survey will be anonymous.

Enjoy Issue 64!

What happened in April?

Wildman Awards Dinner

On Tuesday, April 5th we were able to gather at the Delta Hotel and Conference Centre in Guelph to celebrate the 2021 season! It was a great night to reflect on the season, say goodbye to our graduating seniors and congratulate our award winners. Thank you to our video crew, Dhanung Bulsara and Alex Vutskos for putting together an incredible [highlight reel](#) that captured the big moments of our 2021 season.

Congratulations to all award winners and a special thank you to Stevenson Bone and Lindsay Williams and their team for putting together a fabulous event!

Award Winners:

Rookie of the Year - *Devynn Cromwell*

Pflug Family Community Service Trophy - *Ethan Monaghan*

Richard P Kohler Perseverance Trophy - *Nicholas Mirijello*

Riddell High School/CEGEP Coach of the Year - *Pat Gregory*

Kyle Walters Trophy - *Jared Beeksma*

Support Staff of the Year Award - *Lindsay Williams*

OUA Gino Fracas Award for Volunteer Coach of the Year - *Coach Michael MacDonald*

Tom Mooney Lineman of the Year Trophy - *Kristian Stewart*

Special Teams Player of the Year Trophy - *Eric Stranz*

Tom Dimitroff Defensive Player of the Year - *Siriman Harrison Bagayogo*

Stu Lang Offensive Player of the Year - *Kiondre Smith*

The Donald Forster Trophy - *A.J. Allen*

The Wildman Trophy - *A.J. Allen*

Watch the video recap of the night [here](#).



*Pictured top row, left to right: Jared Beeksma, Kristian Stewart, Kiondre Smith, Siriman Harrison Bagayogo
Pictured bottom row, left to right: Eric Stranz, Devynn Cromwell, A.J. Allen, Nicholas Mirijello, Ethan
Monaghan*



Pictured: Lindsay Williams

Virtual Gala

On Friday, April 22nd, we hosted the 11th annual Gryphon Football Gala. Thank you to everyone who tuned in for the event and supported our program. We raised over \$42,000, and this money will support our student-athletes, events, and our Gryphon Football Advancement Initiatives directed by Head Coach, Ryan Sheahan.

Special thank you to Randy Dimitroff and Brian Cluff for being incredible hosts – you both made the event one to remember! Thank you to Jen Green, Chris Moulton, Cam Baker, Zach Henderson and Kieran Delport for taking care of technical logistics and making sure the event ran smoothly!

Our silent action raised over \$14,000 of the total gala fundraising, and we are so appreciative of all those who donated, or secured items for donation. Thank you to all the donors who generously contributed to the live and silent auction.

It was a fabulous event, and we look forward to hosting the 12th annual gala next year!



Pictured left to right: Randy Dimitroff and Brian Cluff

Spring Camp

Our team took the field this past week for Spring Camp and battled through every type of weather condition. From snow to sunshine to rain, they saw it all! It was great to have the players back on the field and we look forward to seeing them return in August for Summer Camp.



Photo Credit: Sandy Warner



Photo Credit: Sandy Warner

2022 – 2023 season announced

Mark your calendars, Gryphon Fans! The OUA has released the 2022 – 2023 OUA [Schedule](#) for Football.

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	HOME/AWAY	NOTES
August 27 th	1pm	Western	AWAY	
September 5 th	1pm	Windsor	HOME	Orientation Week Game
September 10 th	1pm	Waterloo	AWAY	
September 17 th	12pm	Ottawa	AWAY	
September 24 th	1pm	Queens	HOME	Homecoming, Alumni Stadium 50 th Anniversary
October 7 th	6pm	McMaster	HOME	Highway 6 Rival Game
October 15 th	1pm	Laurier	AWAY	
October 22 nd	1pm	Carleton	HOME	Think Pink Game, Senior Player Day



Celebrations:

Simon Chaves wins OUA Silver Medal – Wrestling

Gryphon DB [Simon Chaves](#) is a dual-sport athlete – competing on the football and wrestling team. Earlier this month, Simon Chaves earned himself an OUA silver medal at the OUA Wrestling Championships. Congratulations, Simon!

Read the recap [here](#).



East West Bowl – Hamilton 2022

Five Gryphon players will be making their way to Hamilton to take part in the East-West Bowl on Saturday, May 7th. Good luck to [Siriman Harrison Bagayogo](#), [Clark Barnes](#), [Juwan Jeffrey](#), [Justin Lauzon](#) and [Spencer Masterson](#)!

