

= Toronto Argonauts =

The Toronto Argonauts are a professional Canadian football team competing in the East Division of the Canadian Football League ( CFL ) . Based in Toronto , Ontario , the team was founded in 1873 , and is the oldest existing professional sports team in North America still using its original name . The team 's origins date back to a modified version of rugby football that emerged in North America in the latter half of the nineteenth century . The Argonauts played their home games at Rogers Centre from 1989 until 2016 when the team moved to BMO Field , the fifth stadium site to host the team . The current team is coached by Scott Milanovich and led at quarterback by Ricky Ray .

The Argonauts have won the Grey Cup a record 16 times and have appeared in the final 22 times . Most recently they defeated the Calgary Stampeders 35 ? 22 at home in the 100th Grey Cup in 2012 . The Argonauts hold the best winning percentage in the championship game ( 72 @. @ 7 % ) and have the longest active winning streak in games in which they have appeared , at five . The Argonauts have faced every current western CFL team at least once in the Grey Cup , while their most celebrated divisional rivalry has been with the Hamilton Tiger @-@ Cats .

The team was owned by the Argonaut Rowing Club for its first 83 years , and has been owned by a series of business interests since 1956 . The Argonauts were a fixture on the Toronto sports scene for decades , with attendance peaking in the 1970s . In May 2015 it was announced that a consortium of Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment 's Larry Tanenbaum ( via the Kilmer Group ) and Bell Canada would acquire the team . The sale included a scheduled move to MLSE run BMO Field for the 2016 season , which has long been proposed given attendance under @-@ utilization at Rogers Centre and plans to install natural grass at the domed stadium , rendering it unfit for football .

Given the length of franchise history , dozens of players , coaches , and management have been honoured in some form over the years . The team recognizes a select group of players with retired numbers : early greats Joe Krol and Dick Shatto , stalwart offensive lineman Danny Nykoluk , and Michael " Pinball " Clemons who has been the most recent face of the team .

= = Name and colours = =

Since the team 's foundation in 1873 , the " Argonauts " name has been in continuous use , a record in North American professional sports . The Chicago Cubs ( 1870 ) and the Atlanta Braves ( 1871 ) franchises of Major League Baseball are older , but both teams have changed their name more than once , and the Braves have also changed cities . The Argonauts also claim to be the oldest professional football team in North America . The claim is debatable , as the Hamilton Tigers date to 1869 ; they merged with the Hamilton Wildcats in 1950 to form the Hamilton Tiger @-@ Cats .

The name " Argonauts " is derived from Greek mythology : according to legend , Jason and the Argonauts were a group of heroes who set out to find the Golden Fleece aboard the ship Argo sometime before the Trojan War . Given its nautical theme , the name Argonaut was adopted by a group of amateur rowers in Toronto in 1872 . The Argonaut Rowing Club , which still exists today , went on to found the football club with the same name a year later . Given their roots in a rowing squad , the team is often referred to as the " boatmen " and less often the " scullers " .

In the 19th century , the most renowned rowing teams in the world were from the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge in England . The Toronto rowers , many of whom had associations with the English schools , adopted uniforms incorporating the light blue of Cambridge and the dark blue of Oxford . In turn , the footballers adopted the colours and the phrase " double blue " would become synonymous with the team . Blue has become the traditional colour of top @-@ level teams in Toronto ( e.g. the Toronto Maple Leafs and Toronto Blue Jays ) .

The team 's other official colour is white . Its current helmet design features an Oxford blue background , with an Oxford blue and Cambridge blue round shield inscribed with a white , capital letter A. For most of the team 's history , the logo featured some form of a boat , often incorporating a football .

= = Franchise history = =

= = = 1873 ? 1906 = = =

The first recorded game of what would become known as Canadian football was played in Toronto on November 9 , 1861 , featuring University of Toronto students . The game at the time was a modified version of English rugby and it gained popularity throughout the 1860s . Rugby itself was still an infant game having evolved out of association football ( soccer ) in the 1830s . Seeking a way to keep fit after summer , the Argonaut Rowing Club ( ARC ) formed their own rugby @-@ football squad on October 4 , 1873 . The Argonauts Football Club would play their first game against Hamilton on October 18 of that year ( a victory ) , beginning a storied rivalry . H.T. Glazebrook served as their first captain and head coach . Establishment of the football team was formalized by the ARC on September 17 , 1874 , with a subscription fee of one dollar charged per player .

