



OUR TRUE NORTH  
STRONG AND FREE.  
**OH, CANADA**  
JULY 1ST IS  
CANADA DAY!



## CFLOAA NEWSLETTER | July 2020

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### Virtual Canada Day 2020

OTTAWA -- You are being invited to celebrate Canada's 153rd birthday virtually this year.

The federal government has announced that in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the in-person birthday festivities in Ottawa and Gatineau on July 1 will be cancelled.

In a statement, Minister of Canadian Heritage Steven Guilbeault said the government has "decided to celebrate Canada Day differently this year, in a way that will allow us to come together virtually to share our pride in being Canadian."

The big Canada Day festivities were scheduled to be held at Major's Hill Park this year, after renovations to Centre Block forced officials to move the party off of Parliament Hill.

Guilbeault says Canadian Heritage is now working with Canadian artists and artisans to put together a virtual program, "reflecting our diversity and values, and showcasing the immense talent our country has to offer."

Details on the virtual Canada Day celebrations on July 1 are expected to be announced soon.

In a message on Twitter, Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson said "the cancellation of Canada Day celebrations on the Hill is regrettable, but it's the right decision to keep everyone safe."

Watson adds "I look forward to welcoming you all back to Ottawa in 2021!"

<https://ottawa.ctvnews.ca/canada-day-celebrations-to-go-virtual-july-1-amid-covid-19-pandemic-1.4900848>





TIM BAINES POSTMEDIA OTTAWA SUN JUNE 7, 2020

If only real life were more like the inner workings of a football team — with trust, togetherness, common goal-setting, accountability, effective communication and a will to win — and we were able to do it together.

Instead, we've got people pulling in different directions, we've got suspicion, distrust. It's always me, not we. And we've got hatred, way too much of it.

As hundreds of thousands of people marched to protest the killing of an unarmed black American — George Floyd — and others, systemic racism and oppression are top of mind.

It's not even just a "black thing." Minorities, including Canadian aboriginals, aren't treated as equals. And there are cries for change. Again.

"Comparing it to a football team ... that's a good analogy," said Ottawa Redblacks linebacker Kevin Brown. "We may not all get paid the same, we may play different positions of importance, but it takes all of us to win. The situation you're in, race, economic status, none of that really matters on a football team. You need everybody (on board).

"Society is the same thing," he continued. "This person might be poor, another person may be very well off. I don't think we should treat each other like we're in different classes. We're all in the same game, we're all trying to win, we're all trying to raise our kids to have the best life possible. In order for change, in order to all get on the same page, we need to work together. That starts when you can look to your brother to the left and your brother to the right regardless of race or how much money they're making and you don't see them for the colour of their skin. We're all in the same race – the human race – we're all on the same team. Until we can see each other as equals trying to win at the same game, there's never really going to be change."

“If the world was a bit more like a football team, I think we’d have a better world,” said Canadian Football League commissioner Randy Ambrosie. “Football has lessons we should want our kids to learn. And I think it ends up making the world a better place.”

Remember *The Titans*, a biographical sports movie which came out in 2000, is the story of black and white coming together on a football field at T.C. Williams High School in Virginia. In the movie, we see the coming together of a team when Gerry Bertier (played by Ryan Hurst), who is white, is in a hospital bed after a car accident. His teammate Julius Campbell (played by Wood Harris, who is black) asks to see his friend. The nurse tells Campbell: “Only kin’s allowed in here.” Bertier replies: “Alice, are you blind? Don’t you see the family resemblance? That’s my brother.” A football team had found a way to conquer its differences.

“Sports is one of those beautiful things that brings everyone together, every race, colour and creed,” said Edmonton Eskimos offensive lineman SirVincent Rogers. “In sports, you work together toward one common goal. Sure, you have your dust-ups, but you’re working in harmony. Ultimately, you’re trying to come together the best you can as a team to beat the opposition. That’s exactly what we need to do. It would be a beautiful thing. Mostly everyone in sports loves the game they’re indulging in, that’s the motivation. If people had the love for one another in society, there’s no way we could have an environment that wasn’t fair and equal for everybody.”

So, if we’re going to fix the inequalities and the injustices, what’s the next step?

“You continue to call (racists) out, you continue to video, you continue to make light of it,” said Toronto Argonauts defensive backs coach Ike Charlton. “The media doesn’t want to show the thousands of people out there protesting silently. Why not present that message when you have races of all kinds kneeling: One heartbeat? All the American media is going to show is the looting and rioting. And your president is talking about looting and shooting.”

Another step forward is education about name-calling and treatment of people of different skin tones. Many call it ‘learned behaviours.’

“Kids are seeing different things and hearing different words at a young age,” said Brown. “You hear the president using words like ‘thug’ and ‘criminal’ and those are the things some people think about us. There’s usually not malice intended, but the kids are copying a word somebody else used. Kids soak in everything, sometimes they don’t know any better. There’s a responsibility to the parents to enforce the ideas of social acceptance and equality.”

There has to be a buy-in from anybody who’s not a minority.

“We need people to educate their own race because apparently they’re not listening to us,” said former CFL quarterback Henry Burris, a three-time Grey Cup champion. “I see a lot more people coming to the realization that it’s not just a black problem, it’s our problem. We are all God’s creation. How you treat other people, you can do something about that.”

“It’s not just one thing, there are a lot of things that point to racism,” added Rogers. “They have to be eradicated and denounced by everybody. It can’t just be the black community crying out. The conscious white people have to ally with the black community to sort through the issues and not sit comfortably in the privilege that exists in the skin of a white American, a privilege that comes right out of the womb.

“There needs to be reform to the justice system, how it’s set up and who it’s targeting to oppress.

“We need to improve the education system in America to make it equal and fair. This is a chance for us to come together and be the wholeness of a human race that God intended us to be.”

“Hopefully, this is the generation that can change things,” said CFL Association president and Solomon Elimimian, a linebacker with the Saskatchewan Roughriders. “I don’t know everything, but I know we have to find a way to put action together and to stop it. It’s going to take empathy. It’s going to take somebody who hasn’t experienced racism to empathize and say: ‘I feel your pain and I want to do whatever I can to help. How can I stop this?’