PLAYER	POSITION	ACADEMIC PROGRAM	TEAM
Spencer Masterson	Offensive Line	Bachelor of Arts, Criminal Justice and Public Policy	EAST
Justin Lauzon	Linebacker	Bachelor of Commerce, Accounting	WEST
Juwan Jeffrey	Running Back	Bachelor of Arts, Criminal Justice and Public Policy	WEST
Clark Barnes	Receiver	Bachelor of Arts	WEST
Siriman Harrison Bagayogo	Defensive Back	Bachelor of Commerce, Sport and Event Management	WEST

More details can be found [here](#).



EAST WEST



MASTERSON

LAUZON

BAGAYOGO

BARNES

JEFFREY

CFL Draft

The CFL Draft begins on May 3rd – good luck to all Gryphon players hoping to have their names called at the draft!

Gryphon Alumni Launches Podcast

In last month's newsletter we announced that Gryphon alumni, Thomas Dimitroff launched a podcast. Be sure to take a [listen](#) and check out the recent article that highlighted the success of his [podcast!](#)

Johnny Augustine Making Moves on CFL Depth Chart

With Running Back Andrew Harris out of the lineup for the Winnipeg Blue Bombers, opportunity for Gryphon Alumni Johnny Augustine to move up in the depth chart is a strong possibility. Johnny Augustine re-signed with the Winnipeg Blue Bombers in February and is currently a Running Back for the Bombers.

More information [here](#).



Devynn Cromwell wins Rookie of the Year at Athletic Banquet

We are very proud of Rookie Player, [Devynn Cromwell](#) for being the recipient of the 2021-2022 Guelph Gryphon Male Rookie of the Year (Scott Yanchus Award)

Starting his Gryphon career strong with OUA First Team All0Start status and Second Team All-Canadian, Devynn led the OUA with a total of 6 pass breakups on the season.

Well deserved, Devynn!

More information can be found [here](#).



Featured Player:

Player Feature – Ben Lane

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, it wasn't the exact start to his football career he envisioned, but 2nd year kicker Benjamin Lane has made the most of his university experience so far and is looking forward the 2022-2023 season.

Our player feature of the month is Gryphon kicker and Puslinch native, Benjamin Lane.

The Lane family are proud U of G supporters, as Ben's grandfather taught at the U of G and his father was an employee for the university. His older sister is a proud U of G alumni and Ben is in his second year of the Bachelor of Arts Degree, completing an Area of Emphasis in Political Science.

Ben joined the Gryphon Family in 2020 eager to start playing football in the Fall, but unfortunately the cancellation of the 2020-2021 OUA season due to COVID-19 took that away.

Although he officially signed his commit letter in Grade 12, Ben's ties to the Gryphon Football program started when he was in Grade 10 attending Centennial High School, a local Guelph high school.

For Ontario high school students, one of their graduation requirements is to complete 40 volunteer hours, and Ben did most of his hours at Alumni Stadium, working with Gryphon Football Equipment Manager, Frank Tersigni.

"It was great working alongside Frank and getting to know the players early on. They were super friendly and would often invite the other volunteers and me to join them for lunch on campus. I just found the atmosphere so friendly and felt really accepted at Guelph."

Someone who has played a big role in Ben's football journey is Gryphon Kicking Coach, [Daniel Ferraro](#).

"Coach Ferraro has been my mentor since grade 10. He is the man who introduced me to football and kicking. He has been there for me in more ways than one, even for things outside of football. In addition to being my Coach, he has been the older brother I never had."

We reached out to Coach Ferraro to get a few words about his experience working with Ben "It has been a pleasure to have the opportunity to coach Ben for the last 6 years. Ben is a very disciplined student athlete who diligently works at being the best version of himself every single day, and this makes working with him a lot of fun. He is someone who his teammates gravitate towards and rally around, as he is not only a great athlete on the field, but also a great person off the field.

"I remember meeting Ben for the first time. It was September 2016, and we met at the Gryphon's rugby field to see if working together would be a good fit. This was Ben's first time ever kicking a football, and I knew right away he had something special. We began discussing his aspirations and it was evident that it was his goal to one day play for the Guelph Gryphons to represent his city at the highest level possible, and I know he will make the most of this opportunity now that it's here.

From kicking a football for the first time, to representing his high school with the CCVI Spartans and his city with the Guelph Jr Gryphons, to representing his province with Team Ontario in Dallas, Texas, and to now be fulfilling his goal of playing for the Guelph Gryphons; it has been an honour for me to be a part of Ben's journey and I am so proud of him for making his dreams a reality. We both know there is more work to be done to keep the journey going, and I am excited to watch Ben continue the legacy of great kickers at the University of Guelph."

