

DYNASTY*

By Andy Malycky

Dynasty! The most powerful word you can use to describe a team in any sport. It immediately conjures up mental images and memories of the finest groups of athletes that ever stepped onto the field of competition; those teams that let nothing stand in their way in pursuit of championship immortality.

But there is no universally agreed upon definition of what string of achievements constitutes a true dynasty, and as such the word is often overused when discussing superlative teams. One popular definition (which I subscribe to) is that to be considered a true dynasty a team must win at least three consecutive championships. Since World War II the Canadian Football League has seen only three teams that meet or beat this condition, the 1945-47 Toronto Argonauts, the 1954-56 Edmonton Eskimos and the 1978-82 Edmonton Eskimos.

But one would be hard pressed not to define the 1958-62 Winnipeg Blue Bombers as a dynasty, with their four cups in five years. Bud Grant's Bombers suffered the narrowest of defeats in the 1960 western final or they may very well have become the first five-in-a-row champions in league history. But prevented they were and as such they are less well remembered than the mid-fifties Eskimo dynasty, despite winning one more Grey Cup. Perhaps those same Eskimos are deserving

of being remembered for more than those three consecutive championships. That team put together a six year run composed of five first place western finishes and an additional trip to the Grey Cup besides their three-peat. Their classic mid-fifties adversaries the Montreal Alouettes never did manage to capture the Grey Cup. Yet they are still fondly remembered as one of the most popular, powerful and star laden teams in all of Canadian football history.

In fact there have been many great and near great teams over the decades whose accomplishments should not be forgotten, even though they may have fallen short of the ultimate accolade of dynasty. This series of articles will revisit those teams concentrating primarily on their statistical exploits and just briefly touching on the personalities and events of the era in order to provide some background context. As I have been unable to discover an acceptable word meaning "almost a dynasty" I have attached an asterisk to the D-word in order to refer to these teams collectively.

I will focus on the post World War II era as the profusion of leagues, teams and political machinations of the pre-war era complicates the endeavor greatly. My qualifications for inclusion as a Dynasty* are these:

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- A team must have accomplished one of these three things for consecutive years:
 1. A 1st place regular season finish in their league, conference or division (L/C/D). Thereby proving that over the long haul they were the best among the competition arrayed against them. - and/or
 2. An L/C/D championship in the playoffs. Thereby proving that when the stakes were raised they elevated their game to meet the challenge. - and/or
 3. A Grey Cup national championship win. Thereby demonstrating that on that day they were the absolute best team in the country, and achieved the ultimate goal in Canadian football.
 - If a run includes at least one grey Cup win then as little as two consecutive years of greatness will qualify a club.
 - If a team did not achieve a Grey Cup victory, then a span must contain at least three years of one of the other two accomplishments in order to qualify. Two near misses need not apply.
 - A team is allowed a maximum of one year within the dynastic* span where they stumbled and did not attain 1, 2 or 3 above.
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	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957
EDM								♥	1 st	1 st ♥ 🏆	1 st ♥ 🏆	1 st ♥ 🏆	1 st
WIN	♥	♥	1 st ♥			1 st ♥		1 st	♥				♥
SASK							1 st ♥						
CAL		1 st		1 st ♥ 🏆	1 st ♥								
BC													
HAM						1 st		1 st	♥ 🏆				1 st ♥ 🏆
TOR	♥ 🏆	♥ 🏆	♥ 🏆			♥ 🏆		♥ 🏆					
MON		1 st				♥ 🏆			1 st	1 st ♥	1 st ♥	1 st ♥	
OTT	1 st		1 st	1 st ♥	1 st		1 st ♥ 🏆						

1st - L/C/D 1st Place Regular Season Finish ♥ - L/C/D Championship Win 🏆 - Grey Cup Championship Win

I have created a chart that will show these accomplishments over time and give some perspective to each team's streaks of excellence. Occasionally I might override the stated qualifications when it makes sense to do so, in order to split up dynastic* spans that might be chronologically adjacent but historically distinct. Because of the flexibility of these rules there will be numerous instances of overlapping dynasties*.

