

UBC THUNDERBIRD FOOTBALL



100th ANNIVERSARY | 1923-2023



**THUNDERBIRD
FOOTBALL**

100th ANNIVERSARY | 1923-2023



ALL-TIME COACHING | 1923-2023

When it all started...

1923: BC's first official football league consisted of YMCA, Ex-King George, St Marks and UBC. Fall practices were led by Art Anglin and captain Lever Bates in preparation for exhibition games being played on December 25, 1923. UBC's first league game took place on January 12, 1924. Since UBC participated in BC's original football league of 1923/24, and the other teams have long since ceased to exist, UBC has the record as the longest continuous football team and program in the province.

1925: Led by Dr. Gordon Burke, "Canadian Rugby-Football" was adopted as a minor sport on campus.

1928: A motion is put forth by the Men's Athletic Committee to adopt "Canadian Rugby-Football" as a major sport on campus. The student vote was 205-119 in favour.

1929: The forward pass is allowed for the first time, provided the pass was not within 25-yards of the goal line. UBC was a small university but was blessed with an inordinate number of outstanding athletes on campus at this time. Two of these athletes were, Gavin Dirom and "Cokie" Shields, both outstanding in several sports, led the Blue & Gold with team captain Oliver Camozzi to victories over Saskatchewan to capture the 1929 Hardy Cup.



1928 | Vic ODLUM



1929: Hardy Cup CHAMPIONS | 13-2 vs SSK



Dr. Gordon SHRUM

1930: It was Gordon Shrum who led UBC into the Western Canadian Inter-University Athletic Union. This meant UBC teams in several sports, including football would be in competition with the Universities of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. In the fall of 1930 following training camp at Bowen Island, UBC opened with an exhibition game against the defending Grey Cup champion, the Hamilton Tigers.

Dr. Gordon Burke - Coaching Record

Year	W-L-T	Pts-For	Pts-Against	Achievements
1923	NA	-	-	
1924	3-2	-	-	BC league finalist
1925	2-3	-	-	BC Sr. champions
1926	0-3	6	30	
1927	4-3-1	55	62	BC, Lipton Cup champions
1928	6-2-1	31	58	BC Champions
1929	7-2	103	35	Hardy Cup champions
1930	5-4	96	99	
1931	3-4-1	29	49	Hardy Cup champions
1932	1-5	13	76	
1933	2-3-1	22	42	Hardy Cup champions
1934	0-7	17	176	
1935	0-4	0	227	
1936	0-4	12	34	

Maury Van Vliet - Coaching Record

Year	W-L-T	Pts-For	Pts-Against	Achievements
1937	3-4	34	49	
1938	9-2	134	56	Hardy Cup champions
1939	10-0	163	40	BC, Hardy Cup champions
1940	1-3	25	42	
1941	0-1	5	12	



Dr. Gordon BURKE



Maury Van VLIET



During his twelve years as head coach, "Doc" led the University to three Hardy Cup championships, and two BC titles. Dr. Burke was a medical doctor who found time within his on-going professional practice to coach not only the varsity team but also the junior varsity and intermediate football teams. According to Gavin Dirom, Burke was very much respected by his players. He was a serious man and in his talks to his players "would plead with them with tears in his eyes." In 2013 Burke was honoured with induction into the BC Football Hall of Fame.

1934: The name Thunderbirds was chosen and adopted by UBC's teams. Years later at half time at the Homecoming football game ('48), this initiative was acknowledged and official permission to use this name was granted by the West Coast Indigenous Peoples for whom this powerful and revered mythical creature meant so much.

1937: Oct. 2nd - Varsity stadium opens at the center of UBC campus

1938: Led by Tommy Williams' three touchdowns UBC defeated the University of Alberta for the Hardy Cup. The following season Coach Van Vliet won his second consecutive Hardy Cup defeating Saskatchewan 27-9 over two games.



1928 | Oliver CAMOZZI



Greg KABAT | HC



H.J. ANDERSON | HC



Don CORYELL | HC

1939: The team emerged to be one of UBC's best ever. It was UBC's first undefeated football team going 10-0 and were crowned BC "Big Four" champion to go with its Hardy Cup. It was a win against Victoria led by Tommy Williams, Freddie Smith, Hank Stradiotti, Johnny Pearson and UBC Hall of Famer Jim Harmer that gave UBC's "Wonder Team", the hard-fought 1939 title.