The football team played a handful of challenge matches ? one team inviting another to play ? as an amateur squad against university and city teams every year throughout the 1870s , with one dormant year in 1879 , likely due to injuries . In 1883 the Toronto Football Club , other city teams from Ontario and university squads from Toronto , Queens University and Royal Military College formed the Ontario Rugby Football Union ( ORFU ) ; it was the first rugby football organization with a league and playoff structure in North America . The Toronto Football Club were league victors in the first year . Starting in 1884 a " Dominion Championship " ? a precursor to the Grey Cup ? was held , pitting the victors of the country 's two organized leagues , the ORFU and Quebec Rugby Football Union , against each other ; it was organized nationally by the Canadian Rugby Union ( CRU ) from 1892 onwards . In the first true national championship , the Montreal Football Club defeated the Toronto Football Club on November 5 , 1884 by a score of 30 ? 0 . Argonauts would lose the Dominion Title in 1901 to Ottawa College . The Ottawa team and the Hamilton Tigers were frequent opponents in this era .

Over the thirty years from 1880 onwards , rule changes were incrementally introduced into the game , including the adoption of the line of scrimmage , scoring that began to resemble the modern version , and the down and yardage structure . Popular personalities of the era included player @-@ coach Joe Wright Sr. , one of the best all around Canadian athletes at the turn of the century . One major outstanding issue within the CRU at the time was the role of professional versus amateur players ; this dispute caused the Argonauts to withdraw from the league in 1903 and eventually led to the establishment of a new league , The Big Four or Interprovincial Rugby Football League . Alongside the professionalism dispute , there was serious disagreement over the adoption of the Burnside rules , with Ontario , Quebec , and the intercollegiate league often not in alignment . Amongst other critical innovations , the Burnside rules reduced the number of men per side to 12 and introduced the ten yards in three downs structure that is central to the modern game .

= = = 1907 ? 1952 = = =

Seeking looser rules regarding the employment of professional players , Toronto and other cities split from the ORFU and formed the Interprovincial Rugby Football Union ( IRFU ) in 1907 . These clubs were the vaunted " Big Four " ? Toronto , Hamilton , Ottawa , and Montreal ? that formed the precursor to Eastern Division of the Canadian Football League .

The IRFU continued under the larger auspices of the Canadian Rugby Union . Beginning in 1909 , the CRU champion was awarded the Grey Cup , with the Big Four competing against university squads and eventually teams from Western Canada . The Argonauts first competed for the Cup in 1911 , losing 14 to 7 to the University of Toronto in front of a then record 13 @,@ 687 spectators at the newly opened Varsity Stadium . The team would claim their first championship in 1914 , exacting revenge on U of T with a 14 to 2 victory . Their star runner and kicker in their first championship year was Jack O 'Conner , who scored a league record 44 points .

After play was halted during World War I , the Argos again achieved success in the early 1920s on the back of one Canada 's greatest ever sportsmen . Lionel Conacher , the " Big Train , " led the team to two perfect 6 ? 0 seasons in 1921 and 1922 . In the first season he accounted for 85 of his team 's 167 points , and 15 of the points in the Grey Cup game , a 23 ? 0 drubbing of the Edmonton Eskimos . It was the first east @-@ west Grey Cup championship in Canadian history .

The 1921 Grey Cup victory was their last until 1933 , at which point the Argonauts became the dominant team of an increasingly nationwide sport . They put together a number of Grey Cup dynasties in the 1930s and 1940s , winning eight of twenty Grey Cups between 1933 and 1952 . The Winnipeg Blue Bombers were most often on the receiving end of Argo Grey Cup victories in this era . From 1933 to 1941 Lew Hayman coached the team with a still unparalleled winning ratio of 45 ? 15 ? 2 . Their first back @-@ to @-@ back Grey Cups came in 1937 and 1938 . This was also the era of the famed Stukus brothers ? Annis , Bill , and Frank ? who proved a potent all @-@ purpose trio in the Argonauts ' championship years .

Joe " King " Krol and Royal Copeland , the so @-@ called Gold Dust Twins , were the best @-@ known players of the 1940s . In an era where players still played multiple positions , they were a threat in every capacity : running , passing , catching , kicking , and playing defence . Often connecting with each other for points , they led the Argos to a Grey Cup threepeat between 1945 and 1947 . 1949 and 1950 marked a watershed in Argonauts history as the team began large scale importation of American players for the first time . The team also broke a cultural barrier in 1950 with the signing of their first black player : Ulysses " Crazy Legs " Curtis would play five strong years with the team .