Finally, just to be completely subjective I have devised a points formula to assign to each teams achievements so that a numerical ranking can be calculated and used as a basis for sorting, comparing and contrasting the list of all-time teams that I will be compiling here. The details of the formula are specified below.

1945-47 Toronto Argonauts - Made in Canada

This was a watershed team in Canadian football history that crafted the first modern dynasty during a time of sweeping changes in the way football was

played and perceived in Canada. The Argos supremacy encompassed the acceptance of professionalism in the sport, the Canadian Rugby Union's lessening of onerous rules meant to hinder the use of import players (long a sore point with the western clubs) and the rising popularity of the game with the paying public. Surprisingly these Argos were the last holdouts in fielding an all-Canadian lineup for every year of their dynastic run.

Coached by Ted Morris (a member of the Argos cup winning teams of the thirties, HOF '64) the team was led by Joe Krol (HOF '63), one of the most dominating players in the history of the game. Krol teamed with Royal Copeland (HOF '88) to create a scoring tandem that opposing teams were unable to defend adequately and earned the nicknamed the gold dust twins for their offensive prowess. Other notables on the team were Frankie Morris (HOF '83), Bill Zock (HOF '84) and Jack Wedley.

Dynasty* Rating Points will be assigned as follows

- L/C/D 1st Place Finish = rating points equal to the number of teams competing in the L/C/D. (Usually 4 in the East and 5 in the West, but not always)
- L/C/D Championship Win = 10 rating points.
- Grey Cup Championship Win = 20 rating points.
- Each Win = 1 rating point, Each Loss = -1 rating point. (for all regular, playoff and championship games played)
- Points Differential = Avg. per game points scored versus points allowed differential for each year.
- To reflect the importance of consecutive achievements, bonus rating points of 1 for an L/C/D 1st place finish, 2 for an L/C/D championship win and 5 for a Grey Cup championship win will be awarded whenever these are managed in back-to-back years.

Strangely these Argos never managed a first place regular season finish but they were close, finishing tied for first in '45 and '46 (losing the tiebreakers) and a single point back in '47. They compiled a respectable .683 winning percentage over these seasons and upped that to an exemplary .875 during the playoffs (many of these games being contested in hostile stadiums) where they only suffered one loss over the three years. They followed this up with a perfect record in Grey Cup match ups defeating the Winnipeg Blue Bombers in three successive appearances.



Canadian Football League

Royal Copeland takes a pass from Joe Krol against Winnipeg in the 1947 Grey Cup

The Argos were fairly evenly matched with their eastern competition ranging from an average per game points differential high of 8.3 in '45 to a low of 2.1 in '46 (eastern games only). The same cannot be said of

control Krol and Copeland coming out on the short end of a 28-6 score, this time managing a touchdown late in the game. By 1947 the Bombers were so much improved that they led for most of the game before finally bowing out 10-9. Krol had kicked or passed for every point in the game and kicked the game winning single on the final play after a failed Bomber third down gamble at their own 33 yard line.

	L/C/D	L/C/D	Grey Cup	Season	Playoff	Grey Cup			Avg	Total	Yearly	
	1st Place	Championships	Championships	Record	Record	Record	PF	PA	P. Diff	Rating	Rating	
	Finishes								Game	Points	Points	
TOR	1945	2nd	Won IRFU	Won CRU	5-1	2-1	1-0	174	-64	11.0		
	1946	2nd	Won IRFU	Won CRU	7-3-2	2-0	1-0	202	-148	3.6		
	1947	2nd	Won IRFU	Won CRU	7-4-1	3-0	1-0	196	-132	4.0		
	Totals	0	3	3	19-8-3	.683	7-1	.875	3-0	1.000	572	-344
	Points	0	34	70	11	6	3			18.6	142.6	47.5

1945-47 Winnipeg Blue Bombers - Runners Up

This team is likely one of the weakest teams to qualify for dynasty* status and is one of only two post war teams to have suffered three consecutive Grey Cup defeats. The Bombers of 1945 were coached by Bert Warwick (HOF '64) and were composed wholly of locally trained Canadian players with a sprinkling of veterans including Ches McCance (HOF '76). There was no regular season play in the west in 1945 so after a few exhibitions against US squads the Bombers qualified for the Grey Cup with a single three point playoff win over Calgary.

