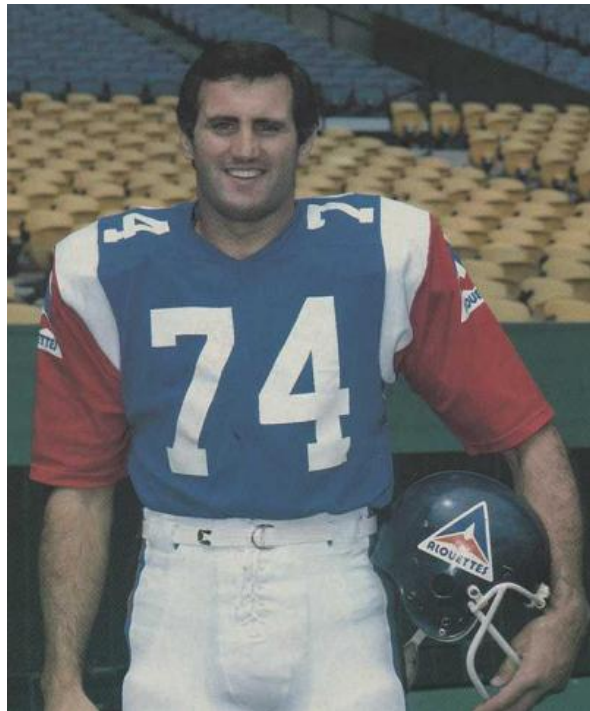


Peter Dalla Riva



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Peter Dalla Riva was an exceptional football player, playing as a tight end for the Montreal Alouettes in the Canadian Football League (CFL) for 14 years. Though born in Italy, Dalla Riva spent most of his childhood in Hamilton, Ontario, and this is where he was first introduced to football. Dalla Riva says, "I lived three blocks from Ivor Wynne Stadium and football was always in my blood."¹ It was in the Hamilton area that Dalla Riva worked and played football in the junior and senior leagues. Many people around Hamilton are familiar with Dalla Riva and his family, and are proud of his accomplishments. Hamilton was the first real home that Dalla Riva remembered, and was the place that started Dalla Riva in football. People who live in Hamilton can be inspired by his skills in football and can inspire people to play football. Dalla Riva's career has played a part in the popularity of the sport in Hamilton.

Peter Dalla Riva was born on December 11, 1946 in Treviso, Italy.² Dalla Riva was the oldest of five children and at the age of seven he and his family moved to Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.³ Dalla Riva's family was poor and at times his father struggled to earn enough money to properly provide for his family. So at the age of 16 Dalla Riva quit school and decided to work at Stelco, a steel mill in Hamilton. This job helped him earn the money needed to provide for his family. Growing up in Hamilton, Dalla Riva enjoyed and became involved in many different sports such as hockey, basketball and fastball.⁴

When playing fastball, many of Dalla Riva's teammates saw his athleticism and potential, and encouraged him to play football in the junior leagues. Although he was inexperienced at this sport and had only played with friends in the park, he decided to give it a try. Dalla Riva ended up trying out for the Burlington Braves, a team based just outside of Hamilton, and made the team as the tight end. He

¹<http://www.cfl.ca/article/retro-profile-peter-dalla-riva>

²<http://www.cfl.ca/article/retro-profile-peter-dalla-riva>

³ IBid

⁴ IBid

played there for a year, and at the age of 21 graduated from the junior level and joined the Oakville⁵ Black Knights at the senior level. During his years at this level, Dala Riva developed his skills, and began to get recognition as a valuable and talented football player. He was also recognized as a talented basketball and fastball player, but decided to focus more of his time and energy to football.