Frank Clair was brought in as coach in 1950 and left his mark on the revamped roster ; he led the team to Grey Cup wins in 1950 and 1952 . The first of these was a 13 ? 0 victory over Winnipeg in the notorious Mud Bowl . A November snow storm followed by mild conditions turned Varsity Stadium into a bog and the play was a shambles ; one Winnipeg player is reported to have almost drowned in the muck .

At some time during this period , the phrase " Argo Bounce " came to refer to the Argonauts ' propensity to receive a lucky bounce of the football . The phrase may date to the Grey Cups of the 1930s , all of which featured improbable bounces and fumbles favouring the Argos ; the phrase was popularized in print by Annis Stukus in the 1940s . It is still in use today , with a number of fortunate on @-@ field happenings attributed to the " bounce " .

== = 1953 ? 1988 == =

The three decades after the 1952 Grey Cup victory have been called the Argonauts ' Dark Ages . The team went thirty @-@ one years between championship victories and nineteen without even making an appearance in the final . Part of the reason was a salary cap introduced in 1953 that cost them many talented players . For the first time in decades , they began ranking at the bottom of the Eastern Division . The management style under new owner John Bassett has also been blamed : young talent was traded or allowed to leave and the team could not form a nucleus of championship players ; coaches came and went rapidly . Two notable events occurred off @-@ field at the end of the 1950s : in 1958 the Argonauts became a founding member of the Canadian Football League and a year later found a new home at Exhibition Stadium .

The Argonauts did have some standout players in the 1950s and 1960s . The stalwart of the era was Dick Shatto , an Ohioan who played twelve seasons from 1954 to 1965 . Listed as a running back , Shatto was a dual threat to run and receive and continues to hold the team regular season records for touchdowns ( 91 ) and total yards gained ( 6 @,@ 958 ) . Living in Toronto year round , Shatto set down deep roots in the city and would eventually serve as the Argonauts general manager . Another American , Tobin Rote , set numerous passing marks in three years at quarterback from 1960 to 1962 . Known for his good living off the field , Rote still holds the Argos single game passing record with 524 yards against Montreal on August 19 , 1960 . A pillar on the offensive line was Danny Nykoluk at tackle who appeared in an incredible 17 seasons from 1954 to 1971 , including one stretch of 12 years where he didn 't miss a single game . Despite these

veterans , the era was marked by losing seasons and high attrition on the roster . By the 1960s , the annual ( and often desperate ) mid @-@ season addition of American imports had become known as the " Argo airlift " ; American imports often wouldn 't last a game before being cut .

Eventually , the team became competitive again under head coach Leo Cahill in the late 1960s . They scored a coup over the National Football League ( NFL ) with the signing of a young Joe Theismann ( and other American stars ) in 1971 . The team also saw an attendance bounce , consistently selling out Exhibition Stadium . The Boatmen 's best chance to end their Grey Cup drought came that year , when they faced the Calgary Stampeders in the 59th Grey Cup , the first to be played on artificial turf . In a defensive struggle at Vancouver 's soggy Empire Stadium , a now infamous late fumble by Leon " X @-@ Ray " McQuay and a possession changing kick out of bounds by Harry Abofs sealed a 14 ? 11 Stampeders victory .

The 1970s were tumultuous for the team , with numerous hirings and firings of head coaches and consistent losing records . There were stellar players over this era , including all @-@ stars on defence such as Jim Stillwagon , Jim Corrigan , and Granville " Granny " Liggins , but the team could not return to winning form . High profile moves such as hiring Canadian football icon Russ Jackson as head coach in 1975 or signing running back superstar Anthony Davis the next year turned into busts . Ironically , the Argos reached historic attendance highs in this losing decade ? regular season average per game attendance reached 47 @, @ 356 in 1976 . The enlargement of Exhibition Stadium over 1975 and 1976 in anticipation of the Blue Jays expansion baseball team allowed for these massive crowds .

The Argos reached an all @-@ time low in 1981 when they finished 2 ? 14 ; this despite having such talented players as quarterback Condredge Holloway , running back Cedric Minter , and receiver Terry Greer . The team began the year 0 ? 10 and there was talk of a " perfect " losing season . The team had been inept so long by this point ( 29 seasons without a Grey Cup win ) that the notion of an " Argo Bounce " had become inverted ; now " it was the unluckiest bounce in the world , the one that usually arose from the Argos ' uncanny ability to lose critical games in the dying minutes by committing an improbable blunder . "

