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## CFL'S FUTURE MAY HINGE ON GOV'T ASSISTANCE

The risk is real: The CFL may become Canada's Forgotten League. Out of sight, out of mind.

That's the observation made by Lyle Bauer, former Canadian Football League player and executive with Winnipeg Blue Bombers and Calgary Stampeders, after Commissioner Randy Ambrosie gave ominous state-of-the-CFL comments as they relate to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Ambrosie met with federal government officials in early May to plead his league's case for a financial bailout. The league is hanging by a thread, he said, and a full season with no football — or a truncated schedule played in front of reduced crowds, or no crowds — would be disastrous.

He asked for \$150 million. A decision is apparently pending, but public opinion seems to be on the side of 'no'. A sports league's future in the midst of a global pandemic where thousands of people are dying is low on a priority list of a government dealing with life and death matters, not to mention the basic economic foundation of our country.

Still, isn't the CFL a major part of our country's economy? Don't millions of people make weekly treks to football stadiums across Canada to watch professional football players provide terrific entertainment for those in the stands plus millions of others watching on TV? Doesn't TSN pay a few million a year to the league to broadcast games to the masses? Aren't the nine CFL teams responsible for thousands of jobs for Canadians — not even counting the football players themselves, more than half of whom are born-and-bred Canadians? And what would become of Grey Cup Sunday, almost a national holiday in Canada?

The Trudeau government in the past has been quick to shell out big dough to huge corporations like Bombardier; why not a big corporation like the CFL? If Gymnastics Canada can receive \$72 million in government funding, shouldn't the CFL's request be a non-brainer?

One year with no football could be a death knell for the CFL, which lives and dies by people paying money at the gate to watch the action. A media report suggested six of the nine teams — Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatchewan, Winnipeg, Hamilton and Ottawa — scrape by with little or no profit, while the other three — Toronto, Montreal and B.C. — lose millions of dollars. A Postmedia story in the Winnipeg Sun had Bauer saying that the league lost \$20 million last year "when there were no disruptions." He feared for the league's future if the 2020 season is wiped out.

Millions of Canadians who are out of work these days are sitting at home collecting government assistance cheques. A bailout for the CFL makes sense if the alternative is the league's extinction.

- **RJ Currie** of [sportsdeke.com](http://sportsdeke.com): "Eight years ago Canada began phasing out its penny. Thus ended great Canadian traditions like penny jars, penny-ante poker and CFL signing bonuses."
- Advice from **Jack Finarelli**, The Sports Curmudgeon: "Any golf writer who focuses on anything **Tiger Woods** says or does in a tournament where Woods is 15 shots off the lead should be banned from covering golf and made to cover camel racing in Saudi Arabia."
- The late **Doug Sanders**, who famously missed a 30-inch putt that would have given him the 1970 British Open: "They still ask me if I ever think about that putt I missed to win the 1970 Open at St. Andrews," he said years later. "I tell them sometimes it doesn't cross my mind for a full five minutes."
- Norman Chad of the Washington Post: "**Kristin Cavallari** and **Jay Cutler** are getting a divorce. She finally looked at his NFL stats."
- Chad, on the many differences between himself and **Tom Brady**, now of the Tampa Bay Bucs: "Brady advocates drinking 1/32nd of one's body weight in water each day. I buy Orange Crush by the keg. He launched his own line of vegan snacks. I eat Fritos and Bugles."
- **Brad Dickson** of Omaha, who lives in a state where COVID-19 is rampant: "Nebraska's no COVID-19 plan: All citizens are going to line the border throughout the state and scream 'GO BIG RED' to scare the virus away."
- From ESPN, via [fark.com](http://fark.com): "New Cowboys quarterback **Andy Dalton** eyes the upcoming season as a setup to 'second half' of career, which means he may bounce around a few teams sitting on their bench."
- **Dwight Perry** of the Seattle Times: "Spotted in **Lady Gaga**'s bizarre shoe collection: a pair of high heels with toes made from horses' hooves. On the downside, though, her feet tend to get sore after 6½ furlongs."
- **Peyton Manning**, to TBS, on why fellow QB **Tom Brady**'s gaffe for walking into the wrong house forced their upcoming charity golf event to be playing in Palm Beach: "The tournament had to be in Florida after Tom's arrest. With the ankle monitor, he couldn't leave the state."

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