

Gryphons' Lair

Issue 62 – March 2022

Despite February being the shortest month of the year, it was filled with activities for our program. With the lifting of COVID restrictions, our players were welcomed back to campus and indoor training resumed. A few Gryphons spent some time in the community to surprise front line workers with some Valentine's gifts. We've added a new segment to our monthly newsletter to highlight the POP program and we have some exciting celebrations of current players and alumni. Our players wanted to say a big-thank you for being such an integral part of our program. Check out this [video](#) to see how much we love the POP group!

The bond within the Gryphon family is like no other. From our players, to parents, to alumni, FOGF members, community fans, staff – you are our family. Check out this [video](#) that we shared on Family Day 2022.

Thank you to all of our Gryphon Family for your continued support with sponsorships, memberships, donations and attendance. Please see below a message of thanks from Head Coach, Ryan Sheahan.

Dear Supporter,

Thank you for your support of the Gryphon Football Program last year. I am writing to you as our 2021 season has concluded and although we didn't accomplish all our goals, I am very proud of our team and the effort that they brought to the field every single day. We will learn from our 2021 campaign and return stronger.

Your support was directed to critical areas of team success, with a particular emphasis on scholarships for our deserving student-athletes. The demands on our student-athletes are significant; in addition to carrying a heavy academic course load, they are practicing and preparing up to 30 hours a week. These constraints mean that having part-time employment is extremely difficult, the scholarship support helps alleviate some of that financial burden. Every year I hear from a parent of a student-athlete who is so appreciative of the scholarship support we provide as their son wouldn't be able to attend university without it. Thank you for helping make education and athletics more accessible.

2021 was a season unlike any other for Gryphon Football. With no season in 2020, we had over 50 rookies on our team. There was a ton of learning throughout the season, and our entire team benefited from the experience. Our season kicked off on a high with a win over the number one team in the country. Our regular season ended with a 3-3 and a three-seed in the West Division playoffs. In the first round we travelled to Waterloo, where we won our first-round playoff game against Laurier. Our season then came to a halt after a hard-fought battle against the Western Mustangs, who went on to win the National Championship. At the end of the season, an incredible 11 Gryphons were named OUA All-Stars. Our success on the field was matched by our success off the field as 19 of our student-athletes were named Academic All-Canadians and our team average was one of the highest in school history. We have made phenomenal investments in our student-athletes success, and we are seeing the benefits of those investments.

Although we fell short of our goal of winning the Vanier Cup, the future of Gryphon Football is extremely bright. We return nearly our entire team next year, and every game this year, we had rookies playing significant roles and gaining critical experience. We are building something special here in Guelph; thank you for your part in making that happen.

As we look towards September 2022, our current team is transitioning to their off-season training and recruiting of next year's class well underway. We are committed to bringing the best student-athletes to the University of Guelph and giving them a phenomenal student-athlete experience that will help them develop into men of great character while striving towards our goal of being National Champions.

Thank you again for your support of Gryphon Football. Your generosity helps us give Gryphon Football student-athletes the best possible experience, and we hope we can count on your support again in 2022.

Sincerely,



This newsletter is jam-packed with updates from the program, happy reading!

What Happened in February?

Valentine's Day Visit in the Guelph community

We've said it many times and we will continue to say it – the Guelph community is one of the best. We wanted to make sure that we showed our appreciation to front line and health care workers in Guelph on Valentine's Day.

Gryphon players [Kwame Osei](#), [Malcom James](#), [Spencer Kennedy](#), and [Jakob Tomas](#) visited Guelph General Hospital, Lapointe-Fisher Nursing Home and Stone Lodge Retirement Residence and surprised their staff and residents with some flowers from [Sweet Violets](#) and chocolate baskets.

Thank you so much to you the team for brightening our day. We were able to make individual goodie bags for all of our team members, and everyone was so excited for their treats. We added the signage and balloons to our Valentine's Day tree and put the flowers on our front desk. We have had a lot of challenging times here over the past 2 years and deeply appreciate your generosity.

-Stephanie Carter

Executive Director at Stone Lodge Retirement

Watch the highlights from our Valentine's Day visit [here](#).



Pictured: Gryphon Players and Frontline Workers at Guelph General Hospital



Pictured: Gryphon Players and Frontline Workers at Stone Lodge Retirement Residence



Pictured: Gryphon Players and Frontline Workers at Lapointe-Fischer Nursing Home

AJ Allen Featured on At The 55 Podcast

In last month's newsletter we shared that Linebacker, [AJ Allen](#) was a guest speaker on the [At the 55 Podcast](#), which is a podcast dedicated to talking about all things OUA Football. Allen's episode talks about mental health. The podcast has now [aired](#), and we hope you check it out!

Remembering Fred Dunbar

An article was published in the Toronto Star that shares stories and memories from the incredible [life of Fred Dunbar](#) who passed away in November , 2021. As the former Gryphon Athletic Therapist from 1969 – 1976 and a member of the Friends of Gryphon Football Board of Directors Fred was no stranger to the Gryphon Football program. He will be deeply missed.

