

The Game

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The first time in senior Canadian football history that two teams produced a high scoring game was on October 2, 1956. That was the famous Montreal-Hamilton game that saw the Als bury the Tiger-Cats 82-14 as Montreal's famous Sam Etcheverry demonstrated the power of a complex forward passing attack. The two teams combined for a then record 96 total points.

Several years later, on Oct. 17, 1982, in Calgary, the Tiger-Cats and the Calgary Stampeders failed to generate any form of defense as both clubs seemed to score with ease, first one team and then the other. When the final whistle was blown, Calgary had outlasted Hamilton 55-48 for a new combined record of 103 points.

But, as the saying goes, records were made to be broken, and on the night of September 1, 1990 in Toronto, the record fell. The teams were the BC Lions, who were going nowhere this season, and the Argonauts, who were fighting for a playoff berth.

When the teams lined up, little did they know history was in the making. BC kicked off under the lights of the Sky Dome (the last great mechanical marvel of the civilized world) to the Argos, who promptly turned it back over to the Lions courtesy of a Matt Dunigan interception. Two incomplete passes by Doug Flutie (Doug who?) and veteran kicker Lui Passaglia booted a 49 yard field goal for a 3-0 BC score.

After the kickoff, a Dunigan run for 24 yards, a BC offside penalty, a completed pass of 17 yards to Andrew Murray and Lance Chomyc tied the score with a 19 yard kick.

Argos kicked off and managed to hold the Lions on three downs. Dunigan completes 3 of 4 passes for 54 yards and Chomyc kicks a 22 yard field goal for a 6-3 Toronto score.

The teams trade punts and penalties for the rest of the first quarter and at the whistle, Toronto still has the lead 6-3.

On the first play of the second quarter, Chomyc's 50 yard field goal attempt is wide and under Canadian rules, it goes into the end zone for a single point. Toronto 7, BC 3. Ah yes, but then BC scrimmages from their own 35-yard-line and in two plays Flutie's pass is intercepted by Ed Berry and returned 62 yards for the touchdown. Chomyc converts and Toronto leads 14-3.

And then, Chomyc kicks off to Lorenzo Graham, who returns it a mere 16 yards, before fumbling the pigskin to Keith Castello, who returns it 34 yards for the second touchdown of the night. Another Chomyc convert and Argo are up 21 to 3. But lightning does strike three times, as after the kickoff Joe Paopao, in for the ineffective Doug Flutie, fumbles and Argos recover on the BC 42. Dunigan scrambles for 11 yards and a first down, and then passes to Jeff Boyd for 27 yards and another Toronto touchdown. With the kick after the score, the Boatmen are starting to turn the game into a rout, 28-3.

Argos kickoff, BC holds onto the ball, fail to get past their own 40, and the Double Blue march down to the BC 8-yard-line, where Chomyc kicks another field goal to up the score 31-3.

However, BC manages to make the score close, as on the next exchange of punts, Argos are held. Paopao tosses a strike to Larry Willis for 48 yards, down to the Toronto 6-yard-line, and then passes to Jay Christensen for the score, to make the count Toronto 31, BC 10.

Both teams again changed possession of the ball till Carl Brazley intercepted Paopao at the BC 23. On the next play, Dunigan found Darrell K. Smith across the line for the touchdown. Chomyc converted to make the score Toronto 38, BC 10 at the half.

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Now, even the halftime statistics proved just how dominating the Toronto Argonauts were over the visiting BC Lions. Argo outgained the 'cats 221 yards to 110, 9 first downs to 5, 6 turnovers to 1, and 16 minutes to 14 minutes for time of possession. The Lions were ahead only in average punting yards (37.2 to 36.3) and penalty yards (82 to 50).

Now, one might think that maybe the Lions would make a great comeback like they did in '59 when they scored 35 points in the 4th quarter to beat Saskatchewan but, that didn't happen. One might think that Argos controlled the game for the next 30 minutes and won something like 41-17. But, that didn't happen. Well, yeah, it did happen. I mean that was some of the score for the third quarter but that wasn't the final score. You see, Flutie got back into the game and in 2 plays from scrimmage, after a punt return, threw a 23 yard pass to Emanuel Tolbert to make the score Toronto 38, BC 17.

Ah, yes, then Toronto took the kickoff and marched 57 yards for another Lance Chomyc field goal: Argos 41, BC 17.