“There needs to be reform on how we treat people. It’s time for a reset. It’s not working the way it’s currently constructed. I’m not a politician, but I sure would love to see action. It’s not good enough for politicians — Republican or Democrat — to say it’s broken. They’ve been saying it’s broken for a long time. We want to hear what we’re going to do together to combat this. It’s time to actually think about how we can change things through action. Let’s educate, let’s see how we can change it. People are sick and tired of being sick and tired. “The emotions and anger have been bottled up for so long. That’s why you’re seeing the protests, that’s why people are upset. This is something we have been living through for so long.

“It starts with conversation, it starts with people not accepting what’s happening. Hiding in darkness is not good enough anymore. When you shine the light on the darkness and you speak out against it, that’s the first step.”

Many athletes have used social media as a platform for voicing their opinions calling for change. The more, the merrier, said Charlton.

“What about (Tampa Bay Bucs QB) Tom Brady? I’m with him all day — we’re in the same (NFL) draft class (2000). He posts a picture of George Floyd’s hands pressed together. No, that isn’t good enough. Nobody’s asking you to march, we know you won’t do that. You have to get out and make a real statement. These one-percenters — the Tom Bradys, the Wayne Gretzkys, all these prominent people — they need to say something. Taylor Swift spoke out on Donald Trump, you need more of that. What they say may resonate, it may get to someone.”

Maybe one day we’ll be able to judge each other by our hearts and our souls, not by the colours of our skin.

Maybe there will be no need for kneeling and marching to ensure equality.

“Hopefully, my kids, my grandkids and my great grandkids live in a world more like what Dr. (Martin Luther) King envisioned,” said Brown. “Hopefully, not only can you live alongside people of different races and economic statuses, but we can all view each other as equal.”

“The reaction throughout the States to these killings has shined a light on what needs to be exposed, what needs to be talked about and what needs to be fixed,” said Elimimian. “It’s tough because it seems like we’re seeing a re-run and things go back to the way they were before. We have to keep fighting. This is too important, too many people are affected, lives are being lost. Generational trauma is being created. There’s a huge divide in the country right now. Through tragedy, maybe good things can come from it.”

“I have hope that we can come to our senses and live in harmony and piece,” said Rogers. “I’m a Christian, I believe in Jesus Christ. I’m not saying my lifestyle is perfect. But I have a belief it’s possible that we can find a way to live peacefully together. The white Americans that believe in their heart they’re better than the next person because of the colour of their skin, they have to wrestle with that. Let’s try to figure out why you feel that way and how can we move forward. Everyone can change their mind about something, no matter how you were raised, regardless of your socio-economic status, regardless of your faith or religion.”

It says in the Bible, Proverbs 10:12: “Hatred stirs up conflict, but love covers over all wrongs.” That has to count for something.

## **KNEE DEEP IN CURRENT EVENTS**

When Colin Kaepernick first took a knee in 2016 during the Star Spangled Banner, protesting the U.S. treatment of minorities, there was a firestorm of fury.

He and other NFL players who kneeled were called unpatriotic and disrespectful of the flag and the country. U.S. president Donald Trump quickly said: ‘Wouldn’t you love to see one of these NFL owners, when someone disrespects our flag to say: ‘Get that son of a bitch off the field, right now. Out. He’s fired. He’s fired.’ Maybe they shouldn’t be in the country.’”

Edmonton Eskimos offensive tackle Sir Vincent Rogers said he gets why Kaepernick, who hasn’t played in the NFL since 2016, did what he did.

“There is so much pride in America that revolves around our flag,” said Rogers. “But when you think about our national anthem, there are verses we don’t sing today because it had things that were offensive to the black community.

“That ties into why (Kaepernick) wanted to peacefully protest. He knew the majority of America takes pride in the flag and the anthem. He had the audience.

“The people in America who don’t want to give up racism and the privilege hijacked his protest and made it about the flag — that it was something that was it offensive to our military and our flag.

That’s not what it was about. Had I been playing in America at that time, I would’ve been kneeling beside him.

“Fast forward to the current events: An officer puts his knee on the neck of another man for nine minutes, never relenting. It’s crazy how things come around. (Kaepernick) peacefully protests, then to have something so tragic — like what just happened to George Floyd — it’s sad to wrap your mind around.”

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**“I CAME TO  
CANADA TO LIVE  
THE AMERICAN  
DREAM”**

**BY SUNNI KHALID  
SEPT 20, 2016**

—————



**First black quarterback to win CFL title says racial climate very different in Canada than in United States**

“I came to Canada to live the American Dream.”

Those were the first words out of the mouth of Chuck Ealey. The former University of Toledo star quarterbacked the Hamilton Tiger-Cats to the Grey Cup championship in his rookie year in the Canadian Football League some 44 years ago.

Success was nothing new for Ealey. He led the Toledo Rockets on a 35-game winning streak in his three years at the helm of the Rockets – an NCAA record for starting quarterbacks that still stands.

A mobile, athletic quarterback in the same mold of a Russell Wilson, Ealey led Toledo to three straight Top 20 finishes, three consecutive Mid-American Conference titles, and three victories in the Tangerine Bowl (now known as the Citrus Bowl).

Ealey was voted by The Football News as a first-team All-American as quarterback, second-team by United Press International and third-team by the Associated Press. He finished eighth in the polling for the 1971 Heisman Trophy. After his final season, Ealey attracted the attention of handful of NFL scouts, including the New York Jets. But none of them were interested in seeing him throw the ball.

“They wanted me to run the 40 [yard dash],” the now 66-year-old Ealey recalled. “I kind of laughed and said, ‘How many quarterbacks have to run the 40? Quarterbacks don’t run the 40.’ ”

A few weeks before the Feb. 1, 1972, draft, Ealey and his agent sent a letter to the NFL informing all of the teams that he would only agree to be drafted if he could be given an opportunity to play his position. Some 23 years later, Florida State’s Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback Charlie Ward would adopt a similar stance.

“You know what, if you’re gonna draft me, draft me as a quarterback,” Ealey recalled. “It was OK for me not to be drafted, if it was not as a quarterback.”