Celebrations

Curtis Newton Re-Signs with Hamilton Ti-Cats

Congratulations to Gryphon alumni, Curtis Newton on re-signing with the Ti-Cats. We can't wait to make a trip down Highway 6 to come cheer you on!

More on this story can be found [here](#).

Johnny Augustine Signs a 2-Year Contract Extension with Winnipeg Bombers

Johnny Augustine will look to win his 3rd Grey Cup with the Bombers as he has signed on for another 2 years with the team.

Read the press release [here](#) and a news story [here](#).



Kosi Onyeka Signs with Saskatchewan

Congratulations to current Gryphon, Kosi Onyeka on signing with the Saskatchewan Roughriders.

Read the press release [here](#).

**KOSI
ONYEKA**

SSK ROUGHRIKES • SSK RUG

**POSITION
DB**

**COLLEGE
GUELPH**

**STATUS
NATIONAL**

**KOSI
ONYEKA**

SIGNED

Royce Metchie joins Toronto Argonauts

Gryphon alumni, Royce Metchie was drafted to the CFL by the Calgary Stampeders in 2018. Earlier this month he was acquired by the Toronto Argonauts. Welcome back to Ontario, Royce and we wish you all the best with your new team!

More information on Royce's story can be found [here](#).



Gryphons Invited to CFL Combine

Congratulations to [Jared Beeksma](#), [Eric Stranz](#), [Jeremy Kapelanski-Lamoreux](#), and [Simon Chaves](#) for receiving an invite to the CFL Regional Combine that will be hosted in Waterloo on March 10th.

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

[Kiondre Smith](#) earned himself an invitation to the CFL National Combine happening in Toronto on March 25-27.

This is a great accomplishment, and we are extremely proud. Your Gryphon family will be cheering you on later this month!

CFL REGIONAL COMBINE 2022



LB JARED BEEKSMA

CFL REGIONAL COMBINE 2022



DB SIMON CHAVES

CFL REGIONAL COMBINE 2022



KP ERIC STRANZ

STRANZ

CFL REGIONAL COMBINE 2022



DL JEREMY KAPELANSKI

CFL NATIONAL COMBINE 2022



NATIONAL

INVITE



REC KIONDRE SMITH

Douglas Pflug launches Leadership Book

We are very proud of former Gryphon, Douglas Pflug on announcing the release of his book 'Finding your Granite.' Pflug walks you through some of the life experiences, lessons, and key takeaways from his 28 years as a police officer and leader.

This book will serve to help people navigate through their lives in a post-COVID World where we must reflect on "who we were, who we are and who we hope to be" moving forward.

The book the books are currently up for pre-sale and can be purchased [online](#). Every penny raised will go <https://www.v-eh.ca/> in hopes we can cover the cost of one support dog (\$18,000) for a frontline worker.

Congratulations on this incredible accomplishment, Doug!



Featured Player

Although #38 [Ben Lack](#) is officially hanging up his jersey and ending his time as a Gryphon, fans will still get to see a 'Lack' jersey on the field in the 2022 season. Ben's younger brother Sam has officially committed to the U of G and will be joining the football roster.

In honour of Family Day 2022, we are excited to highlight a pair of brothers, Ben and Sam Lack in this special edition newsletter feature.

Ben Lack joined the program 5 years ago and wore #38 and played safety throughout his Gryphon career. The Burlington native studied Human Kinetics within the Bachelor of Science program, which was a big factor in choosing the U of G.

“Guelph has such a strong Kinetics program, having the opportunity to do the cadaver lab in 3rd year was really neat.”

The U of G offers many experiential learning opportunities for students, and the cadaver lab is an 8-month dissection and one of the only schools in Ontario that offers this lab for undergraduate students.

For the football side of things, Ben reflected back on his days of committing to the Gryphon program and mentioned that he was initially attracted to the balance of academics and athletics at the U of G.

“It was a while ago, so a bit tough to remember the exact details but I found that the players took me under their wing before I even committed, it seemed like such a brotherhood. The coaches were good for development, both as a player and for life after football.”

Sam’s journey was a bit more recent and it in our discussion it was quite evident how excited he was to be joining the program where he watched his brother play for the past 5 years.

“Guelph checked all the boxes for me – football and school-wise. Before I was at the age of starting to look at University, I was always at the games to support Ben and really liked what the U of G had to offer. It was fun to see how all close he was with all his teammates. There were a lot of schools on the table when I was making the decision but seeing Ben’s experience at the U of G definitely played a factor in my decision.”

As one journey ends, one is just beginning. Ben is moving on to the next stage in his career but noted that it is very bittersweet.

“I will miss the football part, but even more so miss the locker room atmosphere with my teammates. Seeing 100 of your best friends every single day for 5 years, it’s hard to believe that it’s now coming to an end. That being said, I’m ready for this next chapter of my life.”

At the time of our conversation earlier in the month, Ben was currently going through the interview process – and we wish him the best with his job prospects.

Gryphon Football is a family affair for the Lack family. Andrea Lack (Ben and Sam’s mom) is the current Co-chair of the POP (Parents of Players) group. Ben wanted it to be known that although he won’t be playing next season, he will definitely be back game days and looks forward to cheering on Sam from the stands.