However , with the 1982 season came the hiring of Bob O 'Billovich as head coach and Mouse Davis as offensive co @-@ ordinator . Davis implemented the run and shoot offense , and the Argos enjoyed a turnaround , going 9 ? 6 ? 1 that year ; Condredge Holloway was the CFL 's most outstanding player . The team ultimately fell short in their quest for a Grey Cup , losing 32 ? 16 to the mighty Edmonton Eskimos in the final in front of a disappointed crowd at Exhibition Stadium . The 1983 season finally brought the championship home . The Argos finished 12 ? 4 and Terry Greer set a CFL record with 2 @, @ 003 receiving yards . Joe Barnes and Condredge Holloway were a potent duo at quarterback . The Double Blue returned to the Grey Cup , this time facing the BC Lions at BC Place Stadium in Vancouver . Despite the hostile crowd , Toronto defeated BC 18 ? 17 to win their first Grey Cup since 1952 . The Argos were generally competitive for the remainder of the 1980s , thanks in large part to talented players such as Gill " The Thrill " Fenerty and Darrell K. Smith , but a return to the glory of 1983 proved elusive .

= = = 1989 ? present = = =

The 1989 season saw the Argonauts move into the SkyDome , a multi @-@ purpose downtown stadium with a retractable roof . It marked the beginning of an eventful few years . In 1990 , one of the most beloved figures in Toronto sporting history emerged on the team : Michael " Pinball " Clemons set a CFL record for all purpose yards with 3 @, @ 300 in his first full year , a record he would break in 1997 with 3 @, @ 840 .

In 1991 Hollywood prestige arrived in the form of a new ownership trio . Bruce McNall , owner of the NHL 's Los Angeles Kings , bought the team . One of his players , hockey great Wayne Gretzky , became a minority owner , as did Canadian @-@ born comedian John Candy . The group stunned the league with the signing of Raghib " Rocket " Ismail for an unheard of \$ 18 @. @ 2 million over four years . Ismail immediately impressed , particularly on kickoff returns , and was named player of the game in the 1991 Grey Cup , which the Argos won 36 ? 21 over the Calgary Stampeders .

Clemons and quarterback Matt Dunigan ( who played the final with a broken collarbone ) were the other critical pieces to the championship .

However , the Argos slumped to 6 ? 12 only a year later , beginning a slide that only accelerated when Dunigan and Ismail left after the season . The 1992 season was the first of four consecutive losing seasons ; while they made the playoffs in 1994 , they were promptly eliminated by the Baltimore Stallions in the division semifinals . Trouble also struck off the field : McNall was convicted of conspiracy and fraud at the end of 1993 , while Candy died prematurely the next year . Attendance also began to slide in the mid @-@ 1990s , raising questions over the team 's viability that persist to this day . The per game average was just above 16 @,@ 000 in 1994 and 1995 , much less than half the team 's 1970s peak .

Championship material did eventually reemerge in 1996 . Doug Flutie , one of the greatest quarterbacks in CFL history , was signed for the season and surrounded with key personnel . The team included linebacker Mike O 'Shea , veteran wide receiver Paul Masotti , and running back Robert Drummond . Derrell " Mookie " Mitchell was added at receiver in 1997 . The Boatmen took the Grey Cup in both 1996 and 1997 . Flutie would set team records for single season passing yards with more than 5 @,@ 500 in each year and for touchdowns thrown with 47 in 1997 ( one less than his CFL record of 48 ) before crossing the border to join the Buffalo Bills the next year . Massoti retired in 1999 as the team 's all time pass reception yardage leader . Clemons ended his own successful career in 2000 before returning to coach until 2007 .

The years after their back @-@ to @-@ back championships saw a return to mediocrity for the Argos . Ticket sales remained flat , and there were changes in ownership . Gimmicks to attract fans were greeted with criticism . The Argos seemingly bottomed out in July 2003 when the CFL stripped control over the team from owner Sherwood Schwarz . The team had amassed debts of over \$ 20 million , including \$ 17 @.@ 4 owed to Schwarz himself .

New ownership under David Cynamon and Howard Sokolowski brought immediate dividends with another Grey Cup win in 2004 . Veteran Damon Allen led the team to a team to 27 ? 19 victory over the B.C. Lions , with Jon Avery a critical running threat . Allen would continue with the team until 2007 , and retired with professional football 's all @-@ time leading passing yardage ( 72 @,@ 381 ) .

The Argonauts saw winning seasons from 2005 to 2007 before bottoming out the next two years . They finished 2009 with just three wins . Critical players over this half decade included receiver Arland Bruce III , defensive star Byron Parker , and all @-@ star punter Noel Prefontaine . The team generated some controversy in 2006 when they lured running back Ricky Williams from the NFL . Williams had repeatedly violated NFL drug policies and was under suspension for the year ; he played just one season with the Argos .