Another member of the Gryphon squad that has been a mentor to Ben is Gryphon Kicker #70 [Eric Stranz](#).

Ben mentioned that something he really values is the expertise of all the coaches and upper year players and how that elevates the training to being more technical at the university level.

“When we are kicking on a hashmark, Eric will let me know that the ball needs to be placed outside the #'s so we can trap our returner. Whereas in high-school, I was told ‘kick the ball as far as you can down the field.’ Eric has been great. He helped make the transition from high-school football to university football much easier. He has provided so much support and guidance for football and also academically – he helped me set up my planner and teach me how to use outlook.”

Those skills of planning and time management are crucial for the success of our student -athletes as they typically are balancing a busy workload and a football schedule. Throw in the curveball of attending your very first university lecture online, and it makes things extremely complicated.

The players were very fortunate to have the support of the coaches and also Academic Coordinator, Lindsay Williams.

“The support during online learning was fantastic. We were very fortunate to have different outlets as first-years that we could use to improve our academics. The coaching staff was excellent, everyone was there to help the 1st years, especially when Covid had such a big impact on education. Having people like Lindsay Williams was so helpful. Being online was such a different dynamic that I was used to, so the SAM (Student-Athlete Mentorship) program was also a terrific resource. It was a unique skillset to develop, being comfortable and confident with online learning, and I am definitely ready to get back to campus and be on that football field kicking the ball!”

Congratulations, Ben on finishing up your first two years of university and we can't wait to see you on the field during the 2022-2023 season!



Pictured: Ben Lane in his high school career playing days for the Spartans



Pictured left to right: Coach Daniel Ferraro and Ben Lane

Featured Alumni:

The comeback game highlighted in our [March](#) newsletter was such an electric story that we had to chat with #10 Gryphon Receiver, [Carl Trivieri](#) to get his perspective on that iconic game in 2012.

Toronto native, Carl Trivieri spent five years at the University of Guelph studying Marketing Management within the Bachelor of Commerce program. He graduated in 2013.

When we connected with Carl, our conversation naturally had to start with biggest game of his football career: the semi-final win against Queens on November 3rd, 2012.

“That game was insane. It was the semi-finals to go to the Yates Cup and we were playing at home - I remember that game vividly. The last drive going down resulted in catching a 3 - point conversion to put us into the next set of downs, and then catching the 2-point conversion when there was no time on the clock to put us into overtime. And capping it off with QB Jazz Lindsey throwing it to #30 Mike Fortino, Gryphon Receiver in OT to win the game. The stadium was bumping, the crowd was electric, and it was the best sporting moment I have been a part of.”

Going back to where it all started, Carl went to high school at St. Michael’s in Toronto, Ontario. A lot of Gryphon talent has come out of that school, including Gryphon QB [Chris Rossetti](#) who is currently the Assistant Director of Pro Scouting for the Miami Dolphins (NFL).

“I did a world tour across Ontario with a few buddies to check out the various Universities for different recruiting trips. But when I came to Guelph the energy was so good, the campus was gorgeous, the guys were so nice. And what stood out to me was that they were going to be fantastic mentors, and I was going to learn a lot and develop from them, not just football wise, but personally and professionally. I was going to be able to look to people as leaders and that is what drove me to go to Guelph.”

There was no shortage of Gryphon talent and leaders to support rookies such as Carl. He was fortunate to be teammates with [Nick FitzGibbon](#), [Justin Dunk](#), and other Gryphon legends.

In addition to football, Carl was a teaching assistant for a first-year business course, which is a full circle moment as Carl has recently joined the John F. Wood Centre as a mentor to student entrepreneurs at the U of G.

Mentorship and coaching have been crucial parts of Carl’s professional journey.

“Sports are such a good primer for the business and corporate world. A lot of the successful people that I have been surrounded by and leaders and mentors that I have had within the corporate world have all played sports previously, whether it was football, soccer, or baseball. Sports teach us a lot of life skills, such as working together as a team and learning to trust the process. I think my life would have been a lot different if I didn’t play football.”

After graduating, Carl moved to Washington, DC to pursue a career in software sales. He was fortunate enough to have some success and have a few roles around managing teams, building out sales, and recruitment processes.

“When I initially entered the corporate world, I turned down a job with a higher salary because with the other offer that I received, I saw that the leaders were going to lean in and give me the opportunity to grow my skill set. They recognized that I had raw talent and needed to be molded. I wanted to be around the right people to get me to be the right stage.”

Carl is currently working for a cyber security company that specializes in cloud operations and is responsible for managing relationships with some of the top Fortune 100 companies.