While playing football in Oakville, Dalla Riva continued working at the Stelco steel mill, making \$5000 a year. It was at this time that Goldsten, an assistant coach of the Montreal Alouettes, came to Dalla Riva's current coach and asked if anyone from that team would be suitable to play in the CFL. Dalla Riva was recommended, and the Montreal Alouettes offered him \$6000 to play for them six months of the year.⁶ Since this was more money than he was currently making per year at Stelco, he knew he had to give it a chance. Dalla Riva's father was not happy with his decision to play for the Montreal Alouettes, but Dalla Riva knew that he would regret it if he never gave it a shot.

Dalla Riva went to the Alouettes rookie camp, and impressed the coaches with his hustle and work ethic, and although he was less than 200 pounds, earned a spot on Montreal's roster as a linebacker/receiver. However, by the end of his first season with the Alouettes, Dalla Riva had been moved to the tight end position, due to an injury on their team, and stayed there for the rest of the season.⁷ By the end of his first season, Dalla Riva had 129 receiving yards, with two touchdowns.⁸ He returned to the Alouettes the next season, and despite the teams' terrible performance throughout the season Dalla Riva began excelling in his tight end position, and finished off the season with 492 receiving yards and another two touchdowns.⁹

⁵<http://www.cfl.ca/article/retro-profile-peter-dalla-riva>

⁶<http://cfl-scrapbook.no-ip.org/DallaRiva.Peter.php>

⁷<http://cfl-scrapbook.no-ip.org/DallaRiva.Peter.php>

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

The next season brought about a number of changes including a coaching change. The Alouette's introduced Etcheverry as the new head coach. Dalla Riva responded well to this coach saying, "He did a great job and everybody had a lot of respect for him as a player and he treated guys like players."¹⁰ It was during this season that Dalla Riva lead his team with 43 receptions for 609 yards.¹¹ The Montreal Alouettes also went on to beat Calgary for the Grey Cup. Dalla Riva was quoted after that first Grey Cup win as saying, "That first one is special. That was during the time of the FLQ crisis in Quebec and that was quite an experience. We arrived back in Montreal and the army helped us get through the airport. The parade later was unbelievable. It really brought the people and the players together."¹²

The 1970's were the most successful years for Dala Riva.¹³ Despite the Alouette's struggling in the 1971 and 1972 seasons, Dala Riva's play continued to improve and he was named as a CFL all-star in the 1972. It was at this time that changes to the Alouette organization took place with a coaching change with the dismissal of Etcheverry and the hiring of Marv Levy. The 1974 season brought about a second Grey Cup for Dalla Riva and the Montreal Alouettes. This win came as no surprise to Dalla Riva saying, "In '74 we knew we had something going. We knew we were going to put something together".¹⁴

Dalla Riva established himself as a leader on the Montreal Alouettes in the mid 1970's. It was during these seasons that Dala Riva's play was at its peak, leading his team in receptions for three straight seasons; the '75, '76, and '77 seasons.¹⁵ It was in the 1977 season that Dala Riva won his third and final Grey Cup with the Montreal Alouettes. This Grey Cup game against the Edmonton Eskimos was better known as the "ice bowl", due to the weather conditions, and conditions of the playing

¹⁰ <http://cfl-scrapbook.no-ip.org/DallaRiva.Peter.php>

¹¹ <http://cfl-scrapbook.no-ip.org/DallaRiva.Peter.php>

¹² <http://www.cfl.ca/article/retro-profile-peter-dalla-riva>

¹³ The Toronto Star. 1976. The Super-Stars miss the all-star, May 25.

¹⁴ <http://www.cfl.ca/article/retro-profile-peter-dalla-riva>

¹⁵ <http://www.cfl.ca/article/retro-profile-peter-dalla-riva>

surface. The Alouettes scoring was opened that game with a touchdown by Dalla Riva. The Montreal Alouettes went on to win the game 41 – 6.¹⁶

After this season, another coaching change was made bringing in Joe Scanella, who lead the Montreal Alouettes to two consecutive Grey Cup games, however both ended in losses to the Edmonton Eskimos. An issue of the Toronto Star from 1978, points out Dalla Riva's frustrations with his new coach after a game with only one reception, "Scanella wants us to go to (wide receiver) Bob Gaddis," Dalla Riva said, "This is the most frustrating season I've had in my 11 seasons in Montreal."¹⁷