“It would have been fun playing together, but I want him to have his own experience with the team. We’ve always pushed each other, it’s competitive but also brotherly love.”

When asked about growing up as siblings, Sam was the first one to jump in about standing up to his older brother and keeping his ground as the youngest.

“We have always been super competitive growing up. Ben is only 4 years older than I am, it’s a big gap but it is small enough that I can compete with him. Growing up he would typically win at games and sports, but now that I am bigger and stronger...”

It should be noted that at this time Ben interrupted Sam and chuckled with the response “No you’re not!”

According to Sam, he can beat Ben - sorry correction - he can ‘whoop’ him in basketball. We will see about setting up a friendly competition of 1-on-1 in the future.

In the final moments of our conversation, Ben shared some advice to the players, and younger brother, Sam.

“We have some of the best coaches around, and so I encourage any player to learn as much as you can, don’t be afraid to ask questions. Put in the extra work, watch the film, and commit yourself to getting better every day.”

Thank you to the Lack brothers for chatting with us! To Ben – all the best with your career and we look forward to welcoming you back to as an alumnus. To Sam, congratulations on committing to the U of G and welcome to the Gryphon family.



Pictured left to right: Ben Lack and Sam Lack



Pictured: Ben Lack



Pictured: Sam Lack

Featured Alumnus

This month's alumni feature is a special one. Not only is Ron Bremner our March 2022 alumni newsletter story, but Ron is also the Distinguished Alumni Award Recipient and will be celebrated at our upcoming [virtual gala on April 22nd, 2022](#).

"I am very humbled and honoured to receive the recognition at this time of my life. Having only played one year of football, it is truly meaningful to be remembered. Many thanks to Bill Laidlaw for the nomination. I want to congratulate all the people involved, the Gala committee, and the folks that work so hard thought the year to put together a very special 1-day event."

Ron's journey to the U of G was a little bit different than most. He enrolled as a mature student after he spent 3 years working in the advertising business and hitchhiking around Europe.

"Out of highschool, my marks weren't very good, I had the opportunity to play football at Dalhousie, and hockey at Waterloo but I just wasn't ready to be a student."

When Ron began university in 1969, he remembers it as a very challenging time – he had to get back into a different routine balancing studies and athletics, and he hadn't been in school or played football for at least 3 years.

But despite the academic adjustments required, he loved campus life and was excited to be playing football for the Gryphons and his former High School Coach, Garney Henley. Ron studied History and English within the Bachelor of Arts program.

The Gryphon football team had a great culture – the team was very competitive with some outstanding players and the coaching and training staff providing a strong and supportive atmosphere. Ron wore #11 and played Quarterback, but unfortunately his time as a football player was cut short due to an injury in the winter after a promising rookie year.

"I broke my right arm (my throwing arm) in 5 places and unfortunately that spelled the end of my football career. I just couldn't afford the necessary 'rehab' time away from my studies at that point. e timing and rehab just didn't align, and I was only able to play for one season."

Despite playing only one year of Gryphon Football, Ron developed some strong and lasting relationships with various teammates.

"I had many memorable days being on the U of G campus and it was a very important time in my life. I was so fortunate to meet and stay in touch with a number of very special individuals that I've remained in touch with for over 50 years. At the end of the day, it's all about people, to be able to pick up the phone and call guys that I played ball with, and get together with occasionally is something very special."

In our conversation, we chatted about the incredible changes and improvements in the football facilities and the unique features and upgrades in the campus in general since he left the University of Guelph

"The University has done a tremendous job of keeping the buildings up-to-date from a technological standpoint, but perhaps what I admire that they have managed to do this without losing the 'small campus charm.' The campus so special because it has all the modern amenities one would want but it also has character."

Ron has had a very successful and impressive career and we would need an entire newsletter dedicated to his exploits to be able to do it justice. To learn more about Ron's career, please check out his [website](#).

Ron's career started in Broadcast Sales in Toronto in 1972 and in 1974 he was asked to join the Sales Team of the West Coast's premier Station, CKNW Vancouver. Ron spent the next 16 years with CKNW and its FM arm, CFMI. Ron worked his way up to President by 1989.

In 1990, Head Office promoted Ron to CEO of BCTV Vancouver, one of Canada's premier Television stations. Ron spent the next 6 years at BCTV leading the station to record profits and in 1996 he was named BC's Broadcaster of the year.

That same year, 1996, Ron was 'head-hunted' to become CEO of the Calgary Flames of the NHL and the Saddledome facility. It was a very challenging period for the NHL with a weak Canadian dollar and both the Quebec City and Winnipeg franchise leaving for the US.

Ron left the Flames in 2001 after 5 years. He and his wife Gail, embarked on a 2-year sabbatical, spending extended time in France, Italy and New Zealand. In 2004, Ron was asked by Larry Tanenbaum to move to New York City and become Chairman/CEO of Professional Sports Publications. At the time, it was one of America's pre-eminent publishers of 'Game Day' programs. They represented the New York Yankees, Notre-Dame Football, the NBA and Major League Baseball. Ron sold the company 2 years later and did 2 more CEO assignments for Tanenbaum's company.

It is quite evident that Ron makes a positive impact no matter what industry he was working in, whether broadcasting or sports marketing.