John Farina - Coaching Record

Year	W-L-T	Pts-For	Pts-Against	Achievements
1942	3-2-1	57	48	
1943	<i>War years</i>			
1944	<i>War years</i>			

Greg Kabat - Coaching Record

Year	W-L-T	Pts-For	Pts-Against	Achievements
1945	2-2	42	23	Hardy Cup Champions
1946	0-7	39	169	
1947	1-7	65	183	

Don Wilson - Coaching Record

Year	W-L-T	Pts-For	Pts-Against	Achievements
1948	0-7-1	46	222	

Orville Burke - Coaching Record

Year	W-L-T	Pts-For	Pts-Against	Achievements
1949	1-7	64	149	
1950	0-7	46	235	

Hjalmer "Jelly" Anderson - Coaching Record

Year	W-L-T	Pts-For	Pts-Against	Achievements
1951	2-6-1	76	249	
1952	0-8	40	269	

Don Coryell - Coaching Record

Year	W-L-T	Pts-For	Pts-Against	Achievements
1953	2-7	117	209	
1954	0-9	44	157	



1940: A team was organized this year but did not compete for the Hardy Cup despite the fact the Cup was resting in UBC’s trophy case in the Main Library. Football seemed to be the one major sport that was all but eliminated during the war years.

1942: UBC played six exhibition games, three of which were against Canadian Army teams .

1945: Football was fully back on campus and it featured players such as Hall of Famers Herb Capozzi and Reg Clarkson along with Dimitri Goloubef, all three future CFL players. This year the ‘Birds took their sixth Hardy Cup defeating Saskatchewan then outscoring Alberta 36-16.

1946: UBC joins the US-based Pacific Northwest Athletic Conference. UBC’s new football Coach was Greg “Hardrock” Kabat.

1948-1952: Saw UBC register a 3-35-2 record playing in the Pacific Northwest Conference then moving over to the equally tough Evergreen Conference. Under three different coaches these five years UBC was over-matched, at least in football, despite having some good athletes on its roster; George Puil, Bob Hindmarch, Dave Macfarlane, Rae Ross, Vic Chapman, Cal Murphy and veteran Doug Reid, four of whom are UBC Hall of Famers and several, future CFL’ers.

1953: In September 1953 a 28 year old graduate of the University of Washington by the name of Don Coryell was introduced as UBC’s newest head football Coach. Despite fine play from Bob Brady, Bill Kushnir and one year from a young future CFL great, Norm Fieldgate, these two seasons were disappointing, save for the Pep Band’s lusty renditions of “Hail UBC! “ Coryell would then leave for the US and in a few years become one the NCAA’s most celebrated College Coaches followed by a stellar career as an NFL Head Coach leading him to enshrinement in the NFL Pro Football Hall of Fame.

1953: UBC began playing exhibition games against eastern universities such as McGill, Western Ontario and University of Toronto.

1954: Professional football arrived in BC with the formation of the BC Lions. Because UBC was BC’s only university at the time, it was a primary source of Canadian football talent for the Lions during their early years. For 1954, 1955 and 1956 for example, at least half of the Lions’ roster of Canadians was made up of former Thunderbirds.

1955: Gordon Shrum, personally went to Hamilton Ontario to hire former CFL player and junior football Coach, Frank GnuP. GnuP, did an excellent job of promoting and selling football to both the campus and community. Riding to campus on his bike, the opera-loving, cigar-chewing coach was one, if not the most recognizable figures on campus during the late 1950s, 1960s.

Frank GnuP-Coaching Record

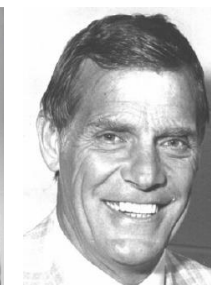
Year	W-L-T	Pts-For	Pts-Against	Achievements
1955	1-6-1	25	149	
1956	2-7	65	238	
1957	1-9	91	394	
1958	3-6	156	190	
1959	6-4	206	173	Hardy Cup champions
1960	3-6	79	131	
1961	5-3-1	130	133	Hardy Cup champions
1962	6-4	185	129	Co-champions
1963	5-4	146	106	
1964	5-4	192	149	Hardy Cup finalists
1965	2-5-2	78	111	
1966	5-3-1	158	104	Hardy Cup finalist
1967	1-7	48	210	
1968	0-8	21	259	
1969	2-6-1	89	223	
1970	1-8	44	277	
1971	3-7	84	218	
1972	3-7	102	247	

