



Dutch Burton, the Tigers' famous little dodging half, running the ball out from behind the line in the Tiger-Argo game. The Argo tackler is young "Mac" Murray, on the left are Walter Levack, the Argo half, and Geo. Smith, the Tiger full-back.

## KNIGHTS OF THE GRIDIRON

*An Appreciation of Rugby and Review of the Season*

By WALTER H. CURRAN

**A** DECADE ago Canadian Rugby football was a closed book to the average person. People would go and freeze watching two teams shove each other all over a two-acre field. If by any chance they saw the ball it was considered quite an event. When the game was finally over they would repair to their homes, and the following day would read the correct score in the morning papers.



The Canadian game, however, has undergone a change. The play has gradually become more open, until now the ball is practically never out of sight, and by means of the score board the average spectator has become so educated in the art of keeping tally that the board has almost become superfluous.

H. C. Griffiths, 'Varsity Coach As constituted at present, Canadian football is a contest between opposing wing lines—the scrimmage is only a link in the line—and two back divisions. In the olden days, when weight on the forward line was considered the most important asset to a team, bucking or shoving through the opponent's line was the usual mode of making gains. However, when the rule specifying that a ten-yards gain or a twenty-yards loss must be made in three downs, came into force, or the ball given over to opponents, the play became more open. Now it is absolutely essential that players have the ability to think and act quickly on the line in pulling off the

buck plays, in dashing around the end, in tackling, but most of all in breaking for the opposing backs when the ball is being kicked, so as to be on hand to take advantage of any fumbles they may make.

Speed on the line is all-important; on the back division it is indispensable. The entire effectiveness of a "back" player depends on his speed. He



Ben Simpson, the Tigers' efficient Half Back.

must be able to catch any ball, and having secured it, must be able to run and dodge and kick the ball under the most trying circumstances.

A team may be a good one if it has a pair of fast outside wings to follow down, a good punter and a couple of sure catchers on the back line. To be a great team it must have speed in every department, with an abundance of brains behind the line.

The teams in the Interprovincial League may be classified as good teams. There has not been a season in many years when the teams in this league were of such uniform merit, and there has never been a season when "football dope" was so badly upset. It will be seen in each case that the back division has been the distinguishing factor of each team.

Montreal with Brophy, the brilliant halfback playing, looked at the first of the season to have the championship at their mercy. Brophy was injured, and Montreal lost three games in a row. Ottawa were badly defeated in Hamilton, but two weeks later, with Jack Williams in the game, they turned around and walloped the Tigers, 17-7. Montreal defeated Ottawa in Ottawa.

Hamilton induced Ben Simpson, the great half-back, to return to the fray, and they jeopardised Montreal's championship prospects by defeating the easterners in their own back yard; the following week they finished their work, and put Montreal completely out of the running by handing them a 23 to 6 defeat.

Argonauts, of Toronto, started the season with a one-man back division, and though their wing line was strong, they met two crushing defeats in Montreal and Hamilton. A couple of changes were made in their back guard. Dissette was put at full, Murphy and Levack coached a bit, and the Argos had a team that was as good as the best in the league.

From the foregoing it will be seen that the back division is much the most important part of a Rugby team, and upon their strategy and speed the effectiveness of a team depends.

Each team in the Interprovincial has one back who stands out above the others. Montreal has Brophy; Ottawa, Jack Williams; Argonauts, Binkley; and Hamilton, Ben Simpson. Hamilton have in addition, Moore, Burton, McNeil and Smith, all of whom are good—and therein lies the secret of their strength.

The Intercollegiate Union has been all Varsity, not because McGill and Queen's were not good teams, but because Toronto had a team of exceptional class. This has been due, in a very large degree, to the work of their honorary coach, Mr. Harry Griffiths. Mr. Griffiths is the brainiest football expert on the continent, and with two stellar half-backs, Gall and Maynard, at his command, and a reliable man in Dixon, he has evolved a scoring machine that works like the proverbial eight-day clock. From scrimmage to full-back he has welded the individuals into a composite whole, which has only one apparent weakness, lack of weight on the line. This they have overcome to date by agility, but their supreme test will come in the Canadian finals.

In the Ontario Union, excepting Parkdale, the teams have been fairly evenly matched, and the games have been close and interesting. The clubs in this Union have continued playing an open, spectacular style of game, ever since the days of the Burnside rules.

St. Michael's College have a fast, tricky team, but they lacked stamina, and their heavier opponents, Dundas and T.A.A.C., proved to be too strong for them, once the season was well under way. They defeated Toronto Athletic Club by a narrow margin early in the season, but had not the physique to stand the hard gruelling.



An Argos man tackled by a bunch of Tigers, at Rosedale, Saturday, Nov. 12.



A Hamilton man that smiles with the ball and two Argos after him.