

WIDESIDE

The Official Newsletter of Football Alberta



Fall Edition, 72nd Issue

September 2008

Senior Bowl 2008

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Lead by the record breaking performance of Leduc quarterback Ben Gorniak, the "North" defeated the "South" 31-21 in front of 1,425 fans at Edmonton's Foote Field on Monday, May 19, 2008.

The "South" started off strong taking their first drive the distance with Springbank's Tom Shaw hauling in a 53 yard bomb from Cochran's Brent Serhyenko. The "North" then fired back immediately with Harry Ainlay's David Berg taking the ensuing kickoff 76 yards for the first ever kickoff return for a touchdown in the Senior Bowl to make it 7-7. The "North" then controlled the rest of the first half adding a 7 yard TD run by St. Albert's Chris Dobko and a 37 yard field goal from Strathcona's Billy Harvey to make it 17-7 at the break.



At the beginning of the third quarter it was all "South" again as Highwood's Bryce Brandford hooked up with St. Francis's Taylor Nill for a 13 yard score to draw to within 3 points on their first drive. The "North" answered later in the quarter with a 21 yard strike from Gorniak to Nicholas Ross from Salisbury to up the lead to 10 once again. On the last play of the third the "South" struck again on a one yard sneak by Serhyenko and that cut the lead to a field goal again and it stayed that way until 30 seconds left in the game when Gorniak hooked up with Ross again for a 17 yard TD on a gutsy 3rd and 5 call to seal the deal for the "North".

This victory cuts the lead of the "South" All-time to 10-8-1 with next years game scheduled for McMahon Stadium in Calgary on the Monday of the May long weekend.

High School Provincials

The big news on the high school front this fall is that for the first time since 1990, all high school Tier Provincial Finals will be held at the same venue in the same location.

This November 21-22 at Foote Field in Edmonton the Alberta Schools Athletic Association will be hosting the inaugural "Alberta Bowl" which will see all four Tier finals played at the same place.

The schedule is as follows:

Friday, November 21:

Tier IV Final at 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, November 22:

Tier III Final at 11:00 a.m.

Tier II Final at 2:30 p.m.

Tier I Final at 6:00 p.m.

This concept will go into future years with the Tier I game always being the feature game on Saturday night with the other games rotating to give Tier's II through IV a shot at the feature game on Friday night.

All first and second round games of Provincials will be assigned to participating teams to host as per usual. You can check out the schedule at www.asaa.ca.

More details will follow as this event gets closer. Football Alberta would like to recognize ASAA Football Commissioner Bill McConkey as well as ASAA Executive Director John Paton and Assistant Executive Director Lynda Bourak for their innovative work in making this happen.

WIDESIDE is the official newsletter of Football Alberta.
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Executive Director's Fall '08 Report - Brian Fryer

SALUTE TO AMATEUR FOOTBALL GAME - To All Amateur Football Teams Red Deer North

EDMONTON ESKIMOS vs. HAMILTON TI-CATS

Saturday, Sept. 13th, 2008 - Kick Off: 5:00 P.M. Commonwealth Stadium

The Edmonton Eskimo Football Club in coordination with Football Alberta is pleased to invite your team to attend the Sept. 13th Edmonton Eskimos vs. B.C. Lions game, as the guests of the Eskimos.

Extended Deadline - Sept. 10th at 4:00 pm:

Please remember, only teams that have their request and payment into Football Alberta's office prior to Sept. 10th at 4:00 pm will be eligible to pick up tickets at the gate on game day at Commonwealth Stadium. There will be no tickets available for teams unless they have contacted Football Alberta with payment and request form.

Maximum tickets available are **40 tickets** per tackle team & **12 tickets** per touch/flag team. Tackle Teams: If you require more than the allotment of 40 then a list of the team personnel/players needing tickets must accompany your order form. All others (ie. parents, non-team personnel) are to purchase their own tickets.

Football Alberta Paid Members - \$40.00 per team Non-Members - \$70.00 per team

2008 FOOTBALL AB SCHOLARSHIPS

This program had many qualified applicants again. For this year, the funding is \$1,800 each for five players. Each semester the athletes will receive \$900 based on the criterion established for the fund. Congratulations go out to:

NORTH

Steven Anderson of Hilltop H.S., Whitecourt
EDMONTON

Chris Dobko of Paul Kane H.S., St. Albert
CENTRAL

Spencer Janke of Hunting Hills H.S., Red Deer
CALGARY

Craig Adamson of Notre Dame H.S.
Calgary Stampeder Scholarship:

Taylor Nill of St. Francis
SOUTH

Brett Serhyenko of Cochrane H.S.

MINOR DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Football Alberta makes grants available to football teams for the purchase of equipment or other related expenses. In June grant requests were reviewed by Football Alberta and 2008 grant recipients who each received a \$1,000 equipment grant are:

Buck Mountain High School six man team
Lloydminster Bantam Football team

Grants are given to new teams and/or the reformation of an old team (longer than 3 yrs. out). All teams/leagues interested in applying for a 2009 grant should submit applications to FA prior to early-June 2009, when the Executive will review and grant funding according to established criteria.