For the last number of years, Ron has operated the Gold Media Consulting Group Ltd, specializing in Executive Coaching/Mentoring CEO's and Senior Executives as well as Keynote Speaking. He focuses on Leadership Development and helping top business people be 'the best they can be.'

What has remained a constant in Ron's life is his commitment to building solid relationships and giving back to his community. Ron has been inducted into the Canadian Broadcasting Hall of Fame, been awarded the Queen's Jubilee Award of Community Service as well as the Variety Club's Golden Heart Award. Ron has served on the Board of the BC Sports Hall of Fame, the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame and the Canadian Blood Doping Agency as well as many other industry and community boards and foundations. His motto has always been 'it's important to make a profit – but it's just as important to make a difference.'

With every different role Ron has had in his career, he has always preached that everyone has a part to play in the success of the organization and that it is crucial that everyone understands the concept of teamwork.

When asked about advice that he could share with players on our current roster, Ron noted the following:

"The competencies and skills that you need to get you to one level, won't necessarily get you to the next level. You need to be continually learning and growing and challenging yourself to get better. Find something that you really like to do and find out how to make a career of it. Be committed, not just involved. Take your work seriously but never take yourself seriously. And finally, surround yourself with good people, look for a few solid, experienced mentors and listen to everyone no matter

what job they do. Some of the best ideas I've ever heard have been from the person in the mailroom or someone on the cleaning staff. Respect everyone!"

Thank you, Ron, for a very inspiring conversation and we look forward to honouring you and your accomplishments at the [Virtual Gala on April 22nd!](#)





Featured FOGF

This month's FOGF (Friends of Gryphon Football) feature is Bill Brown. To anyone who is connected to the Gryphon Football program, we are sure that this name is familiar to you. Bill was the very first FOGF member and has been instrumental in growing the program to over 140 members in 5 years.

Bill's Gryphon journey started in 1994 as a player. He joined the coaching staff in 1999 as a DB Coach. In 2018, after nearly 20 years as a coach, Bill shifted his focus to advancing the program in the areas of alumni and community engagement.

As a player alumnus and a coach, Bill saw a need to provide an opportunity for folks to stay connected with the program. Specifically for alumni, many will say that their teammates turned into lifelong friends and the lessons they learned as a player continually make a positive impact their personal life. Alumni often feel gratitude towards the program because it gave them so many opportunities, and so ultimately, they want a way to stay connected to the program after graduating.

"The constant of the football program is the alumni. Coaches change, athletic directors change, presidents of the university change. But our alumni never change."

For community members, Bill saw that they wanted insider access to the program, to be wearing the same swag as everyone else. This is what sparked the idea to create the FOGF program. It's never been about fundraising, it's been about engagement.

"In 2017, I stood in front of everyone at the Gala Dinner and proposed the idea of this membership opportunity. That night I had 11 people come up to me at dinner and say they were in. An additional 60 members signed up in the first year."

The membership was designed initially to engage alumni and friends of the program. Events like the annual FOGF Golf Tournament and the Gala dinner needed attendance to generate funds to support program needs. Certain levels of the membership offer attendance to these fundraising events as part of the benefits package to the member depending on the level of membership purchased. As memberships increased, so too did the attendance at the team's fundraising events. The golf tournament is a sold-out event each year and the gala dinner attracts nearly 300 attendees annually.

The Membership is designed so that if members cannot attend an event or redeem their benefit, then the value of that benefit is collected in the membership account. The Gryphon Football Head Coach can then apply to use those collected funds for football program advancement needs. In the past 3 year, \$81,000 has been donated to the Football Program for player scholarships.

The membership is also designed so that graduating players can immediately be immersed in the alumni experience. An affordable entry point of \$5 a month (Red Member) was designed for this purpose. The Red Member would get one SWAG item, an invite to the annual Glory Bowl where they can dominate in a friendly touch game with much older alumni, and will gain immediate access to the newsletter, and invites to special invites hosted by FOGF. Black members receive two SWAG items, a Glory Bowl Invite, and one free entry into the Gryphon golf tournament. The highest level of membership, Gold, includes more great perks including three SWAG items and two free entries into the Gryphon golf tournament and a ticket to the Gryphon Gala. Some parents have purchased Gold memberships while their son was playing football and have passed the membership to their son as a graduating gift.

We have incredible coaches, talented players, but our program expands beyond. It's our fan, FOGF members, the POP group. What makes Gryphon Football unique is the bond within all those groups. We are #StrongerTogether

The football season can be quite short, with sometimes only 8 regular season games. Just as it seems to be ramping up for the season, it can be over in the blink of an eye.

"When I was creating this, I was trying to find a way to keep alumni connected not just in season, but all year round."

Bill shared how the gryphonfootball.com website and The Lair, this very newsletter you are reading – now on its 62nd issue – was developed. “Once we started getting more members, we wanted to keep everyone updated on Gryphon Football news. Whether it was hearing about the incoming recruits, seeing pictures of new facilities, or seeing what alumni who play professional football are up to – members wanted to feel like they were a part of the team. The website and monthly newsletters were born in the attempt to answer the demand.”

