

THE SECOND CANADIAN CHAMPIONSHIP

By Bob Sproule

With the formation of the Canadian Rugby Union as the new managing body of football in December of 1891, it was only logical that another title game be arranged from the respective provincial unions in order to determine a true national winner.

On Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 10, 1892 at Rosedale Field, Toronto, the second championship game took place between the Montreal Foot-Ball Club, winners of the Quebec R.F.U., and Osgoode Hall Rugby Club, finalists of the Ontario union.

Under partly cloudy skies some 2,000 fans braved the elements to shiver and shout while 30 brawny young men struggled in the snow for the Canadian title. Light snow was falling and had already covered the green field, but the managers of the match were able to obtain a snowplow and remove much of the six inches of the white stuff before game time. Snowbanks marked the touch and side lines, and although the fleecy particles were able to stop a parade, football players were made of sterner stuff.

Osgoode lost the toss, and at 3:00 p.m., Montreal kicked off with the wind. Peterson grabbed the ball and made a run for the Montreal goal line, but was tackled well past centre field. From a scrumage, Smellie got the ball and lateraled to Harry Senkler, who promptly booted over the line to register the Hall's first point.

Shortly thereafter, Osgoode obtained the leather and with some fine passing worked from mid-field to near the line. Kerr kicked over to rouge the Montreal back, and the Hall gained their second point. On the next series Montreal was held, and when Osgoode again got the oval, they worked it downfield until Harry Senkler made his mark and was successful on the goal from the field. Since field goals were worth five points in 1891, this gave Osgoode 7 points.

The Hallers almost made another score when they took the ball and worked it from their quarter line all the way to Montreal's quarter line. However, several penalties and a free penalty kick for the Red and Black from Montreal changed the situation, and they were able to bring play back to the Hallers' 25-yard line. From a scrumage, the sphere went to Miller and he dropped a goal from the field to cut the score to 7-5 for Osgoode. This was to be Montreal's only score of the contest.

Montserrat made a fine tackle on Senkler's long run to stop a score, but another penalty kick for Osgoode allowed Blake to boot for the single, which failed to count. Then a series of fine scrummages by Montreal carried the game deep into Osgoode territory and the home team was hard pressed to hold the line. Relief came when Senkler, Farrell and Patterson dribbled a loose enemy ball near the Montreal line, and a pass to Senkler just got him over. Osgoode now lead 11-5. (Remember, touchdowns were worth four points, converts two.) Again Osgoode's wingline held. When they obtained the ball, Blake's beautiful rush over the Montrealers' line made the score 15-5. Blake tried the kick, but the ball struck the post and bounced onto the field.

Then the Osgoode team got a break, as another Montreal fumble gave the leather to the locals, who pushed it over the line. When the fallen bodies arose, Pope was at the bottom, ball firmly in hand. Osgoode 19, Montreal 5.

From the kickoff, Senkler and Pope took turns advancing play upfield until Farrell punted for the score and another point. From centre field, Montreal kicked off deep to the Osgoode half- backs and the return was contained. But it was not long before Kerr broke past the Red and Black tacklers and placed the ball by the posts. With Blake's goal from a try, the Hallers were ahead 26-5 when half time was called.

Osgoode Hall started the second half by accepting Campbell's kick, and Casey Wood returned for good field position. Kerr followed up, took a loose ball, and dribbled it over centre field down to the quarter line. Out of the scrumage the 'skin was given to Harry Senkler, who showed himself to be the sprinter of the party, threw off half a dozen tacklers, and downed the ball at the 10-yard line. Ed Senkler, Morin and Patterson worked out a pretty combination passing play that gave the latter the try over the goal line. When Blake's kick failed to score, Osgoode was ahead by 30 to 5.

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Almost immediately, another Montreal miscue allowed the home team to dribble over the line, where Harry Senkler was credited with his second rouge. From a scrum after the kickoff, Campbell took the oval and started out for the Hallers' goal with almost a clear field before him. Smellie took up the chase and with a stubborn tackle brought both the ball carrier and the leather down to earth.

Montreal then booted the ball along the ground to the locals' 35-yard line, only to have McKay gain possession and punt it out of touch. Rykert took the ball from a throw-in and started off on a capital run, only to have Campbell down him. Rykert fell heavily, alighting on his shoulder, which was thought to be broken. After an examination by a physician on the field, Rykert returned to play.

