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## CFL a family affair for Stamps hopeful

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Last Updated: June 4, 2010 6:21pm

Edwin Harrison would love to hear the stories of his grandfather's career in the CFL.

Talk about a thrill, listening to tales of Calvin Jones' success as a rookie with the Winnipeg Blue Bombers and his trip to the 1956 all-star game in Vancouver.

Unfortunately, all Harrison — a Calgary Stampeders hopeful — and his family have are memories and clippings of Jones' lone season, which ended in tragedy with his death in a plane crash. He was flying from Vancouver to Winnipeg after that all-star clash.

"My grandmother told me stories when I was growing up," Harrison said. "My father has relayed the stories to me, too. We have the press clippings, old black-and-white newspapers, at home.

"It's pretty cool to be here now."

Jones went to the Blue Bombers after a stellar career at the University of Iowa. A three-time all-American, he was the first African-American player to win the Outland Trophy as top interior lineman in U.S. college football. He also finished 10th in voting for the Heisman Trophy in his final college season.

He was the first African-American athlete to make the cover of Sports Illustrated, and first college football player to have that honour.

He was one of 62 people — including four members of the Saskatchewan Roughriders: Mel Becket, Mario DeMarco, Ray Syrnyk and Gordon Sturtridge — who died when Trans-Canada Air Lines (which later became Air Canada) Flight 810 crashed on Slesse Mountain near Chilliwack.

"I wish I could have spoken to him," said Harrison, who spent the 2008 season on the Kansas City Chiefs practice roster. "All I can go on is what my grandmother has told me and his family.

"But I hope to continue and pick up where he left off."

He has a chance with the Stampeders. Actually, a pretty good chance.

With the retirement of Jeff Pilon, Calgary's coaching staff plans to start two import offensive linemen this season.

Barring a last-minute signing, the club will have just three of them in training camp when it opens Sunday — third-year CFLer Ben Archibald and a pair of rookies, Harrison and Sam Allen.

Anybody would take those odds.

"That's a huge difference," said Allen, who spent time with the San Diego Chargers last season.

"When I went to San Diego, there were 13 offensive linemen in the meeting room and no ratio. The best seven guys would make the active roster and they'd sign maybe two or three for the practice roster.

"Here, there's maybe 13 offensive linemen in that room, but if they're planning on starting two Americans and there's only three here, you've got to feel good about that."

Archibald is a proven player. Last season, he started every game at left tackle and was named a CFL West Division all-star, All-Canadian and CFLPA all-star.

Allen and Harrison have yet to play a game in any professional league, plus have to make adjustments to the CFL compared to what they've played all their lives.

"There's a lot of subtle differences," Allen said. "The yard off the ball (for defensive linemen), you have to make adjustments from that, but there is so much speed on the line. Defensive ends you go against in the NFL are 290, 300 pounds. Here, they might be 230. They're linebackers and rushers, and with the yard, they have a chance to build up speed. When you run the ball, too, you have more time before you make contact."

Added Harrison: "I knew through the grapevine about the bigger field, the wider field, the yard off the ball before I came. Things like that rouge and kicking rules, I'm learning every day. But, at the end of the day, football is football, especially up front.

"You beat the man in front of you, or you don't."

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