

# TIGER-CAT Q&A

**Name:** Jason Riley

**Years with Tiger-Cats:** 1984–93

**Position:** OL

## CAREER

### 1. Tell us about how you got started in football and your amateur career.

Banting Jr Secondary School in Coquitlam, BC had grade 8 football and I joined the team at 115 lbs. I played punt returner, tailback, and outside linebacker my first year. I loved it so much I prayed that I would grow so I could keep playing football, my new found love.

### 2. How did you get started in the CFL? (draft, free agent, trade etc).

I was recruited to play at UBC by legendary coach Frank Smith. Won a Vanier Cup my senior year, 1982. Was drafted in the first round by the Winnipeg Blue Bombers, one of 5 players from UBC drafted in the first round that year.

### 3. Do or did you hold any records?

Played DL for UBC and held the CIS record for QB sacks with 11. That record was recently broken by Marauder, Ben D'Aguilar. Was All-Canadian DE at UBC for 1981 and 1982 and JP Metris nominee for the Western Conference both years.

Eastern All-Star 4 times and All-Canadian Guard in 1989 for the Hamilton Tiger Cats. Played in 4 Grey Cups winning in 1986. I was also inducted into the Tiger-Cat Walk of Fame and received the Charlotte Simmons Humanitarian Award in 1987.

### 4. Do or did you have a nickname?

Nickname in college was Mad Dog.

### 5. Tell us about some of your fondest memories with the Tiger-Cats or in the CFL.

Playing 3 consecutive Grey Cups with 3 different QBs, '84 – Brock, '85 – Hobart, '86 – Kerrigan (winning 3rd). Part of the best OL in the league with the least sacks against for multiple years. Comradery of the OL in the locker room.

### 6. Who were some of the team-mates and opponents you admired the most and why?

Rocky DiPietro for being the classiest and toughest teammate going across the middle with broken ribs and a flack jacket still catching the ball. Ben Zambiasi the toughest linebacker in the league. Dale Sanderson, Miles Gorrell, John Malinosky, Mike Derks, Ralph

Scholz and Pat Brady the 86' Grey Cup OL unit.

### 7. Which coach did you respect or enjoy playing for the the most and why?

Al Bruno for being a family oriented coach, who always found a way to bring the players together. OL Coach John Salavantis building the best OL unit and never swearing at us, even when we deserved it.

### 8. Tell us about some of your favourite Grey Cup memories.

Pat Brady dancing in his locker in his jock strap with a bottle of champagn in each hand, after we beat Toronto in the back to back Eastern Final in T0. Beating the favoured Eskimos in every facet of the game in the 1986 Grey Cup game in front of my home town crowd and family in Vancouver.

## POST CFL CAREER

### 9. Tell us about your life and career after playing/working with the Tiger-Cats or CFL?

My wife Paulette and I set down roots in Hamilton while I was playing and decided to raise our kids here because we love all the big city advantages we have here, in a small city. Also, after Al Bruno left the Tiger Cats in 1990, he was hired as head coach by McMaster. He contacted me when I retired from playing and I have been the Marauder Offensive Line coach ever since. I work as a high school teacher and coach in Burlington and absolutely love my job. It is very rewarding working with kids.

### 10. Tell us about your interests, hobbies, your passion or anything else you would like to share about yourself.

One of the things I love most about Hamilton is the network of biking trails there are throughout the city. Because of the unique geography of the Niagara Escarpment passing directly through the city I can be on natural trails 10 minutes from my home. The City and the Conservation Authority do a great job of continually developing the trail network and making the many water falls accessible to the public. These are unknown jewels to anyone outside the city.

### 11. Share with us some of the places you've been or things you have experienced.

Vancouver for the 2011 Vanier Cup that we (McMaster) won in the same building that we won the Grey Cup in '86 – that was almost as exciting as winning the Grey Cup! Paulette and I drove to PEI for the first time last summer



and plan to return there for my old team mate Bob Macdonald's wedding this summer. This was a gorgeous trip – please see the wonderful diversity of Canada before you visit other countries!

## THE GAME

### 12. What aspects of the Canadian game do you like the most?

I enjoy the speed and wide open Canadian game more than any other. The motion that we enjoy really opens things up for the offence and helps keep our game less predictable than the US game. They would love to enjoy the large field we have open up their game, but they can't fit it in their new stadiums. All the rules in our game make it so there are no dead plays like the fair catch, so punt returns become very exciting regularly.

### 13. Is there any aspect of the game you would change if you could?

I like our game the way it is. Many people criticize the rouge but this is a historical connection to the game of rugby, which football evolved from. This can be used to strategic advantage and again often adds excitement to the game.

### 15. What advice do you have to either young players or those just starting out in the CFL?

Work hard and listen to your coaches. There is no substitute for hard work to make you the player you want to be. If things don't work out with your first team, keep working until you find your niche. Hamilton was my 3rd team and I almost quit before I came here – if I had I would have regretted missing out on all that the Tiger Cat experience had to offer me and my family.