

KEY HISTORICAL MOMENTS

GETTING INTO THE WIFU: 1951 TO 1954

- 1951** A group led by Ken Stauffer and Tiny Radar, inspired by columnist Andy Lytle, sends representatives to the off-season Western Interprovincial Football Union meetings to initiate Vancouver's bid for a team.
- 1952** WIFU rejects Vancouver's application when Winnipeg and Regina vote against the idea of a fifth team.
- 1953** The first annual meeting of the club, held on January 22, 1953 saw Arthur E. Mercer named as the first President. With the help of future Hall of Fame builder Vic Spencer, Vancouver was granted a conditional franchise on the requirements of a 15,000 seat stadium, selling 6,500 season tickets and providing guaranteed travel expenses of the visiting teams. The Lions hire their first head coach Annis Stukus who begins to scout for players without the aid of an expansion draft.
- 1953** Water boy and future club GM, President and Hall of Famer Bob Ackles is hired.
- 1954** Empire Stadium opens in time for the 1954 British Empire Games and the Lions' inaugural season in the WIFU. The Lions first-ever game is a 22-0 pre-season loss to Montreal before 19,371 spectators.
- 1954** The Lions open at home on August 28, 1954 against Winnipeg and their first ever TD comes a minute before half-time as By Bailey crashes over from a yard out to give BC a 5-1 lead. The Bombers fought back however with a TD to level the score. Two 4th quarter singles eventually gave Winnipeg the victory by an 8-6 count. It would not be until the seventh game that the Lions would post their only victory of 1954. BC upset Calgary 9-4 at home on September 18th as By Bailey scored the only TD of the game on the soggy field of Empire Stadium. The Lions draw 135,983 fans to the first season's eight home games.

EARLY CHALLENGES: 1955 TO 1959

- 1955** BC start off 3-2 but win just 5 games under Coach Stukus replacing him with Clem Crowe after the season.
- 1956** Paul Cameron of UCLA is signed and is named to the west all-star team but BC finishes fourth at 6-10.
- 1957** Herb Capozzi is hired as the club's GM (1957-66) later producing the first Grey Cup winning team.
- 1958** A 10-game losing streak sees Clem Crowe replaced by Dan Edwards and a 3-13 record.
- 1959** Wayne Robinson of Winnipeg is hired as new head coach and the great Willie Fleming is signed from Iowa University. The first real Lions' success is capped on October 24th in front of 31,594 fans at Empire Stadium as Bill Jessup catches a TD pass from Randy Duncan to secure the first Lions playoff spot.
- 1959** October 31st: BC's first-ever playoff game is a 20-8 loss to Edmonton at Empire Stadium.

THE 60'S:

- 1960** Neal Beaumont captures the club's first ever Western Award as he is named Rookie-of-the-Year. All-time club greats Norm Fieldgate and Willie Fleming are named to the all-star team.
- 1961** August 24th: BC obtains QB Joe Kapp in a 5-player trade with Calgary and hire Dave Skrien as head coach.
- 1962** LB Tom Brown is named the West's Top Lineman and FB Nub Beamer leads the West in rushing.
- 1963** The Lions set a then club record with 12 wins finishing first to capture their initial Western title by beating Saskatchewan in a best-of-three series. Joe Kapp is named the West's Most Outstanding Player while Willie Fleming sets a CFL record averaging 9.7 yards per carry and piling up a then club record 1,234 yards.
- 1963** November 30th: The first Grey Cup in club history is a disappointing 21-10 loss at Empire Stadium in front of 36,545 fans. Mack Burton scores the first BC Grey Cup TD on a 5-yard pass from Joe Kapp.
- 1964** October 17th: Willie Fleming sets an unbreakable club and CFL record with a 109-yard touchdown run and is later named among 10 BC Lions on the West All-Star Team.
- 1964** The Lions repeat the success of 1963 with an 11-2-3 mark including an unbeaten 6-0-2 home record. BC wins their second straight Western title by beating Calgary in the best-of-three final series.
- 1964** November 28th: BC wins their first Grey Cup beating Hamilton 34-24. Bill Munsey leads the way with 2 TDs including a 71-yard fumble return. All-time great By Bailey retires after 11 seasons with the club, Tom Brown wins his third Top Lineman Award and Peter Kempf of UBC is named Rookie-of-the-Year.
- 1965** October 27th: The Lions set a CFL record with an attendance of 36,704 at Empire Stadium.
- 1966** Willie Fleming retires as the Lions all-time leading yards producer with 12,465 yards in 124 games.
- 1967** Denny Veitch is hired as the club's fourth General Manager (1967-70) and head coach Dave Skrien is replaced by assistant Jim Champion.
- 1967** BC obtains the rights to WR Jim Young in a trade with the Minnesota Vikings of the NFL. All-time great and Hall of Famer Norm Fieldgate retires after 14 seasons and 223 games for the club.
- 1968** BC Wall of Famer Jim Evenson joins the club while Ted Gerela leads the West in scoring with 115 points. Jackie Parker plays his only season in a BC uniform and is named head coach the following season.