Norm Thomas - Coaching Record

Year	W-L-T	Pts-For	Pts-Against	Achievements
1973	2-8	122	298	



Herb CAPOZZI



Bob HINDMARCH



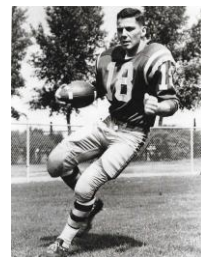
Frank GNUP

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1957: The bright spot of this season though was the emergence of players such as Jack Henwood, Bill Crawford, Don Vassos and Roy Jokanovich. Vassos would set UBC records and play in the CFL, as would Jokanovich. Crawford would go directly from UBC to play two seasons with the New York Giants and later in the CFL, while Henwood would eventually be inducted into the UBC Sports Hall of Fame.



George HOAR #50 | Jack HENWOOD #40 | Bill CRAWFORD #75

Don VASSOS | CFL

1958: UBC finally defeated University of Puget Sound 13 – 7, the first win in 13 attempts – since the 1920s

1959: August ALB-SSK re-instate football, Manitoba rejoined the conference in 1962 and the new University of Calgary became the fifth member in 1964. UBC won the Hardy Cup led by running back/QB Jack Henwood and linemen George Turpin, Bill Crawford and future BC Lion and CFL Commissioner, Doug Mitchell.



1961 | W.C.I.A.U CHAMPIONS | 13-6 vs Alberta

1962: UBC dominated the west, outscoring Manitoba 55-0 over two games, Saskatchewan 64-0 over two games. ‘Birds Barry Carkner was the best QB to come along in a long time while several future pros were on the roster during these early 1960s including Peter Lewis, Peter Kempf, Tom Thomson, George Brajcich and Roy Shatzko. In fact, the CFL drafted seven players from the 1963 UBC roster that set a new school record with 10-conference all-Star selections.

1966: The ‘Birds, handily defeating Alberta, Saskatchewan, Calgary, Whitman and Portland State. They were led by QB Dick Gibbons, Lance Fletcher, two-way star “Chip” Barrett the first Thunderbird to be drafted in the CFL- first round, first overall and exciting young runningback Dave Corcoran signed as FA with the San Francisco 49ers | NFL. The only blemish was a season-ending 34-0 loss to Manitoba. 1967 on the other hand turned out to be the beginning of a decline with one win in eight games. One of those games, the evening of October 18th, was the first ever SFU/UBC football clash labeled the Shrum Bowl.

The Shrum Bowl was the game designed to ignite the rivalry between the two universities under the banner of “Big Time” football. It would also be a test of two football philosophies– the traditional UBC way, academics first, athletics not quite first, versus SFU’s desired American model of scholarships and US competition and rules. The game was played before 15,000 at Empire Stadium in what would be the largest crowd ever to witness UBC play football, at least locally. The score: SFU 32 | UBC 13.

1970: Coach Gnuip added Frank Smith to his staff but other than star back Dave Corcoran, Gnuip again had little to work with. This year could be considered a low point in UBC football history; a one win eight loss season including a 46-2 trouncing at the hands of Manitoba, 27-0 to Calgary, 32-0 to Alberta and to cap it off, a crushing 61-6 loss to SFU in the Shrum Bowl.

1972: Following another losing season, Frank Gnuip “retired” as Head Coach and was replaced for 1973 with one of his former players and assistant coach, Norm Thomas. He would remain on UBC staff as an instructor in the Physical Education faculty but he loved coaching, football and his guys. He had coached both football and baseball at UBC, was a father figure, mentor, assisted in player’s career paths, dedicated to helping the community, all primarily through his role as UBC football Head Coach from 1955 through 1972.



1974: Proved to be the preview of a major change of fortunes for the UBC football program. The 1974 season saw two new “appointments”; the recruiting of a new quarterback in Danny Smith and the introduction of a new Head Coach in Frank Smith. Frank had played in the CFL in the 1950s and had extensive college and high school coaching experience on both sides of the border. The selection of Smith as coach was a popular one facilitated by a committee consisting of Bus Phillips, Bob Osborne and the student head of Men’s Athletics, Bruce Kiloh.

