

Tiger-Cats Roar to 1957 Grey Cup Victory

By Brian Snelgrove

A loaf of bread cost 19 cents, gas was 6 cents a litre and a gallon of milk was a dollar.

The year was 1957 and the Hamilton Tiger-Cats squared off against the Winnipeg Blue Bombers in what was destined to become one of the best rivalries in Grey Cup history. It was the first of five Cup meetings between the two clubs over the next six years.

Hamilton finished in top spot in the East in 1957 with a record of 10-4 and knocked off Montreal in the two-game total point Eastern Final, to advance to the championship game.

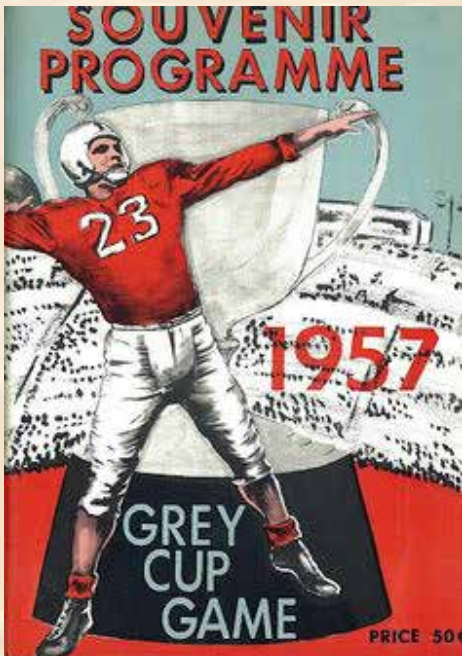
The Ti-Cats were led by a pair of CFL legends: Head Coach Jim Trimble and General Manager Jake Gaudaur. Hall of Fame quarterback Bernie Faloney directed the offence with a talented arsenal of weapons at his disposal including running backs Gerry McDougall and Carlton Chester "Cookie" Gilchrist. McDougall led the East in rushing in '57 with 1,053 yards while Gilchrist ran for 958. Paul Dekker, Tommy Grant, Ralph Goldston, Harry Lampman, Bill Graham and Ron Howell were on the receiving end of most of Faloney's aerials. John Barrow, Vince Scott, Pete Neumann, Tony Curcillo, Ralph Toohy, Zeno Karcz, Eddie Macon and Ray "Bibbles" Bawel were defensive stalwarts. Many players played both ways in the 50's.

In the Grey Cup, the Tiger-Cats jumped out to a 7-0 lead as Bawel scored the first major on a 50 yard fumble return. Later in the first quarter, Faloney scored on a six yard run and the Ticats led 13-0 at half-time. Gilchrist added a pair of touchdowns and McDougall scored one in the second half as Hamilton built a 32-0 lead en route to a lopsided 32-7 victory.

In the fourth quarter Bawel became the focal point of one of the most famous – or infamous – plays in Grey Cup history. After intercepting a pass intended for Ernie Pitts, Bawel was streaking down the sidelines for a likely touchdown when he was tripped by a fan standing near the Winnipeg bench. Future Superior Court Justice David Humphrey was the "Tripper" ensuring that both he and Bawel would become a part of Grey Cup lore. After a conference, officials moved the ball half the distance to the goal line from where the trip occurred. Fortunately the play did not impact the outcome of the '57 Grey Cup and Bawel, finished the game with two interceptions and a touchdown.

"That should have been a touchdown," says John Fedosoff, who is 84 and lives in Ennismore. "They should have given it to him. That was a given. No one was near him. A fan sticks out his foot and trips





him. But it didn't matter. The game was over by that point.

"The camaraderie on that team was amazing," Fedosoff adds. "If you couldn't handle the cutting and slashing in the dressing room you would die. It was a great experience. It was a friendship thing."

"It was pretty important to us, that we win that game," says Bill Graham, a Mississauga resident who is 81. "It was a tough game. It was a physical, brutal type of game. That was probably one of our best games of the season. About the only play I can remember was making a key tackle on

Kenny Ploen. That was a great team we had, a really great team. It was probably our best team of the '50s. Without a doubt. There was a camaraderie there that I don't think I have ever experienced anywhere else."

Sixty years later, Tony Curcillo also shares his recollections. "To me it was just a normal game," he says. "I know we played a good game and were glad to beat them but I can't really remember much about the game itself. It was 60 years ago. I didn't think we had a very good scouting report. Bernie (Faloney) and I were roommates and we watched a Winnipeg game on

TV and that was my scouting report. But I must say that all the people in Canada were so wonderful." Curcillo, who is now 86, lives in Murietta, California.

Both the 1957 and 1967 Grey Cup champion Tiger-Cat teams will be honoured at Hamilton's home game against the Toronto Argonauts on September 30.

Brian Snelgrove is a life-long fan of the CFL and has written extensively for the CFL, the CFL Alumni Association, the Hamilton Tiger-Cats as well as the Official Grey Cup magazine.