“I didn’t want to play defensive back or wide receiver. All I wanted to do was play quarterback. At the time in the NFL, there was only Joe Gilliam with Pittsburgh and they wouldn’t let him play. So, I knew what had happened to him could happen to me.”

## AS A QB, HE WAS IGNORED IN NFL DRAFT

The NFL draft was held over two days at New York City's Essex House Hotel. The 26 teams made 442 selections over 17 rounds. Ealey, like Charlie Ward two decades later, was not drafted.

Standing 6-feet-1 and weighing 195 pounds, Ealey was considered slightly undersized to play quarterback in the NFL, even though white quarterbacks about the same size, like Hall of Famer Fran Tarkenton, were starring in the league.



Toronto Argonaut head coach Leo Cahill (1) and assistant coach Chuck Dickerson (middle) speak with quarterback Chuck Ealey during final exhibition game against Ottawa Rough Riders.

"When I came out of Toledo," said Ealey, "the NFL was looking at 6-3 pocket passers. I was mobile and athletic. That was something that somebody could use against me. They built a reason against black quarterbacks to move them to another position."

This was just three years after Marlin Briscoe became the first African-American to become a starting quarterback, south of the Canadian border, with the Denver Broncos of the American Football League.

Even though he was named the AFL's rookie of the year, Briscoe wasn't even allowed to compete for the job before the next season, was subsequently traded to the Buffalo Bills and spent the rest of his career as a wide receiver in the NFL.

Ealey said he never focused specifically on Briscoe's fate. Decades before Ealey, a succession of black college quarterbacks had been drafted into the NFL, only to be switched to other positions and never given the opportunity to line up behind center.

"[Briscoe] was never an issue for me," Ealey added. "I knew he had gone in there. He was not a factor. It was just a sign of the times."

In the weeks following the draft, when NFL teams sign college free agents to fill out their rosters, the Toledo star quarterback attracted little interest. Kansas City and Denver called Ealey, but he said neither club offered him a tryout as a quarterback.

"I wasn't bitter," said Ealey, who graduated the following May with a bachelor's degree in business economics with a specialization in transportation. "I wasn't worried about it. I wasn't focused on playing pro ball when I was in college. It wasn't part of why I went to college for me to go to the NFL."

Ealey, who had always played quarterback, was determined to either play his position or walk away altogether from a career in pro football.

"I was more practical to the reality that was taking place," said Ealey. "I really wasn't focused on playing in the NFL. I knew the NFL wasn't going to do anything about it."

Soon after, Ealey's agent fielded an offer from the Hamilton Tiger-Cats, one of the charter franchises of the Canadian Football League.

Shortly after graduation day in Toledo, the Portsmouth, Ohio, native retraced one of the routes of Harriet Tubman's Underground Railroad. He left his hometown and traveled north to Detroit, crossing over the Ambassador Bridge that spans the Detroit River across the border into Canada, then on to Hamilton, where the freedom to play quarterback awaited.

Ealey, still adjusting to the larger and wider dimensions of Canadian football, along with 12-man squads and multiple backs in motion, started the 1972 season as the backup to veteran Wally Gabler. He had success in playing in relief in the Tiger-Cats third and fourth regular season games, both losses – a new experience for Ealey, who had never lost a game in high school or college.

Named the starter in week four by Tiger-Cats head coach Jerry Williams, Ealey led Hamilton to an 11-3 record and the CFL's East Division title, displaying a rifle arm and elusive open field running.

### **EALEY: NO RACIAL TROUBLES FOR HIM IN CFL**

Ealey said there was no controversy in Hamilton when he took over as starting quarterback as there certainly would have been in the NFL at that time.

“There was never an issue that it would become a black-white issue,” Ealey pointed out, “because then it was not a segregated mindset. There was no one who put you in the mindset of being a black quarterback. It was like college, it was liberating. I was immediately accepted by the team. There was no controversy. Nobody brought [race] up. That’s a reflection of the country.”

Unlike the NFL, African-American quarterbacks had been starting for CFL clubs for more than 20 years before Ealey arrived in Hamilton. Management, players, fans and the media in Canada had accepted black quarterbacks as part of the game.



**DAVID COOPER/TORONTO STAR VIA GETTY IMAGES**

**Chuck Ealey, who at one time didn't figure prominently in Argo coach Leo Cahill's plans, drew the quarterbacking assignment for the Canadian Football League season opener on July 10, 1978, against the Hamilton Tiger-Cats.**

“For the most part,” said Ealey, “the message when I came in in ’72 is there was no reason why I couldn’t play the position as a black man. There have been so many black quarterbacks up here that, sometimes, six quarterbacks out of the nine teams have been starting at one time. From ’72 on, the opportunity for blacks to play quarterback was still there.”

Ealey capped perhaps the greatest rookie season in pro football history in the postseason, leading to the Tiger-Cats to a last-second 13-10 victory over the Saskatchewan Roughriders in the 60th Grey Cup championship game before the hometown fans at Hamilton’s Ivor Wynne Stadium. Passing for 292 yards and a touchdown and running for 63 more, Ealey was named the game’s most valuable player.

Ealey became the first black man to quarterback his team to a professional football championship (15 seasons before Doug Williams led Washington to the Super Bowl XXII), Ealey was named the CFL rookie of the year and selected to the league’s all-star team.

Ealey played just six more seasons in the CFL, never duplicating the success of his rookie season. Ealey never got the chance to display his skills as a professional back home.

“They never approached me at all,” he said. “They were having all that talk about the World Football League and all that stuff, but never the NFL.”

On the other hand, he seems content with the way the fates played out.

“I never have worried about it from the time I left university to the time I came in Canada, even in a dream.”

But later on, the competitor that remains within Ealey emerges, confident that he would have been good enough to play in the NFL if he’d been given the chance.

“I think I could have,” he said. “I would have had to go someplace and have had somebody who could coach me in the right system. I think if that would have happened nowadays, I’d be given a shot. But that’s the way the society was. Of course, they would.”

Ealey said he’s happy for the success other African-American quarterbacks enjoyed in both the CFL and the NFL.

