

THE COBOURG GALLOPING GHOSTS

The most famous Club in Intermediate O.R.F.U. history was born in the living room of the late Fred Dufton in 1935.

The Club that was to win eight Ontario Titles and three Dominion C.R.U. Titles between 1935 and 1953 with the war years excluded was the brainchild of "Ferocious" Fred Dufton, very aptly named for his tremendous desire to surmount all obstacles and bring home a winner.

With a number of good players just out of Collegiate, Dufton decided the time was right to start Intermediate football. With a \$150.00 loan from the bank, and with the Cobourg Collegiate Coach the late T.H. McClelland, Cobourg entered the O.R.F.U. in a league with Lindsay, Belleville, Oshawa and Peterborough. The "Red Raiders" as they were originally called went through the complete season without winning a game, but did establish a core of good backfielders such as Ken Cooper, Chuck Johnston, Joe Dufton and Chuck Henderson, and a line of Spooner, Barton, Schrum, Pratt and Woods.

1936 was a banner year as the "Red Raiders" scored their first and only win one sunny day in Belleville, as Bus Edwards scored the winning touchdown to give Cobourg their first win, and the start of good times to come.

By 1937 Red Grange "The Galloping Ghost" of Illinois, was tearing up the gridirons in U.S. College Circles and the late John Hayden one of the Clubs Executive Members proposed the Club change their name to the Cobourg Galloping Ghosts and discard their red sweaters for basic white sweaters with red numerals.

The new look "Ghosts" also lured "Chuck Peck" out of Queens to do the coaching. Bob Lucas was now the quarterback with a backfield of Cooper, Edwards, McIlveen and Johnston. Schrum, Spooner and Pratt still anchored the line, however, it was in the kicking department that showed the most improvement. This was due to the acquisition of Graham "Mike" Meikle who had tried out with Balmy Beach, but who decided to come to Cobourg and led the Ghosts to their first O.R.F.U. "B" Title in a thrilling win over Stratford.

1938 saw the Ghosts go on to bigger and better things: Still coached by Chuck Peck and led by Meikle, the fiery Jack Jacobs and of course Lucas, Cooper, Johnston, Newton and Bagnell, the Ghosts waltzed through Belleville Panthers, Kingston Garrison, Toronto Eastsides and Toronto Oakwoods to finally meet Sarnia Wanderers in the Intermediate "A" Championships which they won 12-7.

In 1939 the Ghosts' fortunes slipped a little. Meikle had gone to Sarnia, several players had already enlisted and the Ghosts had to be content with the "B" Crown with wins over Oakwood Indians 8-2 in the semifinals and Smiths Falls Trojans 27-0 in the finals.

The Club disbanded for the war years; however, in 1946 they came back stronger than ever to win their first Dominion Crown. Chuck Peck and Bob Lucas did the coaching. Chub Downey was the quarterback along with Ross Gilbert, Ireland Quigley, Pud Jamieson, Bus Edwards, Chuck Henderson and Chuck Johnston in the backfield. The line of Jim Poynton, Bill Jarvis, Homer Seale, Gord Beatty, Vern Goyer, Bob Campbell and Bill Douglas gave the Ghosts all they needed in a League with Peterborough, Trenton, Oshawa and the Orillia Silver Bombers with Milligan, White and Bond.

In their League Final they defeated Oshawa 25-1. Then came the two game total point Ontario "A" Finals with Niagara Falls, where they defeated the Dynamos 23-2 and 9-0 and finally the Dominion Intermediate Championship game with Montreal Eastwards and a 16-5 win for the Ghosts.

This Club set the pattern for years to come winning two more Dominion Crowns in the next four years, all led by the determined Fred Dufton.

The Central O.R.F.U. in 1947 consisted of Peterborough Orfuns, Oshawa Red Raiders, Orillia Silver Bombers, Queens Intermediates and the Cobourg Galloping Ghosts. In the League Final the Ghosts played the Silver Bombers in a two game total point final, winning 15-11 in the snow, in Orillia and played to a 6-6 draw at home to take the total 21-17.