EDMONTON FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE (www.ffa.ab.ca)

2008 City Finals will be held September 20th

Check website for further details

EDMONTON TOUCH FOOTBALL LEAGUE (www.etfa.ab.ca)

2008 City Final Results

Div. 1: Dicks win over Frost

Div. 2: Speedsters win over Hornets

Div. 3: Superbad win over Panthers

Div. 4: Northside United win over Silver Lining

Div. 5: Aces win over Broncos

Women: Rage win over Sirens

2008 Alberta Touch Provincials

Sept 27 - 28

**All games to be held
At Ellerslie Rugby Park**

SENIOR MEN

Playoff results for the Alberta Football League (AFL):

Sept. 6 Games: Edmonton Stallions (10) vs. Calgary Wolfpack (15) Grande Prairie Drillers (21) vs. Lloydminster Vandals (42)

Sept. 13: AFL Provincial Championship: Lloydminster Vandals @ Calgary Wolfpack 7:00 pm

Sept. 27 Games: CMFL National Championship at McMahon Stadium

Executive Director's Report cont'd.

MEMBERSHIP & INSURANCE

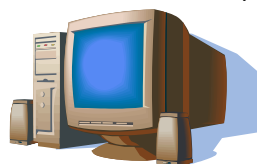
All teams should have been sent their username and password to register online at our website. Payment is due upon registering AND prior to your first game otherwise insurance is not in effect.

If you still do not have access to register as a team call the office and ask for Christy Griffin, our Administrative Coordinator. All insurance claims are to go thru the parent employer health plans first. If the player does not have a parent plan or if there is a balance, then our plan is effective. In order to file a claim using our insurance, contact the office for the proper form soon after the injury or visit the Football Alberta website for downloadable forms and info under "**Membership**". You must acquire a Group Policy number from our office.

Plan #1: Tackle - \$131.25 per team plus 15.00 for insurance
Minor - \$105.00 per team plus 15.00 for insurance
Flag and Touch: \$7.00 per player includes insurance

Plan #2: Tackle - H.S. is \$131.25 per team (no insurance)
Minor - all teams require insurance thru Football AB

Plan #3: Associate - not part of the above is \$25 per person.



Didn't receive your username & password to register your team online? Call or email the office to confirm team contact information.

PULL YOUR PRICE & DONATE BOOKLET - ANNUAL TEAM FUNDRAISING PLAN

Order 40 Books and Make \$2,400....Is Your Team Interested?

Football Alberta is pleased to again offer our winning fundraising campaign. We are offering a highly successful team fundraising plan, based on a **pull ticket donation** concept. This year teams will make \$2,400 with 40 books ordered. This works out to a **75% profit** from each book sold. These successful "**Pull Your Price & Donate**" books have an \$80 value and no More Scratches. The prize board features a great **Grey Cup Package**. The draw date is November 3, 2007.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS:

You start with a Football Alberta - "Pull Your Price & Donate" booklet that contains 50 tickets. Players, coaches and parents approach their favourite people and ask them to Pull Out a ticket & donate the amount on the ticket in support for your football program. Donation amounts range from Free to \$2.50. There are 5 Free tickets per book.

Each book generates \$80.00, of which you keep \$60.00 in profit. Remember out of the \$20, a certain percentage goes towards the printing of the books and the balance goes to us. We pay for all of the prizes and the rest is put towards all of the other programs we offer to amateur football programs. By participating in our fundraiser the dollars raised stay in amateur football teams in Alberta, not anywhere else. **Consider adding \$80 to a player's registration and hand him a book.** All books are then sold upfront. Order your books by calling the office or emailing Christy at cgriffin@telus.net.

Grey Cup/Vanier Cup Deluxe Package (Thru FAIRLIE TRAVEL)

(Valued at \$3,900.00) Includes:

2 Tickets to Nov 23rd 2008 Grey Cup (96th) in Montreal

4 Nights Hotel (Le Centre Sheraton Montreal Hotel)

(Hotel is home to all Spirit of Edmonton functions)

Airfare for 2 from Edmonton - Roundtrip airport/hotel/game transfers

2 tickets - Spirit of Edmonton Breakfast



NFL U15 FLAG FOOTBALL NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Cornwall, PEI hosted 8 provincial teams for the National Championships on July 3, 2008. Teams included British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and the host province of Prince Edward Island. Congratulations to Team Ontario out of Hamilton with Coach Matt Hill, who won the event for the second consecutive year. A job well done to Team Alberta coached by Edmonton's Ron McNeil who captured second place and Team Quebec coached by Laurent Dubreuil who came in third. Alberta had a 2-1 record in prelims, followed by quarter's (AB-29 Manitoba-17), semi's (AB-7 Nova Scotia-0) and the final (Ontario-34 AB 6).

Managed by Football Canada, NFL/CFL Flag League is a community level recreation program that was built upon the successful in-school NFL/CFL Flag Football program. The Edmonton Riverbend Hurricanes defeated the Steele Heights Knights in the U15 NFL/FC 5 on 5 Flag Provincials in Edmonton on June 14 by a score of 61-0. For each Provincial winner, Football Canada pays for 6 players and 1 coach to attend the Canadian Championships.