In 2010 the team again saw an ownership change , with construction magnate David Braley , who also owns the Lions , taking control . After breaking even in 2010 and going 6 ? 12 in 2011 , the Argonauts again acquired a championship nucleus in 2012 . Ricky Ray was brilliant at quarterback while Chad Owens emerged as arguably the league 's best special teams player . Owens broke Michael Clemons CFL record for all purpose yards and won the CFL Most Outstanding Player award that year . The 2012 Grey Cup was played in Toronto and the team took their first championship victory in the city since 1952 , a 35 ? 22 win over Calgary .

= = Championship summary = =

The Toronto Argonauts currently lead the Canadian Football League in total wins and in winning percentage in the Grey Cup . Early success in the final can partly be attributed to the weakness of western teams : between 1921 and 1952 the Argonauts won in nine straight appearances , including six straight against the Winnipeg Blue Bombers . The team 's success is not merely an historical aberration , however : they have won six of their nine appearances since the formation of the CFL , including their last five straight .

For the entire Grey Cup era there has been some form of playoffs leading up to the Grey Cup game ; the 22 Argonauts teams who have won a spot in the final would , in modern terms , be called "

Eastern Division Champions " . It is important to remember , however , that the route to the Grey Cup , participating teams , and playoff format have changed repeatedly over time .

As for the regular season , the CFL records 14 Argonauts teams at the top of the eastern divisional table since its formation in 1958 . Earlier data for the Interprovincial Rugby Football Union provides another 9 years from 1907 to 1957 in which the Argos were the best of the " Big Four , " for a total of 23 divisional wins . The only pre @-@ 1958 year in which the Argos won the IRFU but failed to make a Grey Cup appearance was 1922 , when they lost in semi @-@ final to Queen 's University .

Going back to an even earlier era , the Argonauts won the Ontario Rugby Football Union championship three times between 1883 and 1906 , including the league 's first two seasons , 1883 and 1884 . Their last victory as ORFU members came in 1901 . Given their losses in the Dominion Championship in 1884 and 1901 , the Argonauts would not earn the title " national champion " until their first Grey Cup win in 1914 .

= = Stadiums = =

The Toronto Argonauts ' first home was Rosedale Field at Mount Pleasant Road and MacLennan Avenue near the city centre . The team suggests its capacity was 10 @,@ 000 total with 4 @,@ 000 seated , though O 'Leary and Parrish list smaller numbers , noting that a \$ 32 @,@ 000 renovation in 1883 allowed for a capacity of 2 @,@ 000 . The field has historic significance as the site of the first Grey Cup game in 1909 ; the CFL lists the game 's attendance as 3 @,@ 807 . The field still exists as part of Rosedale Park , although there are no grandstands .

Sources again differ on when the team permanently moved to Varsity Stadium on the grounds of the University of Toronto . The team gives dates of 1874 ? 1897 and 1908 ? 1915 at Rosedale , while other sources suggest the team had moved to Varsity by 1911 . Varsity would become indelibly linked with the Argonauts and the early years of Canadian football ; it was the home field of the great Argo dynasties of the 1930s and 1940s . For most of the Argos time at the stadium , its capacity was about 16 @,@ 000 , but this jumped above 20 @,@ 000 with a renovation in 1950 . Although it has not hosted a professional game since 1958 , it still holds the record for hosting the most Grey Cups with 30 .

Another home beckoned in 1959 with the renovation of the new Exhibition Stadium to accommodate Canadian football . Often remembered ruefully by Torontonians for its exposure to weather and poor sightlines , the stadium was nevertheless the site of the Argos ' greatest attendance in the late 1960s and 1970s . Particularly brutal conditions at the 70th Grey Cup in 1982 paved the way for the construction of a domed stadium in Toronto .

SkyDome ( Rogers Centre since 2004 ) has provided the Argonauts a marquee venue since 1989 , but also been criticized for its football sightlines and atmosphere . Even crowds of about 30 @,@ 000 can look sparse in a stadium that seats up to 50 @,@ 000 people . The domed environment does , at least , remove the elements and is an advantage to passers and comfortable for fans . Two critical opportunities to find a new home were missed in 2004 and 2005 : plans for a revamped Varsity Stadium to accommodate CFL @-@ sized crowds were thwarted by community opposition in 2004 , and the Argonauts withdrew from an alternate plan at York University the following year .