Then in the Ontario Finals, Niagara Falls came to town and this season surprised the Ghosts on a snow covered frozen field 13-6.

1948 was certainly one of the Ghosts most outstanding seasons. First the Central League dismissed Cobourg who had raised their eyre by drawing several players out of Peterborough and Oshawa. Not to be denied, Fred Dufton immediately went to work and formed an Eastern League with Trenton, Trenton R.C.A.F. and Queens Intermediates.

The team consisted almost entirely of Cobourg and Port Hope players with only Bob Cooper and Rye Holman out of Varsity, Russ Boyd an ex-Argo and Glen Connors being imports. Cooper was an excellent leader and with a backfield of Quigley, Jamieson, Connors, Currelly and Medhurst, and a line of Poynton, Jarvis, Austin, Lees, Brandwood, Douglas and Boyd, the Ghosts roared through the Eastern League and into the Ontario Semifinals against who else but the Orillia Silver Bombers in what was supposed to be a sudden death game in Orillia. With the Bombers leading 16-5 at the half, it seemed to be all over for the Ghosts, but they came back to end regulation time tied at 16. With darkness descending the League Officials ordered another game to be played on Wednesday of that week in Peterborough. The injury ridden Ghosts scored early in this one and hung on for a 6-0 win and a berth in the Ontario Finals with London Falcons, who had demolished Niagara Falls 21-2.

The Falcons came to town loaded with ex-Western Mustangs, but it was the Ghosts who prevailed 17-5 after a very tough game.

In the Dominion C.R.U. Final, the Ghosts met Montreal Rocklands, a big hard hitting club featuring the running of Danny Johnston (who went on to the Alouettes) and Jim Chambers (later to the Eskimos), however the Ghosts scored early and surprised the Rocklands 10-0.

Its always hard to repeat and even though the Ghosts added a number of outstanding players, including Jake Edminston late of the Argo's who also coached the club, Andy McConvey from O.A.C., Bob Bevan, Art Jones and with the return of Homer Seale and Jack Newton things looked promising. The League consisted of Trenton Mustangs, Queens Intermediates and Cobourg. The Ghosts romped through the schedule undefeated and then met the Orillia Silver Bombers in a two game O.R.F.U. Semifinal.

The Ghosts prevailed 29-18, winning 15-6 in Orillia and 14-12 at home. Then it was the Dundas Bombers led by Dutch Holland, Granby and Steeves, the Bombers austed an injury riddled Ghost crew 15-6 in Cobourg and 8-3 in a very muddy field in Dundas. Dundas were a strong club, but must have peaked against the Ghosts for they lost to Montreal in the C.R.U. Final.

The 1950 Central O.R.F.U. League was extremely strong - Oshawa had Davey West, Burkhart and Art Skidmore, Peterborough had Huntly, Sriver, Beatty and the McGillis brothers, and of course Orillia had Jim Milligan throwing, Mush Bond and Dave Ross running. The Ghosts had their full crew back, plus two excellent lineman in Gord Burdick and Bob McNally, along with Hawkins, Don Smith and a great running back in Ernie Darrah later to go on to the Alouettes.

Jake Edminston was a tower of strength at centre and Brandwood, Lees, Jarvis, Burdick, Seale, Douglas, Holman and Smith gave great protection to quarterback Cooper. The backfield had Medhurst, Bevan, Darrah, McConvey, Currelly, Quigley and Jamieson. This season the Ghosts were loaded with strength. They won the League losing only one game, that to Oshawa, but several games were won in the dying moments in a very exciting season.

In the Ontario Semifinals they met their old nemis, the Dundas Bombers.

The first game in Cobourg was a terrific struggle with the Ghosts winning 3-0 on the strength of three singles by Bob Cooper.

