

CONVERGENCE | GAME ON

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Matthew

ONE PLAY AWAY: VARSITY BLUES FOOTBALL



WILL ROWLEY
SENIOR EDITOR

The UCC Varsity Blues Football team ended their season with a bitter taste in the mouth on a cold November afternoon, after a championship matchup against St. Andrew's College continued their 4-peat that left The Blues with a case of the blues.

Opening the season on the road with a scrimmage against Kingston's own Frontenac Secondary School, the Blues had high hopes for the season: the seniors were hungry after their championship loss against SAC in 2024, and with a fresh batch of year 11's and new additions from BC and Quebec, team spirit was flourishing as the team faced a challenging season opener. Frontenac left the Blues motivated for their first scored game against Brooklin HS, where UCC came away with a 33-0 shutout win at home. The momentum was carried through to A-Day, where the Blues met Bill Crothers for the first time since their 2024 matchup - in which the game was called early due to a field-rush fight. Whatever residual tension there may have been was squashed, as over 1000 fans watched the Blues dominate with a 35-8 win - helped in part by an electric "big man" defensive touchdown from BC's very own Max Zumbo.

The week after A-Day, the Blues travelled

to Aurora to face St. Andrew's at their own homecoming, where injuries were more common than touchdowns, leaving UCC not only with their first loss on record, but also a loss of players, as several starters were sidelined leading up to UCC's trip to Montreal, where they took on Selwyn House in their first year as a CISAA team.

A 6-hour bus ride led the Blues to Montreal, where they practiced at Molson Stadium, home to the Montreal Alouettes and the McGill Redbirds. The next morning the team returned to the historic stadium, where what seemed to be a dominant win against Selwyn turned into a last ditch effort to put out the fires of Selwyn's fourth-quarter comeback. Returning to Toronto with the win, the Blues headed into their Week Without Bells bye-week in preparation for their next two games, which would also be played against Selwyn.

In the final home game of the season, the Blues beat Selwyn before travelling to Kingston the next week to face them again, where a defensive masterclass led to numerous turnovers and an impressive semi-final win at Queen's University's Richardson Memorial Stadium.

Going into November as the clear underdogs, Coaches Mohtadi, Brown, and Hefferman were confident in the team's improvement since October's matchup against

St. Andrew's, and hoped that the team would be able to beat SAC with knowledge of the game, effort, and grit - if not size.

On Wednesday, November 5th, the Blues returned to Aurora with a passion so vocal that Blake Orr's chants were closer than ever to being drowned out on the sideline. That passion seemed to translate to the game, as a quick defensive stop allowed quarterback Daniel Devine to march the offense down the field to score first, with the help of some explosive running from Johnny McGrath, and the reliable hands of tight end Thomas Lynam. Unfortunately, St. Andrew's struck back twice before the Blues could answer again, and a dubious call from the officials stopped UCC from tying the game on a called-back touchdown.

As time ticked down in the fourth quarter, UCC's offense threw several incomplete passes, each with the potential to send the game into overtime, or allow a 2-point conversion attempt to win outright. However, the players watched with bated breath and linked arms from the sideline as the ball dropped to the ground - a pass just out of reach that left players wondering what could've been. In this SAC vs. UCC rivalry, will David ever beat Goliath? Or will the Blues continue to stand just one play away from the CISAA title?

Photos by Edmond Shen, Ryan She



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UCC'S HISTORIC PERFORMANCE AT THE CHARLES



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Every fall, the tranquil waters of the Charles River in Boston transform into a battleground for rowing teams worldwide. Despite this, the journey for UCC's Charles Four did not start there.

UCC's Charles campaign started two weeks before the start of school during selection camp. The Charles candidates were put through a battery of fitness and testing trials, including a grueling six-kilometre

erg test and a two-kilometre race simulation. The main test, however, was seat racing. Candidates were split into two boats, racing side by side. Rowers alternated between boats until the fastest combination was identified. Through this process, UCC's Charles Four was named: Liam Glover '26, Harrison Way '26, Wyatt Porter '26, Adrian Edwards '26, and James Banquier '27 as coxswain.

The Fall season started in earnest with the Head of the Welland Regatta. There, four rowers competed in a "Head" race for the first time - where crews raced against the clock over a set distance (typically three to six kilometres). Unlike side-by-side sprint racing, head racing allows rowers to showcase their endurance, technique, and strategic prowess over an extended course. At the Head of the Welland, UCC's entry performed admirably, achieving a hard-fought third place.