If you are not a current FOGF member, we’ve outlined the 3 different tiers of membership options below. Some readers might be surprised to know that this membership program is not just for alumni. It’s for anyone that wants insider access to the program. We have parents, coaches, staff, and U of G faculty that are members.

FOGF Membership Tiers:

- Red
 - Red Membership Card
 - \$26 Primary Swag Item
 - Glory Bowl Invite and T-shirt
- Black
 - Black Membership Card
 - \$60 Associate Swag Options
 - Glory Bowl Invite and T-shirt
 - 1 Golf Tournament Entry
 - FOGF Challenge Coin
 -
- Gold
 - Gold Membership Card
 - \$110 Premier Swag Options
 - Glory Bowl Invite and T-shirt
 - 2 Golf Tournament Entry
 - FOGF Challenge Coin
 - 1 Gala Dinner Ticket
 - Priority Invitation to FOGF Special Events
 - Season Pass to all regular-season home games

Memberships can be purchased at <https://www.gryphonfootball.com/friends-of-gryphon-football-membership> or over the phone with Bill Brown 226-979-2242.

Bill – you are the heart and soul of the Gryphon Football program. On behalf of the coaches, players, alumni, community members, and fans, thank you for everything that you do to advance the program!

To the current Gold FOGF members – Billy wants to remind you always have your challenge coin on you!



Pictured left to right: Bill Brown and Heron Tait



Pictured left to right: Bill Brown, Brian Cluff, Stephen O'Brien, John Casasanta



FOGF Golf Tournament

Tweet of the Month

Our tweet of the month goes to 519 Sports Online. Thank you for putting the spotlight on incoming Gryphon, Mac Roy. We appreciate the support and for highlighting the new talent coming to the Gryphon Football Program in 2022. We are counting down the days until next season!

GryphonFootball Retweeted

519 519 Sports Online
@519sportsonline

🌟🌟 519 COMMITMENT ALERT - @WCSSAA football MVP Mac Roy is a GRYPHON! Roy officially signed with @GryphonFB today at Alumni Stadium. Full story to come on 519. Congrats Mac! #519Proud #LocalSports #519Football @CMFALions @guelph_gryphons @OUAsport @BluevaleNews



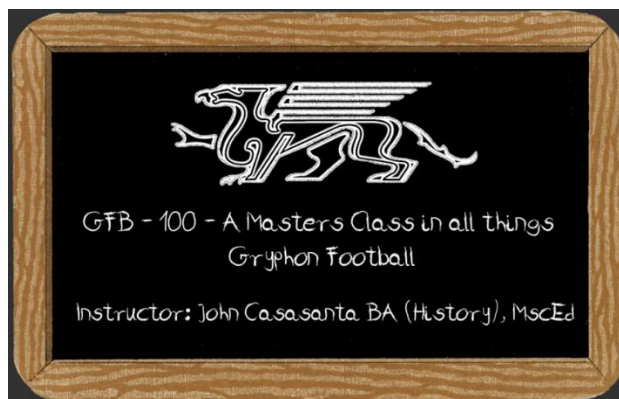
GryphonFootball and 7 others

5:54 PM · Feb 17, 2022 from Alumni Stadium · Twitter for iPhone

5 Retweets 20 Likes

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 in Gryphon Football 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 Gryphon Football. Don't hesitate to contact me with any of your own facts or stats to add to this segment each month. Please forward any information, stat, or story to me at icasasan@uoguelph.ca. I hope you enjoy this monthly section and I look forward to sharing with you all. So, with no further ado, let's begin.



With all the great comebacks during the last few weeks of this year's NFL playoffs, I was inspired to focus on some of the greatest comebacks in Gryphon Football history. I have narrowed it down to four specific games, and over the next four months I will focus each class on one of these games. Each lesson will contain first-hand accounts from past Gryphons who played key roles in each game. When researching these games, one constant stood out over all the others: these comebacks all led to an appearance in the Yates Cup, and one of those comebacks won us the Yates Cup. I hope you enjoy this series as much as I enjoyed putting it together. Mr. Ryan Sydor, (1996 Yates Cup Champion) please focus on the discussion, stop listening to your headphones and focus your attention here. I may ask you a question and I don't want you to respond with some random lyric from Blink 182.

Our series begins with the 2012 Gryphon squad. Coming off a 2-6 season, the Gryphons had recorded their first 7-1 season and were hosting the Queen's Golden Gaels in the semi-finals. Queen's was just 3 years removed from winning the Vanier Cup, proving to be a strong and worthy opponent. This game was a major stepping-stone for the Gryphon program and for Coach Lang, who was in his 3rd season as the Head Coach of the Gryphons.

"We wanted to prove that we had turned the corner and that the gamble the Athletics Department took with hiring me as their Head Coach was a good one." Coach Lang followed this first 7-1 season with 3 more 7-1 seasons, so I'm pretty sure the gamble was a good one.

On November 3rd, 2012, in front of a packed Alumni Stadium with U of G president Alastair Summerlee in attendance and with Coach Lang's *200 Yards from the Summit* speech ringing in their ears, the Gryphons took the field to face Queen's in hopes of punching their ticket to the 105th Yates Cup Championship.