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THE 70'S:

- 1970** Hall of Famer Jim Young receives the first of his two CFL Top Canadian Player Awards.
- 1971** Jackie Parker is elected to the Canadian Football Hall of Fame and assumes the role of General Manager.
- 1972** Al Wilson joins the Lions playing 233 games in 15 seasons with 7 all-star selections and a place in the Canadian Football Hall of Fame.
- 1973** Greg Findlay retires after 12 seasons and 178 games for BC.
- 1975** Bob Ackles (1975-1986) is hired as the Lions' General Manager.
- 1975** By Bailey becomes the first original BC Lions player to be elected to the Canadian Football Hall of Fame.
- 1976** August 5th: Early club director Harry C. Spring is elected to the Canadian Football Hall of Fame. The Lions draft K Lui Passaglia and LB Glen Jackson from SFU.
- 1977** The Lions hire Vic Rapp as Head Coach and go above .500 for the first time in 12 years and initiate a run of 12 seasons at .500 or better.
- 1979** Jim Young retires after 13 seasons as the Lions all-time leading receiver with 9,248 yards and 65 TDs.
- 1979** Norm Fieldgate is elected to the Canadian Football Hall of Fame.

THE 80'S

- 1981** BC starts the season 5-0 but eventually loses the Western Final to Edmonton.
- 1982** Willie Fleming is elected to the Canadian Football Hall of Fame while future great and Rookie-of-the-Year Mervyn Fernandez is signed from San Jose State. The Lions draw 15,071 fans to the final home game at Empire Stadium on November 6, 1982.
- 1983** July 24th: The Lions open B.C. Place Stadium in front of a then CFL record 41,810 fans.
- 1983** Under new Head Coach Don Matthews, the Lions regain first place in the West for the first time since 1964 reaching their third Grey Cup but fall 18-17 to Toronto at B.C. Place.
- 1984** October 27th: The Lions set a CFL record with an attendance of 59,478.
- 1984** 1964 greats Joe Kapp and Tom Brown are elected to the Canadian Football Hall of Fame. The Lions finish on top of the West at 12-3-1 but lose to Winnipeg in the Western Final.
- 1985** With 13 wins and their third straight regular season title, the Lions surpass the club record and beat Winnipeg 42-22 in the West Final to reach the Grey Cup. WR Mervyn Fernandez is named the CFL's Most Outstanding Player.
- 1985** The Lions win their second Grey Cup breaking a 21-year drought with a 37-24 triumph over Hamilton.
- 1986** Bob Ackles receives a special Schenley Award for his outstanding contributions to Canadian football and leaves the Lions for the NFL. Joe Galat takes over the Lions GM (1986-1989).
- 1987** Lui Passaglia becomes the first player to record 200 points in a single season with a club record 52 FGs. Larry Donovan takes over as Head Coach and wins all four of his games to finish on top of the West. Eleven Lions' players are named to the Western all-star team led by all-time great DB Larry Crawford.
- 1988** The Lions reach their fifth Grey Cup coming all the way through on the road in the western playoffs but lose 22-21 to Winnipeg in Ottawa. WR David Williams is named the CFL's Most Outstanding Player.
- 1989** Joe Galat takes over from Larry Donovan as Head Coach. The BC Lions Football Club passes from community into private ownership after 35 years.