“I feel just elated with what they’ve been able to do,” he added. “It was too late for the guys of my times, like Jimmy Jones, Condredge Holloway and others before me to be given a shot. I don’t think about it, until some folks bring it up. If we had a Cam Newton to come up here, or five or six, it would have made a difference. The discussion seems to come up.”

## LIFE IN CANADA VS. THE U.S. WAS SO DIFFERENT

matched by the social acceptance off the field by a much more racially tolerant society than the one in which he was raised.

An investment banker for nearly 40 years, Ealey is a dual citizen, living with his family in Brampton, Ontario. Although he frequently visits family in Ohio, he prefers living in Canada to the States.

From his earliest days in Hamilton, Ealey and his family lived in mostly white neighborhoods. He said neighbors frequently invited him and his family into their homes for dinners. Ealey said he never heard a racial epithet hurled at him either on or off the field in a few years short of a half-century of living in Canada.

Coming of age during the turbulent 1960s in America, Ealey grew up in the projects in Portsmouth's predominantly black North End. Sports and recreation provided a way out. He honed his passing skills by throwing large stones at boxcars traveling along on the nearby railroad tracks, targeting letters on their sides. Ealey said the practice translated easily to the gridiron, make it easy to lead receivers with his throws.

Ealey was a star football and basketball player at Notre Dame High School. He was starting quarterback in his junior and senior years, and his Titans never lost a game, and were selected as the first Ohio High School Athletic Association state football champions.

"When I was in high school, they told me that they had no doubts about me playing in college.

Despite his a stellar prep career on the gridiron, Ealey attracted scant attention from college recruiters, with one very notable exception.

"Bo Schembechler was the coach at Miami of Ohio, the year before he went to coach at Michigan," Ealey recounted. "He came to recruit me. He wanted me to come in as a defensive back and a third-string quarterback, but he only offered me a partial scholarship. The University of Toledo gave me a full scholarship as a quarterback. I was determined to play the position. I just wanted them to give me a shot. I just said, 'Give the guy, whoever it is, a shot.' "

The recruiter from Toledo came to see Ealey at Portsmouth's Notre Dame High School too late in the year to scout him on the gridiron. Instead, he saw Ealey playing basketball. Ealey signed his national letter of intent with Toledo on the basketball court at Notre Dame – shortly after sinking a last-second jump shot to win a game.

Going to school in Toledo brought Ealey closer to the growing political protests of the era, especially the anti-Vietnam War and Black Power movements. Ealey said he largely escaped the racial tensions four years later when he went across the border to play in Canada, where he raised his family. He added that his son, Damon, who left Canada to play football at the University of Toledo some 20 years later, did not.

"My son saw the differences in the society," said Ealey. "He said he couldn't stay there because the social element was so different. In the States, you're forced to choose between black and white. You have to take sides. He didn't have to do that in Canada, because he had white friends and black friends, Indian, Chinese and Italian friends that he played with. In Canada, everybody's just here. It's not a perfect thing, but you just don't think a lot about race."

Now more than 40 years removed from living in the United States, albeit across the border, Ealey admitted to an almost out-of-body perspective in looking at his native land, which, to him, is a different country, a different society, in geographic, spiritual and even emotional terms.

"As a society and social environment, we [the United States] still seem to be behind," said Ealey, who has watched with amazement at the racially charged U.S. presidential campaign from a distance.

"I can't see them [politicians] talking in Canada like that [Trump], not in business, corporations or sports. There's no reason to have this in Canada. Why is that in the U.S

Looking back at his career, Ealey said he was never asked about being a black quarterback during his playing days.

"The only time we talk about black quarterbacks is when someone calls from the U.S.," added Ealey. "We never talk about it here."

Ealey said he's unaware of an informal fraternity among former African-American CFL quarterbacks as there is among NFL signal-callers – even though they are far more numerous.

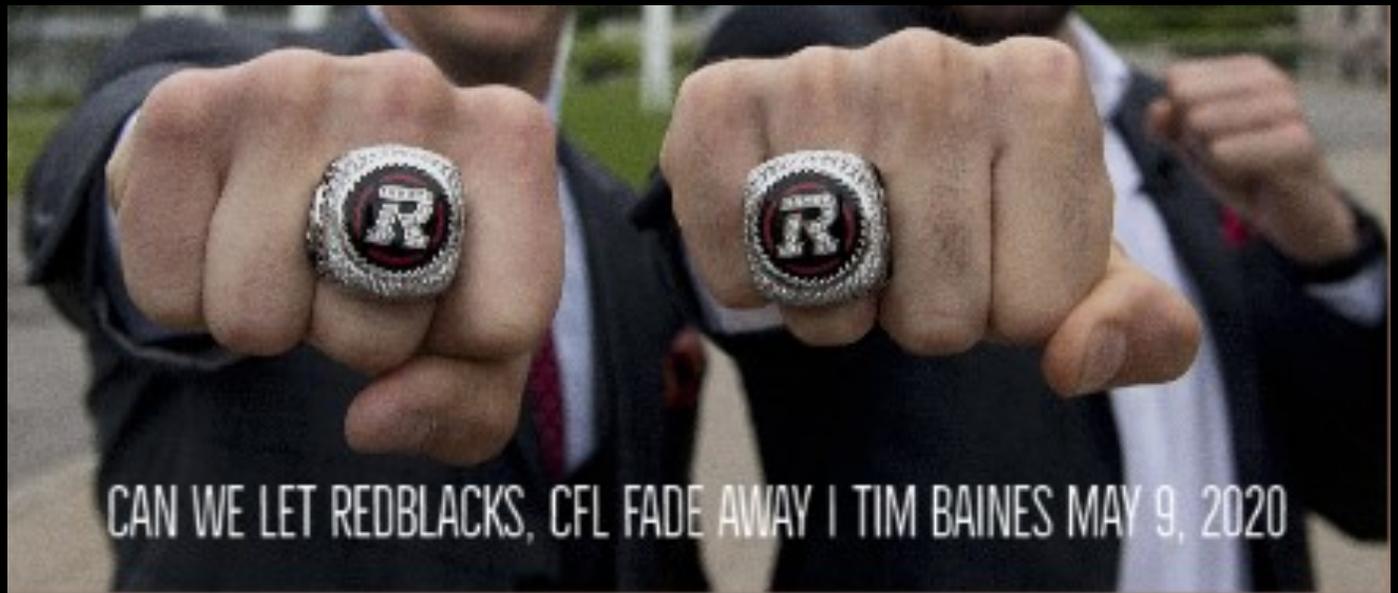
Instead, he said, former players tend to socialize primarily around the close-knit alumni associations of the nine CFL clubs.

