

Grey Cup fever hits 100!



Toronto Argonauts' victory caps off week-long festival celebrating football

By Jessica Nyznik

It's four hours away from the 100th Grey Cup game in Toronto and the streets between John and Simcoe on Front Street are filled with smiles, laughter and the occasional, "AAR-RGGOOO'S" chant from a crowd of enthusiastic fans.

Amid a sea of blue and red jerseys, hints of additional colours are peppered among the thousands of people. Although their teams may not have made it into the Grey Cup, proud fans support their teams by donning their uniforms. Team shirts for Saskatchewan Rough Riders, Winnipeg Blue Bombers and Hamilton Tiger Cats are just a few to be seen on the streets.

The aroma of pork is undeniable as enthusiasts walk down the street with a variety of ribs, pulled-pork sandwiches and hotdogs. Gator BBQ, Bone A Fied BBQ, Pistol Petes and Blazing Big Rib are lined up alongside each other, showcasing their trophies, making it that much more difficult for customers to choose.

The slight flurries that began an hour ago have vanished and the weather is co-operating nicely for a street festival that many have been anticipating for some time.

"I've been waiting for three weeks. I just love it. All of it," says 34-year-old Karyn Kennedy, who is sporting a straw cowboy hat with a CFL logo on it. Arriving from Kitchener, Ont., Kennedy is accompanied by her mother, brother and nephew. They will be among some of the lucky fans to enjoy the Grey Cup from inside the Rogers Centre.

David Lashly, of Castleman, Ont., is a Montreal Alouettes fan but will be supporting the Argos. He is excited to be attending his fifth Grey Cup. His wife, Cavelle Lane, is not a football fan but came along for the ride.

"I enjoy the hype and meeting people who have travelled here from across the country to see the game," said Lane.

Another Alouettes fan, Damien Lewis, is rooting for the Argos. With a painted face, and wearing a 100th Grey Cup jacket, it is obvious that Lewis is caught up in the hype.

"The 100th Grey Cup is going to be phenomenal – even more than the game itself."

With free concerts and DJs playing on an outdoor stage, people bop their heads and dance to the music as they stroll along the street. While some stop to buy a bit of merchandise or snack on a free food samples, others take a minute to throw a rock on a mock curling lane set up by Rock Solid Productions.

The energy on the streets is undisputable and fans from opposing teams high-five one another as they pass each other by. The animosity that is often apparent between play-off team supporters is nowhere to be found.

Chad Kackert runs past Stampeders defender Chris Randle during his match against the Calgary Stampeders at the Rogers Centre Sunday. Kackert was named MVP after the Argonauts captured the 100th Grey Cup, winning 35-22. For story and more Grey Cup photos, see page 3.

Photo by Alicia Wynter

Grey Cup celebrations more than a football game

By Vivek McCague

The 100th Grey Cup Gala is the event where everyone that is someone in CFL shows up to mingle and enjoy.

Usually galas are held in extravagant venues such as the Carlu or the Palais Royale. However, this time the gala was held in the SkyDome (Rogers Centre). On the way into the SkyDome there was a red velvet carpet laid down on the ground, giving the venue a high-class club air. As you follow the red carpet you are led down the 100 level stairs to the field ready for the football game. Before you get onto the field you walk through a large inflated football helmet greeted on the other side by attractive young women asking if you would like a glass of white wine. Behind them you can see two other young, attractive women, one opening the wine bottles and the other pouring the wine into glasses laid out on a table covered in black velvet cloth.

As you progress further, there is a sort of podium with CFL league teams, helmets with special artwork available for auctioning later. Now you can get a clear look at the venue and see all the decorations from the tables with the table number on an Argonaut's football sitting on a podium surrounded by either red or white roses and candles on both sides of

the table. The lighting is dim and warm you could say it was almost romantic.

There were various stations of food in a buffet style-one had cold cuts and cheese on large silver plates embroidered with designs around its margins. Another table had large silver pots filled up to the brim with mouth-watering red chili. You could see the steam rising from the pot in the toasty, warm light. The following table had skewered sautéed sizzling shrimps with some rice seamlessly settled beneath. The last table had miniature burger buns and burgers called 'sliders'.

The DJ is playing country and pop songs through the see-through glass touch-screen table that has all the controls for the music. As a photographer approaches, the stage he is on to take photos, the DJ swiped all music controls in his scooter, stands up and also thanks everyone for their support and that it is much appreciated.

The DJ stops the music suddenly and Chris Rudge, executive chairman and CEO of the Toronto Argonauts walks onto the stage in a casual black suit to thank everyone for coming to the gala. Shortly after David Onley, lieutenant governor of Ontario drives onto the stage in his scooter, stands up and also thanks everyone for their support and that it is much appreciated.

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Photo by Justin Tang

Fletcher Armstrong, chair of the Calgary Grey Cup Committee, lets out a "Yahooo" while mounted on Marty the horse last Thursday on Toronto's Front Street. Horse and rider were denied entry to the Royal York Hotel during their attempt to recreate the 1948 spectacle when a fan rode a horse through the hotel's lobby.