Football Canada Cup Highlights

The annual Football Canada Cup was held in Sherbrooke, PQ for the second year in a row and although it featured some strange shenanigans (i.e. Saskatchewan's inexplicable use of University and Junior players at the U19 level) it was a very well run event and we wish to thank our hosts and Football Quebec for doing an excellent job.

For Alberta the results were mostly positive with all three teams doing well. The U19 team took a strange route to the National Championship game (see Saskatchewan shenanigans) but were unable to defend their title taking the silver medal against a tough Quebec team. The U17 South team also advanced to the National Championship Game only to suffer the same fate vs. Quebec, while our much improved U17 North team finished in fourth place.

Here are the game details:

U17 Division:

Saturday, July 5th

Game #1: Alberta South 17 Western Ontario 3

In a close defensive battle the South rose to the occasion in the fourth quarter scoring two touchdowns to break a 3-3 tie. Steven McCaffrey, replacing injured kicker Terrance Hartley, opened the scoring mid-way through the second quarter with a 32 yard FG. Western Ontario matched that on the last play of the first half. Both teams then went into defensive shells before the South put together a drive early in the fourth capped by a one yard plunge by QB Jeff Vela. They sealed the deal late in the game with 45 seconds left after a 70 yard Andre Skinner run had put them at the 5 yard line, followed two plays later with a two yard run for the TD by Garret Field. The good news for the South is that they advanced to the Semi-Finals on Tuesday vs. Manitoba. The bad news is that they had to do it without the services of star running back Jeff Hassler who reinjured his hamstring early in the game. In any event it was a big win for South Alberta and a great start to the 2008 Football Canada Cup.

Game #2: Eastern Ontario 25 Alberta North 0

Unfortunately things didn't go so well for Alberta's Northern U17 team as they went down to defeat to Eastern Ontario. Thanks to a solid effort from the defense lead by some big tackles from defensive back Robert Lepine the score was only 8-0 for Eastern Ontario at halftime despite having the ball in Alberta's end the majority of the time. Two touchdowns and a field goal in the second half for Eastern Ontario went unanswered leaving the final score 25-0. Next up for Alberta North was Western Ontario who lost Game #1 of the day to Alberta South.

Tuesday, July 8th

Game #1: Alberta North 28 Western Ontario 14

It was Zack Skibin's day at Coulter Field in Bishop's University as the Jasper Place running back tore through the Western Ontario defense for 3 touchdowns, leading Alberta North to it's first ever win at the U17 Division of the Football Canada Cup. After a scoreless first quarter, the "North" opened the scoring early in the 2nd quarter on a 2 yard run by Skibin and lead 8-0 at the half after a Braedon Kopernick rouge later in the frame. The second half saw the North open up a 22-0 lead with two touchdowns in the third quarter on a 64 yard run by Skibin and a 4 yard run by Kyle Dunlop. Western Ontario didn't go away as they punched two touchdowns across in the fourth quarter but the North sealed the deal with a 20 yard run by Skibin late in the game. The North now earned the right to play Eastern Ontario on Friday for the Bronze Medal.

Game #2: Alberta South 40 Manitoba 7

Kapow! On the strength of a 31 point outburst in the first quarter the Alberta South U17 squad cruised to a 40-7 final making them the first Alberta team ever to advance to the Football Canada Cup U17 Final. Steven McCaffrey opened the scoring early in the first with a 34 yard field goal which was followed by an avalanche of touchdowns from the "South" which included a 32 yard pass from Jeff Vela to Adam Osterling, a 2 yard run by Garret Field, a 8 yard pass from Vela to Jake Altilio, and a 17 yard pass from Vela to Akeem Haynes. Manitoba scored their one and only touchdown pass late in the second quarter. Following that the game bogged down into a slow defensive stalemate in the second half which was unfortunately marred by plenty of penalties. Nevertheless the South put the icing on the cake in the fourth with a 1 yard TD plunge from Altilio and a safety touch. The South advanced to play Quebec in the National U17 Championship Game on Friday.

Friday, July 11th

Game #1: Eastern Ontario 9 Alberta North 2

In a tournament that saw a much improved performance over last years results the Alberta North U17 team came up just short in their quest for the Bronze Medal. Giving the team that beat them in the first round 25-0 all they could handle the North challenged early but couldn't push a score across the Eastern Ontario goal line. The only points garnered by the North came early in the third after Eastern Ontario had taken a 6-0 lead at the half on the strength of two field goals. Looking for better field position Eastern Ontario conceded a safety. Braunt Pierce and Eric Querengesser turned in great performances for the North defense but sadly 6-2 was as close as it came before Eastern Ontario added a field goal in the 4th for a final score of 9-2.

NEED RESOURCE MATERIALS FOR THE COACHING SEASON?

If you missed out on coaching clinics or if want to better your skills, visit the Resource Materials section on the Football Alberta website <http://footballalberta.ab.ca/web/resources/> for a complete list of materials available through the office.