Back in Dundas on another terrible field the game was a defensive struggle. The Ghosts line was outstanding particularly Don Smith and Bob McNally. Coopers kicking kept Cobourg in the game and late in the fourth quarter led 8-6 on the round even though they trailed 8-3 in the game. With the flag up, the Bombers kicker Mancini tried a field goal from 20 yards out, however, Ernie Darrah somehow deflected the ball and Cobourg recovered to win the round 8-6.

The O.R.F.U. Finals with London Falcons were almost an anticlimax. The Ghosts rolled to a 13-1 win in Cobourg and an 18-11 win in London. However, London did tie the game in the second quarter 11-11 before Art Jones took over and kicked two field goals in the fourth quarter to lock it up.

The Quebec winners this season were the Montreal Lakeshore Flyers featuring a big hard charging line and the running of Danny Johnston, who had given the Ghosts lots of trouble as a member of the Westmounts in '48.

The game, played on the same day as the famous "Mud Bowl" at Varsity Stadium, was dominated by a strong wind which pushed many kicks out of bounds on the west side of the field. With the weather dictating a low scoring ground game the Ghosts line prevailed and with Cooper kicking single points in the third and fourth quarters, the Ghosts won their third C.R.U. Intermediate Title 2-0.

By 1951 the Central O.R.F.U. League had expanded to include East York Blue Devils, as well as Ryerson, along with Orillia, Peterborough, Oshawa, Queens and Cobourg. Jake Edminston was back as coach. New players included Bernie Flesch, Darc Campbell, Karl Lenahan, Vic Garvin and Joe Kane.

This season saw the Ghosts pick up a lot of key injuries and as a result were nosed out of first place by the Oshawa Red Raiders led by Jim Loreno, Sully Ford and Mel Taylor. However, the Ghosts did grab second place and a berth in the sudden death Intermediate "B" Final with the Sarnia Wildcats.

The Wildcats, led by the Reeves brothers Hank & Pete, played well, but in a rough game that saw three players ejected. The Ghosts triumphed 13-0.

1952 saw the League reduced to four teams, Oshawa, Kingston R.C.E.M.E., Cobourg and the Peterborough Orfuns who now included many of the disbanded Orillia Bombers.

With the retirement of several players there was a considerable turnover in personnel. Coming into the Ghosts folds, were first of all a new coach in the person of Art West, the former Argo star who had been coaching at Balmy Beach. With him came players such as Red Alexander, Don Hatt, Magee, Hendry and Horvath, along with Jack Reeves from O.A.C., Mel Taylor, Armstrong and Brodie who defected from Oshawa. This gave the Ghosts a potent crew, but as the season wore on it was evident something was missing. Injuries again were instrumental in the Ghosts finishing second to the Peterborough Orfuns-Bombers combination.

This put them into the Intermediate "B" two game final, with the Kitchener-Waterloo Rams and Carl Totzke. The Ghosts won the first game in Kitchener 17-12, but in the second game in Cobourg the score

was 6-1 for Kitchener at the end of regulation time and it took two periods of Overtime before the Ghosts led by Red Alexander scored, to win the "B" Title 24-18.

That title would turn out to be the last the Ghosts would ever win. Even though they operated in 1953, most of the local stalwarts had retired. The club consisted almost entirely of out of town players which unfortunately did not make the playoffs. With attendance dwindling and costs spiralling, it became evident to Fred Dufton and the Ghosts executive, that it would be impossible to continue.

The Galloping Ghosts were, and still are the most famous of all teams in Cobourg's Sports history. To play for, or even to be associated with the Ghosts, left one with a sense of pride and a never to be forgotten desire to perform to the best of one's ability.

In Fred Dufton, the Ghosts had a leader who proved that there is no supplement for hard work and determination. With a record of eight Ontario Titles and three C.R.U. Titles in thirteen years of operation, very few clubs could ever challenge the record of the Cobourg Galloping Ghosts.