

Art Moore

by Robert Sproule

In the so called "amature era" of Canadian football, before and just after the turn of the century, several power teams dominated the game. Toronto Argonauts first, then Ottawa College followed by their cross-town rivals, Ottawa Rough Riders. Each team had great runners and great kickers but not: both. Hamilton Tigers, at the start of the 1903 season, had a player who possessed both. Great speed combined with an educated toe for kicking.

There is really very little known about the early life of Arthur Tames Moore other than he was born in 1882, one year before organized football in Canada, and that he played rugby football for Hamilton teams at the junior and intermediate levels. But once he graduated to the senior ranks and to the Hamilton Rangers of the Ontario Rugby Football Union, never before in the history of the Canadian football did one player dominated his position as did Art Moore.

There are two aspects of the game that must be mentioned in order to understand and appreciate Art Moore. There is Moore the scorer and Art Moore the runner. First, what was considered the standard of scoring in terms of kicking by an individual. Then, what was considered the standard of advancing the ball in terms of the runner.

Art Moore the Scorer

In 1889 Hugh Smith of the Toronto Argonauts set an ORFU seasonal record of 56 points in a 4 game schedule that was considered truly remarkable. That record was challenged several times but never broken until Art Moore, in only his second season, scored 74 points in another 4-game schedule during the 1904 season. That figure in turn was not broken until 1953 when Dick Gregory scored 95 points in an ORFU 12 game schedule. Nobody had ever won consecutive scoring titles before. That is, until Art Moore managed four straight in 1903, 04, 05 and 06 season. Hugh Stirling of the Sarnia Imperials during the 1930s won 4 scoring titles, but only two were consecutive.

Points in a game belonged to kickers that could score touchdowns (trys) as well. Players like Saunders, Smith and Maurice Guillett of Ottawa College were mostly kickers that scored a try or two in their record setting 20-point games. George Ambery had the record for most points in a game with 26 and that lasted until Oct 22,1904. On that date, Tigers destroyed the Toronto Victs 80-2 and Art Moore on a one man scoring spree set a new record with 35 points; 5 touchdowns and 10 convert kicks. In fact, that mark still stands as the 2nd highest in. Senior Canadian football history.

Even with a more rounded ball, convert kicking (or goal from a try) was still considered a science. One had to catch a pass from the quarter-back, drop the ball to the ground and, as it bounced up, attempt to kick it past the onrushing defense and through the upright. In those days the conversion kick took place at the angle where the try was scored, not straight on as in today's game. Accuracy was the name of the game and Stuart Rayside of the 1898 Ottawa Rough Riders took advantage of his teams many touchdowns by scoring a record 5 convert kicks in a season and, in one game equalled Jack Gilmour's record of 6 kicks. Art: Moore caught the attention of many of the Old Guard in his 1903 rookie season when he equalled both marks. The following year against the Toronto Victs he set the record for convert kicks scoring on 10 of 12 attempts. In several other games he kicked 6 converts. He kicked a record 22 converts in 1904 followed by 21 and 20 convert seasons. This record stood until 1948 when Pat Santucci, in a 9 game season, kicked 25.

Considering that the defense was already ready for the run, scoring trys was not an easy matter, and stacked defenses in key situation made the outside run or plunge up the middle more difficult. Stronger teams would score several in a game and their primary runner might average a try a game. As such, Charlie Fox of Queens set the standard for touchdowns in a season with 6 in 1893. Then, years later,

playing for the Tigers, he equalled his own record. Such a feat was considered unheard of. Several years later, behind the blocking of a powerful Ottawa team, Dick Kenny set a new standard of 8 tries in a season. And then came Art Moore. He only scored 3 in his first season but in the following season he a new record of 10 touchdowns. This in turn, wasn't broken until 1946, when Don Toms of the Hamilton Flying Wildcats scored 11 times. Moore was also the ORFU touchdown leader for three consecutive seasons; 1904-06. Norm Perry of the Sarnia Iniperials equalled Art Moore's consecutive touchdown streak during the 1932-34 seasons.