Coach Smith secured a young Bob Laycoe to be his Defensive Coordinator, a move that proved to be profound. And also a few fresh-faced rookies joined the team this year including Marshall MacLeod, Digby Leigh and Gary Metz who along with Danny Smith, Gord Penn and others, would lead UBC four years later to its first Shrum Bowl victory and first appearance in the Vanier Cup. Meanwhile, this 1974 season turned out to be dreadful but . . . change was about to happen.

1976: September 27th, a heart attack claims the life of 59-year old Frank Gnuv. That fall the T-Birds capture the 40th edition of the Hardy Cup on home turf defeating the Saskatchewan Huskies 36-10.

Frank Smith - Coaching Record

Year	W-L-T	Pts-For	Pts-Against	Championships
1974	1-8	89	341	
1975	6-4	293	215	
1976	6-5	272	258	Hardy Cup
1977	5-5-1	270	174	Hardy Cup finalist
1978	10-3	365	164	HC, Churchill Bowl
1979	6-4	169	162	Hardy Cup finalist
1980	3-6-1	124	189	
1981	8-3	235	121	Hardy Cup finalist
1982	12-1	466	143	HC, Atlantic Bowl, Vanier Cup
1983	6-5	236	194	Hardy Cup finalist
1984	4-5	178	178	
1985	5-5	201	178	
1986	11-1	343	175	HC, Churchill Bowl, Vanier Cup
1987	11-2	335	224	HC, Churchill Bowl
1988	6-3	226	191	
1989	5-5	253	256	Hardy Cup finalist
1990	5-5-1	207	231	Hardy Cup finalist
1991	3-7	251	223	
1992	7-4	309	232	Hardy Cup finalist
1993	5-5	265	254	
1994	1-8-1	231	400	



Bob LAYCOE | DC



1976 Hardy Cup CHAMPIONS | 36-10 vs SSK

1978: November – Quarterback Danny Smith becomes the first 2-time conference MVP and leads the Thunderbirds over the Wilfrid Laurier Golden Hawks 25-16 to win the Churchill Bowl and advanced to their first ever appearance in the College Bowl. Frank Smith becomes the first UBC coach to be awarded the Frank Tindall Trophy as the CIAU’s Coach of the Year. In his remarkable coaching career with the Thunderbirds, Smith was named Canada-West Coach of the Year six-times.



Frank SMITH

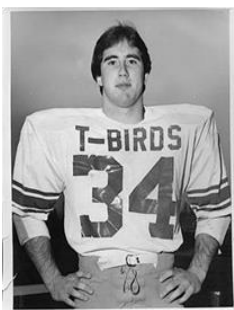


2019 CFL Hall of Fame

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Glenn STEELE | RB

1981: Freshman sensation Glenn Steele becomes the first player in Canada-West history to win both the Peter Gorman Trophy-Rookie of the year and the Frank Gnuip-MVP award. He led the CIAU in rushing yards setting a new conference record with 951-yards. The Thunderbirds became the first team to capture all four major awards— Linebacker Mike Emery was named the CIAU Presidents trophy winner as stand-up defensive player of the year and fellow defender Jason Riley, who led the country in QB sacks was named as the conferences Metras trophy recipient.

1982: The T-Birds dominated the western conference, posting a perfect 8-0 regular season record becoming the first UBC football team in 43 years to record an undefeated Western Conference season. The T-Birds won the National Championship for the first time with a 39-14 victory over the OUA Champion Western Mustangs. The '82 Thunderbirds experienced a historic season | WIFL champions, Vanier Cup champions, Shrum Bowl champions and Sport BC's '82 Amateur Team-of-the-Year. They established a new school standard with 14-conference all-Star selections. HC Frank Smith, stated his team's success was a product of its tremendous sense of togetherness, caring and family, its excellent over-all ability and the fact that it executed so very well. The programs talent was highlighted in the spring of 1983 when the 'Birds had five players selected in the first round and ten overall in the annual CFL draft. A feat that has never been duplicated...