“The guys up here don't treat it like that; once you cross that border, it's not a black-white issue,” Ealey said. “It just doesn't come out that way. Everybody blends together. We hang out with each other as alumni. I hang out with the Tiger-Cats or the Argonauts alumni. It's not a black thing.”



**We are saddened and angry that racism still divides us. Racism is a learned behaviour that breeds hate, intolerance and violence to which no person should ever be subjected. We stand with anyone who condemns acts of hatred or violence because of the colour of someone's skin and we stand with those who take peaceful action to make this stop.**





In a world that has been twisted into a mangled outtake straight out of *The Twilight Zone*, the Canadian Football League is begging for its life.

While there's plenty of skepticism and some suspicion about the CFL's money ask (up to \$150 million) from the federal government — it's not like any of us feel in much of a giving mood these days in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic — a league that has presented its Grey Cup 107 times needs our attention. So what are the financials? Why bail out a league that was nearly choked out in the 1990s

When CFL commissioner Randy Ambrosie talks about a likely scenario being that there will be no 2020 season for a league that collectively loses between \$10 to \$20 million a year, it's not the Ottawa Redblacks that are “reddening” the balance sheets.

Maybe surprisingly — given the fact they hosted playoff games in four straight years (2015-18), won a Grey Cup in 2016, hosted a Grey Cup (2017) and had a large string of home sellouts (about 25,000 fans) going into 2019 — the Redblacks are basically a “close-to-breaking-even” team.

In good years, the Redblacks come close to making a profit. In really, really good years — a 2016 Grey Cup championship — the Redblacks lose money. Sounds crazy, right? But when you start paying for Grey Cup rings, flying family members to the site of the Grey Cup, player and coach bonuses for winning the championship, extra accommodations, etc., well, it adds up. Back in 2017, Roger Greenberg, managing partner of the Ottawa Sports and Entertainment Group, told an Ottawa city council finance and economic development committee that the team took a \$1.1-million hit for getting the opportunity to lift Lord Grey's coveted chalice. Weirdly enough, if the Redblacks had lost the Eastern Conference final against the Edmonton Eskimos, OSEG would have been \$1 million ahead. and CFL fade away

In bad years, the Redblacks also lose money. A 3-15 season in 2019 was accompanied by many bad-weather home dates. Plus, eight CFL teams (including the Redblacks) were helping to finance the Montreal Alouettes.

Edmonton, Winnipeg and Saskatchewan all make money. It figures that Calgary and Hamilton are also in that “close” zone, along with Ottawa. Toronto, B.C. and Montreal are taking losses.

The CFL has a nice deal with TSN (paying about \$50 million per season) to divide between its nine clubs, but for comparison's sake, NFL teams EACH make upwards of \$255 million season. Attendance revenue is imperative for the CFL's lifeline. No fans means no money. So, yeah, this is a league that needs help.

Speaking via video before a House of Commons standing committee on finance on Thursday, Ambrosie, the CFL's man of the people, spoke about scenarios where there would be a shortened season and another where there was no season. He has asked for an immediate \$30 million to cover expenses already incurred (coaches and team employees have contracts — many already have taken pay cuts given the circumstances). The league is asking for up to another \$70 million if it goes through a shortened season and up to \$150 million if there are no games in 2020, taking it into 2021.

Maybe the feds see the CFL's plea as a bluff. What if they tell the CFL to finance its own way out of a disaster like we've never known. Maybe the CFL teams find a way. Or maybe they don't. How do the CFL's community-owned teams find a way to finance the devastating losses they could incur in 2020? What if the deep-pocketed owners of the other franchises decide their pockets aren't deep enough. Surely, they are feeling the pinch of a wallop to the economy. And philanthropy has its limits.

How sustainable are any of TD Place (Ottawa), Tim Hortons Field (Hamilton), Mosaic Stadium (Regina), McMahon Stadium (Calgary), IG Field (Winnipeg), Commonwealth Stadium (Edmonton) or B.C. Place (Vancouver) — BMO Field (Toronto) and Percival Molson Memorial Stadium (Montreal) may be OK — without a major tenant? Would any municipal, provincial or federal government want that to happen on their watch? What would the cost be to taxpayers?

OSEG made a profit of about \$4 million from playing host to the 2017 Grey Cup (between Toronto and Calgary) at TD Place. What shouldn't be lost is the Grey Cup — a wonderful national celebration on and off the field — also generated an economic impact of an estimated \$72 million for the Ottawa region. That's an economic boost that would be missed in each of the nine CFL cities.

Also, what happens if roughly 600 players and another couple hundred coaches and football team personnel are out of a job? These guys pay taxes, right? So if you're taxing a guy at 30% of \$100,000 and you multiply that by a few hundred ... do the math. So, with a cash boost to the CFL, the federal government would be giving money ... to get money. There has to be a way to help.

The CFL needs to tidy up its house, soften its relationship with its players — its biggest asset. There is no room for disconnect. Pushing forward, hand in hand, will make the league stronger.

The ask is big. Many of us are hurting, our spirit and bank accounts have been ravaged by COVID-19. We're suffering. Businesses — large and small — are being suffocated. So, yeah, it's tough to imagine money being handed to a professional sports league.

But my world includes the CFL, a lunch-bucket league that puffs out its chest and talks about Diversity is Strength. With its wider and longer field, with three downs, with 12 players on the field, with the waggle, with the rouge, it's not the NFL — that's one of the things that makes it so great.

When it's safe for the CFL to play games and we can sit in the stands and sip a cold beer, our little world will once again seem normal, even if it's a new normal.

