

In Conversation With...."Ray Bibbles Bawel"

By Chris Durka

The 1957 Grey Cup game was played in Toronto at Varsity Stadium between the Hamilton Tiger-Cats coached by Jim Trimble and the Winnipeg Blue Bombers coached by Bud Grant. The final score in that game was 32 to 7 in favour of the Tiger-Cats, however if it wasn't the blow-out that the score depicted.

Winnipeg's offensive stats were better than Hamilton's but it was the Tiger-Cat defence that made the big and timely plays that day. The defence stopped the Blue Bombers at least four times inside their red zone preventing Winnipeg from scoring any points.



One of the defensive stars in that game was an individual by the name of Ray Bawel better known as "Bibbles Bawel". Ray wore number 72 and he had an outstanding game. He picked up a fumble in the first quarter

of the game and returned it 55 yards for a touchdown. He also recovered another Winnipeg fumble inside the Tiger-Cat 10 yard line and intercepted a pass in the Tiger-Cat end zone; in both cases ending Winnipeg's scoring drives.

However, what he is best remembered for is the infamous "Bibbles Bawel" trip. In the fourth quarter of that 1957 Grey Cup game #72 picked up his second interception of the game and was running in full stride and in the clear along the side lines when it happened...someone standing close to the Winnipeg bench stuck out their foot and tripped him.

Initially it was thought that one of the Winnipeg players had tripped Bawel but it turned out to be a spectator by the name of David Humphrey, a Toronto lawyer who was the culprit.

Never the less, all hell broke loose with both teams storming that area of the field. The referees had to improvise on how to solve the dilemma because there were no direct rules for that type of situation. They



eventually decided to penalize Winnipeg and place the ball half the distance to the goal line from the point in which Bawel had hit the ground even though there was a good possibility

that he would have scored a touchdown. When David Humphrey was interviewed he simply stated that he thought that it would be funny.

At the end of the day Ray Bibbles Bawel was the defensive star with two pass interceptions, two fumble recoveries and a defensive touchdown.

This past January I had the distinct pleasure of talking to Ray Bawel. He is 83 years of age now and resides in Indiana with his wife Mary-Anne. We talked about a number of things particularly how he ended up in Hamilton to play for the Tiger-Cats. He said that half way through the 1957 football season coach Trimble requested his services to help out the defensive secondary which was riddled with injuries. Bawel and Trimble had a history together in Philadelphia with the NFL Eagles. Bawel agreed to come up to play for Hamilton but only for the remainder of the season and he was true to his word because after the Grey Cup he retired from football and returned to Indiana.

While up here he and his wife rented a furnished house in Dundas and said that they still have many fond memories of their stay in Canada.

They both never forgot about the infamous trip nor did the tripper himself forget because a few years ago Ray said that David Humphrey, who was a retired Judge, invited Ray and his wife to spend a weekend with him as his guests. They accepted his invitation and Ray said that they had a great time. Humphrey also gave Ray a gold watch with an inscription on it

that read "The Tripper". Funny though, Ray told me that Humphrey still never apologized for tripping him but instead took credit for it and stated that he was responsible for making Ray famous because if it wasn't for that trip, no one today would have remembered Ray Bibbles Bawel. (David Humphrey passed away only a couple years ago.)

I asked Ray how he got his nickname Bibbles Bawel and he told me that it originated quite innocently from a college basketball team-mate of his one day during practice and stuck ever since.

It was truly good luck that Ray Bawel accepted coach Trimble's invitation to come to Hamilton and play the remainder of the 1957 season because if it hadn't been for his timely interceptions and fumble recoveries the final outcome of the '57 Grey Cup may have completely different. The Cats could have used Bibbles Bawel for the '58 and '59 Grey Cups because he was a player that always seemed to be in the right place at the right time except for the time when he was tripped.



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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.