1986: Coached by Frank Smith, the Thunderbirds went undefeated in regular-season play and outscored Canada West opponents 237-82. After a crushing 49-3 victory over the Calgary Dinos in the Canada West Championship, the Thunderbirds travelled to Lennoxville, Quebec where they defeated the Bishop's Gaiters 32-30 in the Churchill Bowl to win a berth in the Vanier Cup. One week later Smith's Thunderbirds claimed UBC's second-ever Vanier Cup championship with a thrilling 25-23 win over the Western Ontario Mustangs. A total of nine UBC players were named Canada West All-stars, while three were named First Team All Canadians | Jack Beetstra, Mark Norman, Leo Groenewegen. Defensive back Mark Norman was a finalist for the Hec Crighton Trophy | CIS Most Outstanding Player and the winner of the President's trophy | CIS Most Outstanding Defensive Player.

1987: The T-Birds finished in 1st place in CW with 8 wins, 0 losses and would capture back-to-back Hardy Cup titles. Defeating the Alberta Golden Bears in the Hardy Cup final 26-8 and the OUA Champion Wilfrid Laurier Golden hawks 33-31 in the Western Bowl. Quarterback Jordan Gagner becomes the first UBC player to be awarded the CIAU Hec Crighton trophy as the country's most outstanding player. Jordan Leith was named Canada-West Presidents trophy-Defensive player of the year and Leo Groenewegen named conference Metras trophy winner as the most outstanding lineman . Groenewegen would become the first UBC Thunderbird to be play in the NFL East-West Shrine game.



1982 Vanier Cup CHAMPIONS | 39-14 vs UWO



1986 Vanier Cup CHAMPIONS | 25-23 vs UWO



1987 Leo GROENEWEGEN | East-West Shrine



1994: January, former T-Bird captain and assistant coach Casey Smith appointed Head Coach.

1997: The Thunderbirds finished the season at 5-2 in a first place tie. They rolled into the CW playoffs with the conferences #1 ranked defense and an explosive offence. They captured the Hardy Cup with a 39-12 victory. Then traveled to Halifax for the Atlantic Bowl championship vs. the Mt. Allison Mounties. Olson who passed for 402-yards and 5-touchdowns in a 34-29 victory. Their Vanier Cup opponent was the OQIFC champion Ottawa Gee-Gees, a perennial national power. The T-Bird defense was at their best, limiting the explosive Gee-Gee offence to 7-points for 3-Qtrs, and the offence used their power run game and their dominate offensive line to propel CIAU all-Canadian RB Mark Nohra to 120-yards in a 39-23 victory. Norha was named the Hec Crighton trophy winner as the CIAUs most outstanding player.

Casey Smith - Coaching Record

Year	W-L-T	Pts-For	Pts-Against	Achievements
1995	4-6	303	266	
1996	6-4	234	239	Hardy Cup finalist
1997	7-3	321	221	Hardy Cup, Atlantic Bowl, Vanier Cup

Dave Johnson - Coaching Record

Year	W-L-T	Pts-For	Pts-Against	Achievements
1998	7-3	301	191	Hardy Cup finalists

Jay Prepchuk - Coaching Record

Year	W-L-T	Pts-For	Pts-Against	Achievements
1999	8-3	292	204	Hardy Cup finalists
2000	4-5	277	297	
2001	2-7-1	145	271	



1997 Vanier Cup CHAMPIONS | 39-23 vs Ottawa



1988 Bob BEVERIDGE | East-West Shrine

1999: The Thunderbirds finished in first place with a 7-1 record with the #1 ranked defense in the conference. Defensive back Simon Quinto sparked the UBC Thunderbirds to a 27-14 Canada West semi-final victory over the visiting Calgary Dinos. Quinto had 5 solo tackles, 2 assists and 2 interceptions. With just over two minutes remaining in the opening half, Quinto stepped in front of a SSK pass and ran it back 56 yards for a TD. The touchdown sent UBC to the locker room with 20-0 halftime advantage, as the Thunderbirds coasted to the win. UBC Running Back Akbal Singh rushed for 131 yards on 19 carries, and in the process broke single-season UBC records in both rushing and total yards. He surpassed T-Bird great Glen Steele's performance of the 1982 season. In the Hardy Cup final vs arch rival SSK Huskies, a faked field goal early in the second half, resulting in a 30-yard touchdown lifted #2 Saskatchewan Huskies to a 31-24 Hardy Trophy victory over #1 UBC Thunderbirds.