It was announced in 2013 that the Rogers Centre 's artificial turf would be replaced by natural grass within five years to better facilitate Toronto Blue Jays baseball . This will require the stadium 's movable stands to be permanently locked into position for baseball , making it impossible to host CFL games . The stadium issue generated significant press and raised concerns over the team 's long @-@ term viability given that the Argonauts losses have been estimated anywhere from \$ 2 to \$ 6 million annually . While various stadium rumours swirled over the course of David Braley 's tenure ( including building a new facility ) it became increasingly clear that a move to a renovated BMO Field was the only viable option .

The BMO Field move became finalized on May 20 , 2015 , concurrent with the announcement of the team 's sale to a consortium of MLSE shareholders Larry Tanenbaum and Bell Canada . The team will move following the completion of stadium renovations for the 2016 season . The \$ 120 million renovation plan had originally been announced in March 2014 . The upgrades raise the

stadium 's seating capacity from 21 @, @ 566 seats to 30 @, @ 000 for soccer , with 25 @, @ 000 seats in CFL configuration , and will be temporarily expandable with additional endzone seating to 40 @, @ 000 for big events such as a Grey Cup . The agreement requires MLSE to reach a " long @-@ term use ( i.e. 20 years ) " lease with the Argos for usage of the stadium . The inclusion of the CFL configuration had partly been at the insistence of the City of Toronto , which owns BMO Field , and had been planned in the original stadium agreement .

Following the demolition and reconstruction of the 5 @, @ 000 seat Varsity Stadium at the University of Toronto , the Argos returned to the stadium , hosting preseason games from 2013 to 2015 . The team also acquired a much @-@ needed training facility in July 2014 when it was announced that MLSE had partnered with the Argonauts to expand KIA Training Ground , Toronto FC 's new state @-@ of @-@ the @-@ art academy and training facility .

= = Ownership and management = =

= = = Ownership history = = =

For more than eight decades , the Toronto Argonauts Football Club was the sole property of its namesake rowing club . By the 1950s , the team 's complex management structure made the arrangement increasingly awkward . Facing overdraft and with wealthy suitors knocking , the Argonaut rowers finally sold the team to a consortium led by John Bassett , Eric Cradock , and Charlie Burns in 1957 . Each held about 20 % share in the company , with the balance made up by small investors who had some affinity with the club ; the initial agreement called for a long @-@ term debenture of \$ 400 @, @ 000 to be set up that would sustain the rowing club in the absence of its football income . Bassett was the operating head of the franchise and is often given sole credit for the initial purchase of the Argos , but Cradock was also instrumental in spearheading the drive . He would sell his share to Len Lumbers just two years into his tenure in part because of Bassett 's controlling nature . Bassett arranged a complete buyout of the other shareholders for \$ 2 @. @ 31 million in 1971 through his holdings in Baton Broadcasting .

The Bassett years of the late @-@ 50s to early @-@ 70s were marked by mediocrity on the field but consistent success at the turnstiles . An issue that has become a perennial concern in the city also emerged at this time : the possibility of a National Football League team in Toronto . Various machinations were entertained by Bassett including moving the Argos to the NFL , bringing an American expansion team to the city ( e.g. the Toronto Northmen of the WFL ) , or expanding the CFL itself in the opposite direction . Other team owners steadfastly opposed Bassett 's moves and almost rescinded his franchise in 1974 ; angered , he sold the team for \$ 3 @. @ 3 million to hotel magnate William R. Hodgson in the same year .

Hodgson sold to Carling O 'Keefe in 1979 , who had been minority owners since 1976 . The brewing company 's total investment in the team was \$ 5 @. @ 8 million . At the time it was rapidly ramping up its sports sponsorship ( it also owned the Quebec Nordiques before they moved from the World Hockey Association to the NHL ) and would become a huge benefactor to the CFL itself , inking television rights deals that would reach \$ 11 million annually by 1984 . Reports at the time suggest the league became spoiled by the partnership and that when the money dried up in 1987 , the transition was difficult . For the Argos , the Carling O 'Keefe years were marked by their first modern @-@ era Grey Cup in 1983 .

