

## **2009 CIS FOOTBALL TEAM PREVIEW**

2008 regular season record: 4-4

2008 regular season standings: fourth place

2008 playoff record: 0-1

2008 playoff finish: lost 42-37 to the Ottawa Gee Gees in the first round of the playoffs

### **General Write-Up:**

With 17 returning starters, the Guelph Gryphons enter the 2009 football season with excitement and optimism. Fourth-year head coach Kyle Walters is hopeful his more experienced and mature group on the field this season will bring them to post season glory.

When Guelph has the ball, Walters will look to nine returning starters to lead the offence. Last season, Guelph had one of the countries strongest offences, ranking third in the country with 3,771 total yards (471.3 per game) behind 2008 OUA all-star running back Nick FitzGibbon (Puslinch, Ont.) and mobile quarterback Justin Dunk (Guelph, Ont.). Both are back this season to lead the offense. Arguably one of the deepest positions for the offence is at wide receiver. The team returns a strong and deep core of receivers led by the capable hands of 2008 All-Canadian Jedd Gardner (Niagara Falls, Ont.).

The defensive unit boasts eight returning starters led by OUA all-star linebacker Adam Dunk (Guelph, Ont.) and defensive lineman Grant MacDonald (London, Ont.). They return four of five starters in the secondary. Leading the list is 2008 first team All-Canadian defensive back James Savoie (Niagara Falls, Ont.). A young defensive squad last season gained valuable experience and coach Walters expects the benefits will be seen in 2009.

The special teams unit should pick right up where it left off last season led by CIS All-Canadian kicker Rob Maver (Brampton, Ont.). Maver is back to handle both the punting and kicking responsibilities.

The 2009 recruiting class is one of the best in recent years and coach Walters expects many of the recruits to contribute early in their careers. The top priority this season with the recruiting class was to bring in size and depth along the offensive line.

Quote from head coach:

#### **On the 2009 Offence:**

"We're very excited about this season. We have improved our offensive line, and the guys have one more year of experience under their belt so we should be able to put up points in bunches this year."

#### **On the 2009 Defence:**

"Last season our defence was young and they gained valuable experience and I expect the benefits to be seen this season. I think our defence will be tougher against the run and athletic in the secondary to cover the oppositions receivers."

#### **On the 2009 Recruiting Class:**

"This is the foundation for a very strong recruiting class. A lot of these players will be expected to contribute early in their careers. This is a group of young men who are excited to be Gryphons, but more importantly will represent the University of Guelph as student athletes over the next four years."

### **Head Coach: Kyle Walters**

- Number of seasons as head coach with team (including 2009): 4
- Number of seasons as head coach in CIS (including 2009): 4
- Career regular season record with team: 10-14
- Career regular season record in CIS: 10-14

- Career overall record with team (reg. season & playoffs only): 8-12
- Career overall record in CIS (reg. season & playoffs only): 8-12

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## **OFFENCE:**

### **Key Returning Players:**

QB **Justin Dunk** (Guelph, Ont.) returns for his 5<sup>th</sup> season at the controls of the Gryphon offense. The mobile quarterback ranks No.1 all-time at Guelph with 9,091 total offensive yards (P: 7,667, R:1,424). Last fall he completed the second best offensive year ever by a Gryphon passing for 2,064 yards and running for 418.

RB **Nick Fitzgibbon** (Puslinch, Ont.) returns for a 4<sup>th</sup> season. Nick returns after another stellar campaign that saw him earn first team OUA All-Star accolades. In 2008 he averaged 6.1 yards per carry with four touchdowns. His 853 yards last year is the third best single season rushing total in school history. Only 550 yards remain for him to break Bruce Morris' all-time rushing leader at Guelph.

WR **Jedd Gardner** (Niagara Falls, Ont.) returns for a 3<sup>rd</sup> season. Jedd returns after an outstanding season that saw him earn CIS second team All-Canadian honours. In 2008 he finished third in CIS receiving with 38 catches for 812 yards with four trips to the end zone. His total yards last season is the third-best single season receiving total in Guelph school history. He also returned six punts for 505 yards and two kickoffs for 91 yards.

P/K **Rob Maver** (Brampton, Ont.) enters his 4<sup>th</sup> season. Last year Rob was named a first team All-Canadian punter and second team All-Canadian place kicker and has been named as Guelph's special teams player of the year for three seasons in a row. In 2008, Maver led the CIS with 3,090 punt yards and the OUA with 18 field goals. He averaged 46.12 yards on 67 punts and 55.17 yards on 35 kickoffs.

### **Key Recruits:**

RB **Corey Davidson** (Port Colborne, Ont.) – Davidson is an outstanding running back from Lakeshore Catholic High School in Port Colborne. Corey led his team to win the Golden Horseshoe Bowl in the Rogers Center last December. The Gryphons will be looking for Corey to contribute right away.

OL **Jakob Piotrowski** (Shanty Bay, Ont.) – Piotrowski is a 6'4 offensive lineman from Eastview Secondary School in Shanty Bay. This Lineman of the Year also plays offensive tackle for the Huronia Stallions in the OVFL.

### **Key Losses:**

2008 Team Captain: Graeme Reed (RB)

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## **DEFENCE:**

### **Key Returning Players:**

DB **James Savoie** (Niagara Falls, Ont.) enters his 3<sup>rd</sup> season. Last year James was named a CIS first team All-Canadian defensive back and is considered one of the best DB's in the country. He finished second on the team with 54 tackles and two interceptions last season.

LB **Adam Dunk** (Guelph, Ont.) enters his 4<sup>th</sup> season. Adam led the squad with 60 tackles, including three sacks in 2008. He plays a big role in the Gryphon defence.

DL **Grant MacDonald** (London, Ont) enters his 4<sup>th</sup> season. Grant plays an integral part in the Gryphon defence. Last year he led the team with six sacks and added 27 tackles.

**Key Recruits:**

DL **Cameron Thorn** (Midhurst, Ont.) – Thorn is a 6'5 defensive lineman from Eastview Secondary School in Midhurst. Cameron plays his summer ball for the Huronia Stallions. He is currently coached by Gryphon Alumni Jeremy Oxley. Cameron will be an excellent addition to the Gryphon defensive line.

**Key Losses:**

2008 Team Captain & OUA first team All-Star: Sean Riley (DB)

2008 Team Captain: Tag Russell (LB)