Casey SMITH



Dave JOHNSON



Jay PREPCHUK

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2008: Receiver/Kick returner Spencer Betts (7) becomes the first Thunderbird to be named UBC Athletics Rookie-of-the-Year (2007-08). Betts had a stellar career with the T-Birds leading Canada-West in kickoff returns ('09,'10), led UBC in all-purpose yards ('08,'09,'10), led UBC in punt returns including longest-98 vs Manitoba, Sept. 13th ('08). Career highlights included being named conference all-Star ('08), Academic all-Canadian ('10) and was invited to the CIS East-West bowl ('11).

2004: Nate Beveridge (77) becomes the first-ever UBC player to receive the Russ Jackson trophy honouring academics, athleticism and citizenship. He was also the recipient of the Bobby Gaul Memorial Trophy | UBC graduating Male Athlete of the Year.

2005: all-Canadian Nick Johansson (95) selected to the NFL East-West Shrine game.

Laurent DesLauriers - Coaching Record

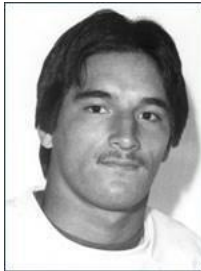
Year	W-L-T	Pts-For	Pts-Against	Achievements
2002	3-5	144	141	
2003	0-8	132	260	
2004	5-4	235	251	
2005	4-5	216	232	

Ted Goveia - Coaching Record

Year	W-L-T	Pts-For	Pts-Against	Achievements
2006	4-5	303	244	
2007	3-5	167	198	
2008	2-6	117	160	
2009	3-5	110	263	



2007: The Thunderbirds win their fourth consecutive Shrum Bowl tying the record of wins set in 1981-82, 1987-88. Winning 42-24 ('04), 40-33 OT ('05), 41-6 ('06) and 31-2 ('07). October 18th 2007, Chris Ciezki ties a Canada-West record for most touchdowns in a game (five) against cross town rival SFU.



Laurent DESLAURIERS



Ted GOVEIA



2010: Former Vanier Cup champion and conference MVP – Shawn Olson becomes the 18th Head Coach in UBC history. The decade of the 2010’s can best be described as one of national recognition and resurgence, as the Thunderbirds returned to both Hardy Cup and Vanier Cup championship glory. With 34-victories and 3 consecutive Hardy Cup finals, the talented T-birds dominated Canada west in post season awards including 53-Academic all-Canadians, 45-players invited to the CFL combine, 34-conference all-Stars, 27-players invited to the East-West bowl, 24-CIS/U SPORTS all-Canadians, and 6-major player of the year awards.



2011: Duel threat quarterback Billy Greene (11) led the conference in passing yards-2,558 and TDs-20 to win the Frank Gnuip Conference MVP, he would become the second Thunderbird to capture the CIS Hec Crighton trophy as the most outstanding player in the country. Joining Greene on the CIS all-Canadian team were receiver Jordan Grieve and defensive back Sam Carino.

2013: Donovan Dale becomes the second Thunderbird to capture back-to-back Canada-West Metras Trophy-Outstanding Lineman ('13,'14), the dominate defender was named Canada-West all-Star ('13,'14), CIS all-Canadian ('13,'14) and was invited to the U SPORTS East-West bowl ('14).

2015: Blake Nill is synonymous with success when it comes to U SPORTS football. Already one of the most decorated coaches in the country after brilliant stints at Saint Mary’s and Calgary, Nill made history with the UBC Thunderbirds in 2015, his first with the program. In his debut season with the Blue and Gold, he led a remarkable turnaround, guiding the squad to the Vanier Cup national championship. The year began with a triumphant non-conference win at Laval in Quebec City. The team then recorded a 6-2 regular season, which was followed up by playoff wins against Manitoba, Calgary, St. Francis Xavier, and finally Montreal in the U SPORTS title game in the very same Stade TELUS-Université Laval where its season began.

