

It's the most wonderful time of the year – football is back! There will be no shortage of content to share with our readers as the 2022/2023 Football season has officially begun.

After a cancelled season in 2020, and a shortened 2021 season, we are ready to get back to our regular schedule of 8 games. Check out this year's <u>hype video</u> created by our media team!

Check out the 2022 Football season preview article <u>here</u>. A reminder that our home opener is quickly approaching on Monday, September 5th, buy your tickets <u>here</u>.

Enjoy issue 68 of the Gryphons' Lair!

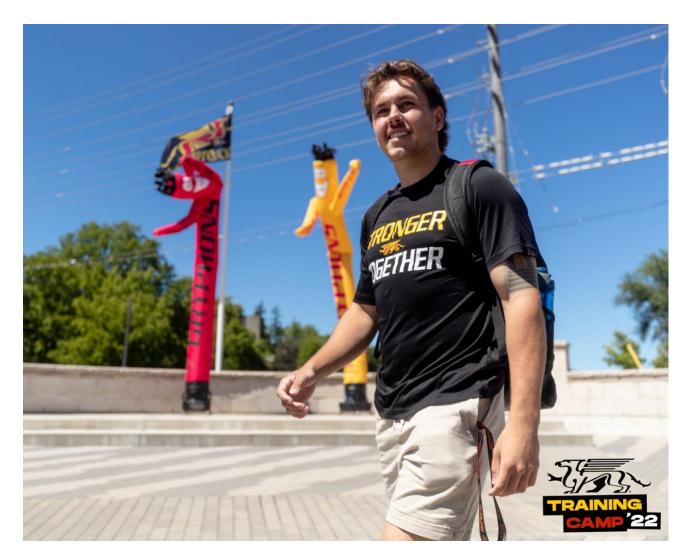


Training Camp

Day 1 of Training Camp kicked off on Saturday, August 13th at Alumni Stadium in Guelph. The day prior, better known as 'Day Zero', was an opportunity for first year students to get settled into the locker-room, conduct baseline testing and sort out their equipment. All parents of first year students had the opportunity to meet with coaching staff and got to meet the Co-Chairs of the POP Group. We are excited to welcome new parents to our tailgate experience and can't wait to welcome them into the Gryphon Football Family!

All players got a chance to get an updated headshot and then attended the first team meeting of the season later that day.

The days were long and the schedule was jam packed, but the team was fortunate to have good weather and, according to Coach Sheahan, it was a productive and exciting camp.



Pictured: Jakob Tomas Photo Credit: Christian Bender



Pictured: Coach Ryan Sheahan chatting with the parent's of 1st year players Photo Credit: Christian Bender



Photo Credit: Christian Bender

Exhibition Game – Gryphons vs. York Lions

The Gryphon Football team hosted a pre-season game on Saturday, August 20^{th} on their home turn and faced off against the York Lions. The Gryphons came out victorious with a score of 68 -0.

It was a great day to be a Gryphon fan and we hope that there are more victories to come for the rest of the season. Thank you to all the fans and community supporters that came out to enjoy the game and cheer on our team!

Read the game recap here.



Pictured left to right: Rachel Guthrie, Anakin Guthrie (Scored 2 punt return TD's vs York) and Mayor Cam Guthrie Photo Credit: Christian Bender



Pictured:Kaine Stevenson Photo Credit: Christian Bender

Game 1 – Guelph Gryphons vs. Western Mustangs

The 2022 season officially began in London, Ontario on Saturday, August 27th as the Gryphons faced the defending national champions, the Western Mustangs.

Through the first quarter, the score remained 0-0 and the Gryphons were the first to get on the scoreboard with a field goal by #70 Eric Stranz. Heading into the half, the Gryphons trailed the Mustangs by a score of 10-6, and the purple ponies managed to pull away in the quarter with a final score of 34-11.

Read the game recap here.

The Gryphons will look to get into the winning column on Monday, September 5th when they host the Windsor Lancers at Alumni Stadium.



Pictured: Ryan Ogilvie Photo Credit: Christian Bender



Photo Credit: Christian Bender



Football Field Dedicated to Winnipeg Bombers Coach Mike O'Shea

A football field in North Bay has been dedicated to honour current Head Coach of the Winnipeg Blue Bombers, <u>Mike O'Shea</u>. The field is located at Steve Omishci Sports Field Complex in North Bay, which is Mike's hometown.