Football Canada Cup Highlights cont'd.

Game #2: Quebec 24 Alberta South 0

In the Gold Medal game of the U17 Division a dominant Quebec team came out strong in front of 2,000 fans at Coulter Field at Bishop's University. Scoring a TD and FG in the first half Quebec took a 10-0 lead into the locker room at halftime. The South kept it close in the third mainly due to the hard work of linebacker Stephen Dereniwski and lineman Mitchell Bec but Quebec kept pushing, adding two singles and a safety in the third before adding another FG and TD in the 4th. The South becomes the first Alberta U17 to medal at the Football Canada Cup taking the silver in 2008, and they did their half of the province proud.

U19 Division:

Wednesday, July 9th

Saskatchewan 16 Alberta 15*

On a rainy day in Sherbrooke the defending National Champion Alberta team went down to defeat in a game filled with penalties and miscues that cost them dearly. After already having a touchdown called back Alberta trailed 10-0 at halftime but closed that gap to 10-7 on a Chris Dobko 4 yard run early in the 3rd. Several chances came and went for Alberta to pull ahead but the only managed a single point in the remainder of the 3rd quarter to trail 10-8 with just the 4th left to go. Again, Alberta dominated the play but it wasn't until 5 minutes left in the game when Dobko scored again from 8 yards out to put them up 15-10. That lead was short lived as the Saskatchewan offence that had been dormant all half came alive and promptly went 82 yards in four plays to pull ahead 16-15 (the convert was missed). Alberta advanced into the red zone one more time but had a string of penalties take them out of field goal range and the dream of a repeat gold medal died on that drive. Alberta was now scheduled to play Ontario and Manitoba in a three team round robin on Saturday, July 12 for the Bronze Medal. However due to Saskatchewan having been found to have ineligible players the results of this game were forfeited and Alberta U19's now was scheduled to play for the National Championship on Saturday, July 12 at the University of Sherbrooke Stadium at 7:30 p.m. vs. Quebec.

Saturday, July 11th

Quebec 37 Alberta 11

In Alberta's 9th appearance in the Championship Final the U19 squad went down to defeat at the hands of the host Province, Quebec 37-11. Quebec opened the scoring early in the first with a 24 yard FG. Alberta then shocked the Eastern Champions with a 75 yard drive that culminated in a 15 yard pass and run TD to Tom Shaw from Ben Gorniak. Curtis Glawson added a single late in the quarter and at the start of the 2nd the score read 8-3 for Alberta. Quebec scored the only TD of the second quarter and lead 10-8 at the half. That was as close as Alberta would come as Quebec scored three TD's and two FG's prior to Alberta capping off the scoring late in the 4th with a 37 yard FG by Curtis Glawson.

PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM WITH DESIGN MARKETING

Football Alberta is excited to announce a partnership with **Design Marketing** to offer cleats, apparel, uniforms, jerseys, tracksuits and football accessories for a **25% discount off retail prices** to all Football Alberta teams, athletes, coaches and parents.

We are pleased to offer **Reebok** branded apparel and accessories, as well as other cost effective options. Screening and embroidery services are also available.

Upon appointment, the **Design Marketing travelling trailer** can come to your training camp or practice to size athletes and coaches on all products right on the spot. All merchandise will be available for purchase from the Design Marketing showroom, the travelling trailer or by contacting the Design Marketing office at 780-448-0077 or pr@designmarketing.com.

Download the catalogues from the Football Alberta website at <http://footballalberta.ab.ca/web/links/>


 The image shows the Reebok logo in a large, bold, white font against a black rectangular background. The letters are thick and blocky, with a slight shadow effect.

Upcoming Competition

Minor Provincials

Here is a listing of the Minor Football Provincials Schedule for 2008. We are very pleased to offer competition at the Tier IV level now for both Bantam and Pee-Wee. Please check the Football Alberta Website for further details and any changes as we get closer to the event:

Bantam

Quarterfinals - November 1, 2008

Tier III

Central Alberta "B" at Wheatland

Semi-Finals - November 8, 2008

Tier I

Calgary "A2" at Southern Alberta "A"

Capital District "A" at Calgary "A1"

Tier II

Central Alberta "A" at Capital District "B"

Calgary "B" at Southern Alberta "B"

Tier III

Capital District "C" at Winner Quarterfinal

Southern Alberta "C" at Calgary "C"

Tier IV

Grande Prairie at Capital District "D"

Southern Alberta "D" at Central Alberta "C"

Finals - November 15, 2008

Tier I - Southern "A"/Calgary "A2" winner hosts

Tier II - Calgary "B"/Southern Alberta "B" hosts

Tier III - Capital District "C"/Winner Quarterfinal hosts

Tier IV - Capital District "D"/Grande Prairie hosts

Pee-Wee

Semi-Final - November 4 or 5, 2008

Tier II

Southern Alberta at Calgary "B"

Tier III

Capital District "C" at Central Alberta "A"

Tier IV

Lloydminster at Central Alberta "B"

Finals - November 8, 2008

Tier I

Calgary "A" at Capital District "A"

Tier II

Winner Semi-Final at Capital District "B"

Tier III

Calgary "C" at Winner Semi-Final

Tier IV

Capital District "D" at Winner Semi-Final

Atom

Final - November 1, 2008

Tier I

Capital District 1 vs. Capital District 2

Thanksgiving Jamboree

Football Alberta will be hosting a downscaled version of it's annual Thanksgiving Jamboree this October as with the unavailability of McMahon Stadium this year, games will only go ahead at Foote Field in Edmonton. Here is the schedule to date. Should any team wish to take on one of the TBA spots please contact Football Alberta at (780)427-8108.