Shawn Olson - Coaching Record

Year	W-L-T	Pts-For	Pts-Against	Achievements
2010	2-6	164	255	
2011	7-3	246	190	Hardy Cup finalist
2012	2-6	193	297	
2013	4-4	284	257	
2014	2-6	175	293	

Blake Nill - Coaching Record

Year	W-L-T	Pts-For	Pts-Against	Achievements
2015	11-2	470	323	HC, Uteck Bowl, Vanier Cup
2016	4-7	340	376	Hardy Cup finalist
2017	8-3	335	267	Hardy Cup finalist
2018	5-4	219	237	
2019	2-6	163	311	
2020	COVID-19 cancellation			
2021	3-4	152	260	
2022	7-4	218	223	Hardy Cup finalist
2023	9-3	356	210	Hardy Cup, Mitchell Bowl



Shawn OLSON



Blake NILL

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2015 Continued: With a strong returning roster, Nill quickly added a talented crop of blue-chip prospects including Penn State transfer Michael O'Connor (QB), Boise State transfer Taylor Loffler (FS), Stavros Katsantonis (HB) Nevada transfer Malcom Lee (REC/DB), SFU transfer Mitch Barnett (LB), and CJFL all-Canadian Dylan Chapdelaine (LB). The motivated T-Birds crushed the Manitoba Bison's 52-10 in the CW semi-final with another outstanding defensive performance and advanced to the Hardy Cup final. Next was a trip to Calgary to face the number one ranked football team in the country. But, it was not enough as UBC exploded for 475-yards on offence and came out with an incredible 34-26 victory to stun the entire nation. The Thunderbirds went on to defeat the AUS champion St. Francis Xavier X-Men 33-9 in the Uteck Bowl to earn their ticket to the Vanier Cup. There, they would face the defending national champion Montreal Carabins. With 1.19 seconds left in the game defensive backs Kevin Wiens and A.J Blackwell combined to deflect, then intercept the ball to set up a final offensive drive. With 1-second left on the clock van Gylswyk kicked a 20- yard field goal to win the CUP. The 26-23 victory successfully returned UBC to championship status.



2018: Vanier Cup champion Dakota Shepley is drafted in the first round, fifth overall. He signed as an undrafted free-agent with the New York Jets (NFL), then returned to play for Saskatchewan earning the Roughriders Outstanding Rookie Award. He has continued his NFL career with the Seattle Seahawks, San Francisco 49ers, Dallas Cowboys and signed with the Indianapolis Colts in 2023.

2019: Mark Norman inducted into the Canada-West Sports Hall of Fame. Norman was a back-to-back WIFL First Team all-Star and Canadian Interuniversity Athletic Union (CIAU) First Team all-Canadian in both 1985 and 1986. In UBC's 1986 national championship season, he won the Presidents' Trophy as CIAU's Most Outstanding Defensive Player, and was a finalist for the Hec Crighton Trophy, awarded to the most outstanding player in Canadian university football. After being selected 26th overall in the 1987 CFL Draft by the Edmonton Eskimos, Norman played in 18 games as a rookie for the Esks during their 1987 Grey Cup championship win.



2015 Hardy Cup CHAMPIONS | 34-26 vs Calgary



2015 Uteck Bowl CHAMPIONS | 36-9 vs SFX

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2020: The Coronavirus disease (COVID 19) cancels the season.

2021: All-Canadian linebacker Nick Cross is selected in the first round, ninth overall by the Hamilton Tiger-Cats (CFL). Cross led U SPORTS in total defensive tackles in a season-74 ('19), was invited to the U SPORTS East-West bowl ('20) and the CFL national combine ('21). Linebacker Ben Hladik was picked in the third round, twenty second overall by the BC Lions, the T-Bird defender was named Canada-West Presidents Trophy Defensive-MOP ('18), UBC Defensive Rookie-of-the-Year ('17), Defensive-MOP ('18). Selected defensive co-captain of the Canadian National Junior Team-International bowl ('18). CW all-Star ('18,'19), U SPORTS all-Canadian ('18,'19), invited to the U SPORTS East-West bowl ('20), was invited to the CFL national combine ('21).

2022: December 1st, Thunderbird quarterback Derek Engel scored on a 1-yard line sneak with 25 seconds left to lead the T-Birds to a 18-17 come from behind victory over the Simon Fraser Red Leafs in the 34th edition of the Shrum Bowl. SFU looked to have the game won when they scored the go-ahead touchdown with just 96 seconds left. The second-year pivot drove the Thunderbirds 65 yards in 12 plays in the game-winning drive. The T-Birds defense amassed 12 quarterback sacks and held SFU to minus 12 yards rushing.