The 2012 campaign did not start well for the Gryphons, opening the season with a 50 – 9 loss to the defending Vanier Cup Champions, the McMaster Marauders. This group was resilient; after that loss they went on a seven-game win streak leading us to one of the greatest 4th quarter comebacks in Gryphon Football history.

The first half did not go as expected, as Queen's had taken an early lead against Gryphons going into the half up 28-14. Being a member of the coaching staff on this team, the one thing I remember clearly was the absolute calm and confidence in the room during the break, emanating hope for the rest of the game.

With that being said, the third quarter wasn't much better than the first half and the Gryphons found themselves trailing Queens 36-14 with just over 10 minutes to go in the game. Now, how does a team comeback from 22 points down with less than 10 minutes left you ask? That's a great question. As indicated earlier this group had a sense of calmness that was present all season.

Down 22 points the Gryphons started to show some life with resolve and resilience. With just over 5 minutes to go, Queen's attempted a QB sneak and fumbled the ball, Gryphon Safety #23 [Zach Androschuk](#) picked up the fumble and rushed it into the endzone. This defensive score began to chip away at Queen's theoretically insurmountable lead. The score was now 36-21 with under 5 minutes left in the game.

Once the Gryphons scored this touchdown, the tide of the game began to change, you could feel the shift on the sideline. The Gryphons were gaining confidence, but the Gaels, on the other hand, looked skittish. The Gryphons could do no wrong.

With 4 minutes remaining Gryphon QB, #2 [Jazz Lindsey](#), called his own number and took off down the sideline, tight roping the sideline to score an 80-yard touchdown for the Gryphons, closing the gap

to 36-28 with just over 4 minutes remaining.

Following the 3-minute warning, Queen's had the ball on their own 30-yard line, their attempted pass deflected off the receiver, then off Gryphon defender, #18 [Jarryd Baines](#), and into the hands of a waiting Zach Androschuk #23. The crowd erupted and the Gryphons gained momentum. The Gryphons had a chance to do the unthinkable. With 45 seconds remaining and starting QB Jazz Lindsey on the bench due to an injury, back up QB #8 [Lucas Nangle](#) entered the game as cool as could be, rolled to his right and found #7 [Saxon Lindsey](#) in the endzone, setting up a dramatic 2-point conversion to bring the Gryphons all the way back 36-34, from what most thought was an insurmountable deficit. Lindsey returned to the game for the 2-point conversion and found #10 [Carl Trivieri](#) in the endzone, who bobbed but secured the 2-point conversion bringing the Gryphons all the way back 36-36 sending the game into overtime.

Guelph had won the coin toss to start the OT and deferred giving Queen's the ball first. The Gryphon defense was strong and held Queen's to a field goal bringing the score 39-36. The Gryphons needed to respond with at least a field goal to continue, or a TD to win outright. The series did not start well. On first down Queen's had tackled Lindsey for a loss, putting the Gryphons out of field goal range. But on the very next play Jazz hit wide receiver #28 [Michael Fortino](#) on a play called *Silence the Band*. Fortino alluded the first tackle and carried the ball into the endzone completing one of the most improbable and unthinkable comebacks in Gryphon Football history. Gryphons win 42-39. Coach Lang recalls thinking Fortino was the perfect guy to cap off the comeback, a blue-collar type of player (one of many out of the Niagara Region) who just worked and played hard all the time.

"He was the right guy at the right place and at the right time." Fortino was the leading receiver that day with 85 yards and a TD for the win. For those of you who are regular visitors to the stadium, the play itself is painted on the walls of the pavilion to remind us of our history and this monumental comeback.

The atmosphere was electric; not only did the Gryphons punch their ticket to the Yates, they sent a message throughout the OUA that this program was to be taken seriously. As I mentioned earlier, President Summerlee was in attendance and he has been quoted as saying "being part of the atmosphere that day and watching the Gryphons come all the way back was one of the most satisfying and uplifting experiences as this great university's president." I want to note President Summerlee's response to the win – it was something I had never seen before, and have not seen since - the President of the university rushed the field with the students and celebrated an unthinkable comeback and a truly outstanding performance by the Gryphons.

I've included a [YouTube link](#) and several pictures from November 3rd, 2012. It was a great day to be a Gryphon and one of the turning points for this program's march to a Yates Cup victory in 2015. Let me take a moment to thank Stu Lang for his time and contribution to this month's lesson. Coach Lang was gracious enough to spend some time with me and helped me re-live this exciting November day back in 2012. I hope you all enjoyed today's class. I look forward to seeing you next time when we discuss comeback number 2 of 4 in the series of Gryphons' greatest comebacks. Class is dismissed.



Did You Know?

Did you know that [Vutsup Media](#) is the creative company that produces our video projects and highlight reels? The dynamic duo of Alex Vutskos and Dhanung Bulsara have worked with the Gryphon Football program since 2016. From the creative process to the directing and the editing and producing - these two do it all!

Take a quick glance at our [Youtube Page](#) and you'll see that we have videos highlighting game day action, community involvement activities, interviews with our staff and more. Be sure to subscribe to our [Youtube channel](#) so you don't miss out on watching the latest video release.