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THE 90'S

- 1990** Former Head Coach Eagle Keys is elected to the Canadian Football Hall of Fame. Joe Kapp takes over as GM but is replaced by Jim Young midway through the season. Bob O'Billovich assumes head coaching and GM duties with seven games remaining. QB Doug Flutie signs with BC as a free agent.
- 1990** August 20th: K Lui Passaglia becomes the all-time CFL scoring leader with 2,312 points.
- 1991** Tom Hinton and Jim Young are elected to the Canadian Football Hall of Fame. OT Jim Mills wins his second straight Top Lineman Award while CFL Most Outstanding Player QB Doug Flutie sets all-time CFL passing records of 6,619 yards and 466 completions. Jon Volpe is named Rookie-of-the-Year and leads the West in rushing with 1,395 yards setting a CFL record for first-year players with 20 TDs.
- 1991** BC sets the all-time CFL records with 9,117 yards of net offence and 6,714 yards passing.
- 1993** Dave Ritchie is named the Lions' Head Coach under new GM Eric Tillman (1993-95). The Lions begin a stretch of reaching the playoffs in 15 of the next 16 seasons (1993-present).
- 1994** July 21st: K Lui Passaglia becomes the all-time CFL games played leader with 289 surpassing Ron Lancaster. BC starts the season 8-1-1 and has three 1,000-yard receivers but finishes 11-6-1 to grab a spot in the playoffs and a trip to Edmonton for the West semi-final.
- 1994** For the second time in club history, the Lions reach the Grey Cup after finishing third. BC beats Calgary 37-36 in the snow at McMahon Stadium on the 1994 West Final's last play behind Danny McManus' pass to Darren Flutie. The Lions capture their third Grey Cup and only one at home with a 26-23 triumph over Baltimore. Lui Passaglia's 38-yard FG on the final play decided the contest.
- 1995** Cory Philpot sets a then CFL record with 22 touchdowns.
- 1996** George Chayka assumes VP, Football Operations duties. Damon Allen (1996-2002) signs as a free agent.
- 1997** David Braley assumes ownership of the BC Lions Football Club in January 1997 while Adam Rita takes over as the club's General Manager (1997-2002). Al Wilson is elected to the Canadian Football Hall of Fame.
- 1999** BC matches the club record with 13 wins, grabs 11 places on the West all-star team and five individual awards but loses the West Final at home to Calgary 26-24.

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2000-PRESENT

- 2000** Starting the season at 5-9, the Lions get on a roll winning 3 of 4 down the stretch to eke into the playoffs with a 27-26 win to close the season. With wins at Edmonton and Calgary, the Lions string together four consecutive must-win games to reach the 2000 Grey Cup in Lui Passaglia's final season. Sean Millington is named the CFL's Top Canadian Player and one of six Lions Western all-stars.
- 2000** The Lions capture their fourth Grey Cup with a 28-26 win over Montreal at Calgary's McMahon Stadium.
- 2000** Lui Passaglia retires after setting all-time CFL records with 25 seasons, 408 games and 3,991 points. LB Barrin Simpson is named the CFL's Most Outstanding Rookie and the West's Top Defensive Player.
- 2001** Bill Frank and James Parker are elected to the Canadian Football Hall of Fame. All-time leading receiver Geroy Simon and Brent Johnson sign with the Lions.
- 2002** Bob Ackles returns to the club as President and is elected to the Canadian Football Hall of Fame. Jamie Taras retires after 16 seasons and 264 games with the Lions (second only to Lui Passaglia). Jason Clermont is drafted from the University of Regina and is named the CFL's Most Outstanding Rookie.
- 2003** Wally Buono is hired as the Lions' Head Coach and General Manager while QB Dave Dickenson joins the club as a free agent and captures the West nomination as Most Outstanding Player. Dickenson sets all-time CFL records for completion percentage (74.0%) and QB rating (118.8).
- 2004** In one of the finest seasons in club history, the Lions grab first place with a 13-5 mark winning a then club record eight straight games. Casey Printers leads the Lions at QB and is named the CFL's Most Outstanding Player. BC beats Saskatchewan in the 2004 West Final to reach their eighth Grey Cup but fall to Toronto by a 27-19 count in Ottawa.
- 2004** All-time leading professional scorer Lui Passaglia and former Head Coach Cal Murphy are elected to the Canadian Football Hall of Fame.
- 2005** A second straight Western regular season title at 12-6 followed a club record 11-game winning streak to start the season. The BC overall winning streak of 14 (including the final 3 games of 2004) matched the second longest in league history. Brent Johnson receives his first of two CFL Top Canadian Player Awards.
- 2005** Ray Nettles is elected to the Canadian Football Hall of Fame.
- 2006** In the finest season in club history, the Lions win 11 of their last 13 games to post a 13-5 mark and their third straight first place finish. BC destroyed Saskatchewan 45-18 in the West Final behind QB Dave Dickenson and CFL Most Outstanding Player Geroy Simon. Ten Lions players are named to the all-star team and the club captures five individual awards including two by Brent Johnson as Top Canadian and Defensive Player. Aaron Hunt earns Top Rookie honours in the CFL.
- 2006** The Lions capture their fifth Grey Cup with a 25-14 win over Montreal and club builder Vic Spencer and former QB Matt Dunigan are elected to the Hall of Fame.
- 2007** BC captures a fourth consecutive Western regular season title with a club record 14 wins (including the final eight games) and playing in their fourth straight home West Division Final. A club record 15 Lions' players are named Western all-stars including Geroy Simon who led the CFL in receiving. The Lions dominate the CFL Awards with Cameron Wake (Defensive), Jason Clermont (Canadian), Rob Murphy (Offensive Lineman), and Ian Smart (Special Teams) receiving recognition.