Mike is a Gryphon alumni and also held the HC position at the U of G from 2006 – 2009. He has since had a standout career coaching in the CFL, and the Bombers currently hold a 9-0 record this season and are looking striving for a Grey Cup victory after claiming the trophy in 2019 and 2021.

Congratulations, Mike!

Read the full article here.



Pictured: Mike O'Shea and family

Football, Family and Faith – Kian Shaffer-Baker

Our streak continues of having a featured article in our monthly newsletter to highlight Gryphon alumni, <u>Kian Schaffer-Baker</u>.

Check out this <u>great article</u> written about Kian's journey to the CFL and how he continues to stay committed to the sport of football, his family and his faith.

One quote that we are particularly proud of is "The 24-year-old from Mississauga, Ont. is quick to make time for young fans at Mosaic Stadium, signing jerseys and passing off game gloves, no matter the weather. He even pulled over at a Regina park once to throw some footballs with kids practicing their skills."

We are extremely proud of you, Kian!



Pat Tracey Inducted into Belleville Sports Hall of Fame

Congratulations to Gryphon alumni, <u>Pat Tracey</u> for being inducted into the Belleville Sports Hall of Fame! The link to the entire group being inducted can be found <u>here</u>, and we have included the announcement of Pat below.

You could say that Pat Tracey lives and breathes football. In fact, it would be an understatement, and his four-decade career record is the proof. This Belleville native was a standout athlete in both football and track while attending Centennial Secondary (Sports HOF-1989). Elevating his game at the university level, Tracey started at defensive back with the University of Guelph from 1982 through 1986, winning the Vanier Cup in 1984. Notably, he set the Gryphons' record for most games played in a career (51), captained the team in 1986, and was named to the 1980s team of the decade. On the sidelines, Pat's ability to prepare future CFL players has earned him accolades as one of Canada's top defensive specialists. He began coaching with his alma mater from 1987-97 and 1999, as both the defensive coordinator and special teams coordinator. He coached in three Yates Cup finals with the Gryphons, winning two. Tracey was also the special teams coordinator in the CFL with the Winnipeg Blue Bombers and the 1998 Grey Cup finalist Hamilton Tiger-Cats. Next, Tracey lent his talents to the Queen's football squad for over a decade, where he served as defensive coordinator, and special teams coach. In 2008, he was instrumental in leading Queen's to an undefeated regular season, culminating in the 2009 Vanier Cup championship. He coached with Team Canada, capturing a gold medal at the 2007 NFL Global Juniors in Miami, Florida, and won a Silver medal at the 2011 IFAF World Senior's in Vienna, Austria. Since 2016, Tracey has held the role of defensive coordinator with the UBC football program where he collected his third Vanier Cup title in 2015. Tracey's overall defensive record includes: 145 career wins, 100 conference All-Stars, 40 CFL draft picks, 37 All-Canadians, 14 career shutouts and 12 number one ranked conference units.

And counting. Tracey is an honoured team member of the University of Guelph Sports Hall of Fame and the Queen's Football Hall of Fame, and an individual member of the Quinte West Sports Hall of Fame. For a lifetime of dedication to his sport, the Belleville Sports Hall of Fame proudly honours Pat Tracey.



Pat Tracey Jr (In Jersey) Pictured at a Gryphon Football Gala Dinner Surrounded by his Gryphon Family

EndZone Scarfone

Gryphon alumni <u>Jacob Scarfone</u> celebrated with a <u>backflip</u> after scoring his first TD of the 2022 season against the Saskatchewan Roughriders. Check out this flashback <u>video</u> from 2015 where he did a one-handed catch while doing a backflip!





"I just show up to Alumni Stadium, play football, eat, sleep and repeat. It's the dream."

This month's player feature is QB <u>Tommy Yanchuk</u>, a transfer from UBC (University of British Columbia.) Pat Sheahan (Offensive Line Coach) tried to recruit him to Queen's out of highschool, however, Tommy's football career took him to the <u>Edmonton Huskies</u> from 2017 - 2018 and then ultimately to UBC for 3 years. The Gryphon coaching squad reached out to Tommy in April of 2022, and within 17 days he had visited Guelph, signed his offer letter and moved to the Royal City.