By a series of scrummages, control of the wingline, and smart passing, the Osgoode men marched down the field until on one particular play Montreal broke through and cast the Hallers for a 15-yard loss. Smellie grasped the ball from the scrim and passed out to Ed Senkler. Eddie made a pretty run, but when the tacklers converged he passed over to Casey Wood, who made a few more steps before being brought down just outside the goal line. A pass to Harry was off his hands, but he managed to dribble over the line for a touch-in-goal, and Osgoode had its 32nd point of the afternoon.

Again, Campbell got off for another long one. He was undoubtedly the main star of the Montreal team. After a considerable gain, he was tackled and Osgoode received the ball on a kick. With the play around centre field, Woods, Farrell and Morin worked out another combination play to give Morin his try. The 2-point convert kick failed and the score was now Osgoode 36, Montreal 5.

On an exchange of kicks following the kickoff, Harry Senkler recorded another rouge. No doubt Montreal could not adjust to the slippery condition of the field. This allowed Casey Wood to take a pass-out from a scrum and step his way downfield and over the line to the cheers of his mates and the crowd. This made the count 41 points for Osgoode and 5 for the Montreal squad. Blake again tried for the 2 points, but the ball was too wet and slippery for the kick to be true.

For a while the match bogged down to a massive struggle, as the visitors were determined to keep the score down while at the same time perhaps driving the leather close enough for another attempted drop, or at least a rouge.

But it was only fitting that the grandest play of the day took place just before full time was called by the officials. A scrum formed with Osgoode in possession; Ed Senkler, having taken over the quarter-backing from Smellie, was the first to break through the Montreal wingline with the ball. After a speedy run past a few fallen tacklers, he passed over to Morin. Just as the tackle was about to be made, the leather was handed to Rykert, who was alongside of Moran, and an accurate throw to Peterson allowed him to secure the eighth Osgoode try amidst partisan cheering. Pope's convert kick failed to cross the bar, and the game ended 45 to 5 in favor of the Ontario football champs.

It was a good and exciting game that the spectators saw, in spite of the uncertain weather conditions. And the story was the same as in all Osgoode matches -- good team play from a combination of good individual play. Montreal played a good game, but their selection of plays and their results were not as effective as Osgoode's. Both teams did good work in the scrummages, but the Hallers excelled in running the ball and tackling the ball-carrier. Although the Montrealers made several spurts and placed the home club on the defense, they were unable to advance the sphere and add to their 5 points.

The slippery footing and soggy ball were beneficial to neither team's game, but Osgoode adapted better. The Montreal halfback, Male, decided that the referee didn't know the rules. He was prepared to back up his opinion by a wager. However, Mr. Grant made an excellent official for the contest, and it was Osgoode's good play that won the championship. If the weather had been better the superiority of the winners would have been more apparent.

As it was, Harry Senkler was the star for the national champions, scoring 13 points from a try, a goal from the field, and 4 kicked single points. Stirling of the Montreal club in the old CRFU title game of 1884 still held the record for most points with 18, but Osgoode had racked up more points as a team than any other club in a Dominion championship match.

And so ends the Second Canadian Championship game.

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OSGOODE HALL R.C.		MONTREAL F.C.	
McKay	B	Fry	
Kerr	HB	Miller	
Wood	HB	Male	
J.H. Senkler	HB	Campbell	
Smellie	QB	Hager	
Peterson	W	Baird	
Morin	W	Montserrat	
Ed Senkler	W	W.Jamieson	
Pope	W	Routh	
Patterson	W	Redpath	
Farrell	W	H. Jamieson	
Rykert	W	Buchanan	
Blake	S	Higginson	
Copeland	S	Black	
Young	S	Bell	

Referee: H.R. Grant, Queen's U.
Umpire: Ed Boyly, Toronto
Touch Judges: Dr. Parky, Toronto;
E. Yates, McGill College
Goal Judges: W. Hutchins, Toronto;
Gordon McDougal, McGill

Temperature: 35 F. Wind: NW, 22 m.p.h. Field: Muddy, light snow.
Atmosphere: Partly cloudy

First Half

O.H., rouge, Harry Senkler
O.H., rouge, Kerr
O.H., goal from field, Harry Senkler
Mtl., goal from field, Miller
O.H., try, Harry Senkler
O.H., try, Blake
O.H., try, Pope
O.H., rouge, Farrell
O.H., try, Kerr
O.H., goal from try, Blake
Osgoode Hall 26, Montreal F.C. 5

Second Half

O.H., try, Peterson
O.H., rouge, Harry Senkler
O.H., touch-in-goal, Harry Senkler
O.H., try, Morin
O.H., rouge, Harry Senkler
O.H., try, Casey Wood
O.H., try, Peterson
Osgoode Hall 19, Montreal F.C. 0

Final Score: Osgoode Hall 45, Montreal F.C. 5