The Head of the Welland gave the crew many insights which were drilled coming into the Head of the Trent - one of the largest Head races in Ontario, with collegiate, club, and high-school crews. The course features a narrow canal, preparing crews for the difficult turns of the Charles River. The UCC Four pushed hard through the race, improving upon their last result and achieving a silver medal. UCC also entered an eight, which raced against much older and experienced club and university crews, finishing a remarkable third place.

The next weekend marked UCC's Welland training camp, where the rowers were able to practice on the Welland canal, simulating the Charles River's tight conditions.

As the Head of the Charles weekend dawned, the anticipation and excitement was palpable. The UCC Four, accompanied by faculty advisor Mr. Weekes, flew to Boston on Thursday to rig the boat and to conduct two practice rows. The rows gave the boat a taste of what racing on the Charles would resemble. The racing environment was conspicuous, with over 11,000 athletes competing and trying to practice. Many past members of the UCC Community were racing at the Head of the Charles, including Simon DeLuca '25, Henry DeLuca '25, John Liu '23, and Dane Halkiw '19.

As race day rolled on, the air was charged with anticipation. The months of hard work, the early mornings, the sacrifices - everything had led to this moment. The UCC Four started in 17th position, where they finished last year, and was able to fight their way into placing 14th overall out of 90 boats.

The crew had a historic performance, setting a UCC course record on the Charles. With every stroke, the UCC crew embodied the College's values. The UCC Charles Four had not just successfully requalified Upper Canada College for next year's Head of the Charles, but set the stage for a top 10 placement next year.



STURINO: CHANGE IN HOUSE SPORTS STARTS WITH THE HOUSES



FERRARI ZHANG
BLUE PAGE EDITOR

Mr. Sturino runs House Basketball and House Volleyball, two of the most popular house sports programs in the school. With the house sports season is heating up, he shared his perspective on the current state of house sports.

To start, he outlined his vision for House Basketball and House Volleyball. Mr. Sturino noted that his goal was to have a high rate of participation and a lot of excitement built around house sports. However, he said that he has noticed a significant drop in house sports participation since when he first came to this school. "I've been here for twenty-seven years, and I have really noticed a dropoff in house sports participation." Indeed, walkovers and defaults are common occurrences in house sports in the last few years, and turnout, not skill, is often what determines the outcomes of matches.

This naturally flowed to a discussion of the causes behind the turnout problem. "The problem is that kids have too many other things to do nowadays," Mr. Sturino said. "There are a lot more things kids can do now, be it gaming, clubs, or going to the village, and house sports are just down on the list of priorities." He noted that there were also big problems with the schedule as well, since due to the structure of the schedule, only Tuesday and Thursday flextimes were reliable periods for house sports.

How can it be fixed then? Mr. Sturino says he isn't the one to ask: "My job is to run tournaments that are as exciting as possible. But house spirit can only come from

the houses. It is really up to the Senior House Advisors and the Leadership Team to take action promoting house sports."

The conversation then turned to the possibility of whether new house sports could be added to the calendar. House Badminton emerged as a popular student suggestion. Mr. Sturino duly noted that House Badminton could be quite difficult to set up and that ultimately, the school administration makes the decisions. If you want a house sport to be included in the calendar, write a guest opinion piece for *Convergence*. The school administration would be happy to consider your opinion.

As for what house he thinks will come on top, Mr. Sturino expressed uncertainty. "In house basketball, the boarding houses and Orr's generally do quite well. But I really don't know! Year to year, kids change a lot." But both of us are certain on what house we want to come on top: Mowbray's. One year, our imperial forces will crush the nine other houses and capture every house sports trophy in dominant fashion. We both hope that it is this year.

Photos by Carlos Wan, Edmond Shen



AHEAD OF THE GAME: KEEP UPS FOR A KAUSE



NICHOLAS JIRSCH
SENIOR EDITOR

Keep Ups for a Kause was an event organized by Mowbray's Head of House Christopher Chung on October 3rd. A school-wide juggling marathon, it aimed to raise \$6,000 to fund the construction of a borehole in Kamwe, Malawi. Take a deep dive into the thinking behind this successful event, which drew 70+ participants!

Convergence: Could you summarize your initiative, Keep Ups for a Kause, in 2-3 sentences?