"I had a lot of trials and tribulations in my previous playing career. As a player that was doubted and didn't think I was going to play ball again, I am so excited to be back on the turf and joining the Gryphon squad. You can't write a happy ending much better than that."

Tommy has been living in Guelph since mid-May and has been busy learning the playbook while also representing the Gryphon Football team at many community events. Tommy volunteered at the FOGF Golf Tournament in July and attended the President's Golf tournament in August

In addition to playing football, he was pleasantly surprised at the other benefits of being a Gryphon Football player. "I couldn't believe that this was my new reality - the housing situation, the level of support players receive, the facilities, it's all incredible." Having only previously been to Ontario once, Tommy was excited to visit Guelph on his recruiting trip.

"I had known that Guelph was a great city and had things going for it, but I didn't do any research prior to my visit, I wanted to be blown away – and that I was. I actually grew up in Manitoba until I was 12 and so I understand the small-town vibe that Guelph is known for. It was very refreshing to get away from the big city of Vancouver, the city that never sleeps and move here to Guelph."

Something that caught Tommy's attention when adjusting to his new home, was the quality of food that is prepared by <u>Hospitality Services</u> at the University of Guelph.

"I want to be a cook, specifically an independent chef as food is my passion. I really appreciate the amount of local and fresh food that is available to us. One of my favourite places to eat on campus is Creelman Hall. One of the food stations aims to serve food that is grown with 100-mile radius of the campus. It's really neat to see that the university is so committed to sustainability and that they are offering high-quality food options for all students, not just athletes."

Tommy was very thankful to have the meals provided to the players during training camp. Not having to worry about preparing meals or go grocery shopping allowed him to clear his mind of

any additional stressors and let him really focus on the game. He commented that he didn't open his fridge at all throughout the 2 weeks of training camp!

Day 1 of training camp officially began on Saturday, August 13th. The schedule was action packed with workouts, team meetings, media sessions, photoshoots and practice. But despite the busy schedule and the gruelling long days, Tommy said that it's been a lot of fun.

"I was trying to learn the offence prior to Training Camp, as there are a lot of moving parts. From the signals, to learning the reads, to learning the plays. Every day I feel more confident and getting more comfortable. My body is sore and my mind is exhausted, but as Coach Sheahan says 'nothing in life that means something to you is ever going to be easy.' We have to keep looking at the big picture, and that is winning the Vanier."

Tommy made his first appearance as a Gryphon Football player on Saturday, August 20th during the pre-season matchup vs. the York Lions. He entered into the game during the final few minutes of the 1st quarter and overall, he was pretty happy with how it went. Statistically speaking, he completed 8 of 11 passes for 107 yards, including a 17-yard TD pass. He noted that the pre-season game was a great opportunity for him to get the nerves and jitters out of the way before the regular season began on August 27th against the Western Mustangs.

"I am excited to continue to build on what we've accomplished so far as a team out of training camp. I've been a part of a lot of teams and very rarely do you have the best defence, the best kicker, a veteran O-Line, such depth at running backs, and star receivers. If we can piece it all together, I don't see a lot of teams being able to stop that. We are a well-oiled machine."

After an intense training camp, Tommy is feeling good and excited heading into the regular season. The 2022 season will be his first time seeing the OUA conference and he won't be as familiar with a lot of the players as he would be with the CAN West conference, but that won't stop him from getting out there and "letting the bullets fly."

It was noted in the conversation with Tommy that he knows this current roster is special. He commented on the comradery between the players, and that is what motivates him, personally. "You want to play for those 4th and 5th year guys who are in their last year."

A special thank you to Tommy for taking time out of his day during a very busy training camp to speak with us. All the best for the 2022 season!



Pictured: Tommy and his dog, Bear



After featuring current Gryphon player, <u>Benjamin Lane</u> in our <u>May newsletter</u>, we thought it was only fitting to feature Ben's mom, Sarah Lane, who happens to be our most recent FOGF member!

Sarah has many ties to the University of Guelph, as her father-in-law was a professor at the U of G, her daughter is a recent alumnus, and now her son Ben is in his second year and on the roster as a kicker for the football team.