Thank you, Dhanung and Alex for elevating our digital presence. We can't wait to see what creative project you get up to next!



Pictured: Alex Vutskos



Pictured: Dhanung Bulsara

POP Feature

We are excited to be adding a new segment into our Gryphons' Lair newsletter. One very important piece of our Gryphon Football program is the POP (Parents of Players Group). We look forward to providing our readers with an update each month and highlights of the incredible work that this group is doing.

Without further ado, the POP segment from POP Co-Chair, Andrea Lack.

POP would like to extend a big THANK-YOU to Judy and Richard Beeksma for their amazing contribution to POP. Judy helped us navigate an unprecedented year with COVID and ever-changing rules. Her weekly emails and up-to-date information ensured that our Gryphons had as many parents and family members cheering from the stands and watching online from home. We appreciate all of her guidance and support, and we wish Judy, Richard and Jared all the best in the next chapter of their football journey!

THANK-YOU SO MUCH FOR ALL OF YOUR HARD WORK!



Pictured: Richard, Jared and Judy Beeksma



Pictured left to right: Andrea Lack and Judy Beeksma

We are lucky to welcome two new members to the POP Committee for 2022. Cindy Atkins and Cathy Condello have both agreed to help and we are excited for their new ideas, energy and support!

2022 POP Committee:

Parent	Player	Position of Player	Academic Program of Player
Christine Stranz	Eric Stranz	K/P	Accounting
Andrea Lack	Sam Lack *2022 recruit	DB	Criminal Justice and Public Policy
	Ben Lack	DB	Human Kinetics
Cathy Condello	Nathan Condello	LB	Arts and Sciences
Cindy Atkins	Aidan Atkins	REC	Sport and Event Management

Would you like to get more involved with POP?? Please reach out to gryphonpopgroup@gmail.com
We would love to have you!!

-Andrea Lack
POP Co-Chair

Gryphons Gone Pro

This month's Gryphons' Gone Pro is Guelph native, [Nick Parisotto](#). After playing 4 years with the Gryphons, Nick was drafted into the CFL in the 8th round by the Hamilton Tiger-Cats. Nick recorded 3 special teams tackles in 8 games.



Pictured: Nick Parisotto

#NextGryphon

Another strong group of recruits have been added to the Gryphon roster! We look forward to seeing you in red, black and gold for the 2022 season!

NAME	POSITION	HOMETOWN
Harjas Dulku	DB	Calgary, Alberta
Abdul Hamzeh	OL	Oakville, Ontario
Joshua Messina	REC	Hamilton, Ontario
Laurent Paquin	TE	Laval, Quebec
Cameron Taylor	DB	Barrie, Ontario
Josh Costigan	LB	Oakville, Ontario
Miltiadis Koulelis	RB	Victoria, British Columbia

Training Talk

February saw a full-time return to training for the Gryphon football program. We put away the bands, TRX's, and whatever weights we could find in our garages, and we were welcomed back to our beautiful, brand new state-of-the-art facility to resume our off-season training. The constant stop again, start again aspect of the last few years has provided its challenges to our regimen. However, learning to adapt to what is given to us is something we have been doing for quite some time, and so the transition was seamless.

Next week, we will do our first round of testing in quite some time to see where the bar will be set for the next 6 weeks prior to spring training camp. The reason we have chosen not to test until now is because with all the time we have had for layoffs, certain anatomical adaptations generally occur which made testing right away after time-off not the best idea. Since we have been consistent for the last month, it now allows us to do a safety check in with our athletes and see what work needs to be done to meet expectations.

At the release of this writing, combine invites [Kiondre Smith](#), [Eric Stranz](#), [Jared Beeksma](#), [Simon Chaves](#), and [Jeremy Kapelanski-Lamoureux](#) are in the final stage of the prep for their respective combines. On campus, we have seen the latter three working diligently with each other, pushing each other to prepare as best as possible for their own testing. Wishing them all the best of luck during their respective days in hopes of continuing the tradition of Gryphons being drafted to the CFL.

And finally, I am working with the Lang Innovation Team and will soon be unveiling and handing out Gryphon Football S+C (Strength and Conditioning) t-shirts for all the players. We have not had these for a few years now and I am excited to see them make a comeback. Furthermore, we will be creating a milestone club or two for the near future and beyond. Some of you that follow me on [social media](#) may have seen me hinting at the 1000-lb club. This is in consideration along with an upper tier strength-based milestone that would be rewarded to the strongest Gryphons on the team. Who knows - we may even hand out the Granite Gryphon Award for the first time since 2018! Stay tuned.

Save the Date

Wildman Gala – April 5th, 2022 *Tentative

Virtual Gala – April 22nd, 2022

Gryphon Football is excited to announce that on April 22, 2022, we will be hosting our 11th Annual Gryphon Football 'Virtual' Gala. This is a fundraising event in support of our Gryphon Football program, student-athlete scholarships, team events and our Football Alumni Advancement initiatives. We have a fantastic lineup of incredible speakers and awards this year; you will not want to miss this year's event.

Tickets are \$75 each and will include a tax receipt upon purchase. FOGF Gold members will receive a separate email invitation with code to redeem for 1 ticket per person.

