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A Biography of Russell Stanley Jackson

Displaying one of the finest athletes representing Canada is Russell “Russ” Stanley Jackson. On the day of July 28th, 1936 in Hamilton, Ontario comes a child who is to be recognized as one of the greatest contributors to genuine passion for the love of athletics and sportsmanship both on and off the playing field.

Jackson’s early life truly defined what his passion was: sports. Jackson excelled as an athlete in his careers in basketball, hockey, and baseball. Many spectators that watched Jackson on the playing field often came to the conclusion that as his skill level rose, so did the fortunes of his fellow players. Jackson was truly a beneficial addition to any team he took part in. Russ played several sports and loved the competition involved in it.

Baseball was a large part of his life from early childhood to adolescence. Jackson was involved in some semi-pro baseball in Hamilton for a period of time; however, he grew out of it. Jackson began to develop a passion for football, yet his father felt that there was no insurance after the football season ended. Instead, he felt academics were a priority. Despite Jackson’s father’s disagreement with playing football during school, Russ got his neighbour to sign the permission to play (Canadian Heroes with Canada Heroes). Jackson had the intent of playing defensive back and dominated playing in the senior level while he, himself, was still a junior. Former *Tiger Cat*, Joseph Hockey, caught sight of Jackson’s talent in football and told him that he was going to be the team’s quarter back.

Terrific success trailed behind Jackson because of his character and his contributions to team-ship. Following high school, Jackson enrolled himself in McMaster University located in Hamilton, Ontario, in preparation to receive a career in education. To no surprise, he excelled in both basketball and football at the university. Jackson graduated from McMaster University in 1958 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics. Following this, he was nominated for the Rhodes scholarship, however refused to attend the interview. Instead, Jackson signed with the *Ottawa Rough Riders* as a defensive back in 1958. Four years later, Jackson became the starting quarterback following the 1962 season (Wikipedia). Jackson was presented with the opportunity to undergo special training with well known football coach, Frank Clair. Clair was nicknamed “the Professor” because of his ability to recognize and develop talent. Jackson outrivaled many other young quarterbacks because of the combination of both his talent and coaching received from “the Professor” (Jones). The article about Russ Jackson on CFL.ca comments that “good quarterbacks like Russ Jackson are a special kind. They must be leaders, supremely confident, tough, courageous and possess incredible poise. They must also have good teammates, and Jackson was fortunate

enough to play with some of the best, including: Dave Thelen, Kaye Vaughan, Bobby Simpson, Ron Stewart, Whit Tucker, Billy Joe Booth just to name a few” (CFL.ca).

Pressing further into his scholarship, Jackson qualified for a teaching certificate from the Ontario College of Education at the University of Toronto. The *Rough Riders* promoted his decision and provided Jackson with a contract which included a base salary, a five-hundred dollar signing bonus, and an open airline ticket so that he could commute from Ottawa to Toronto. Jackson exemplified his dedication to his football; however, his career did not last forever.

Following an extraordinary career in football as a dominant Canadian quarterback, Jackson returned to teaching mathematics from 1959 to 1961 at Rideau High School located in Ottawa, Ontario. Jackson embodied the principles of maintaining success while taking pleasure in everyday life. From 1961 to 1966, Jackson moved deeper into his teaching career where he then became head of the Department of Mathematics. Later in his career, he took on the role as principal at secondary schools in Ottawa and Mississauga.

Resulting from Jackson’s success throughout his football career, he was presented with several opportunities and awards. Jackson did sports commentary on the CFL’s *Hamilton Tiger Cats* with CHML-AM radio station. Jackson also received the honour of becoming an Officer of Order of Canada in 1969 as he achieved outstanding merit throughout his life long contributions which made a large difference in Canadian sports. Jackson not only involved himself as an athlete in the sport of football, he also acted as coach. During the years 1975 and 1976, Jackson took on the role as head coach for the Toronto Argonauts (Cosentino). The Russ Jackson award was created in 1986 in his honour, recognizing the Canadian University football player who best displays athleticism, academic achievement, and devoted citizenship. The award is called the Canadian Interuniversity Scholarship (CIS) (Desjardins Vanier Cup 2008).

During the year 1989, Jackson was awarded an honorary doctorate degree in law at McMaster University. Throughout Jackson’s life, he personified love, passion, hard-work, and genuineness.

Awards:

Russ Jackson is considered by many as one of the best Canadian-born football players in the CFL (Canadian Football League) and considered the best Canadian-born quarterback to ever play in the CFL. He was originally signed as a defensive back, but then ended up playing the Quarterback position for the Ottawa Rough Riders. During his 12 years in the CFL, Jackson won many awards and led the Rough Riders to three Grey cup victories in 1960, 1968, and 1969 seasons of the CFL.

Jackson was inducted into the Canadian Hall of fame in 1973 (Canadian Football Hall of Fame). He also won the Ontario's Outstanding Athlete, Canada's Outstanding Athlete, and was a member of the Order of Canada (Governor General of Canada).

CFL Awards:

Russ Jackson led the Rough Riders for the 60th, 68th, and 69th Grey cups and was a finalist in the 66th Grey cup game. Russ won the Schenley award for Most Outstanding Player in 1963, '66, and '69 and the Schenley award for Most Outstanding Canadian in 1959, '63, '66, and '69 seasons. Jackson won the Jeff Russell trophy in 1959 and 1969. With all of these awards, Russ Jackson was also the Most Outstanding Player in the East Division (CFL.ca).

CFL Records:

Russ Jackson set many sky-high records in the CFL for other Quarterbacks and players to reach for. He was a 6-time Eastern conference All-star Quarterback in 1962, '64, '66, '67, '68, and '69. He was also the CFL All-star Quarterback in 1966, '68, and '69 seasons. No one was even close to his ground breaking records. He was the five-time passing yards leader in 1963, '64, '65, '66, and '67. And the four time passing attempt leader in 1963, '66, '67, and '69 seasons. He was the four- of all time rushing Quarterback with 5,045 yards in one season. Russ also is the 13th all-time passing leader with 1,356 completions of 2,530 attempts for 24,592 yards (53.6%) with only 125 interceptions (CFL.ca).

Russ Jackson is the third longest pass completion of all time in the regular season with 107 yards to Ted Watkins in 1964. He is the second of all-time leader for Most Game Throwing Passes in Playoffs for 28 passes. Jackson is the Second all-time leader for Most Season Throwing Passes in the Playoffs for 12 passes. He is the Fourth of all-time leader for Most Pass attempts in Playoffs for 435 attempts and fourth of all-time Leader for the Most passing yards in playoffs which is 3,173 yards (Wikipedia).

Russ is the Second of all-time Leader for Most Passing Touch Downs in playoffs for 25 Touchdowns. He is the First all-time Leader for Most Passing Touchdowns in a Grey Cup game with 4 Touchdowns. And lastly, is tied for First all-time Leader for Most Passing Touchdowns in Grey Cup games with 8 Touchdowns.

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