Christopher Chung: Keep Ups for a Kause was an event that aimed to use the beautiful game of soccer for a beautiful cause. The global game for global good.

C: In terms of the actual event, what was the turning point that made you turn a notional idea into a real event?

CC: To provide some context, I initially pursued a solo keep up marathon called Keep Ups for Kamwe. I realized that an individual setting a goal of how long they wanted to juggle for, and how much money they wanted to raise was actually pretty scaleable! This could be done across any group of people; it doesn't even have to be a soccer team. For me, the inflection point came in realizing that people at my school, Upper Canada College, might want to take part in this initiative as well. I was also able to form a team of co-founders to help "copy and paste" my solo keep up marathon and mission across a whole community. Through these inflection points, I was able to turn an idea that was notional into

a reality. It filled me with great joy to see that transition!

C: One of the biggest hurdles in bringing an event to life is ensuring that you get adequate turnout. Addressing a younger member of our Upper School community, or an aspiring leader, could you provide any advice in terms of how to maximize this turnout?

CC: It did take a lot of courage to take a solo effort (Keep Ups for Kamwe) into something done across a whole community (Keep Ups for a Kause). I just want to acknowledge, for a young UCC brother, that it takes a lot of confidence to put an initiative together. It will take perseverance as well, when you realize that you're juggling a lot of factors and "balls" (literally and figuratively). In terms of getting turnout, I tried to communicate my mission and vision and why one should come out to this event as clearly as possible. Through the summary of "The beautiful game of soccer for a beautiful cause; the global game for global good" I was able to target certain groups within the community, specifically the soccer teams, and create an ideal environment that incentivized people to participate. For example, when sharing the idea to each soccer coach (who would pass the idea onto their respective players), I asked them to include the following in that message: you will be part of something that will contribute to the identity of UCC Soccer, especially beyond the pitch. The event was more than the obvious perks of pizza, prizes, and so on. I believe I got higher turnout by providing a space where people could connect through juggling a soccer ball for a beautiful cause, and making that idea resonate.

C: Another impressive aspect of your initiative was that you were able to achieve such a global goal (building a borehole in Malawi) through something local. The event was at UCC, and you established many local partnerships with L&M Taylor, Pizza Pizza, etc. Even when achieving a global goal, could you speak on the importance of starting locally?

CC: If you want to have a global impact, you first need to think about the resources you have on hand immediately. Concretely

speaking, what support can you get to empower yourself? I asked myself this question, and I realized that I needed to contact these local partners. In terms of Keep Ups for a Kause, what we needed locally to get the event into motion was many of the physical aspects (food, soccer balls, etc.) This led us into the direction of partnerships with L&M Taylor and Pizza Pizza. I also must go back to the idea of taking that "leap of faith", and having the courage to simply reach out (the worst they can say is no!) Fortunately these organizations did say yes and we were able to form these win-win, high-quality partnerships. Furthermore, on a higher level, in terms of global impact, that's where partnering with local charities with global outreach like Love a Village come into play. To answer your question, we need to take advantage of what we have on hand right now, and do the best you can with your local inventory. What we did was take our local resources and create a global ripple effect.

C: In terms of advice to other aspiring leaders: what is something you didn't do with this event that you'd recommend to yourself, or to any other aspiring leader, to do next time?

CC: Perhaps my strength is my weakness - because I often have these bigger-picture goals and ideas, I often get caught up and miss smaller planning details. Examples of this would be "day-of-event" details such as the large Gatorade jugs, the food, the nets. I got sort of lucky because I spontaneously asked and was able to get these things, but I think for any future leader out there, you need to be very discriminating in terms of covering all your bases when it comes to the participant's experience. Our team did a great job with creating this large vision, but we should definitely, for next year, tighten up logistics and improve the experience/impact of Keep Ups for a Kause. Finally, my last point would be to collaborate with more schools. Whether it's BSS or Branksome, we could definitely start with the COSSOT schools and then branch out to public schools. What if we could eventually reach schools across Ontario and Canada? There are endless possibilities, which I love thinking about and encourage aspiring leaders to explore and get excited about.