The year 's following the Carling O 'Keefe era were marked by increasingly short ownership stints . Canadian businessman Harry Ornest bought the team off Carling O 'Keefe for \$ 5 million at the end of 1988 and then sold to the trio of McNall ( 60 % ) , Candy ( 20 % ) , and Gretzky ( 20 % ) for the same amount in 1991 . Of the three , Candy is best remembered for his emotional investment in the team and a team player award continues in his honour . Given McNall 's indictment and Candy 's early death , the era was tumultuous and the last in which the club regularly made front page headlines . The now money @-@ losing team was sold to the Labatt Brewing Company through its TSN unit in 1994 for \$ 4 @. @ 5 million . At the time , Labatt also owned the Toronto Blue Jays . In

1995 , Labatt was acquired by Interbrew ; The Interbrew years saw two championships but also the worst Argos attendance of the modern era . Interbrew soon lost interest in sports ownership and the team was sold again at the end of 1999 to New York businessman Sherwood Schwarz .

After the debacles of the Schwarz era and brief control of the team by the CFL ( see above ) the Argos were rescued by David Cynamon and Howard Sokolowski in 2004 . There was optimism surrounding the duo 's arrival and attendance figures improved in their six years heading the organization . It was also appreciated that the two were Torontonians after a quarter @-@ century of foreign and / or corporate ownership . But by 2010 losses were great enough that the team was again put on the block and eventually sold to David Braley . There was some controversy surrounding Braley 's takeover . He is simultaneously owner of the BC Lions , raising questions of competitive integrity . It was also revealed that Braley had bankrolled half of Cynamon and Sokolowski 's initial \$ 2 million buy @-@ in of the Argos in 2004 , and covered half their subsequent losses , in exchange for half of the 2007 Grey Cup profits .

By 2014 Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment and its chairman and minority owner Larry Tanenbaum had emerged as serious suitors for the team . On May 20 , 2015 , it was announced that an agreement had been reached for Argonauts to be sold to Tanenbaum 's Kilmer Sports and Bell Canada , who both own a stake in MLSE with Rogers Communications . Financial details were not disclosed . Despite its shared stake in MLSE , Rogers was not interested in having an ownership share in the Argonauts because it does not have any media relationships with the CFL ( unlike Bell , whose TSN division holds the broadcast rights to the league ) . Argonauts Holdings Limited Partnership , a holding company which Bell and Kilmer each own 50 % of , formally acquired the franchise on December 31 , 2015 .

= = = Senior executives = = =

Below the ownership level , the two most senior positions within the Toronto Argonauts organization are its president and general manager . The GM role was titled as " managing director " from 1957 to 1971 , while the president role is now included in the title of CEO .

The longest serving executive in the organization is Lew Hayman , who had a five decade career beginning in the 1930s as coach and administrator . A Jewish @-@ American , Hayman served with both the Argos and Montreal Alouettes and has been called " the architect of Canadian football . " He was the team 's first president and managing director at the insistence of Eric Cradock in 1957 , and would continue in the former role until 1981 . Ralph Sazio took over from Hayman and is another hall of fame builder .

After relative stability at the senior executive level for three decades , there has been significant turnover in the positions since the 1990s . The team had eight general managers in eight years , for example , between 1996 and 2003 . The current GM is Jim Barker , who was appointed at the end of 2010 . Chris Rudge , former head of the Canadian Olympic Committee , took over as president and CEO from the beginning of 2012 to the end of 2015 , when Michael Copeland took over .

= = = Head coaches = = =

55 men have served as Toronto Argonauts head coach . The current coach , Scott Milanovich , was appointed in 2011 . He has succeeded in reviving a stalled offence and led the team to a Grey Cup victory in 2012 .

The longest total tenure at head coach belongs to Bob O 'Billovich , who led the team for eleven years over three stints in the 1980s and early 90s . Other notable coaching careers include those of Joe Wright , Sr. at the end of the nineteenth century , Ted Morris and Frank Clair in the post @-@ war years , Leo Cahill in the late 60s and early 70s , and Pinball Clemons after the turn of the millennium .

Since 1961 , the Canadian Football League has awarded the Annis Stukus Trophy annually to the league 's outstanding coach . ( Alongside his playing career , Stukus achieved fame as a coach , promoter , and newspaper columnist . ) Argonauts coaches have been honoured seven times :



Cahill ( 1971 ) , O 'Billovich ( 1981 & 1987 ) , Adam Rita ( 1991 ) , Don Matthews ( 1997 ) , Jim Barker ( 2010 ) , and Milanovich ( 2012 ) .

= = Current team = =

= = = Roster = = =

During the season , active roster sizes in the CFL are 46 and game day rosters number 42 , at least 20 of whom must be Canadian in accordance with the league 's " national player " rule ( formerly called the " non @-@ import " rule prior to 2014 ) . Training camp rosters are allowed to swell to 68 .