"Football is something that Ben does. It's not who he is, but rather something he enjoys doing. In the grand scheme of things, what matters is being a part of the team. The sport of Football brings people together. And we need that – especially after these last 2 years." When asking Sarah about Ben's recent experience in Training Camp, she said that Ben is really enjoying his time on the team. He's been able to meet some new teammates and develop some new relationships. According to Sarah, Ben has always been about people, and so being a part of a team with over 100 people is the perfect opportunity to make new connections. Ben must have gotten his personality of being a people person from his Mom, because Sarah mentioned that getting know new people was one of the main reasons she joined the FOGF membership program.

"I joined the FOGF program because I want to support the team and meet new people. By being involved with FOGF, I am able to meet other parents and learn about their sons on the team, and ultimately I am getting connected with people who have a common goal of supporting Gryphon Football. Doug (Sarah's husband) and I are firm believers of supporting, whether it be physically, financially, or both. Whatever our kids are involved in, we believe in giving back to that organization. And the FOGF program is a way for us to say thank you to all parties that are involved with the Gryphon Football program"

As part of the membership program, there are different benefits based on a subscriber's membership level. As a Gold member, you get 2 tickets to the annual gala, the golf tournament, season tickets to the Football games and more. When asked about what event she was most looking forward to, Sarah couldn't pick just one!

"I don't think I could narrow it down to just one, because all of them involve a social activity and will provide me with an opportunity to get to meet people. I know that they will all be enjoyable experiences because they combine football, and socializing, and ultimately will be a way to create connections. And really that is what life is all about – relationships."

To any of our readers who want to get to know more people within the Gryphon Football community, the FOGF membership is the perfect opportunity to do so. Anyone is welcome to join the membership program, our community is made of up coaches, players, alumni, parents, city of Guelph residents, professors at the U of G and more! There are three different tiers to the membership and more information can be found on our <u>website</u>. Please reach out to Bill Brown directly if you want to join our program by emailing him at <u>brownw@uoguelph.ca</u>

One particular part of the membership that Sarah finds interesting is the *Challenge Coin*. For those who are not aware, each Black and Gold FOGF member is given a coin to carry around. If another FOGF member pulls out their coin and challenge you, the rules state that you have to also show your coin right away. If you don't have your coin on you, you must buy that member a drink.

"I brought my coin to the exhibition game in August and gave it to my husband, Doug to hold onto. But looking back that probably wasn't a great idea, because he loses everything! The challenge coin is such a fun way to break the ice, and a great way to get to know someone."

A note to all FOGF members, make sure to always have your challenge coin on you, otherwise you might owe Sarah Lane a drink!

Thank you, Sarah for taking the time to chat with us! We look forward to seeing you at the home opener on September 5th at Alumni Stadium with your challenge coin in hand!



Pictured left to right: Sarah Lane, Ben Lane, Doug Lane



Although a Gryphon Football player's time on the field might only last 4 or 5 years, they will forever have a connection to our program as an alumni.

We are very excited to feature Reza Shayani in this month's newsletter as our alumni spotlight.

Reza was a part of Gryphon Football roster from 2012 – 2016 as a Defensive End. He studied Criminal Justice and Public Policy within the Bachelor of Arts program.

When it was time to make his decision about coming back for a 5th year, Reza unfortunately had to end his career after 4 seasons due to a back injury. However, the 2015 season was probably the best way he could have ended his playing career for the Gryphons, as that was the year they won the Yates Cup.

Reza is a hometown kid and attended John F. Ross Collegiate Vocational Institute in Guelph, Ontario. He didn't play football until grade 11 as university sports was not a top priority for him. It wasn't until his 5th year of high school that he realized it was an option for him to play sports at a higher level.

"I started getting recruited by a few different universities, and it was a really tough decision in terms of where I wanted to end up for my post-secondary education. The Gryphon Coaching staff at the time reminded me of my high school coaches. Jeff Yanchus was my highschool coach at John F. Ross, and he was also a former Gryphon Football Player."

When looking back at his time as a Gryphon, Reza recalled his third year as one of the most monumental seasons (aside from a Yates Cup victory in 2015 of course!) During their homecoming game in 2014 against Queen's, the entire Defensive Line registered either a sack or a tackle for a loss and they won 66 - 0.

"We didn't let them score, and we were so dominant. I always remember that we had such a strong unit, regardless of who was on the field."

The demands off the field were almost as much as what was expected of them as players on the field. Reza noted that it was tough managing a school load and football commitments, especially during the season.