FIVE FANTASY FOOTBALL PICKUPS FOR LATE-SEASON SUCCESS

DYAUS PAN
JUNIOR EDITOR

Every year, thousands draft their fantasy football lineups with a smile on their face, assured that this season they are finally safe from the vengeful claws of whatever cruel punishment awaits the last place finisher of their league. And every year, these same fanatics watch as their super team collapses into a pile of mess consisting of a benched quarterback, a receiver on IR, and a running back with swiss cheese for an offensive line. Whether it's the turf monster's annual ritual of claiming an ACL at MetLife, Mac Jones' sudden reemergence, or your "sure thing" kicker missing three straight extra points, the tide is constantly shifting. And if you don't want to run a 5k in a dinosaur costume...you should probably shift with it. Here are five waiver pickups to rescue your fantasy football team before it's too late.

Tyler Allgeier, RB (Atlanta Falcons)

It is not often that we see a backup running back get the workload that Tyler Allgeier does, let alone when the RB ahead of him is none other than Bijan Robinson. Yet, somehow Allgeier has scored in 5 of his last 7 games, mostly thanks to Atlanta's 43.58% run rate, the 14th highest in the league. Even more impressive, he has scored more than 9 points 6 times, the only backup running back in the league to do so.

Allgeier is never going to supplant Robinson barring injury, but he provides a rock-solid floor that outperforms many starters. His combination of opportunity and efficiency makes him a reliable flex option. If he continues to handle this volume, you can count on him for consistent contributions each week. Add Tyler Allgeier now to lock in that dependable scoring floor before your league does.

Wan'Dale Robinson, WR (New York Giants)

Who else but the most reliable WR3 in PPR history, former second-round pick Wan'Dale Robinson? Despite a shaky Weeks 3-5, Robinson has since blossomed into the star we all know him to be. With

Malik Nabers' season ending ACL tear, Robinson leads the Giants with 57 targets, 23 more than all other wideouts (excluding Nabers) combined.

Partially thanks to Jaxson Dart's amazing form, New York's new top receiver has scored more than 7.5 fantasy points 9 times this season, including an instrumental Week 6 Thursday Night Football win against the defending Super Bowl champions in the Philadelphia Eagles. Wan'Dale Robinson is firmly in the spotlight and will remain so for the foreseeable future. If you want to keep pace, don't let this one slip away.



Bryce Young, QB (Carolina Panthers)

Bryce Young's first two years in the NFL were far from pretty, but it seems that times are changing in Charlotte. A quarterback who was once benched in favour of Andy Dalton has now led the Panthers from a 1-3 record to 6-5. Young has scored double points in 7 of his last 9 games, despite a minor injury against the Jets that left him sidelined for one week against the Bills.

While nowhere near an immediate QB1, Bryce Young is a great deep stash with high upside for low risk. Remember, this is not a practice squad QB who somehow made the roster, but rather the 2021 Heisman Trophy winner. Carolina's upward trajectory and favourable second-half schedule make Bryce Young a no-brainer stash.

Bam Knight, RB (Arizona Cardinals)

With James Conner out for the season courtesy of a right-foot injury and Trey Benson on IR following surgery on his meniscus, Bam Knight has ascended through the line of succession to claim the role of starting running back for the Arizona Cardinals. While initially unclear, Emari Demercado's costly goal-line fumble against

the Titans in Week 5 and Michael Carter's lackluster performance against the Colts means Knight is all but guaranteed to be Arizona's go-to back for the immediate future.

In his past game as the sole featured back, Knight posted an impressive 14.5 points against the 49ers, establishing himself as the clear lead option. With Arizona's offensive line ranked 11th according to PFSN's Offensive Line Impact (OLi) metric, Bam Knight is a must-add for your RB3 or Flex spot. Claim him now before it's too late.

Cleveland Browns D/ST

Never in the history of fantasy football has a Browns player, let alone their entire defense and special teams been unironically recommended as a waiver pick. But today that changes. Despite a 2-8 record, the Cleveland Browns boast an incredibly impressive defense, from secondary to the line. Headlined by Myles Garrett and Denzel Ward, the Browns defense has had 3 or more sacks in 8 of 10 games and an average of 1.5 turnovers a game. Further, they have only allowed more than 28 points 3 times this entire season.

With no negative scores and 6 games with 7+ points, the Browns have an immovable floor and an ever-rising ceiling. Don't let their record deceive you; add the Browns D/ST before your league catches on to this unlikely diamond in the rough.



Conclusion:

The waiver wire is where championships are won and last place finishes are avoided. Whether you need a consistent flex floor, a breakout receiver, or a defense flying under the radar, these five pickups offer immediate impact without costing you draft capital. Act fast, make your moves, and leave that dinosaur costume in the closet where it belongs.