When looking for new talent to join his current company, Carl looks for individuals who excel in intelligence, character, coachability, and experience. He encourages people to look for a job that will provide them with the opportunity to work with the best leader and mentor. He mentioned the importance of being put in a position that will allow you to develop and unlock possibilities in the future.

“Be open to all experiences, you never what is going to come across that sticks with you. Leverage the network that you’ve built within the time you’ve spent at the university. Get connected. Have informal conversations with people. If there is a job, role or company that you are trying to get involved in, ask if you can get connected to have those conversations. You will never know what that leads to. A lot of people are willing to help and want to support you.”

Thank you, Carl for taking the time to connect with us and share with our readers about your journey after football. The Gryphon Football Family is very proud of your accomplishments, and we hope to see you at a game in the 2022 season!





Featured FOGF:

The Gryphon Football Program is extremely fortunate to have support from parents, alumni, FOGF members, and the community. From attending the events in the off-season, such as the golf tournament, gala, and poker nights, to cheering on the team from the stands for game day – it’s the people we have in our community that make our program so special.

And one Gryphon super fan that has supported the program from the beginning, is Brad Duncan. We are thrilled to be featuring Brad as our FOGF Member for this month’s newsletter.

Brad’s son [Jordan](#) played for the Gryphons from 2008 – 2011 as a Defensive Back and logged quite an impressive career for the red, black, and gold. Jordan finished in the Top 10 for Tackles in a career and was named to the 2000-2010 Team of the Decade.

“I attended every game from the beginning to support Jordan, and I remember Sharanne MacDonald, who spearhead the POP (Parents of Players) group by going through the stands trying to find all the parents to spread the word about the new group forming.

Even though Brad’s son graduated in 2012, Brad continues to attend the POP events. And this is just the tip of the iceberg in regard to the types of events that Brad has supported throughout his time with the Gryphon Football Program.

“In the early years of the FOGF program, I was a part of the committee and sat on the board to help with fundraising, organizing events and planning the gala.”

The FOGF program officially welcomed its first group of official members at the Gala in 2017. Gryphon alumni and previous coach Bill Brown pitched the idea to the attendees and Brad was one of the first members to join. Brad’s wife Elisabeth is also an FOGF member.

“I remember when I got married to Elisabeth, I told her ‘If you don’t like football, you probably won’t see much of me from September to November’ but luckily Elisabeth is a supporter of the program and she attends all the games. Even if I am unable to make it, you will often see Elisabeth at Alumni Stadium, I think she now has more friends in the group that I do!”

Brad mentioned that attending the games has been part of his and Elisabeth’s social life, and then it continues in the off-season with attending the Wildman Dinner, the Gala, the golf tournament, and poker nights.

Additionally, Brad sat on the FOGF board for 4-5 years until 2018/2019. For any of our readers who attended the regional Alumni Outreach Events in 2014, you can extend your thanks to Brad for spearheading those wonderful get-togethers.

“I’ve been a Clemon Tigers (NCAA Football Team) fan since 1978 and some of things they did in the off-season, included regional tours. Coaches would travel around to 30-40 cities in small cities around South Carolina, North Georgia and North Carolina.”

“With the support of Bill Brown, Randy Dimitroff, Stu Lang and others, we hosted events in St. Catharines, Guelph, London, Burlington, and Oakville. The purpose was to bring together members of the Gryphon Football community and it was a great opportunity for alumni to connect with the current coaching staff.”

Football has made a big impact on Brad’s life, its opened-up opportunities for him and allowed him to make connections with others.

“I played football in high school during Grade 11, 12, and 13, then one season for the Burlington Braves. Although I probably played more hockey and basketball than football, I found that the sport of football made more impact on me than any other sport.”

And this love of the game has pushed Brad to bring new initiatives to the Gryphon Football program. In addition to spearheading the regional events, he also has written over 1,000 articles about the team and the program.

Brad started an online [blog](#) in January 2011 and wrote on a continual basis until 2019. For any alumni who want to take a trip down memory lane or any newcomers that want to learn about the Gryphon Football History – this is the perfect way to get that insider knowledge.

When asked about why Brad continues to stay involved and play an active role in the organization, he mentioned that organizing events was something tangible that he could do, and it gives him an opportunity to get involved y building things at the local level – it is his way of giving back.

“Being a part of the FOGF program is my way of being able to make a difference. I am invested in the program and I want to see it be successful. By being a member, you’re making a contribution to the program. There is a feeling of making a difference, and I feel good about it.”

Thank you, Brad for your dedication and support to our program. You have been a critical piece in the growth and development of Gryphon Football, and it truly is an honour to have you as part of our FOGF program.