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- 2008** To start 2008, former Lion Doug Flutie is inducted into the Canadian Football Hall of Fame. The Lions secure their 12th consecutive playoff spot and fifth consecutive Western Final berth with an 11-7 mark. Geroy Simon becomes the Lions all-time leading receiver surpassing Jim Young. Wally Buono pulls to within four wins of Don Matthews as the CFL's all-time winningest coach with 227 victories. The club and their fans are saddened by the loss of Bob Ackles in July. Defensive end Cam Wake is named the CFL's Top Defensive Player for the second-straight season and moves on to sign with the Miami Dolphins of the NFL.
- 2009** Jim Mills and Alondra Johnson are inducted into the Canadian Football Hall of Fame. Despite posting their first sub .500 mark since 2001, the Lions earned a cross-over berth into the East Division playoffs defeating Hamilton for their first-ever playoff game outside the West Division. Wally Buono became the all-time winningest coach in CFL history pushing his total to 235 wins over 20 seasons. Martell Mallett earns Top Rookie honours in the CFL while Rick Foley is named the league's Top Canadian Player for 2009.
- 2010** The Lions began the 2010 season with one of the slowest starts in club history, but went on to create the year of the comeback. The year played out in two halves with a 7-3 finish following on the heels of a 1-7 start. Facing elimination in each of the final three weeks the club edged Edmonton to finish third in the West and earn a date in Regina with the Riders. The Lions dropped their third overtime loss in a stretch of six games by a 41-38 score to end their run of six straight division final appearances. Solomon Elimimian earns the CFL's Most Outstanding Rookie Award while Paul McCallum and Ryan Phillips earn places on the All-CFL team. Yonus Davis is the West Division nominee for Outstanding Special Teams Player and Travis Lulay earns the starting job at quarterback late in the year.
- 2011** The 2011 season will go down as one of the club's finest in their long history. As in 2010, a slow start (1-6) was left behind as the Lions won all but one of their final 13 games on the way to their sixth Grey Cup victory. The 34-23 victory over Winnipeg in a tenth appearance was accomplished in newly rebuilt B.C. Place Stadium and before 54,313 fans. The win at home in the Grey Cup was the second time for the club and first in front of their own fans since 1994. Travis Lulay was named the game's Most Outstanding Player after capturing the regular season Gibson's Finest award earlier in the week. Andrew Harris was named the Most Outstanding Canadian in a year where he became the starting running back. Paul McCallum had a stellar season setting CFL records for FG percentage (94.3%) and consecutive makes with 30. He won the league Most Outstanding Special Teams Award and joined eight others on the CFL All-Star Team. Geroy Simon moved into the #2 spot among all-time CFL receivers at 15,087 yards. Attendance jumped to 267,525 with the return to B.C. Place highlighted by a crowd of 50,213 at the stadium re-opener on September 30, 2011.
- 2012** In 2012, Mike Benevides took over for Wally Buono as head coach and led the Lions to their best record since 2007 at 13-5 tying the league record for wins by a first year head man. The Lions started slowly at 2-2 but then ran off 12 wins in the final 15 regular season games to capture first place for the 13th time in team history. The club just missed out on a second straight Grey Cup appearance with a 34-29 loss to Calgary at B.C. Place in the West Final, their eighth Finals berth in the last nine years. Ten players made the Division All-Star including QB Travis Lulay for the second straight time and Corey Banks for his eighth in a row. Team Geroy Simon moved into the #1 spot among all-time CFL receivers at 15,787 yards despite missing five games. Andrew Harris became just the second Canadian to ever lead the CFL in yards from scrimmage with 1,830 and made the CFL All-Star Team.
- 2013** In Mike Benevides second year at the helm and the club's 60th season, the Lions made a strong start posting a record of 5-2 over the first seven games. They increased that to 9-4 creating a battle down the stretch with Calgary and Saskatchewan. BC ended up even with the Riders at 11-7 but in third on a tie-breaker necessitating a trip to Regina for the West Semi-Final where they dropped a 29-25 decision. The playoff spot extended the current, active run to 17 consecutive seasons – the third longest streak in CFL history. Ryan Phillips, Jovan Olafioye and Adam Bighill were named to the CFL and West Division All-Star teams while Solomon Elimimian, in his return to the club, rookie Cord Parks and veteran Dante marsh earned Western berths. Travis Lulay led the club in passing with 2,841 yards but missed 7 starts due to a shoulder injury. Andrew Harris again led the Lions in rushing with 998 yards (#3 in the CFL) and in yards from scrimmage with 1,511.