After being thrashed in the '45 cup game the Bombers recruited a new coach Jack West and started to add some import strength including Wally Dobler from North Dakota. Statistically the '46 Grey Cup game was much closer than the score indicated as the bombers posted 281 combined run and pass yards compared to the Argos 296. By 1947 the Bombers outgained the Argos 301 yards to 206 and import quarterback Bob Sandberg did everything but lead his team to the win. A Bomber touchdown pass on a fake field goal early in the fourth quarter that likely could have put the game away for Winnipeg was called back on a disputed ruling. The Bombers had used only 15 men during the game and

nine had played both ways the entire 60 minutes.

These Bombers qualified for each of their Grey Cups with fairly narrow margin playoff victories over Calgary and their playoff win percentage of .666 was only a slight improvement over their somewhat tepid regular season mark of .625. The teams points per game differentials in '46 and '47 were 3.2 and .6 respectively (western games only). These statistics are a pretty fair indication that the Bombers were not a dominant team within their own league over this time span. However they did



Canadian Football League

Bob Sandberg goes up the touchline in the 1947 Grey Cup

manage to do just enough come playoff time to get to each Grey Cup game, as had their predecessors. (Having a Winnipeg based club represent the west in the Grey Cup was something that had become almost a foregone conclusion since 1935). But the superiority of the Argos teams of the same era is reflected in these Bomber's .000 championship percentage mark. In fact the team was outscored by their opponents over the three years by a total of 16 points, a statistic that is unlikely to be repeated for any of the other teams that will qualify for inclusion as dynasties*.

	L/C/D		Grey Cup Championships	Season Record	Playoff Record	Grey Cup Record	PF	PA	Avg P. Diff Game	Total Rating Points	Yearly Rating Points
	1st Place Finishes	L/C/D Championships									
WIN 1945		Won WIFU	Lost		1-0	0-1	9	-41	-16.0		
1946	2nd	Won WIFU	Lost	5-3	1-1	0-1	105	-95	0.9		
1947	1st	Won WIFU	Lost	5-3	2-1	0-1	121	-115	.5		
Totals	1	3	0	10-6 .625	4-2 .666	0-3 .000	235	-251			
Points	3	34	0	4	2	-3			-14.6	25.4	8.5

1948-49 Calgary Stampeders - Yeehaw

A short dynasty* but one of the most storied in the history of the sport, due to the unbridled enthusiasm that the organization and their fans brought with them to the east. While my rules would allow me to extend this span back to a first place finish in 1946 there is little reason to link that team with the nearly unbeatable squad that was built by new coach Les Lear (HOF '74) starting in 1948. Nine players on the '46 team were still with the Stampeders in '48 but other than star plunging fullback Paul Rowe (HOF '64) the key performers were newly recruited imports from the US and young homegrown talent from the Canadian junior leagues.

In 1948 the Stampeders recorded the only perfect campaign in Canadian senior/professional football history (12-0) in a season composed of more than 6 games. Quarterback Keith Spaitth directed an aerial offensive attack that electrified the western crowds of that era. The team then scored an upset Grey Cup win against the heavily favored Ottawa Rough Riders despite being severely out-gained in the yards department.

Spaitth and end Woody Strode played starring roles in the game that featured the only "sleeper" play in Cup history and an unusual late developing lateral fumble return that cemented the victory. Import Chuck Anderson was universally praised by the Toronto sportswriters as the standout performer in the game for his defensive prowess. But almost more important than the championship win was the spirit and revelry that the Calgary entourage infused into the national final helping transform it into much more than just a football game.