"I remember being told by upper year players and coaches that I will be surprised how well I will perform academically during the busy football season because of how structed the schedules would be. I learned very quickly that time management is key. I still bring that work ethic with me years later into my professional life. I have even taught some of my co-workers about balancing various projects and tasks. Often, they are surprised when I tell them that I developed these skills during my time as a student-athlete. I find that there can be a stereotype about athletes just being focused on their sport and not academics. However, I found that a big benefit to playing sports at the varsity level is the time management skills that you develop, so that you can have the opportunity to excel in both your sport and school work."

It is to no surprise that Gryphon student-athletes perform well both on and off the field. During the 2020/2021 season, 1 in 3 varsity athletes across all sports were awarded Academic All Canadian status (having an 80% average or higher during the season)

A contributing factor to academic success is the support of the professors at the University of Guelph. Reza recalled that his professors were always extremely understanding of the travel schedules for athletes and helped them manage their schedules to accommodate them.

When asked about his current career and journey since graduation, Reza was eager to share with our readers that it's still a journey, and constantly evolving.

"One thing that I want to come across in this article is the idea of continuous growth. Although it might seem that once you graduate you must have it all figured out, that is not always the case. I am continuing to navigate my career path, because you never know what direction life will take you."

After graduating from the U of G, Reza got connected to a plumbing wholesale company, EMCO, and landed a job in their sales development program. He was connected to that position through <u>Rob Carnegie</u>, the Wildman trophy winner in 2016.

"During university, my initial career goal was law enforcement, becoming a lawyer, etc. But during an LSAT prep course, I came to the realization that it was not something I was interested in and so starting at EMCO was a way for me to get into business."

After a few years at EMCO, Reza wanted to expand into the tech sector. After applying to multiple jobs and not getting any interviews, he was feeling quite lost and unsure about his next step. Thanks to the Gryphon football network, he got connected to Colin Dyer, also a former Gryphon and an alumni of John F. Ross. What makes this story even more interesting, is that Reza and Colin never overlapped in their playing days, but through a few mutual teammates, they were able to get connected.

"I was at an event with Colin in Toronto and was telling him my story and how I had been going through multiple interviews but was not successful in landing jobs. Colin offered to help me with my resume and let me know of an opening for a business development job at a digital telecommunications company. He offered to give me a reference to the hiring committee to help me get my foot in the door. It was quite a rigorous interview process, and ultimately I was successful in getting that job."

Reza noted that looking back at his job search process, he had many former teammates, such as <u>Carl Trivieri</u>, and <u>Taylor Palmer</u> help him out with other interviews and helped him make connections in the business and tech community.

"All you need is someone to get you in the door. Interestingly enough, I wasn't best friends with all those guys who helped me out, but they recognized my name from the roster and they supported their alumni family! Those initial connections were extremely helpful and then it was up to me to capitalize on it."

Reza talked highly of the importance of staying connected to past coaches and teammates because you never know who those alumni are connected to and what they have the potential to provide for you, whether it's a connection piece or a job opportunity.

"As an alumni, I encourage all past and current players to attend any Gryphon Football events if you are able to do so. Having a network of people that you can reach out to early in your career after university is crucial and I am super thankful for Colin and Rob for their support throughout my career journey." This was such a great story to share to our readers, and we hope that it encourages former Alumni to connect back with the program and your past teammates. Thank you, Reza for sharing your story with us and we look forward to seeing you at many alumni events in the future. And who knows – maybe one day we will be writing an article about how you continued to pay it forward and support one of our players with some career opportunities!





Pictured: Players and Coaches from the 2015 Yates Cup Champion Team - Reza is far left in photo Photo Credit: Kyle Rodriguez

Mr. Casasanta's History Class

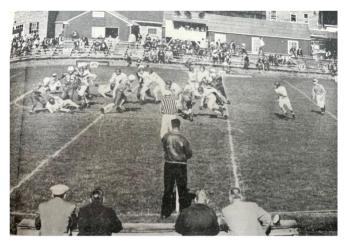
Welcome to GFB – 100. I hope you all enjoyed your summer. I am your instructor John Casasanta, your resident Gryphon Football historian. GFB -100 is a master's class where we will delve into interesting and historical facts about all things Gryphon Football. Each month I will provide you with an interesting 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</u>. The monthly goal is that you find this section informative and educational. I look forward to sharing with you all, so with no further ado, let's begin.