After the 1981 season and 14 seasons with the Montreal Alouettes, Dalla Riva announced his retirement from the CFL. Dalla Riva's number 74 was retired by the Montreal Alouette organization a short time later, Dalla Riva was extremely honoured by this saying, "That was something else, going on the field at half time with my wife and kids. I was very nervous. But I was also very proud."¹⁸ In 1993 Dalla Riva was inducted into the Canadian Football Hall of Fame. This was another proud moment for Dalla Riva and his family after giving so much to the sport and the Montreal Alouette organization.

Dalla Riva is now in his mid 60's and still lives in Montreal with his wife and 2 children. He currently works in the customs brokerage business, as has been for the past 13 years. Dalla Riva also participates in many charity events, and other various events around his community. Dalla Riva has also kept himself busy after his retirement by promoting the Montreal Alouettes and attending public relations events.¹⁹

Dalla Riva had a very successful and lengthy career with the Montreal Alouettes. He played 14 seasons with the Alouettes, and never played for another team in the CFL²⁰. Throughout his career, Dalla Riva had many accomplishments and honors due to his work ethic and skills on the football field.

¹⁶ <http://www.thats-a-wrap.net/alouettes/alsstats.php>

¹⁷ The Toronto Star. 1978. Fumble made Esk back think of Argo blunder, November 27.

¹⁸ <http://www.cfl.ca/article/retro-profile-peter-dalla-riva>

¹⁹ <http://cfl-scrapbook.no-ip.org/DallaRiva.Peter.php>

²⁰ <http://www.rds.ca/pantheon/chroniques/204872.html>

He was a three time CFL all-star, and would often play well and contribute touchdowns in the all-star games. An issue of the Toronto Star from 1972, mentions Dalla Riva's touchdown saying, "Jonas completed 12 of 25 passes.... including TD strikes to montreal's Peter Dalla Riva".²¹ He was also the all-star game MVP in 1973. In 1976, Dalla Riva was honoured to be the Al's representative for the League's Most Outstanding Player Award, and in 1975 and 1976 was Montreal's nominee for the Outstanding Canadian Award. Dalla Riva was the Alouettes' receiving leader for five different seasons, and currently hold the Alouette's record for touchdown catches with 54. Dalla Riva's 14 seasons with Montreal is also the record for most regular seasons games with the Montreal Alouettes.²²

Dalla Riva was known as a big tight end, with the ability to come up with key receptions, as well as a player with a remarkable blocking ability. This ability is what made Dalla Riva one of the most valuable and significant players to play for the Alouettes in the 1970's.²³

Throughout Dalla Riva's 14 seasons with the Alouettes, he caught 450 passes for 6413 yards, and had 54 touchdowns.²⁴ The highlight of Dalla Riva's career was when he was inducted into the hall of fame. When he was selected he was quoted as saying, "I just couldn't believe it, I was really proud for me, for my mom and dad for my brothers and sister and friends."²⁵ This selection summed up Dalla Riva's career and highlighted all his accomplishments. Dalla Riva was an exceptional athlete and football player.²⁶ He is one of the greatest football players to play for the Montreal Alouette's and to come out of Hamilton. He is also an inspiration to football players in Canada, especially to those from the Hamilton area.

²¹The Toronto Star. 1972. All-Star game was a great commercial, June 29.

²²<http://www.cfhof.ca/page/dallarivapeter>

²³The Toronto Star. 1974. Edmonton offence should win, November 23.

²⁴<http://www.thats-a-wrap.net/alouettes/alsstats.php>

²⁵<http://www.cfl.ca/article/retro-profile-peter-dalla-riva>

²⁶The Toronto Star. 1976. The Super-Stars miss the all-star, May 25.

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