When The Hamilton Tigers joined with the Argonauts, Ottawa Rough Riders and the Montreal Football Club, in 1907, to form the Inter-Provincial Rugby Football Union (IRFU) otherwise known as the Big-4, Art Moore's' scoring came to an abrupt halt. Playing against stronger defenses and tighter competition, the Tigers and Art Moore never again experienced big scoring games. 1907 saw Moore held off the scoring sheet. The next year he managed a try and 3 converts and then in 1909, he finished 3rd in scoring with 19 points. Although he managed to lead the IRFU that season in tries and converts, kicking half-backs like Jack Williams of Ottawa and Ben Simpson of Tigers were in vogue with their 25 and 30 singles on kicks to the end sone. His last year, 1910 saw Art Moore managing to score just one t:ry for 5 points.

Art Moore the Runner

Whereas Art Moore the Scorer had his scoring taper off once the Hamilton Tigers joined the Big-4, Art Moore the Runner maintained a consistence threat throughout his career.

Before Art Moore, runners were divided into three distinct categories. The Pure Runner; a player who runs with good speed off-tackle. The Power Runner: a player in the 200-pound class that advanced the ball by sheer brute force through the line. The Break-Away Runner; a player who utilizes his speed to round the ends and break away for long gains.

When the revitalized Hamilton Tigers, after three consecutive loosing seasons, opened the 1903 season, they had two distinct advantages. Complete understanding of the Brunside Rules and Art Moore. Ball control was now a key issue as the ORFU adopted the Second Principal of Possession. Teams now had to gain 10 or more yards in any combination of three consecutive downs. TheTigers had their Pure Runners in Ballard, Tope and DuMoulin, Power in Isbister and Burkholder and Break-Away speed in Jimmy Stinston and then later with the Great Ben Simpson. But with 154-lbs Moore in the backfield, Hamilton introduced something new and different to the game. As one of the first truly great broken-field runners, Art Moore brought a new dimension to the concept of running the ball. Not only could he break past the ends but, once turned upfield, he had the natural ability to suddenly change direction; time and time again, thus leaving a would-be tackler grasping thin air. This made him a threat not only out of the back ffield but also as a punt returner.

At the same time, the Hamilton *Spectaor*, the local evening newspaper started publishing play by play accounts of the game and some of the incredible yardages gained by the Tigers were noted. From 1903 to 1906, running the ball 30, 40, or even 60 times in a game, the mighty Bengal Kings were gaining anywhere from 500, 600 or even 700 yards in any given game. As the Tigers ran, Art Moore ran. Teams that tried to shut down Moore found that his teammates, Simpson, Tope and Burkholder were free to run for big yards.

Considering the defense at the time, good runners could gain well over 100 yards in any game, and 200-yard games were not uncommon as there are today. The main difference is that today's teams have one or two runners to power the running game. In the early years, teams utilized four or five runners during the game. What Art Moore the Runner did was to record 100-yard games time and time again as well as several 200-yard games and many great zig-zag punt returns.

For the 1903 season Jimmy Stinston was the main runner for Hamilton gaining the bulk of the ground game. But in Game Two against the Toronto Torontos, Art Moore registered his first 100-yard game. Six runs for an even 100 yards, including one score for 40 yards.

The next year, Hamilton's best year ever, everyone was gaining hugh chunks of real estate behind the crisp blocking of the Tiger line. With Stinston departed for Montreal and Ben Simpson joining Moore in Lhe backfield, both runners had many great games. Moore's running game was now in full stride as he

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registered 125 yards in his first game, then 100 yards, and then, in Lhe 80-2 thumping of the Toronto Victs on Oct 22, he gained an amazing 310 yards on just 12 carries. He finished with 175 yards in his last game for a season total of 710 yards (an average of 19.7 yards per run).