Foote Field (Edmonton)

Friday, October 10, 2008

<u>TIME</u>	<u>TEAM 1</u>	<u>TEAM 2</u>	<u>LEVEL</u>
7:30pm	Sexsmith Sabres	St. Mary's Saints	H.S.

Saturday, October 11, 2008

<u>TIME</u>	<u>TEAM 1</u>	<u>TEAM 2</u>	<u>LEVEL</u>
9:00am	Archbishop Jordan Scots	St. Mary's Saints	H.S. JV
11:30	Fort McMurray Trappers	Central Memorial Rams	H.S.
2:00pm	Grande Prairie Warriors	Ernest Manning Griffins	H.S.
4:30pm	TBA	TBA	H.S.

Sunday, October 12, 2008

<u>TIME</u>	<u>TEAM 1</u>	<u>TEAM 2</u>	<u>LEVEL</u>
9:00am	Edmonton Chargers	TBA	Atom
11:30	Edmonton Chargers	TBA	PW
2:00pm	Edmonton Chargers	TBA	Bantam
4:30pm	Edmonton Chargers	TBA	PW
7:00pm	Edmonton Chargers	TBA	Bantam

Monday, October 13, 2008

<u>TIME</u>	<u>TEAM 1</u>	<u>TEAM 2</u>	<u>LEVEL</u>
11:30	Leduc Tigers	Peace River Pioneers	H.S.
2:00pm	Bev Facey Falcons	TBA	H.S.

"Twas the day before Christmas and all through the league,
The upcoming playoffs are filled with intrigue.
Who will be left stand when it's all said and done?
Who will proclaim, "We did it! We won".
- A Christmas poem for the gridiron prone by Bob Frantz

Alberta Summer Games 2008

The 2008 Alberta Summer Games were held in Medicine Hat from August 7-10. With the later than usual start date for the Games (they usually are the last weekend in July) it presented a few challenges to the football competition but both the host organizers and participating Zone teams did an excellent job.

The football side of things gets better and better with each Games. Since football's first foray into the Games in 1995 the gap between the stronger Zones from those areas with traditionally lots of minor football to the other Zones who's minor football is still in it's infancy is closing fast. In fact the "mercy rule" which caused the clock to run when the point differential hits 30 points or more in the second half of any game was only used twice and both times, with less than 3 minutes to go in the game. Compare that to 1995, 1997, and 2000 where it was used eight times.

The highlight of the competition was of course the Gold Medal game which saw Calgary Zone 3 win their third Gold Medal with a miraculous comeback in the final minutes of the game. With 1:40 seconds left in the game, Edmonton Zone 6 - which had advanced to it's first Gold Medal game ever - lead 16-5 and held the ball. A turnover, a touchdown to make it 16-12, a failed short kick, a time count penalty, and a short punt all gave Calgary an opportunity for the win with less than 30 seconds left and they promptly completed two passes for the winning score. Add a two point convert & you have a minor miracle 20-16 win for Calgary.

The other cross over games had their moments as well with two time defending Gold Medalist Zone 5 - Black Gold winning a close Bronze Medal Game 17-13 against the host Zone 1 - Sunny South. A spirited comeback by Sunny South was hampered by hurricane force winds that blew in with 6 minutes to go in the Game. The scramble for shelter for the fans and dodging of debris became the main concern at the time but the Game played on and the teams and officials should be commended for finishing up in those conditions.

A spirited Zone 7 - Northeast was the most improved team at the Games as they showed great organization and always had a trick play at the ready. In their final round robin game they defeated Zone 8 - Peace Country not so much in the trenches but in time of possession as they attempted four short kicks and recovered three of them, thus maintaining the ball for infinitely longer than Peace Country had it. In any event their style wasn't enough to overtake a strong Zone 2 Big Country team who defeated them in the 5th and 6th Place Game 28-13.

The 7th and 8th place crossover game saw Peace Country take on a much improved Zone 4 - Parkland squad. In 2006 Parkland struggled on both sides of the ball while this years team moved the ball and shut down opponents time to time. Unfortunately for them they didn't have enough of those moments and wound up dropping their final game to the well run Peace Country team 34-13.

Things weren't all rosy for the event as once again football suffered a black eye when three coaches decided to miss curfew and one of the cross over games saw a fan ejected for abuse of the officials, but all in all a wonderful job was done by the host committee. Particular kudos go out to Russ Boris and Quinn Skelton for their no-job-too-small attitude in making sure these were the best Games yet.