- 2014** A rollercoaster season for the Leos as injuries and inconsistent play resulted in a 4-5 record at home and a 9-9 finish overall in a competitive West Division. Operating without quarterback Travis Lulay for almost the entire season, the Lions leaned on journeyman pivot Kevin Glenn who was acquired in the off-season. The club overcame early-season losses to eventually push their record to 7-4 but three consecutive losses at the end of the season dropped the team to fourth in the division and a cross-over spot in the playoffs which pushed their postseason streak to 18 consecutive years resulted in a disappointing and lopsided road loss. The Lions dispatched third-year head coach Mike Benevides following the season and hired Jeff Tedford as its 25th head coach. There were bright spots despite the tough season as linebacker Solomon Elimimian set a new league record for defensive tackles with 143 and earned the CFL's Outstanding Player as well as Outstanding Defensive Player awards while also picking up a CFL All-Star selection along with fellow Leo Jovan Olafioye.
- 2015** Another step backwards for the Lions in 2015 as the club's record fell to 7-11 under first-year head coach Jeff Tedford. Quarterback Travis Lulay reclaimed the starter's role out of camp, but the offence struggled to a 3-5 mark before he was sidelined with a knee injury. Two games later, back-up John Beck was out for the season as well, and the Lions' season rested on the shoulders of rookie Jonathon Jennings. With linebacker Solomon Elimimian also out for the year with an Achilles injury suffered in August, the defence leaned heavily on Adam Bighill who responded by leading the CFL in tackles and eventually earning Most Outstanding Defensive Player honours. With Jennings at the helm, the Lions won three of their six remaining games finishing third in the West earning their 19th consecutive playoff berth. It was an early exit however as the Lions fell 35-9 in Calgary and it was an early exit for Tedford as well as the well-traveled NCAA coach resigned in early December to pursue U.S. college opportunities. With qualified candidates in short supply, Wally Buono announced that he would once again lead the Lions on the field in 2016.
- 2016** A resurgent and entertaining year for the Lions as their young, dynamic quarterback Jonathon Jennings led an exciting squad to a 12-6 record and a trip to the Western Final. Establishing identical 6-3 records at home and on the road, the 2016 edition of the club won late, won shootouts and even came out on top in tough defensive battles. Jennings led a vibrant offence with 5,226 passing yards, the third-best passing season in club history, while the duo running attack of newcomers Jeremiah Johnson and Anthony Allen helped the Leos to a CFL-high 2,082 rushing yards. Receivers Emmanuel Arceneaux and Bryan Burnham turned in fabulous performances earning West Division All-Star nods as did offensive tackle Jovan Olafioye – his seventh-consecutive. On defense, linebacker Solomon Elimimian returned from a season-ending injury in 2015 to lead the league in tackles with 129 and claim his second Most Outstanding Defensive Player selection. Fellow linebacker Adam Bighill also hit the century mark for tackles making the duo the first-ever pairing to record more than 100 tackles in the same season. A dramatic 32-31 win over Winnipeg in the Western Semi-Final made the club's first second-place finish since 1986 one to remember, but a tough outing the next week in Calgary showed the Lions that there is work to be done if a Grey Cup title is to return to the West Coast.
- 2017** A season which had plenty of high expectations going in certainly started out on the right foot as the Lions burst out of the gate to a 6-2 start. Injuries to both Jonathon Jennings and Travis Lulay along with bouts of inconsistent play led to a mid-season meltdown however, as the club stumbled to a 1-9 record the rest of the way and their first non-playoff year in two decades. There were a few bright spots on the season however, with three CFL All-Stars including Bryan Burnham, punter Ty Long and Solomon Elimimian whose 144 tackles set yet another CFL all-time mark. At the end of November, Wally Buono relinquished General Manager duties and appointed former Edmonton Eskimos executive Ed Hervey to the role. Hervey in turn announced that Buono would return for one final season as head coach.