The current team is led at quarterback by Ricky Ray , who had three statistically brilliant seasons between 2012 and 2014 , earning eastern Most Outstanding Player nominations in the latter two years . Injuries have begun to take a toll on the QB and he enters the 2015 recovering from shoulder surgery ; attention has shifted to backup Trevor Harris who has waited three years for a chance at starting opportunities .

The Argonauts receiving corps , which was decimated by injuries in 2014 , saw significant turnover in the off @-@ season including the loss of standout John Chiles to an opportunity with the Chicago Bears . Chad Owens and Canadian Andre Durie are set to return but the rest of the unit is a bevy of untested imports , many of whom do not have a pro pass reception on their record . One important offensive piece remains in place for the 2015 season with the resigning of running back Curtis Steele .

An off @-@ season move on defense saw the trade for defensive linebacker Shea Emry , who led the team in tackles in 2014 , for defensive end Ricky Foley ; Foley has had previous success with the Toronto squad . Another change on the defensive side was the promotion of Casey Creehan to Defensive Coordinator . The team has been troubled in recent years by turnover in their defensive personnel and coaches . Tristan Okpalaugo , the 2014 sack leader for the team , remained on the roster until the end of the 2015 CFL season .

= = = Front office and coaching = = =

= = Rivalries = =

With few teams , but a long history , it is inevitable that intense rivalries have developed in Canadian football . Far and away the greatest Toronto Argonauts rivalry has been with the Hamilton Tiger @-@ Cats and its precursor teams . Fittingly , the Argonauts first game was against a club from Hamilton , while the raucous Eastern Final of 2013 ? featuring a Tiger @-@ Cat win over the Argos in front of 35 @,@ 000 at the Rogers Centre ? proved the rivalry is alive and well . The two teams meet in Hamilton every year in the Labour Day Classic , a league wide tradition since the late 1940s in which the game 's greatest rivalries are showcased .

To the east , the Argonauts have also faced off against teams from Montreal and Ottawa since their earliest days . In recent years , the Montreal Alouettes have consistently fielded strong teams and often run up against the Argos in the playoffs ; the teams have faced off eleven times in the Eastern Final , with Montreal taking six .

In 2014 , The Argonauts reignited their historic rivalry with an Ottawa Football Team as the team came back as the Ottawa REDBLACKS ( Other rivalries with Ottawa consisted of rivalries with the Ottawa Renegades and the Ottawa Rough Riders ) . In 5 games against the current Ottawa franchise ; the Argos maintain a winning record of 4 @-@ 1 @-@ 0 . The Argonauts won their last meeting with the Redblacks by a final score of 38 @-@ 35 in front of a crowd of 15 @,@ 001 people at TD Place in Ottawa on October 6th , 2015 .

At the Grey Cup level , the Argonauts have faced an assortment of teams in recent decades rather

than any one team regularly . The Edmonton Eskimos , for years a dominant team in the league , became a rival . The two teams ' five Grey Cup match @-@ ups include an epic 38 ? 36 Toronto loss in 1987 and most recently , the Snow Bowl victory in 1996 led by the arm of Doug Flutie . In the pre @-@ CFL days , the Argos had a Grey Cup rivalry with the Winnipeg Blue Bombers and a cross @-@ town rivalry with the University of Toronto in the first years of the Grey Cup championship , including the Argonauts ' first win in 1914 .

= = Notable personnel = =

The highest distinction the Toronto Argonauts can accord a player is to retire their number ; just four players have received the honour . Starting in 1996 , the team began another category of distinction with its list of " All @-@ Time Argos . " Twenty @-@ two players have been rewarded so far and a banner in their honour hangs at Rogers Centre .

Players and management personnel may be separately inducted into the Canadian Football Hall of Fame . A total of 56 people who have been part of the team are in the Hall . The All @-@ Time Argos list does not extend back to before the Second War era while the Hall of Fame does . Thus , for instance , Lionel Conacher is in the Hall but not listed as an All @-@ Time Argo .

Finally , players may be honoured on an annual basis through the CFL awards . The most prestigious of these is the Most Outstanding Player Award , awarded since 1953 . Six Argonauts have been recipients : Chad Owens ( 2012 ) , Damon Allen ( 2005 ) , Doug Flutie ( 1996 & 1997 ) , Pinball Clemons ( 1990 ) , Conredge Holloway , and Bill Symons ( 1968 ) .

= = = All @-@ Time and Hall of Fame = = =

= = Mascot = =

Jason is the mascot for the Toronto Argonauts . In 2003 Jason replaced Scully as the team 's mascot .