The next Alberta Summer Games are scheduled for Peace River in 2010.

South Pool	W	L	T	PF	PA	PTS
Zone 3—Cal.	3	0	0	71	7	6
Zone 1—South	2	1	0	48	24	4
Zone 2—B.C.	1	2	0	8	43	2
Zone 4—P'land	0	3	0	0	53	0
North Pool	W	L	T	PF	PA	PTS
Zone 6—Edm.	3	0	0	79	20	6
Zone 5—B.G.	2	1	0	71	17	4
Zone 7—N.E.	1	2	0	33	74	2
Zone 8—Peace	0	3	0	13	92	0

Round Robin Results:

Cross Over Games:

7th & 8th Place: Peace Country (Zone 8) 34 Parkland (Zone 4) 13

5th & 6th Place: Big Country (Zone 2) 28 North East (Zone 7) 13

Bronze Medal: Black Gold (Zone 5) 17 Sunny South (Zone 1) 13

Gold Medal: Calgary (Zone 3) 20 Edmonton (Zone 6) 16

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The Case Against Summer Football - by Tim Enger BPE,MA

I have two sons and am very fortunate to say that they are great kids. Like their father before them they do not possess a great deal of athletic talent, but they do love being on teams and the atmosphere that it provides. Since they were each four years old their mother and I have constantly shuttled them about to this activity and that, all in the name of keeping them active in sports they enjoyed. I've done the 6:00 a.m. drive to some god-forsaken arena in the dead of winter for a hockey practice and I've huddled under trees as an unexpected downpour interrupts one of their baseball games. There isn't too much one of their activities can throw at me that I can't handle, however there is one issue that one of their sports provides that I just can't wrap my mind around and believe it or not comes from the very sport that employs me - football. The issue in question is the increasing creeping into the summer months of minor football and it's effect on families.

This season will be my eldest son's last year of bantam. He is a skinny, somewhat quick wide receiver who is extremely adept at avoiding contact (boy, have I seen that movie before). The first email we received from his team this spring detailed the summer plans of the team, which included preliminary practices to begin on July 14th, a mere two weeks from the end of the school year. The rationale was quite simply that the team needed to prepare for the Capital District Minor Football Associations Pre-Season Tournament on the August long weekend. The season itself that would start on August 9th. Believe me it made a lot of sense in football terms but immediately caused stress upon our family since my son's desire to be with his team didn't match up with the family holiday we had planned for the last two weeks of July.

Now, let me state clearly for the record that there is nothing sinister being done by either the CDMFA or my son's coaches. Their schedule was known well in advance and was approved by all the clubs within their organization. I'm also very grateful my son has such quality men taking the time to coach him and his teammates and they were only scheduling what they felt necessary to field a competitive team. However, these weeks were the only ones available to my family for a vacation and this incident got me thinking about the whole summer football concept.

On the one hand, as Technical Director of Football Alberta, should I not be supportive of increasing the exposure our sport to young athletes? Heck, winter comes soon enough here every year, shouldn't we try to maximize our time on the field in good conditions? Lord knows other sports have no problem expanding their seasons (i.e. my youngest son's first league scheduled on-ice experience in hockey this year was on August 23 and he's about as far from Rep as you can get), so what's the problem?

Well, it's quite simple. Upon returning from our holiday we found that many other families on my son's team were in same boat. If they hadn't taken their holidays yet they were soon about to, which meant a revolving door of players at practices, which in turn made it very difficult for any team to sort themselves out accordingly for any upcoming competitions. My son's teams coaching staff remarked that they never had more than 15 players during their July practices and never the same 15 at any given time. As it turned out my son's bantam team did participate in the August long weekend tournament with 18 players. They were slated to play against four opponents but only made it to the third one before injuries forced them to forfeit

their fourth contest. And they weren't the only team with low numbers at this event. A few teams even backed out or did not come due to low numbers. This doesn't take away from the fact that some teams had good numbers and that this event was well run and played in a great new facility at the Tri-Leisure Centre in Spruce Grove, but it certainly wasn't a good thing for my son's team.

As I said earlier this wasn't forced on anyone. The League voted it in, and I can assure you that I am not calling the intentions of the Board of Directors and Executive of the CDMFA anything but pure in this matter. These are hard working people with only the best intentions for the development of the sport at the minor level in the Edmonton area.

But people, summer football does not work and here is why:

1) 12 year olds don't drive: The funny thing about this is that the more I think about it, the more I think about it, the group that could handle summer football better than anyone is those athletes playing at the high school level. When you are 15-17 there is a good chance that you might have a summer job that keeps you in town and that your days of going on the family vacation are over. You would have plenty of time to practice with your team and play on weeknights. However, when you're playing minor football at age 14 or 12 or 9 - not so much. You are pretty much at the mercy of your families whims over the summer and that's it. You may wish to play football but if the only time mom and dad can get holidays is during late July or in August you're out of luck, or at least well behind everyone when you return. I've coached minor football for four years in the mid 1990's and the last five since my son's started playing and I've always tried to start my summer practices as late as possible, yet still get many raised eyebrows at our first parents meeting in the spring when they find out how early in the summer we have to start. "We didn't know this when we signed up," is a common refrain. Therefore as a coach you spend the better part of the summer dealing with much less than a full roster and constantly having to go back to step one when new kids arrive. Very little can be done system wise beyond the basics and the frustration level of those who come in late is palpable. There has to be a better way.