Pictured left to right: Elisabeth and Brad after the 2015 Yates Cup Game



Pictured left to right: Brad and Jordan at the 2012 CFL Evaluation Camp



Pictured: Jordan with a fumble recovery in 2011 at the Homecoming game against McMaster

Tweet of the Month:

Our tweet of the month goes to Football Ontario who competed in the Intercollegiate Championship for Women's Flag Football earlier this month. Shoutout to Gryphon Players [Jared Beeksmas](#), [Jake Bennett](#) and [Shawn Lal](#) for volunteering your time to work with these athletes!

POP Update:

We are very happy to see that our schedule is back to 8 regular season home games. Plans are well underway to make this season feel more like "the good old days"! We are working towards bringing back our famous barbecue tailgates, the Mother's Tea and post-game Brass Taps celebrations. We are also looking to elevate our road game tailgates to a new level! Stay tuned for more info!

If you would like to get involved with POP, please drop us a note at:
gryphonpopgroup@gmail.com

-Andrea Lack
POP Co-Chair

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 3 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. I hope you enjoy these lessons in Gryphon history as much as I enjoy teaching them. Mr. Gerrit Stam '96 Yates Cup MVP, please be sure to get to class on time, scratch that, your performance in the '96 Yates Cup gives you carte blanche my friend. Have a seat and enjoy today's lesson.

Before we get started, I need to make an amendment to my lesson on the Law of Jungle. I have mentioned that Rob Popkey passed the Law of the Jungle to Ian McQueen, in fact, he passed the baton to Steve Burns who then passed it to Ian McQueen. My apologies to Steve Burns for the oversight and thanks to Ian McQueen for providing me with the correction.

Our series shifts and now focusses on the 1996 Gryphons. Before we can focus on 1996, we need to discuss the '95 season where the Gryphons finished in last place. In fairness, they lost some games that could have easily gone the other way that season but in the end the record was still 1 and 7. In speaking with Coach McNally regarding the difference between the '95 season and the '96 season, he pointed out *experience*. He believed he had great athletes in '95 but not a lot of experience. Many players were in new roles, and they took their lumps throughout the '95 campaign. This group learned from this experience and came back in '96 with a vengeance according to McNally, "Losing won't kill you, it's ok to lose, it allows you to learn how to play under pressure." Coach McNally also noted the off-season after '95 was the most productive off-season he had been a part of. In his words, he believed the players took '95 personally, they decided this wouldn't happen again. The only people who could change this were the players in the locker room. He knew '96 would be different when he walked onto the field the Monday after the final regular season game in '95. Graham Meahger, among other Gryphons, was running sprints on the field in preparation for the '96 season. The ink hadn't even dried yet on the '95 season and this group of Gryphons were already at work.

With '95 a distant memory and the return of a group of core players, the Gryphons set out to right the ship. Veterans like Kyle Walters, Bill Vastis, Chris Camboia, Brent Dallimore, and Gerrit Stam were ready to right any of the wrongs that occurred in '95. One of the most important aspects was getting experience back at the QB spot between Nathan Body and Wally Gabler. The roster was full of great veterans and leaders and everyone knew their role. Not to mention an excellent rookie class coming in led by Jeremy Oxley, a two-time All-Canadian who should have easily been a 5-time All – Canadian (who loves you Big Man?). The '96 Gryphons were ready to bust through the gates and place their mark in the OUA. That's exactly what they did week one, starting the season off with a sweeping defeat of the McMaster Marauders. But like all good stories the '96 Gryphons had to face some adversity and hit a few speed bumps along the way.

Week two and week three were not as kind to the Gryphons who dropped their first home game to Waterloo 23-17 and then the following week lost to Western in London, 38-14. The Gryphons pummeled both programs later in the season when it counted most.

With U of T on the horizon for week four, the Gryphons needed to focus in order to erase the ghosts of the previous 1-7 season. Yes, Nick Gallo there is a difference between U of T and York, I will explain that later. Going into a game vs Toronto is never an easy task, the Varsity Blues (Vanier Cup Champions in '93) were ready, but the Gryphons prevailed 24-7 and doubled their win record from '95. Little did anyone know that the following week October 5th, 1996, at York would be the pivotal game of the '96 season and the turning point to lead the Gryphons from a 1 and 7 '95 season to becoming the 1996 YATES CUP CHAMPIONS.

This week 5 match up was an important game for both programs. York was coming in at 2-2 and the Gryphons were looking to get past the 2-2 record and make a statement in the OUA. York had started the game firing on all cylinders, making play after play and amassing a 24-0 lead at half. The Gryphons on the other hand struggled and couldn't find their rhythm on offence or defense. It was a surprising and disappointing start to such an important game.