If 1904 was a banner year for Art Moore, then 1905 was better yet. In six games he gained 153 yards, 180, a low 95 yards due to injury, then 230, 55 and 120 for a record 833 yards and a 17.4 average. He repeated 1906 with 80 yards in the opener, then 185 yards, two back-to-back 220-yard games before tapering off to 80 and 40-yard games. His season total was 830 yards and an average of 14.6 yards per run. This was the year that Tigers were allowed to challenge for Canadian Championship honours. Although he was a marked man running out of the backfield, his spectacular zig-zag punt returns gave his team great field position. That combined with a superior defense gave Hamilton the title 29-3 over a strong McGill University team.

The Tigers expected another great and perhaps easy season in the new Inter Provincial Union but they were not in condition once the season started. An unexpected opening game loss to Montreal set the tone for the season. It was Tigers first loss in four years and the team struggled to finish in second place. Art Moore did not receive the same kind of blocking as in other seasons as the defense were aware of his famous end runs and broken field running. Two 100-yard games (165 & 148) boosted his average to 10.1 and he finished with 466 yards.

Nineteen-o-eight saw Art Moore limited to just one 100-yard game (130) and his yardage dropped to 395 yards. In spite of this Hamilton made it to the Canadian Rugby Union Championship game (Pre-Grey Cup), and with Moore running 16 times for 170 yards, Tigers won the Canadian Championship 21-17 over Toronto Varsity.

O-Nine was a comeback year for Art: Moore. Not only did he finish third in scoring but his running game was back to form. First, there were two 90-yard games, 205 on only 10 runs in the third game, then, 135, 150 and 70 yards in the season final. His 14.4 yard average gave him 745 yards for the season.

In his last year, the defense re-adjusted to his style and he was limited to just 545 yards for the season; 125 and 100-yard games coming in the last two matches. Yet, Tigers managed to finish in first place and played defending champions Toronto Varsity for the 1910 Grey Cup. In that game Varsity dominated completely. They outran, outpunted, outtackled and outscored the Tigers to win 16-7.

One other aspect of Art Moore the Runner was Art Moore the Punt Returner. Returns of 25 yards at anytime was normal. Returns of 40-50 yards were common and anything over 50 yards occurred at least once or twice a game. From 1904 to 1906 Art Moore held the ORFU record of most Touchdowns season (2 in 1905) and most Touchdowns Career with 4. He had a 60-yard touchdown return in a 1904 game, a 55-yard and 40 yard touchdown returns during the 1905 season and another 60-yard TD return in a 1906 game. Several times he had return limited to 70 and 80 yards only because the last man to beat was able to push him out of bounds. In fact his greatest return was during the 1910 Grey Cup against Varsity. Behind 5-0 in the second quarter, Hughie Gall punted a good 50 yards to Art Moore standing some 5 yards in his own end zone. Moore grabbed the leather, eluded several would be tacklers and zig-zagged his way 85 yards upfield before a diving tackle by Jack Maynard brought him down at the Toronto 35-yard line. The return might have inspired Hamilton to tie the score but poor play selection gave the ball back to Varsity who marched down field, scored another try and never looked back. Moore finished with 11 returns for 150 yards.

The game was the last for Art Moore as he retired shortly thereafter. He was never involved in football at the coaching level to any of the senior Hamilton teams in either the ORFU or the Big-4. Instead he concentrated his time as a member of the Hamilton Golf & Country Club as well as a partner in local Real Estate as a Broker with the firm Moore & Davis.

On February 15, 1957 at the age of three quarters of a century, Arthur James Moore passed away. Football lost one of its great players, great scorers and great runners from the early years. He played in three Canadian Championship games including one Grey Cup appearance and was instrumental in his team winning two of them. Art Moore was the first great broken field runner. He set the standard for others to follow, both in scoring and in running.