

2018 Grey Cup Review

Hello fellow alumni,

I had the pleasure of attending the Grey Cup this year as the Tiger-Cat Alumni representative for the CFLAA – AGM. Although I was prepared for arctic conditions, the weather was unusually mild for November in Edmonton. At kick-off on Grey Cup Sunday it was +1 C, unlike 1984 when we played Winnipeg in the Grey Cup with -28 C temperatures at game time!

I knew I was in for a great weekend when I went to Hamilton Airport on Thursday afternoon and the Ottawa cheerleaders were

on our flight to Edmonton. What a great group of young people. Next, when I arrived at Edmonton Airport I ordered an Uber to drive me to the hotel and I was intercepted by a volunteer driver who was shuttling Grey Cup personnel between the airport and the hotel. She wouldn't even take a tip because she said it was against festival policy. What a lovely lady.

Arriving at the hotel, I went directly to the hotel pub to meet my old college and Blue Bomber team mate Pat Cantner and Bob Bronk the Argos alumni rep, who was my roommate for the weekend. At this point, I had the pleasure of meeting legendary coach Wally Buono. He had just retired as the winningest coach in league history. Now I've been retired from the CFL since 1993, and Wally not only remembered my name, he also remembered my number (58) and I never played for the man! I was impressed and this just added to the positivity surrounding the G.C. weekend.

I had previously been instructed by Leo Ezerins, the Executive Director of the CFLAA, to bring my game worn jersey for the annual Legends Luncheon event on the Friday morning. According to many sources, this has become one of the most popular events of the G.C. festival each year and I was looking forward to attending it – the tenth annual. I was not disappointed.

It was on Friday, November 23, at the Shaw Conference Centre down town Edmonton, from 11AM–2PM and it was sold out. There was a buzz in the building when we arrived an hour before the event. Hector Pothier who was the point man on this event told us if we signed all the new alumni jerseys for the raffle, we got a goody bag – it contained a





toque, scarf, and gloves with the CFLAA crest on them – really cool stuff. The best part of the event was the social for all the CFL alumni who were in town for the game wearing all their team jerseys. It was very nostalgic for me to reconnect with so many of the players I played with and against throughout my career and those that are legends from another era. I could have stayed in there all day and just enjoyed the camaraderie in the room.

Then Hector told us all to line up in order of our colours and there were groups of alumni from every team, with the Eskimos contingent coming up the rear. We marched into the packed conference room to bag pipes, as the sold out crowd gave us a standing ovation. It really was an emotional moment to be surrounded with a thousand hard core CFL fans celebrating their personal favourites. As the steak dinner (Alberta beef is the best in the world!) was being served commissioner Randy Ambrosie spoke and he was genuinely impressed with the event. He announced the great news that the Atlantic Schooners will be the new maritime addition to the CFL. There

was also a silent auction, a live auction, and a game of Heads or Tails, of which all proceeds go to the CFLAA Support Fund.

After the incredibly successful Legends Luncheon, I attended my first AGM. This meeting lasted from 3PM–8PM and covered a plethora of key issues and events that the CFLAA regularly deals with. I don't have the space here to discuss it all, but one important issue I do want to mention is the Medreleaf, long term medicinal cannabis health study that the alumni association is embracing. Medreleaf is a well-respected company with excellent credentials providing cannabis products like CBD to help manage chronic pain resulting from arthritis often associated with football injuries. Please contact htcaa@bell.net if you're interested in joining the study.

Saturday afternoon we attended the Tiger-Cat event to watch the Vanier Cup between Western and Laval. In the evening we went to several of the team social events for the G.C. The sea of green in the Roughrider venue with the food, music, and nostalgia was amazing.

On Grey Cup Sunday the game was sold out and there were fans from every team in the league just enjoying meeting fans from across the country. The atmosphere in Commonwealth stadium was electric and bolstered by the relatively balmy weather. Unfortunately, the outcome of the game was never in doubt from the start because Ottawa seemed flat for the first half. Apparently they used up all their karma breaking records against our Tiger-Cats in the Eastern Final the previous weekend! It seemed fitting that Calgary won, since it was their third consecutive attempt.

So the weekend was very memorable for many reasons, but mostly because of the excellent Legends Luncheon experience. I recommend that everyone put it on your bucket list if you haven't already. Thank you to Hector Pothier, Leo Ezerins and the rest of the CFLAA for crafting such a successful event.

Have a safe and prosperous 2019!

Jason Riley
Past-president, HTCAA