When speaking with Coach McNally about the slow start, he said he wasn't worried about this group, he felt that the leaders would step up and the rest of the team would make plays as well. The difference between this team and other successful teams he had coached was that everyone on the '96 team believed they could make a difference and felt they could contribute, and they didn't have to rely on the play of their superstars alone. So going into the half, Coach described a calmness, within the coaching staff at least. The players were not panicked but they were angry, and they refused to have a repeat performance like the loss to York in '95 at our Homecoming where the Gryphons fell to the then Yeomen 10-6 in front of a stunned Gryphon crowd. Led by Chris Camboia's toss of the Gatorade jug across the dressing room, the Gryphons came out in the second half with a mission to not let history repeat itself.

At the start of the second half the Gryphons received the kickoff and right away Coach McNally knew this was a different group playing in the second half. Not only did he see a change in his team's level of play, he noticed that this moment was too big for York. "Right off the opening kickoff I could see that York was out of sorts and that they had no idea how to play with this type of lead. I told anyone who would listen that York is in trouble and that we were about to have a big second half," recalled McNally when discussing the game with him over the phone. Coach was a prophet on that day. Brad Bunn started the comeback with a TD reception and the Gryphons just kept rolling. Scoring 24 unanswered points in the second half, including a late TD to tie the score, with a run from Gerrit Stam. It was an Outside Zone run called on the York 5-yard line. Coach McNally recalls the only thing that would kill this play was a half back blitz and sure enough York had called that exact defense. What York didn't realize was that Gerrit Stam was one of the best backs in the nation if not the best and on the snap Gerrit did what he always did and made the defender miss. He scored the tying TD. It was a typical performance of that '96 team. They were able to run the ball and have their big 5 up front (Kip Zavits, Graham Meagher, Jeff MacIntyre, Rob Emery and Dan Crabbe) lead the way when it was needed most. Everything was riding on this play and the Gryphons were able to score and tie the game.

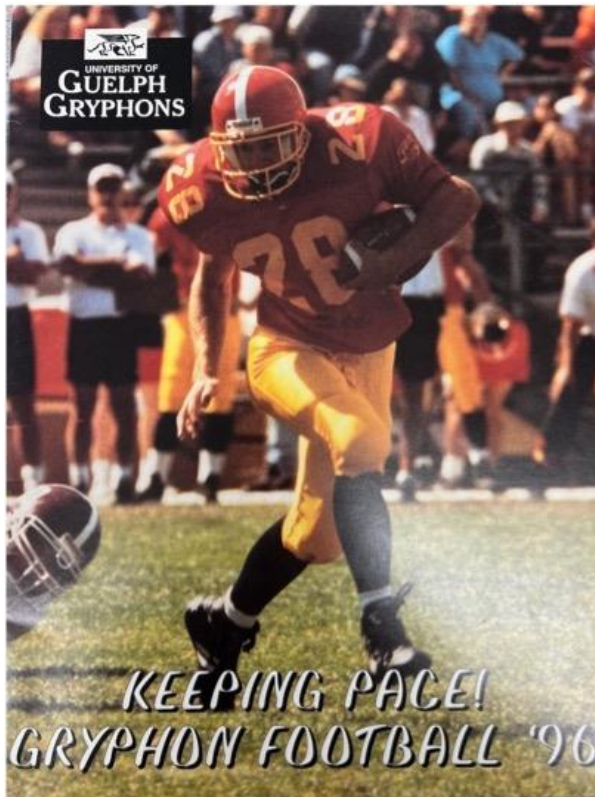
With 30 seconds left on the clock and with the defense forcing another turnover - a one handed off the hip interception by Billy Brown - the Gryphons were set to kick the winning field goal. A fun fact that you might like to know is that the Gryphon defense led the OUA in interceptions that season with 15. Krystian Strynger was called into action and with the win relying on his foot, he delivered, and the Gryphons completed the comeback and escaped York with a 27-24 win and a 3-2 record.

More importantly than the win was the belief that this team couldn't lose. They had erased the demons from '95 and proceeded to steam roll through the OUA. The next week they crushed Mac 44-0, the following week defeated Laurier 13-10, scored 24 against Windsor to defeat them 24-17 and got themselves a chance at redemption with a 6-2 record and a spot in the play-offs. The road to the Yates went through London and Waterloo, the only 2 losses on the Gryphon's record in '96. A semifinal in London is always a great way to spend a Saturday but even better when you can send them packing for the season, and that's what the Gryphons did. They recorded an 18-9 victory on the road against the Western Mustangs to set up the deciding game for the Yates Cup vs. the Waterloo Warriors. The Gryphon's Defense and Gerrit Stam's running game was too much for the Warriors to handle. The Gryphons went from last place in the OUA in '95 to Yates Cup Champions in '96 and like every championship season there are pivotal

moments. For this group of Gryphons it was the '95 season and the great comeback against York to solidify an unbelievable and an unprecedented journey to becoming the '96 Yates Cup Champions.

