

100 Years Of Canadian Intercollegiate Football

In October 1874, the McGill Rugby Football Club played host to the Harvard University team from Cambridge Massachusetts and from that first football game in this country and for the next fifty years college football was to reign supreme in Canada.

During the 1880's, the big three—McGill, Queen's, and Toronto—began to compete on an annual basis with each other and later on in that decade were joined by the Royal Military College and the Ontario Agricultural College. During the 1890's Ottawa College, Queen's, and the University of Toronto won the Canadian Rugby Union Championship five of the first six years the Dominion Final was played.

The 1898 season opened with the universities competing under the banner of the newly formed Canadian Intercollegiate Rugby Union and the Yates Cup, the oldest annually awarded football trophy in Canada, was donated for the competition.

In 1900, the Intercollegiate Union withdrew from the Canadian Rugby Union but returned in 1905 and when Lord Grey put up his \$50.00 trophy for annual competition in 1909, it was to become the property of the universities for seven of the first nine years the trophy was awarded.

The University of Toronto won the first three - 1909, 1910, 1910. From most accounts the McGill teams of 1912, 1913, and 1919 with the late great Frank "Shag" Shaughnessy, C.F.L. and baseball Hall of Famer, would have undoubtedly have taken home the trophy had they played the final game.

In 1920 it was the University of Toronto again winning the top award and then it was the turn of the tricolor of Queen's under the leadership of the late Billy Hughes. With Frank "Pep" Leadley and the late Harry Batschone, the Golden Geals ran a consecu-

tive string of 26 victories from 1922 to 1925 including three consecutive Grey Cups in 1922, 1923, and 1924.

1924 marked the last time a college team was to win the Grey Cup and the Intercollegiate Union formally withdrew from Grey Cup competition in 1934.

The rapid development of commercial sport did not, however, sound the demise of college ball but rather directed the college people to concentrate on internal growth.

In 1927 the Intercollegiate Rugby Football Union was formed comprising the Universities of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba and the Hardy Cup was put up for competition.

The league, however, was never strictly an intercollegiate one until 1967. Since the 1927 date some universities had competed against senior and professional teams within their respective provinces and others aligned themselves with teams south of the border because of economics of travel.

In 1967, with the initiation of the CIAU National Championship series, the University of Calgary joined the four charter members of the Union to form the Western Intercollegiate Football League. From a shaky start and due primarily to the constant prodding and pushing of Dean Maury Vam Vliet, through the years, the W.I.F.L. has finished strong to participate in six and win four national championships since 1967.

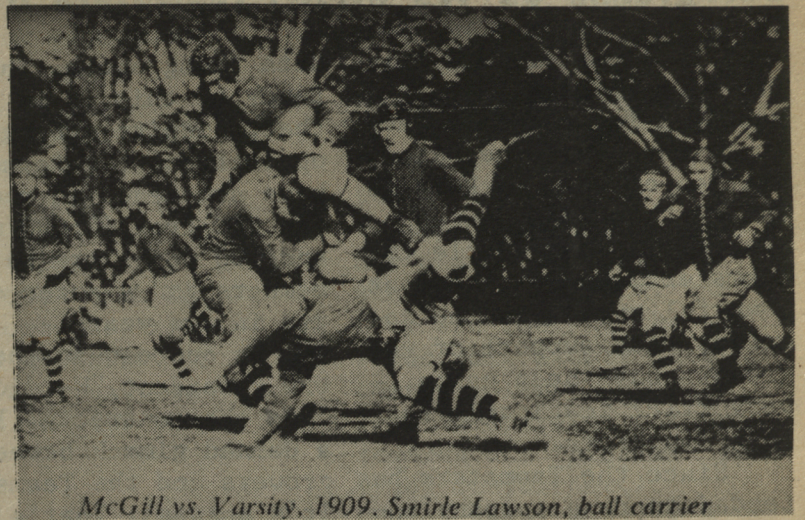
Between 1929 and the present day a succession of teams and leagues were formed in Ontario and Quebec varying from four teams to the present fourteen. Today there are eleven teams from Ontario and three from Quebec divided into two conferences of seven teams each.

During the 40's and 50's, the names of Metral and Tindall were synonymous with intercollegiate football. Both have won 106 games as coaches of res-

pectively, Western and Queen's.

In the East intercollegiate football started with a game between St. Mary's and Dalhousie in 1947 but the Bluenose Intercollegiate Football Conference was not formed until 1965.

Don Loney, coach at St. F.X., has totally dominated Atlantic football since 1957. Under him St. F.X. teams have garnered ten Atlantic crowns. As well Gus MacFarlane at Mt. A. and Bob Hayes at St. Mary's have helped to put Atlantic football on the map.



McGill vs. Varsity, 1909. Smirle Lawson, ball carrier

The Canadian College Bowl, initiated as a charity event became the national championship game in 1967 and since that time has

helped to garner over \$70,000 for the Canadian Save the Children Fund.

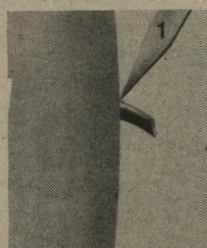
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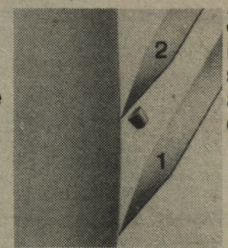
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