Ah, yes, then BC took the kickoff and marched down field for another Passaglia field goal to make the count Toronto 41, BC 20. And that was all the scoring of the third quarter.

Following a punt towards the end of the third quarter, Flutie carried over his playmaking into the last frame and in 12 straight plays, threw a 13-yard touchdown pass to Christensen. Lui's convert made it Toronto 41, BC 27.

Then, Toronto took the ensuing kickoff, marched the length of the field for another Dunigan-to-Smith touchdown pass to up the score 48-27. So far the two teams had combined for 75 total points, but nobody was thinking of a record.

BC took the ball after the kickoff and failed to move. Same for Toronto, but a Glenn Harper punt was fumbled by Robin Belanger at the BC 13 and Carl Brazley recovers for the Double Blue. Following an unnecessary roughness penalty, second string quarterback Rickie Foggie comes in, drops back to pass, sees nobody open, and then scampers 28 easy yards into the end zone. Chomyc's 6th convert makes the score Toronto 55, BC 27.

The game is far from over, as on the next punt by Passaglia, Mike "Pinball" Clemons weaves his way through the entire BC team for a spectacular 56-yard touchdown punt return. Chomyc's aching legs convert. Toronto 62, BC 27 and there is just under three minutes left in the game.

Chomyc kicks off and in 5 plays Flutie completes 4 of 5 passes for 74 yards and the Lions score on a 15-yarder, Flutie to Christensen. With the 2-point convert the score is Toronto 62, BC 35. At this point the Sky Dome's huge replay screen, the *Jumbotron*, flashes a message that both clubs are only 5 points away from the two-team total point record of 103 points, and the fans chant "*we want a touchdown, we want a touchdown*".

Passaglia kicks off short to his own 47 and Paul Masotti jumps on the ball for the Argos for no return. First and 10 on the BC 47, Foggie calls his signals, drops back to pass and hits Andrew Murray with a short pass at the sidelines. The BC defender can't hold on and Murray spins away for the touchdown. In for only two plays, Foggie first runs for a score and then passes for a score. Easy pick'n as they say. Matt Dunigan comes back in and tries to make it an even 70 points with a 2-point convert pass, but it is incomplete. Both clubs have tied the record for most total points in a game at 103.

Chomyc kickoffs again and Lorenzo Graham returns to the BC 40 yard line. With 46 seconds on the clock, Flutie's first two passes are incomplete. Facing a third-and-10 situation, Doug goes for broke and hits Emanuel Tolbert for 18 yards and a much needed first down. With the clock ticking away, Flutie completes his next pass for 35 yards to Jay Christensen to the Argonaut 17. And then, on the final play of the game, he throws to Larry Willis, 17 yards for the score. There is no Passaglia convert attempt as Flutie lines the players up and passes for the 2-point convert to Christensen to make the final score Toronto 68, BC 43. There is a cheer from the 31,003 fans at Sky Dome as the PA announces that both teams set CFL record 111 combined points on the night.

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Toronto won the game but, as far as the statistics were concerned, BC had the margin: they had 24 first downs to Toronto's 17, had 467 total yards to Argo's 419 and had a higher time of possession: almost a full 31 minutes to 29 minutes for the Argos. What did them in were 8 turnovers, a porous defense, and allowed the Argos to score a touchdown on a fumble return, an interception return and a punt return.

As far as records goes, Argonauts had equalled their club mark for most points in a game that dated back to Oct. 6, 1886, when they defeated a Peterborough team 68-6 (and that was a time when touchdowns and converts were both worth 4 points). Lance Chomyc had set a CFL record for most kickoffs and yards with 12 and 675. Lorenzo Graham had equalled the record with 9 kickoff returns and Jay Christensen had also equalled the record for most 2-point converts in a game with 2.

Lance Chomyc was not the leading scorer in this game as one might think. He had 7 converts and 4 field goals and a single for a total of 20 points, but the leading scorer was actually Jay Christensen of the BC Lions. Jay had a total of 22 points on three touchdowns and two 2-point converts.

Argos lead at the half 38 to 10 but BC outscored them in the last thirty minutes 33 points to 30. It was actually a case where the Boatmen took clear advantage of BC Lion's mistakes, jumped into a big lead, kept adding to their score by a huge margin, and managed to hold off an attempted BC rally in the last half of the match.

If you were an Argonaut fan, you were entertained. If you were there (and I was) you saw history in the making.

It was the highest scoring game by two teams in Canadian football history, ever.

It was, the game!