



BRITISH COLUMBIA SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION



Steve Gelley

Thoughts from Tom Kudaba

I first met Steve in 1972 at Simon Fraser as a rookie. We were all in the same boat and few of us at that time felt that our class would be arguably the bumper crop of players to wear the SFU colours. Included in this group were players like Lui Passaglia, Glen Jackson, Randy Graham, Greg Warkentin, Emil Nielsen, and myself. Of course as rookies we were under the watchful eye of Lorne Davies but the players like Steve, who was a DB were coached and nurtured by the late great coach Pokey Allen. Pokey took a liking to Steve and Steve was quickly inserted into the travelling squad and was getting a lot of reps in our games.

As we all matured in our various roles on the team Steve continued to be a leader on and off the field. His nickname was "Bones" or "Bonesy" and as you can tell from his nickname. Steve spent as little time in the weight room as possible. He never wanted to bulk up and wanted to keep his slender appearance so that he could excel playing basketball, racquetball and hockey. This did not hamper him at all since Steve would always play 40 pounds heavier which often led to bruises and injuries. Steve was as tough as one could be but when you are part of a team like the players I have already mentioned and add incoming players like Lyall Woznesensky, Rick Goltz, Nick Hebler, Barry Houlihan, Eddie King and Jim Champagne as transfers from U. of Washington the core group of guys fed off each other.

After a stellar career at SFU Steve was drafted, along with the rest of us, in the 1976 CFL draft. His first team was the Ottawa Rough Riders. As often happens good Canadian players were at a premium in the CFL and in high demand so Steve ended up in his first year in Hamilton where he and I played together for the half season we were there together. As a matter of fact Steve lived with me in my parents home where we enjoyed great home cooking and my proud parents loved having 2 Tiger Cats living in the same house. It was like high school for us but with less restraints.

The benefit of living with Steve for the first season was that I got to know him better than our SFU days (since when do Offensive Linemen "hang out " with the DB's - unless it's a bar. Steve and I became close and remained that way for many years. We even played Old Timer Hockey together for 25 years with many of the East Van boys from Britannia HS and Notre Dame - now that was a crew!

Steve ended up playing with Ottawa, Hamilton, Montreal, Saskatchewan and Winnipeg during his years in the CFL. From all I can tell, he was valued and popular with every team he was a part of. Eventually "Bones" and his body started to wither and his last season was 1981. Steve ended his playing days and began a new career teaching and coaching at the high school level (Vancouver College) and the elementary level as well.

I know Steve had a few car accidents after his playing days and these events slowed him down.

As we all do as we age along we sometimes drift apart and unfortunately Steve started to do so as well. He will always be remembered for many things apart from athletics. Steve was loyal to his friends and always helpful, thoughtful and respectful.

Steve, you were a great friend to me and the others.

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