As I gathered information for this lesson, I was fortunate enough to speak to Dan McNally, Ian McQueen, and Nick Gallo about their memories of the game vs York and the '96 season. Unfortunately, my friend and brother Nick Gallo's recollection of the events were a little vague and not very helpful. "I remember it was hot that day and I remember the long walk back to the dressing room and thinking to myself how is it that we are losing to U of T???" Thanks Gallo, fortunately Coach McNally and Ian McQueen were able to provide excellent insight and information to help me organize today's class.

I want to thank Coach Dan McNally, Ian McQueen and Nick Gallo for their time and contribution to this month's lesson. Coach, Ian, and Nick were gracious enough to spend some time with me and helped me relive this exciting October day back in 1996. It was great to catch up with these great 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 OUA and to play out a season full of redemption and team successes like no other season in this great program's history. I hope you all enjoyed today's class. I look forward to seeing you next time when we discuss the final installment in this series. Class is dismissed.



Stringer puts boot to York

BY MERCURY SPORTS STAFF

TORONTO — As far as comebacks go, this one was huge. Krystian Stringer kicked a 25-yard field goal with five seconds remaining as the Guelph Gryphons overcame a 24-0 halftime deficit to knock off the York Yeomen 27-24 in OUA football action Saturday.

The field goal by Stringer, who has struggled with consistency as a Gryphon, improved Guelph's record to 3-2. York dropped to 2-3 on the season.

"I looked into his eye before the snap and I knew he would make it," Guelph quarterback Wally Gabler said. "All the things people say about Krystian apply to the past. We've got a kicker now. I have complete confidence in him."

This one amounted to a tale of two halves for the Gryphons. In the opening 30 minutes, the Yeomen piled up 252 yards in offense while Guelph managed just 79 yards.

The second half, starting with the opening drive, was a different story. The Gryphons took the kickoff to start the third quarter and marched the length of the field, capping the drive when Brad Bunn hauled in a 16-yard touchdown pass from Gabler.

"I think, offensively, it was (the turning point)," Gabler said. "Sometimes when you get frustrated, you try to do more than you should. That first drive, we went back to some pretty basic stuff."

"The only adjustment we made (at halftime) was mentally and emotionally. We didn't have our heads over our hearts in it the first half. We were getting smoked then we had a 15 minute break and a chance to regroup."

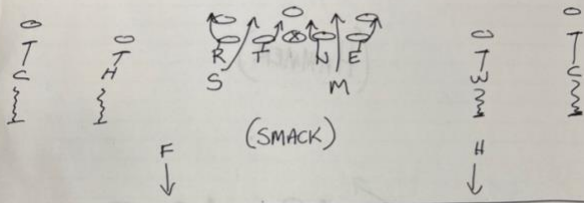
Stringer kicked a 20-yard field goal late in the third to make it 24-10. In the fourth quarter, Gerrit Stam crashed over twice, from five and three yards out, to set up Stringer's game-winning field goal.

Stam finished with 36 yards on 17 carries while Gabler completed on 16 of 31 passes for 237 yards and one touchdown.

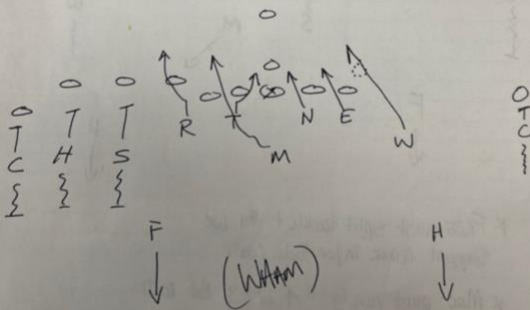
- ### 1996 - ONE FOR THE RECORD BOOKS
- Head Coach Dan McNally became the first Gryphon Football Coach to be named CIAU Coach of The Year.
 - RB, Gerrit Stam became only the 2nd Gryphon to ever lead the OUAA in scoring (66 pts).
 - The Gryphon defense allowed only one opposition runner to gain over 100 yards.
 - The Gryphons became the first team in OUAA history to win the league championship the year after finishing in last place.
 - The Gryphons became only the second school to ever have three different players return punts for touchdowns.
 - The Gryphons led the OUAA in interceptions with (15).
 - The Gryphons led the OUAA with the lowest number of penalties (45).
 - The Gryphons led the OUAA in +/- with 290 punt return yards in a season and 6.3 yards per game.
 - The Gryphons led the OUAA in punt return yards with (672).
 - The Gryphons led the OUAA with the lowest number of turnovers with (13).
 - The Gryphons led the OUAA with an 8-3 overall record.
- A Proud History and A Winning Tradition