2022 Shrum Bowl CHAMPIONS | 18-17 vs SFU

2023: Canada-West Metras Trophy winner, 6'7 320 lbs. All-Canadian Theo Benedet becomes the fourth Thunderbird selected to the prestigious NFL East West Shrine Bowl.



Nick CROSS | LB



Ben HLADIK | LB



Theo BENEDET | East-West Shrine | 2-time U SPORTS Metras Trophy winner



100th ANNIVERSARY | 1923-2023



ALL-TIME COACHING | 1923-2023

2023: The 100th Anniversary Gala dinner was hosted by the TFA on Oct. 21st. The highlight of the evening was the induction of the Frank Gnuip Wall of Honour class. **BUILDER** | Tom Reimer Bachelor of Arts 1975-77. **TEAM** | 2015 Vanier Cup Champions. **ATHLETE** | Don Adamic (OL) Bachelor of Arts 1981-85, Nate Beveridge (REC) Bachelor of Human Kinetics-Physical Education 2000-04, Mike Bellefontaine (REC) Bachelor of Arts, Andrew English (REC) Bachelor of Arts 1992-95, 1985-88, Curtis Galick (DB) Bachelor of Arts 1993-97, Bernie Glier (DB) Faculty of Education 1978-82, Nick Johansson (DL) Bachelor of Commerce-Sauder School of Business 2002-05, and Stewart Scherck (LB) Bachelor of Arts 1997-99.

A championship season: Overall 9-3 | PCT .750 | Conf 6-2 | PCT .750 | Home record 7-0.

The T-Birds finished in first place for the 12th time in school history. The Defense ranked # 1 vs run, # 1 Tackles for loss, # 1 goal-line short-yardage stops, # 2 vs pass, # 2 scoring 19.5 per game | First season since 1997 (18.3) under 20 pts, 11-Shut-out Qtrs. and set a new record for fewest passing yards allowed in a game with 81 vs Alberta on Oct. 28th. Offense ranked #1 in yards per game 483.9, scoring-271 pts, total yards - 3,726, RedZone TDs -17, passing TDs -19 and rushing TDs -11. All-Star QB, Garrett Rooker set two school records – 72% completion percentage in a career and 68.0% in a season. All-Star kicker Kieran Flannery-Fleck set a new school standard with an incredible 90.0% in field goals, along with defensive co-captain Mitchell Townsends new team mark of 17-total tackles vs Regina on Oct. 21st.

CW Players of the Week

Week 1: Kieran Flannery-Fleck, also U SPORTS | Week 2: Ryan Baker | Week 3: Max Kennedy | Week 4: Garrett Rooker | Week 6: Garrett Rooker | Playoff Week 1: Mitch Townsend | Playoff Week 2: Sam Davenport, Taaj Jhooty, Kieran Flannery-Fleck – Davenport also U SPORTS | Playoff Week 3: Jaxon Ciraolo-Brown, Garrett Rooker, Cesare Rednour-Bruckman – Rooker also U SPORTS | Playoff Week 4 - Vanier Cup: Kieran Flannery-Fleck, Jaxon Ciraolo-Brown, Dane Kapler

2023 CW all-Stars | 14-tied the mark set by the 1982 Vanier Cup championship team. Led by Theo Benedet (OL), Ryan Baker (LB), Jaxon Ciraolo-Brown (LB), Jerrell Cummings (DB), Sam Davenport, WR, Kieran Flannery-Fleck (K), Skyler Griffith (RC), Isaiah Knight (RB), Giovanni Manu (OL), Shemar McBean (WR/KR), Garrett Rooker (QB), Lucas Robertson (TE), Kyle Samson (DL)

2023 U SPORTS all-Canadians | Theo Benedet (OL, 1st), Lucas Robertson (TE, 1st), Giovanni Manu (OL, 2nd), Skyler Griffith (RC, 2nd), Kyle Samson (DL, 2nd).



2023 Canada-West Hardy Cup CHAMPIONS | 28-27 vs Alberta



2023 U SPORTS Mitchell Bowl CHAMPIONS | 47-17 vs SFX