



Former Regis quarterback Travis Lulay, now with the B.C. Lions of the CFL, has found great success in his career in Canada.

PHOTOS SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL

Regis grad Travis Lulay continues to impress in the Canadian Football League

By Bill Poehler
Statesman Journal

Travis Lulay vividly remembers what it was like to be a fourth-string quarterback.

It was a short five years ago that the Regis High School graduate was a new import to the Canadian Football League and was trying to figure out how to make enough of an impact on the B.C. Lions to keep a job.

These days, though, Lulay is one of the most visible and well-established quarterbacks in the CFL, and he has done his part in making the B.C. Lions a successful team in the past couple years.

"It makes your really appreciate the opportunity to play," Lulay said. "Being a starter professionally, I don't take it for granted for a minute because I remember being the fourth quarterback on the team."

The 6-foot-2, 217-pounder from Aumsville has become the face of the B.C. Lions' franchise.

When the team does poorly — as it did Tuesday in a 38-12 loss to the Toronto Argos

— he can take a beating in the media.

When it does well — as it did with a three-game win streak before that — Lulay is feted.

That's the life of a pivot (what quarterbacks are called in Canada).

"Honestly I think that's something as soon as you sign up for the quarterback position that you start learning that you're probably going to get more credit than you deserve when things go well and more of the blame when they don't," said Lulay, a Montana State graduate who bounced around NFL practice squads and NFL Europe before landing in Canada.

"You do understand that you touch the ball every play. You have a pretty good influence on the outcome of the football game. You do have to understand that really the best way to approach it is to take on my individual assignment on each play."

Most of those plays have gone well this season.

Lulay is third in the league in passing yards with

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1,200 by completing 64.5 percent of his passes with seven touchdowns and four interceptions. He's also rushed for 180 yards on 21 carries.

B.C. is 3-2 and in third place in the Western Division of the CFL, but Lulay said that's far from an insurmountable deficit.

He said that with teams playing each other as many as three times in the regular season, coming back to win the division, as the Lions did in 2011, would not be unusual.

"You really have to take it one week at a time," Lulay said.

The Lions' next game — they host the Winnipeg Blue Bombers at 4 p.m. Monday — will have some added importance to Lulay, as most home games do.

Lulay and his wife Kim (Tower) have a 9-month-old daughter, and he said that his parents make the trip from Oregon to Vancouver, B.C., for most home games.

"Last game up I had both of my grandfathers," he said. "I feel really fortunate to be up here on the West Coast. It's fun to see all the family members, especially since my wife and I have a little one."

That little one — Parker — has a lineage that makes every Regis coach hopeful for the future.

Besides Lulay, who was an all-state football, basketball and baseball player at the Stayton school, his wife, Kim (Tower), was a standout in every sport at Regis, too, and played volleyball at Western Oregon.

Lulay said that one day Parker may attend Regis.

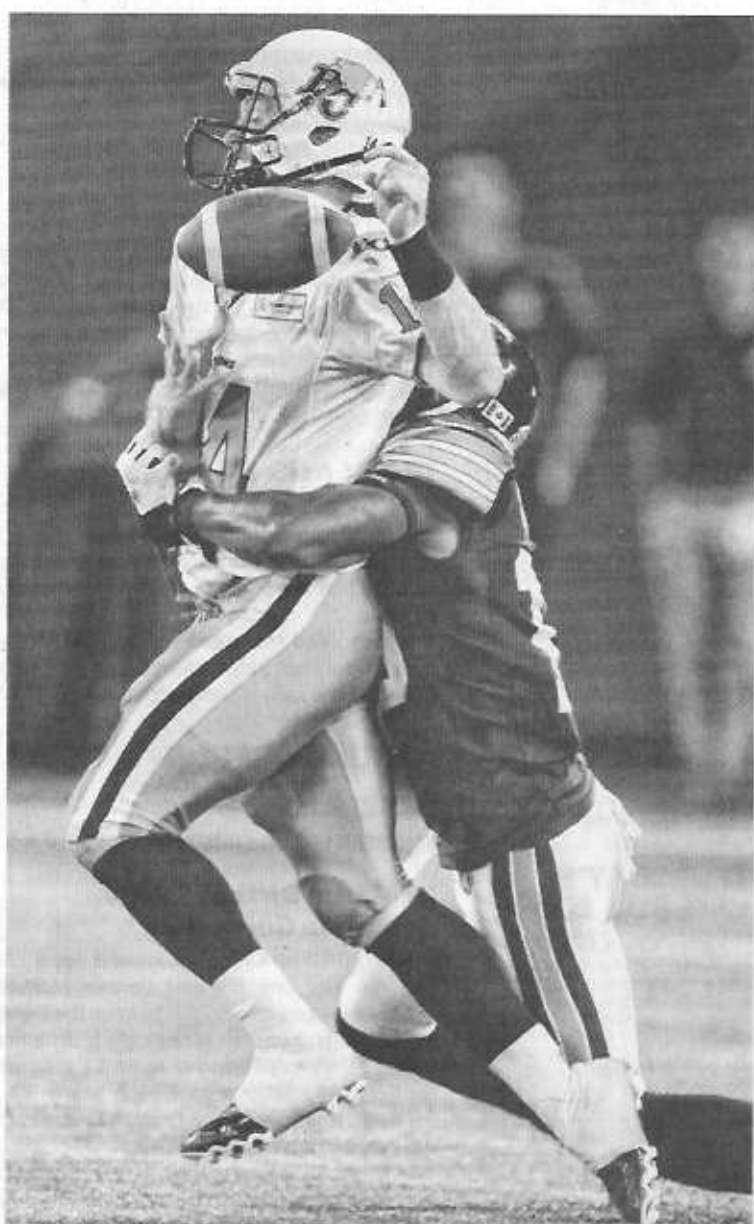
"I actually had a couple of my Regis coaches on video at my wedding talking about how we need to send our children to Regis down the road," Lulay said.

He said it's tough on him at times with long road trips to the East Coast such as the one he took this week to Toronto.

Lulay left his home in British Columbia on Sunday morning and didn't return until Wednesday afternoon.

Canadian Football League teams play a long season.

After a two-game preseason starting in June, there's an 18-game regular season followed



Lulay fumbles the ball as he is sacked by Toronto defensive back Jalil Carter during the fourth quarter of a CFL game in Toronto on Tuesday. Lulay has learned to deal with success and failure during his career. AP

by the playoffs that stretch into late November with the Grey Cup.

In his years as a professional quarterback, Lulay has learned that the length of the season is part of the challenge, and he's learning that being away from his family is another sacrifice.

"It is different, especially now with the little one," he said. "It was easy when it was just Kim and I."

"I've been an athlete as long as I can remember. Being away for days at a time is pretty commonplace. Thank goodness for technology. I'll get face time with her on the road."

Lulay developed a taste for

winning after hoisting the Grey Cup in 2011 and being named the MVP of the championship.

That kind of success makes the long hours and travel worth it.

"It's very competitive and the goal every single year is to win a championship and to find a way to win a Grey Cup," Lulay said.

"There's only one team that feels good about themselves in the end of the year and that's the one that hoists that trophy."

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