Pressure vs York

Balance

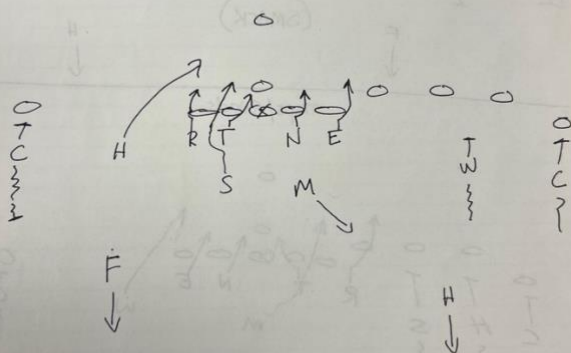


Trips/Quads



Pressure VS Trips Away
From strength or trips/quads
into the sideline

(HAMMER)



Rules

- * Free must split tackle + #1 we support quick in/or fade route
- * Mac must run to #4 or #3 hot route
- * End must anchor the pressure.
- * Will outside shade on #3 in Quads, inside shade #2 trips.

Did You Know?

Did you know that in the last decade, two of our former Gryphon coaches have been nationally recognized as Gino Fracas Award Winners? This award is given out annually to an assistant coach who improves the lives of their players and fellow coaches.

[Brian Cluff](#) received this award in 2011 and Mike MacDonald was the [2021 recipient](#). Thank you to both Mike and Brian for your support to our program. You inspired many players through your countless hours of coaching and mentorship. Thank you for elevating our program!



Pictured left to right: Mike MacDonald and Brian Cluff

Gryphons Gone Pro:

In honour of being the guest speakers for our fireside chat at our recent Gala, we are highlighting Gryphon Alumni [Chris Rossetti](#) and [Curtis Rukavina](#) who are currently both scouts in the NFL.

Chris is the Assistant Director of Pro Scouting for the Miami Dolphins and Curtis is the Assistant Director of Pro Scouting for the Buffalo Bills.

Congratulations to you both on a successful career and thank you again for joining us for our virtual gala and sharing about your journey to the NFL.



#NextGryphon:

As the recruiting season is about to come to a close, we are excited to add two more standouts to the gryphon squad. Welcome, Yunus, Donavin and Riley!

NAME	POSITION	HOMETOWN
Yunus Larry	LB	Hamilton, Ontario
Riley O'Brien	WR	Barrie, Ontario
Donavin Milloy	RB	Hamilton, Ontario

Training Talk:

This month's edition of training talk will be short and sweet. Your Gryphon football athletes wrote their final exams this month. No scheduled workouts occurred past the first week of April, but programming did continue for the student-athletes to come into the Performance Center and complete the workouts on their own time. As expected, many showed up throughout various hours of the day and kept to the commitment to excellence that they made when they joined the program.

Training camp went by fairly quickly, and the fruits of our labour were on display with added size, speed, and strength across all positions. The offensive and defensive lines battled in the trenches through various one-on-one and team periods, while the speed guys turned it up a notch despite, the colder weather.

As we shift into May, we transition to our final few months of training in preparation for our first game in London. With the athletes going home for the most part, they will continue to follow the workout plan on the TeamBuildr app. Those in town will be training with me in the evenings on the turf, and in the Performance Centre afterwards. As of May 1st, we can also welcome in local members of our incoming class of recruits for training, should they choose to join.

Personally, it is also a shift for me, as with the summer months comes more time to focus on my own education as well. As more studies on training come out, I always want to stay on the cutting edge of performance and what will help this program. Online courses, in-person conferences, and discussions with our track coach [Jason Kerr](#) will take place during this time in anticipation to see the final, yet ongoing product, come mid-August.

Save the Date:

FOGF Golf Tournament – July 22, 2022

[2022 – 2023 Season Schedule](#)

Poker Night – May 7th, 2022

Details: Guelph Curling Club, Doors open at 6pm, Event starts at 6:30

All welcome. \$40 entry includes registration and food
Contact Dan Crabbe or Frank Tersigni for more details

F.O.G.F. Charity Poker Tournament



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.