Registration for the event will close on [April 21, 2022 at 11:59PM](#).

YOU'RE INVITED

11TH ANNUAL GRYPHON FOOTBALL 'VIRTUAL' GALA

PRESENTED BY



CALGARY SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT CORPORATION



Fireside Chat
Curtis Rukavitsa
Buffalo Bills

Guest Speaker
Mike O'Shea
Winnipeg Blue Bombers

Honour Jersey Award Winner
Nick FitzGibbon, 2022

Distinguished Alumni Award Winner
Ron Bremner, 2022

Wildman Winner
???, 2021-2022

Fireside Chat
Chris Rosetti
Miami Dolphins



Friday, April 22, 2022

7pm Reception | 8pm Gryphon Football Gala

\$75 PER LOGIN

Event hosted on Hopin

GRYPHON

HONOUR JERSEY AWARD RECIPIENT

Nick FitzGibbon, 2022

PRESENTED ANNUALLY AT THE GRYPHON GALA DINNER

Nick FitzGibbon is a 5-year Varsity Letterman who played Running Back with the Gryphons from 2006 - 2010. Nick was selected as this year's Honour Jersey recipient for his stand-out performance in his years with Gryphon Football. After receiving three Rookie of the Year awards (Football, Athletics - Scott Yanchus, and OUA - Norm Marshall), Nick went on to set 8 school records including most rushing yards in a career (3,603) and most touch downs in a career (40). With all of these accomplishments, it is no surprise that Nick was named to the 2000's All-Decade Team. For all five of his years at Guelph, he led the OUA in rushing twice and was on the OUA All-Star Roster for four consecutive years. National honours include Nick being named a two-time All Canadian.

After graduating from the University of Guelph with a degree in Sociology, Nick played football with the Winnipeg Blue Bombers in 2011. As a third-generation Guelphite and local realtor, Nick is a well-known face in the Guelph Community. He serves on the Board of Directors for Big Brothers, Big Sisters Guelph and continues to be an active part of Gryphon Football.





DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD RECIPIENT

Ron Bremner, 2022



PRESENTED ANNUALLY AT THE GRYPHON GALA DINNER

Ron Bremner is a proud University of Guelph graduate and former Gryphon quarterback. After graduating from the University of Guelph in 1972 Ron embarked on a career that took him to the highest levels in broadcasting and sports.

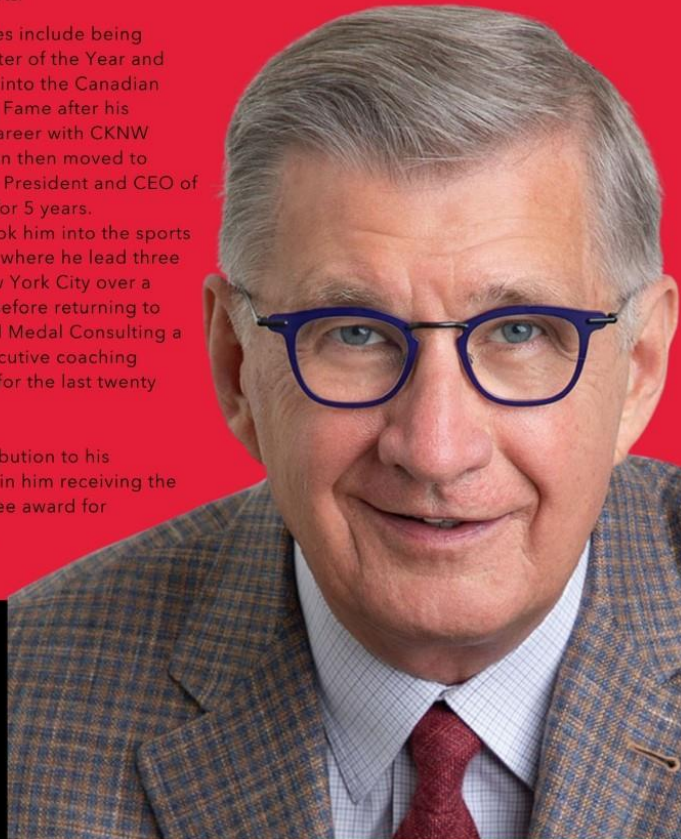


Ron's list of accolades include being named BC Broadcaster of the Year and also being inducted into the Canadian Broadcasting Hall of Fame after his incredible 22-year career with CKNW Radio and BC TV. Ron then moved to sports where he was President and CEO of the Calgary Flames for 5 years.

Ron's career then took him into the sports publication industry where he led three organizations in New York City over a seven-year period, before returning to Canada to start Gold Medal Consulting a CEO and Senior Executive coaching business he has led for the last twenty years.



His incredible contribution to his community resulted in him receiving the Queen's Silver Jubilee award for Community Service.



FOGF Golf Tournament – July 22, 2022

FOGF Memberships

Thank you to those of you that submitted your online order for your Gryphon SWAG. Orders will be available for pickup or delivery in March.

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

Thank you to all members for your continued support. Please see below a message of thanks from Head Coach, Ryan Sheahan.

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.