

In Conversation With... "Steve Stapler"

By Chris Durka

I recently had a conversation with #80 Steve Stapler who was an outstanding Ti-Cat receiver from 1981 to 1988 and a member of the 1986 Ti-Cat Grey Cup Championship team. Steve currently lives in California and his licence plate reads "86 Grey Cup".

In his total 9 CFL seasons, Steve finished with 353 receptions for 5,848 yards and 40 touchdowns.

I asked him how he ended up in Hamilton and he said that after his college playing days at San Diego State he was signed by the Toronto Argos in 1980 and then traded to the Ti-Cats in 1981. Steve said that he had a number of great memories from playing in Hamilton but the one that stands out the most was the second game of the 1986 Eastern two game total point Final when the Cats came back from a 26 point deficit to beat the Argos in the total point final 59 to 56. He said that huge win carried over and gave the team momentum and confidence going into the Grey Cup game against heavily favoured Edmonton where the Cats won big 39 to 15.

The Ti-Cat team of the day was a close knit group but Steve's closet buddy was Grover Covington who he shared accommodations with and he also gave special mention to Mike Walker and his quarterbacks Mike Kerrigan, Ken Hobart and Tom Porras.

I asked him about his coach Al Bruno and he said that Al was a great player's type coach; he was "one of the guys".

When I mentioned that the 1986 Grey Cup team reunion will be coming up in 2016 and that there are a lot of Ti-Cat fans that would love to see and meet him again including his teammates, he said that he would try to make it here for that event; hopefully he will.

CHRIS DURKA

Chris is a long-time Tiger-Cat fan, season ticket holder, historian and collector of Tiger-Cat memorabilia and autographs. Over the years, Chris has had the honour to speak with many Tiger-Cat players whom he now recalls in conversation.