The next year the Stampeders would continue their domination of the WIFU eventually setting the still standing record of 25 consecutive games without a loss. Their combined two year won loss percentage was an astounding .961, a standard unlikely to ever be bettered. Spaitth had new import end Ezzrett "Sugarfoot" Anderson in the lineup to complement the play of Strode. A second consecutive western championship was added after barely outlasting the Saskatchewan Roughriders in a two game total points final. But the team was unable to duplicate its Grey Cup success this

time suffering a convincing defeat at the hands of the Frank Filchok led Montreal Alouettes.

The success Lear had had with his veteran imports helped accelerate the signing of American talent

across the country. Soon the Canadian teams would be competing with each other and with the NFL to sign promising college graduates and established professional stars.



Canadian Football League

Playing coach Les Lear and Chuck Anderson hold the 1948 Grey Cup during post game celebrations

	L/C/D 1st Place Finishes	L/C/D Championships	Grey Cup Championships	Season Record	Playoff Record	Grey Cup Record	PF	PA	Avg P. Diff Game	Total Rating Points	Yearly Rating Points
CAL 1948	1st	Won WIFU	Won CRU	12-0	1-0-1	1-0	251	-78	11.5		
1949	1st	Won WIFU	Lost	13-1	1-1	0-1	307	-126	10.7		
Totals	2	2	1	25-1 .961	2-1-1 .625	1-1 .500	558	-204			
Points	8	22	20	24	1	0			22.2	97.2	48.6

1947-51 Ottawa Roughriders - Vindicated

This team put together an impressive string of regular season success posting four first place finishes in five years but more often than not they stumbled in post-season play. In 1947 they were derailed in the eastern final by the last gasp of the Argos dynasty which prompted a coaching change back to Wally Masters who had coached the team earlier in the mid-thirties. The 1948 squad posted a 10-2 record and advanced to the Grey Cup as the class of the east but was bitterly disappointed to lose to the upstart Stampeders. Stars

such as Tony Golab (HOF '64), Howie "Touchdown" Turner and Pete Karpuk dominated the play but Karpuk was the unfortunate goat on the lateral fumble that led to their defeat.

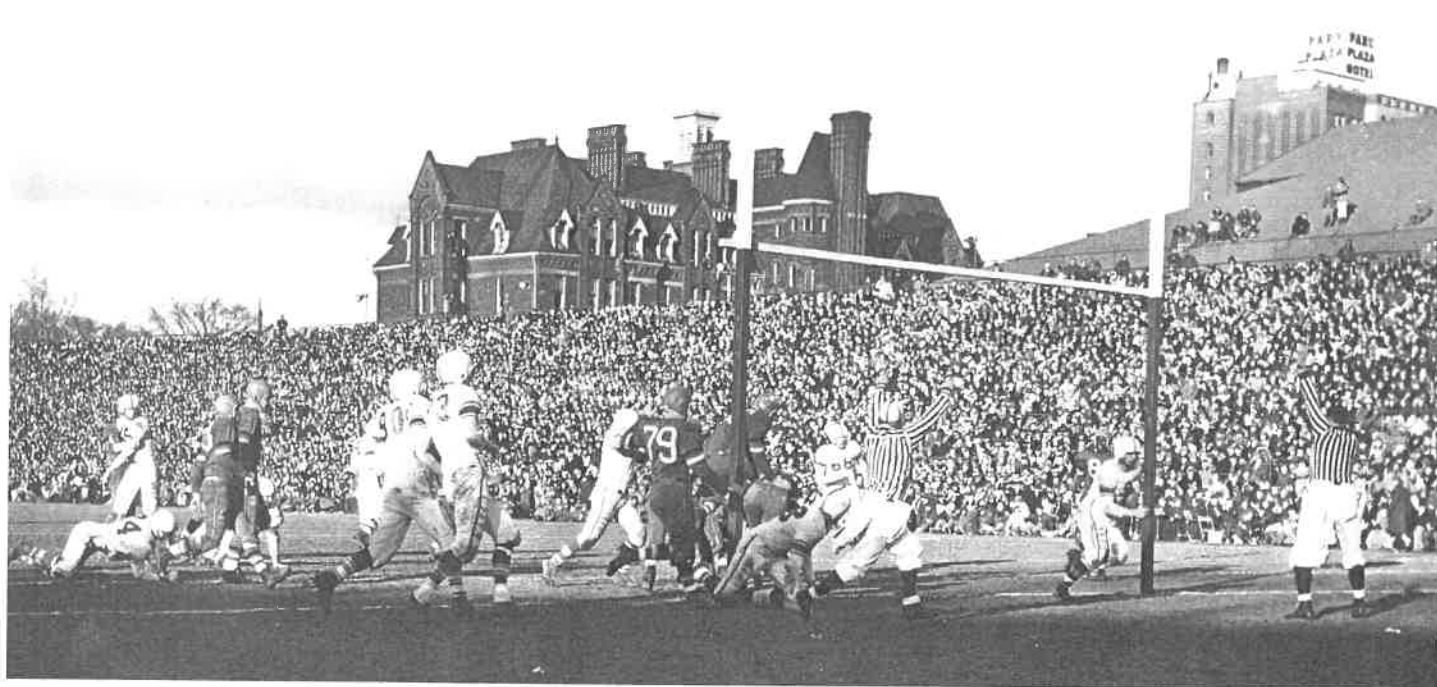
Determined to get back to the final in 1949 to redeem themselves the Rough Riders almost matched the Stampeders perfect season mark but settled for an 11-1 record. They were then derailed in a two game total point series by the surging Alouettes. Masters got one more kick at the cat in 1950 but the team stumbled badly to a last place finish in the east. This was Golab's