This month's lesson is more of a pictorial retrospective of Gryphon Football from the 1950's. Thanks to the staff of the <u>Ontarion</u> for allowing us access to every issue beginning in 1952 with the OAC Aggies, then Redmen and right up to today's Gryphons. Yes, Mr. William Brown (96 Yates Cup Champion), I see your hand raised, please let me finish explaining today's exercise before I answer all 1502 questions you may have. Ok let's get started.



Tony Roman, Redmen kicker, just gets ball away before Mustang linemen rush him. Roman had three kicks blocked during the Western game Saturday.

Redmen vs. McMaster November 1959



Aggies vs. McMaster October 1952



Mac vs. the Redmen October 1956

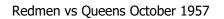


first string offensive end, although he also played centre in his second year. Before coming to O.A.C., Brash played its on the Toronto mpionship winning Etoblocke Rams. Brash at 6' 4" and 190 pounds, is a tough offensive blocker. He completed three passes which resulted in 124 yards gained against R.M.C. Saturday. Brash scored two touchdowns on five runs-after-pass receiving.

Redmen vs RMC November 1955

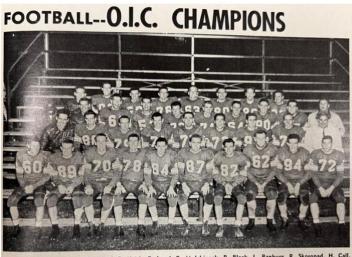


Stu O'Neil, Redmen wingback, races for the only OAVC touchdown in last Saturday's Redme Queens game. McKelvey (54) of Queens follows in a vain try.





Redmen vs Ryerson October 1956





irom left to right 1st row—D. Ward, R. Keith, D. Lund, B. Mulchinock, R. Black, L. Banbury, R. Skoropad, H. Ci D. Rollins, C. Jackson. 2nd row—B. McCuaig, D. Humo, D. Varnell, M. Atkinson, D. Carter, Jim Wright, B. Lush, forny, Bill Mitchell. 3rd row—Baster, H. Holman, C. Bolsan, John Wright, P. Bright, R. Pearn, R. Scherar, G. Youn J. Weatherson, D. Hewitt, T. Mooney. 4th row—R. Shaw, J. Burton, M. Francis, C. Crose, P. Morris, R. Germa Greenhow, T. Sawyer.

1959 Redmen O.I.C Champions

Redmen vs Waterloo 1959



PETE GREENHOW (86) made long runs in the Homecoming game against Carleton. The referee and two Carleton players could not keep up. Murray Atkinson (71), in the background, watches. The Carleton players are Chris Novakowski (60) and Don Thompson (64).

Redmen vs Carleton October 1959



Redmen vs. McMaster November 1959

I want to thank Patrick Sutherland for his time and contribution to this month's lesson. Patrick was gracious enough to allow me access to the Ontarion's archives. I am excited to be able to share 72 years of history with you with the help of Patrick and the staff of the Ontarion. I look forward to seeing you next time when we discuss all things Gryphon Football. Class is dismissed.



Congratulations to Melissa Tomas for submitting her answer to last month's trivia question! A total of 68 former Gryphons have been drafted to the CFL since 1925.

For this month's newsletter, we would like to highlight a recent addition to that board, <u>Kiondre</u> <u>Smith.</u>

Kiondre was **s**elected by the Tiger-Cats in the fourth round, 37th overall of the 2022 CFL Draft and made it official on May 9, 2022 when he signed with the Tiger-Cats.



Did you know that we have our own Gryphon Football website? Be sure to check out the <u>player</u> <u>profiles</u> to read more about each player on the squad!





Monday, September 5th @1pm – Home Opener @ Guelph vs. Windsor Saturday, September 10th @1pm - @ Waterloo Saturday, September 17th @ 12pm - @ Ottawa Saturday, September 24th @1pm – @ Guelph vs. Queens *Homecoming Friday, October 7th @ 6pm - @ Guelph vs. McMaster Saturday, October 15th @1pm - @ Laurier Saturday, October 22nd @1pm - @ Guelph vs. Carleton

Check out the rest of the 2022/2023 Football Schedule here



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.