I want my new normal to include the CFL.





## CANADIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE EXHAUSTING ALL OPTIONS FOR RETURN TO PLAY | DAN BARNES MAY 29, 2020

If the Canadian Football League's nine teams don't play a single game this year, it won't be for lack of effort or imagination.

Because commissioner Randy Ambrosie, the CFL's football operations personnel, team presidents and governors will have run to ground every reasonable scenario, and some that don't meet the smell test.

Take, for instance, the fact that Ambrosie has invited The Spring League CEO Brian Woods to present a formal proposal for a partnership between the two leagues. The men had a 20-minute introductory conversation on Wednesday, and Woods has promised to deliver his proposal on Monday morning.

At its crux is Woods' vision of having all nine CFL teams play the entirety of their shortened 2020 regular season — most likely eight games each — in at least two American cities in either the southeast or southwest quadrant of the country. Cities such as Dallas, Memphis and Birmingham have been mentioned as likely venues.

The Spring League's five teams would play games against one another as well, and the proposal will call for pre-season games between CFL and TSL teams, employing Canadian rules. Woods made no mention of playoffs or Grey Cup games.

He believes his plan will interest the CFL's governors if they reach the conclusion that games cannot be played in front of fans in any Canadian venues this year because of physical distancing restrictions in place to combat COVID-19.

"I think it's not probable (the CFL will play this season in Canada)," said Woods. "I feel you need to play and this is an opportunity to split some costs with another league and still be able to hopefully satisfy some of your contractual obligations with TSN. So you're going to miss out on ticket revenue but we're going to mitigate the other potential losses they could be looking at whether operating or not operating this year."

He said he has targeted venues in the southern states because they have been the first to re-open their economies, and might be the first to allow fans at sporting events.

There are other benefits to his proposal.

"I can give them a road map for a less expensive venture. They could eliminate the practice squad. Players from The Spring League would effectively become the de facto practice squad for the CFL while their season is taking place in the United States. They would be able to mobilize battle-ready players immediately."

He also mentioned the fact that large portions of CFL coaching staffs and player rosters are already located in the U.S.

“Again, I am sure there will be people looking at this proposal, going it just makes more sense for teams to stay in Canada. We’re trying to make the strongest argument possible for our players to receive more exposure.”

Prior to the conversation with Woods, Ambrosie said he was “happy to talk to anybody who loves the game like we do.”

There is no harm in listening to every idea, and considering every possible return-to-play scenario. The CFL is still doing that.

“I think at some point we have looked at almost everything,” said Ambrosie. “How big will training camps be? How long will training camps be? Will there be pre-season games? How many games would we play in a regular season? What kind of playoff format would we use?”

“This will be totally different than any other year in CFL history, so we are willing to be somewhat unconventional in our approach.”

The CFL is still analysing the financial and physical realities of operating out of two hub cities, most likely Regina and Winnipeg. But that’s not a certainty.

“We are still looking at, could we play in all of our CFL stadiums? Right now we don’t know. We are looking at various versions of a truncated season, which is related to how long into December we might have to go. One factor is whether or not some stadiums could actually function below a certain temperature.”

Having already announced that the regular season will not start before September, the league has given itself some runway, but it is not infinite. Ambrosie has been asked to come up with a drop-dead date for a decision whether to go ahead or not. Once that is reached, Ambrosie and the nine team presidents who comprise the management council will whittle down return to play options and set them in front of the governors for potential ratification.

“At some point, we are going to narrow this field down to one or two very specific ideas and then test them for their viability,” said Ambrosie.

“At that stage we will present to the governors the entire story, how it will all work. It will include all of those issues related to financial considerations. At this stage we have ideas and have made progress with those ideas. But we haven’t narrowed it down to the one or two things.”



NEWS JUNE 18, 2020

## AMBROSIE PROVIDES UPDATE ON BEHALF OF CFL

TORONTO — The Canadian Football League has released the following statement, attributed to Commissioner Randy Ambrosie:

We are in this together, all of us who love and support, and are part of, the Canadian Football League. And that is why I want to share a short update with everyone today.

Like so many businesses, we have been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. We have been forced to postpone our season. We continue to assess whether we can still play a shortened season in 2020 against two criteria: whether we can do so safely, and whether it is financially viable. We love our game and want to see it back on the field.

We know this situation is tough on our fans, sponsors, employees — and especially tough on our players. Some have received off-season bonuses, but many have gone without pay since last season. We know that's enormously difficult for them, their families and we've been working on ways to help.

One example is our ongoing work with the Canadian Football League Players' Association asking the federal government to change the criteria for its wage subsidy program so that our players are fully eligible. Together with the CFLPA, we've written to government explaining the circumstances and asking for the changes. We know government is managing a crisis across the entire country, but are optimistic they will find an opportunity to act on our submission and help assist the players that COVID-19 has prevented from going to work.

We also understand that our players want certainty. So do our fans and so do I. We want to make as informed a decision as possible on this year, to make it as soon as possible and most of all to make the right decision for Canadians. Above all, with COVID-19 re-opening plans continuing to evolve across the country, we will be guided by the advice and experience of Canada's Public Health Officers who have worked tirelessly and endlessly to protect Canadians during the pandemic.

Our focus also goes far beyond whether we play in the fall. We are committed to taking actions that not only allow us to weather the COVID-19 storm, but also ensure we have a foundation to renew, reinforce and one day continue the growth of the CFL. It was reported this week that non-player football operations across the league have been asked to cut their budgets by 20 per cent. We know this is tough on our very dedicated coaches, general managers and scouts. But we all must show leadership at this time. That's why I and every member of our league's executive team

voluntarily took pay cuts of at least 20 per cent back in April. There have also been pay cuts, reductions in hours and even layoffs across the nine CFL clubs as well as the league office since the pandemic struck. We continue to look for more efficiencies and opportunities to overcome the challenges of COVID-19. We are leaving no stone unturned when it comes to controlling costs and creatively looking for revenue.

Our fans make the game possible and they too have sacrificed. The vast majority of CFL season ticket holders have chosen to leave their pre-season deposits with our clubs, providing us with much needed operating capital. We can't thank them enough. The enthusiasm and support of Canadians from coast-to-coast inspires us every day – and at no time more than during the COVID-19 crisis.