2) Fifteen players does not a practice make: There is another bantam team that practices close to where I live. They start practicing on July 1st each year. Now the coach doesn't make it mandatory (obviously), but when I drive by their practices in July and see 12 kids or less on field I really wonder what is being accomplished. True, you can work on skills, but with sometimes over half your team missing you will not be progressing together. This becomes particularly acute when you have a minor player who is new to the sport and he comes in two or more weeks after practices have started. Most coaches like to progress during the season and rarely backtrack to basic skills or systems once a certain level has been attained. Therefore if you come in late as a first timer and have not experienced rudimentary skills such as how to tackle or be tackled it can become hazardous to one's health in a hurry. Plus, trying to pick up an offensive or defensive system on the fly is a frustrating event for even experienced players. Can anyone say liability?

3) Lightning anyone? As a baseball coach in the spring I am constantly searching the heavens each day we have a game scheduled. Is it going to rain? Or worse? Baseball is particularly

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sensitive to wet conditions and it doesn't take much to cancel a game. I have always trumpeted the one thing about our sport that sets us aside from most is that we play in any weather condition. Nothing stops us. Well, almost nothing... We seem to keep forgetting that we live in Canada; therefore we pay for our good weather. Anyone who has lived here for more than a little while knows that a nice pleasant sunny day in the summer has a good chance of being followed by an early evening full of thunderstorms. You may find yourself in middle of an evening practice with a bunch of kids whose parents have dropped them off and won't be returning until the end of the scheduled time, with a "War-of-the-Worlds-the-aliens-are-coming" type storm bearing down on you. Add to that the fun fact that a lot of minor teams are strictly assigned a field and have no type of shelter or clubhouse to avoid the on-coming onslaught and you have a "Fall-of-Saigon" search for shelter situation that nobody signed up for. According to Environment Canada; lightning is more frequent during the summer months, June to August, occurring every 1-2 seconds somewhere in Canada, is the summer weather phenomenon that kills the most people and Alberta is Canada's top lightning hot spot. This type of weather activity rarely happens in the fall, maybe that's one of the reasons we play our schedule there. Can anyone say liability?

4) We're not "Rep": As mentioned earlier, most sports have been expanding their seasons for years. In the 1980's, football took a major hit when minor hockey decided to move the start of their season from late October to early September, thus forcing kids who wanted to play both football and hockey to choose (and guess which way most of them chose). Since that time football numbers have increased exponentially but there will always be this uneasy truce with hockey during evaluation time. Soccer has added an indoor season and most other sports have either expanded on their time of year or added some off-season events. But have you ever noticed that they mostly stay away from the summer? Spring sports such as soccer, baseball, track, lacrosse, and ball hockey all put the breaks on at the end of June. Even competitive swimming takes a break during the summer. The exceptions to this rule are the elite representative or "rep" teams in those particular sports where the best of the best have committed to continue on throughout the summer towards provincial and national competition. The reasons for this is obvious, for those who just want to play the sport and aren't selected to the highest levels, their organizations know that they probably will lose the vast majority of participants if they go into the summer. These kids can enjoy their participation in the sport without the worry of conflicting family plans once school ends. However, the elite kids who are a very small percentage of the overall registration, have committed their time (and their parents have committed the money) to go as far as they can, so their summers are committed to the sport of their choice - which IS their choice. Sometimes a trip to Nationals IS the family holiday. However, that is not the case in football. Although there are some pretty well run minor organizations the nature of minor football is come one - come all and that you play for the team in your area. There may be some sorting out of players if there is more than one team you can play for but for the most part it is rarely done on a elite vs. recreational team basis. Therefore, we are all in same boat and there is no elite faction of our game at the minor levels. Although it is clear that some kids and families would be prepared to commit their summer to a minor football team, it is obvious that the vast majority would not and family holidays come first.

We are not rep!

5) I coach - therefore when's my break? Lastly let me bring up the forgotten warrior in all of this - the coach. With the development of football programs at an all time high in Alberta at all levels, the strain on finding good coaches gets tougher every year. Especially with the development of spring midget teams whose coaching staffs are filled with men who also coach something other football team in the fall. Can you say burnout? Imagine if you will a man who coaches a Bantam team that starts in mid-July. His team does well and goes into November. Following the Christmas break he starts planning for his Midget team and gets them on-field in March. Coaches Midget through to May then picks up with a Spring Camp for his Bantams. A couple weeks break after that into the middle of July he starts with the Bantams again... Don't laugh - it happens more than you know. There are many other examples of coaches who work high school in the fall and midget in the spring and want to help out with whatever minor team their son is signed up for in the summer. We all would like to believe that coaching football is something we'd love to do 12 months out of the year but believe it or not there is such a thing as too much of a good thing. When do WE get to spend family time with our kids? All I'm saying is that to expand seasons without expanding the coaching ranks is going to have a serious effect on whether good people are going to choose to coach minor football. You can only do so much.