final year with the team but the club added standout Bobby Simpson (HOF '76) who began a stellar thirteen year career with the team.

New coach Clem Crowe took over in 1951 and despite an unremarkable 7-5 record the club tied for first with both Hamilton and Toronto and received the eastern final bye based on point differentials. They narrowly defeated the Ti-Cats in a two game total point series

to finally get another shot at the title they had fumbled away three years previous. This time the Rough Riders delivered against their western namesakes who were led by Glen Dobbs. A comfortable 20-2 lead held up to a couple of late Saskatchewan touchdowns for a final 21-14 score. At least eight players who had been with the team since 1948 including Howie Turner, Don Loney and Pete Karpuk had persevered and achieved their ultimate goal. 🍁

	L/C/D	L/C/D		Grey Cup	Season	Playoff	Grey Cup	PF	PA	Avg	Total	Yearly
		1st Place	L/C/D									
OTT	1947	1st	Lost		8-4	0-2		170	-127	3.1		
	1948	1st	Won IRFU	Lost	10-2	2-1	0-1	324	-170	9.6		
	1949	1st	Lost		11-1	0-2		281	-206	5.4		
	1950	4th			4-7-1			182	-231	-4.1		
	1951	1st	Won IRFU	Won CRU	7-5	3-0	1-0	310	-244	4.1		
Totals		1	2	1	40-19-1 .664	5-5 .500	1-1 .500	1267	-978			
Points		18	20	20	21	0	0			18.1	97.1	19.4



Canadian Football League

Western 'Riders score a late touchdown in the 1951 Grey Cup, but it was too little too late

The Dynasty* Register

	Years	L/C/D		Grey Cup	Season	Playoff	Grey Cup	Avg	Total	Yearly
		Spanned	1st Place							
		Finishes	Champs	Champs				Game	Points	Points
'45-'47 Argonauts	3	0	3	3	19-8-3 .683	7-1 .875	3-0 1.000	5.6	142.6	47.5
'48-'49 Stampeders	2	2	2	1	25-1 .961	2-1-1 .625	1-1 .500	11.1	97.2	48.6
'47-'51 Rough Riders	5	4	2	1	40-19-1 .664	5-5 .500	1-1 .500	4.0	97.1	19.4
'45-'47 Blue Bombers	3	1	3	0	10-6 .625	4-2 .666	0-3 .000	-0.6	25.4	8.5

This article will be continued in subsequent issues of "From Scrimmage to Snapback"