When it comes to the role of the fans, not all sports leagues are the same. Larger US-based leagues play for a larger North American market and get the lion's share of their revenue from television. While we are grateful for our US fans — and those even further abroad — the CFL plays for Canadians and depends on ticket sales more than any other source of funds. From a financial point of view, playing without fans is far less important to making it through COVID-19 for the NBA or NHL than it is for our league.

We love our game, our players, and our fans. We're working hard everyday to find a way to get back on the field in 2020.

We look forward to more opportunities to work with the CFLPA on our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including whether there can be a season in 2020, the short term and long term recovery plan for Canada's league and what we need to have in place together for 2021 and beyond. The practical and financial realities imposed by COVID-19 will – as is the case for many Canadian businesses – provide a framework for talks on a new collective bargaining agreement. A strong, positive, and productive partnership with our players is critical to enduring the pandemic, returning to the field, and getting back on the track to pursuing a future that will directly benefit players, the league, and our fans.

We are strongly committed to working positively with our players and to always trying to build a better relationship. Only by working together can we reach our goal: to come out of this pandemic, and out of 2020, having done all we can to secure the strongest possible future for the CFL, its players and all of us who love and support this wonderful league.

– Randy Ambrosie  
CFL Commissioner



## RAVENS CELEBRATE PAST, LOOK TO FUTURE AT 2020 BANQUET BY GRIFFIN PORTER MAY 16, 2020

OTTAWA, Ontario – It wasn't an awards dinner that any of the Carleton Ravens Football family had ever experienced before, but the annual celebration of Carleton's best and brightest still went off without a hitch and contained some great moments as the Ravens looked back on the 2019 season.

The ceremony featured speeches from Ravens football stars young and old, as well as a moment to honour Carleton football alumni Al Abelson, and of course plenty of awards.

The quality of the 2019 Carleton team became apparent yet again as the nominees for the various awards were listed, as many of them were hotly contested between all three candidates.

The Rookie of the Year was awarded to Patrick Lavoie, who started every game of the season for the Ravens on the offensive line, a rare achievement for a rookie at any position. Tevin Bowen took home the Joe MacDonald Award for Lineman of the Year, as head coach Steve Sumarah praised Bowen's influence not only on the game, but also in the locker room as a leader among his teammates. Bowen fittingly gave the Graduating Address, speaking to his personal journey overcoming adversity in his years at Carleton, reminding all in (virtual) attendance of the importance of perseverance while also having a system of people in place to support you, which Bowen named as his coaches and teammates.

The Coaches Award went to fullback Mitch Raper while the John Ruddy Award, which is chosen by the Old Crows alumni society for a combination of athletic and academic achievement went to linebacker Trevor Hoyte. In the positional awards, Matthieu Pickens was named Special Teams Player of the Year after leading the team in special teams tackles, while wide receiver Phil Iloki took home Offensive Player of the Year honours, an award which recognized not only a fantastic season, but one of the best careers in the history of the program.

The biggest winner on the night was linebacker Jack Cassar, who was named both Defensive Player of the Year and Team MVP following a phenomenal season that saw him rack up both provincial and national honours, as well as become a 2nd round pick of the Toronto Argonauts of the CFL. Cassar was also one of the graduating athletes honoured by Coach Sumarah, alongside Iloki and Bowen as well as Jesse Lawson, Jesse St. John, D'Sean Thelwell, Quinton Soares, Chad Manchulenko, and Josh Walsh. The ceremonies concluded with a preview of the Carleton recruiting class of 2021, which Sumarah previewed as a "recruiting class that is coming in extremely strong... it adds to the foundation for us moving forward". It was an encouraging end to a night in which the Carleton community said goodbye to a very strong graduating class, and served as a reminder that despite the great players moving on from the program, the best is still yet



It's been an incredible journey for Marcel Bellefeuille, one that started as the son of a 15-year-old mom and 17-year-old dad living in the public housing projects in south Ottawa's Heatherington area.

The long, circular journey, with against-all-odds success, has brought the 54-year-old back to the University of Ottawa. Thursday, he was named head coach of the Gee-Gees football team, replacing Jamie Barresi, who stepped away from the job in March. It's not like he's a newbie to the program. Bellefeuille was an assistant coach with the Gee-Gees from 1995-97 (the team won three straight O-QIFC championships), then the head coach from 1998-2000 (with a 26-5 record). He was O-QIFC coach of the year in 1999, then won a Vanier Cup in 2000. In 2018, he was inducted into the Gee-Gees Football Hall of Fame. So, yeah, he was already a Gee-Gees legend.

Bellefeuille has had CFL stops in Montreal, Winnipeg, B.C., Saskatchewan, Hamilton (where he was head coach from 2008-11) and Edmonton, he's been to the U.S with the United Football League's Omaha Night-hawks (2012) and last year he was working in the Texas Professional League.

Who and what Bellefeuille is — he's also a keynote speaker, an author, a professor at Algonquin College and a corporate trainer — was shaped as a kid living in the middle of 240 public housing units. A rough area? When he was 12, he witnessed a woman gunned down. One of his friends died of an overdose. His mom, Bonnie, who had four children by the time she was 19, worked as a waitress, while dad Aldege was a furniture mover. What the parents — kids raising kids — didn't have in money, they made up for in guidance, steering their children toward education and a better life.

"There were things going on you think maybe would come out of a major U.S. city, you don't associate those things with Ottawa," said Bellefeuille. "You become street smart. People ask how it motivated me. I tell them it drove me. I didn't want to grow up in poverty. It also created resiliency. That's the thing that's allowed me to coach professional football as long as I have. There have been a lot of ups, a lot of downs — that's pro football. You need confidence and resiliency. That area I grew up in gave me the mental toughness I needed for this kind of career. Football really became a driver for me to want to get out of the projects."

As a player, at 5-8 Bellefeuille would have been considered short, but it wasn't something he worried about.