To summarize, those are the concerns regarding Minor Football's incursion into the summer months. Although at this time it only really deals with one association but let it be a cautionary tale to the others who may be considering expanding their season. So what can be done of it? I am certainly not advocating the abolishment of all summer activity for football but we need to strike a happy medium that can serve both the needs of the sport and the needs of the families as well. Here are some suggestions:

1) Stay out of July: Yes, the CFL is in full swing so why shouldn't we be? Well, mainly because everyone on field at that level, coaches included, is paid to be there. We're not. Since we can't ignore the better weather factor we'll have to at least reach a compromise where August can be football time and July family time. Why? We need to toss our families a bone by not having any on-field activity with minor football teams in the month of July. They are only kids once and to interfere with an opportunity for them to go on a memorable family vacation or visit their grandparents is just plain wrong. Plus it is not a crime for sometime of the year for kids to go "unprogrammed", where they have to make their own fun and are not rushing off to another planned activity. We had that as kids - why can't our kids have the same luxury? True it will never totally eliminate the problem of family holiday conflicts but it will sure reduce them. As well, giving families a large target to shoot for family holidays will be a great boon as opposed to only the first two weeks of July or in some cases - never.

2) Take advantage of no high school programs in August: You want more games? Fine. At a recent meeting of coaches in the CDMFA the President floated an idea for mid-week games in late August along with the weekend games to potentially allow for more games over a lesser time period. This would be a great idea as up until Labor Day there would be no competition for

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facilities and officials during the week. Even with an August 15 season start you could still get four games in before the end of the month and with the continued development of artificial turf fields you can run bundles of games together. Yes, I know we'd hear it from those who say that would be too much pounding on the kids and perhaps they have a point. However just look at the type of pounding that goes on during a practice. It's six to one, half a dozen to the other, whether it's a practice or game most nights in terms of contact so you want more games? There it is.

3) Stagger the levels: The kids who have the least control over their lives are the Atom kids aged 10 and under. So why do we expect them to have the same commitment to the sport as our Bantam players? Every course I took on sport development involving kids under twelve in both my Undergrad and Masters told me that they should not be set up to play the same game as the adult version of their chosen sports - nor should they be expected to play as many games. So they don't get to play 10 games - big deal! What is the matter with 8 or even 6? A suggestion would be to let the Bantams start practicing on August 1st with their first game on or about two weeks later. The Pee-Wee could start practicing August 7th with games starting two weeks later and the Atoms could start practicing August 15th with game starting after Labor Day. This way families with young children would have more of an affinity to sign their kids

up for football as they can have the bulk of the summer to vacation away. As they grow with the sport the families will become accustomed to the timing of the start dates and be prepared accordingly when planning their summer. Most importantly it would give those long suffering souls who coach Atom (and I know where they are coming from as I put in my four years there) a chance to have a decent training camp with most if not all of their registered players there, thus allowing for the team to gel at the same rate. This is critical at the youngest levels and we need to help those who are coaching there.

As you can tell, this article is just my opinion as both a minor football coach and father of two minor football players. It is not the official position of Football Alberta but rather a statement that hopefully will generate discussion at the minor football levels. My family loves the sport but its increasing stress on our summer is not viewed very positively. The argument that kids want to play lots of games is relevant but keep in mind that a famous person in show business once stated that the best way to win over an audience is to always leave them wanting more. Just because we can start as early as we want at the minor levels doesn't mean that we should. Another famous book states "to everything there is a season", and it's time we stuck to ours.

Team Alberta Hawaii Report

For the third year in a row Football Alberta has run a successful summer football camp that culminates with a seven day tour of Maui, Hawaii and a controlled scrimmage vs. King Keakaulike High School in Pukalani.

The highlights for this years tour included a daily practice, evening conditioning sessions on the beach, and other events such as a snorkel tour, a luau and rain forest hike. Our host school and their head coach J.W. Kenton did another amazing job of welcoming us to Maui with a joint practice on the Monday and a scrimmage on the Friday (which was followed by the greatest spread of food you could imagine).

Football Alberta would like to thank all the players from all over our province who signed up for the tour. Your behavior both on and off field was commendable and your performance in the scrimmage made us proud. Despite giving up 5 touchdowns, Team Alberta Hawaii had many long drives and scored twice which is two more times than in any of the previous years. Big days were had by Jasper Place running back Zach Skibin, and the offensive line anchored by Henry Wise Wood's Kenton Boote. Defensively, Willow Creek's Trayce Bozarth and St. Mary's A.J. Hill had great scrimmages. Alex Issik from Henry Wise Wood did a great job playing both ways.

Special thanks go out to Head Coach Rick Gilson and assistants Bill McConkey, Johannes van Leenen, Tim Enger, Brian Fryer as well as food coordinators Chauna Gilson and Kirsten Olsen and athletic therapist Nicole Lemke for all their hard work in making this a memorable tour.



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