"After finishing up as a player at Ottawa U, I went to play in the NFL Budweiser League in London (England) as a player/coach, going against players like Gordie Lockbaum. I guess in your head, you think you're 6-foot-5."

He went to NFL camps, gaining all kinds of coaching insight. He listened and thought to himself, "I can do this stuff."

After winning the Vanier Cup, the Gee-Gees' first national title in 25 years, Bellefeuille began his CFL career in Saskatchewan in 2001.

"After winning the Vanier Cup, I did have aspirations to go pro," said Bellefeuille. "My goal was to be a CFL head coach, my goal was to coach professional football in the U.S., my goal was to coach in the Grey Cup. I've been able to actualize all those. As you go along in your career, you start looking at, what is my impact, what matters most to me? Being able to come back to the university level, help shape lives, help shape (players') academics and help them see the world differently, that's a big purpose for me. That's what I really get geeked about."

There were 25 applicants for the uOttawa job. Five coaches were interviewed by a committee of seven: former Gee-Gees players Julian Hanlon, Steve Alexandre, Kevin Kelly and Rashid Timbilla, along with Roger Archambault, Danika Smith and director of varsity athletics Sue Hylland.

"(Bellefeuille) has a storied coaching career and was absolutely the right fit for what we want — a great leader, strong communicator and someone who could rally and unite the many contributors to our football program in the coming years," said Hylland. "He was someone who could have an immediate impact."

Bellefeuille, who briefly returned to USports in 2018 as the offensive co-ordinator and quarterbacks coach for Queen's, lives in Ottawa with his wife, Julie. They have four children, Ymilie and Alexandra (both uOttawa graduates), Mathias and Cedrik. It's come full circle for the coach.

"You can leave home, but home never leaves you," said Bellefeuille, who was interviewed to be the first head coach of the Ottawa Redblacks seven years ago (Rick Campbell got the job). "Through my previous 18 years of pro football, I always had that place in my heart. I always kind of felt I might end up back here in some kind of role or responsibility, be part of the university family again. You just never know how or when that's going to transpire. It's exciting, it really is."

Three of uOttawa's staff from last season — defensive co-ordinator Jean-Vincent Posy-Audette, Nathan Taylor (recruiting, special teams and receivers) and Carl Tolmie (offensive line) — will be back. Bellefeuille will call the offensive plays.

"I will start off in that mode, based on our staff right now and based on the needs of our program," he said. "I will add other coaches with experience in play calling. Over a period of time, I would like to relinquish those duties. I do believe at this level and to run this type of program, I'm best suited to be head coach of the whole team and not have that responsibility, but that will be over a period of time."

The coaching staff will look to put some shine back in the uOttawa program.

"We want to be the team that everyone else is aspiring to be," said Bellefeuille. "We're not going to be Laval, we want to be the team they're chasing, not just on the field, but off the field as well."





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One of the bright lights in these dusky times, has been the stories of everyday heroes ... the men and women that enable us to safely carry-on our lives in physical isolation by putting their own health at risk.

Could be a cashier or a delivery person or anybody who has made life better. Who is your everyday hero? We'd like to hear their story. At all home games, the REDBLACKS and #RNation pay tribute to community heroes by presenting them with the team's symbol of excellence, a "wood cookie" ripped by chainsaw from the touchdown log. That's not possible right now, so we've launched a virtual wood cookie campaign to honour some of the exceptional people you've noticed during the Covid-19 crisis. Please submit your nominee and tell us their story.



Ottawa REDBLACKS

June 19 at 6:05 PM · 🌐

Meet our latest RNation Everyday Hero, Shayne Lachance. Shayne witnessed life-saving treatment and exceptional care his grandson Ethan received as a baby at CHEO and pledged to on day care for others. True to his word, Shayne is a Personal Support Worker who cares for scores of elderly clients each week. Thank you Shayne!



OTTAWAREDBLACKS.COM

RNation Everyday Hero: Shayne Lachance - Ottawa REDBLACKS



Ottawa REDBLACKS

June 12 at 8:45 PM · 🌐

As part of our Virtual Home Opener, meet our latest #RNation Everyday Hero, Dr. Vera Etches of Ottawa Public Health.

Dr. Etches has been a calm, clear voice of reason, teaching us how to stay safe and flatten the curve. Thank you Dr. Etches! ❤️

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Repay all that Father's Day love by giving your family the gift of time  
by Adam Bisby | Jun 24, 2020

Father's Day gifts are awesome no matter what. Even if your kids bring you burnt toast and eggshell-filled omelettes, your day is still made because it's the thought that counts. In cases like these, the thoughts revolve around the importance of family. They show their love and appreciation for none other than you, a.k.a. Dad.

What can you do for your family in return? Ultimately, the best gift you can give them is the gift of time. Spending time with your kids is great because it's natural, free and fun — as these easy ideas show:

### Road hockey



Do you have a driveway or live in a cul-de-sac? Is there a schoolyard or park nearby? If you answered yes to any of these questions, you're a few hockey sticks and a tennis ball away from hosting your own Stanley Cup Finals. Teaching your kids new skills and watching them improve is incredibly rewarding, and is one of the easiest ways to connect with your child. Plus, you never know, you might end up with the next Sydney Crosby or Hayley Wickenheiser.

### Shooting hoops

Whether you've bolted a net to your garage or there's a court in a nearby park, a game of 21 with your son or daughter lets everyone channel their inner Raptor.



## A Quick Game of Tag



No child under the age of 12 can resist joining in when you simply tag them and holler, “You’re it!” You better run fast, though, those kids can move!

## Charades



Google “charades clues” on your computer or smartphone, and you’ll get dozens of lists you can use to stage a spirited game. If your teen claims charades are “lame,” get the ball rolling yourself. If they guess correctly, they’ll get into it. If not, at least you’ve shown them that dad can loosen up.

## Walk it off



Okay, we know we said time was the greatest gift of all, but that doesn’t mean your family won’t appreciate a frozen yogurt or ice cream after some active Father’s Day fun. Walk with them, talk with them, and who knows? Maybe they will teach you a thing or two!

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We are here to make sure your Membership experience is the best it can be...if you have any questions, suggestions or concerns please contact a member of the Executive team.