

Sea or ski, and football too!

Gord Judges is not your average lineman, and for a man who claims he will play until they carry him off in a box, he has a lot of time left to harass rival quarterbacks.

Gordon Judges has done a lot to dispel the accepted illusion that football's defensive lineman is a musclebound assassin, slow of foot, but strong enough to squeeze an unwary quarterback into two dimes and a nickel.

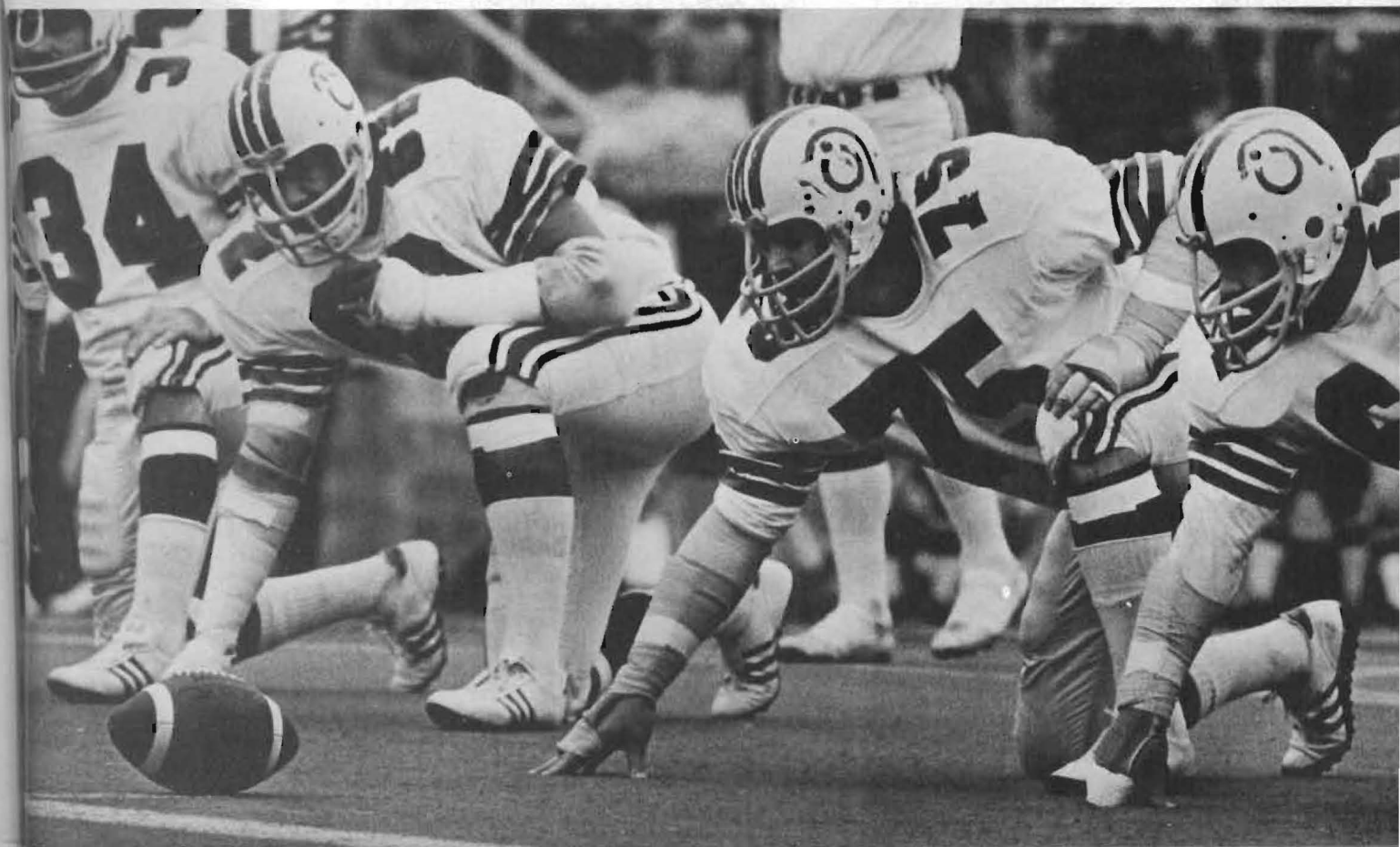
This isn't to say that Gordon Judges doesn't have an abundance of muscle and would wreak whatever havoc he could on whichever quarterback he could catch.

But he is also Gordon Judges, water skier, a picture of terpsichorean delicacy as he skims over the swells; and Gordon Judges, with a different kind of helmet, hunched over the wheel in the cockpit as he guides his Super Stock inboard around the buoys at breathtaking speed at regattas.

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Forearms taped and sheathed, Judges (75) lines up with fellow AIs.

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People who watch the young veteran of Montreal Alouettes peeling off enemy blockers, or slipping past them to find the most direct route to the object of his venom, would never believe that this was Gordie Judges who used to zip down the sprint lanes at high school meets, or dart swiftly into the line as a speedy backfielder in the same school area of competition.

"I was a running back until my final year in high school," he revealed. He played in Metro Toronto secondary school leagues, with Alderwood in the western suburbs and Victoria Park in the East. In the 11th grade at Victoria Park he recalls scoring "10 or 15 touchdowns and I was picked some kind of all star."

"I can't run around like Stillwagon and Granny Liggins but I guess I'm quick for a physical tackle. I guess you could say I'm almost a quick physical tackle, if you can figure that out."

Judges was 6 feet 3 inches tall then, the same as he is today, but he weighed only 200 to 205 pounds. Before heading into his senior year, he spent summer vacation as a water ski instructor at a camp on Lake Couchiching in Ontario. When he turned out for his final season of high school football, he weighed 230 pounds.

"I don't know how it happened. I just got fat." The end result of taking on the added poundage was that his coach moved him out of the backfield and onto the front line. That's when he really began to enjoy football.

"That last year in high school was my best. I played tackle both ways and I really enjoyed it." He was selected to play in the annual Metro high school all star game, but had to miss it because he was working. He played one season of junior football with Scarborough Rams and then turned out for Argonauts in 1968.

It was strange that Argos should relinquish their claim on such a fine young prospect. He went to the Toronto team's training quarters at Aurora, made the team, then hurt his knee in the second league game. Argo coach Leo Cahill was almost lyrical in his praise of Judges as a prospect. But late in the season, when Cahill faced the crunch of keeping Judges, or a spare defensive back, Grant McKee, he elected to keep McKee.

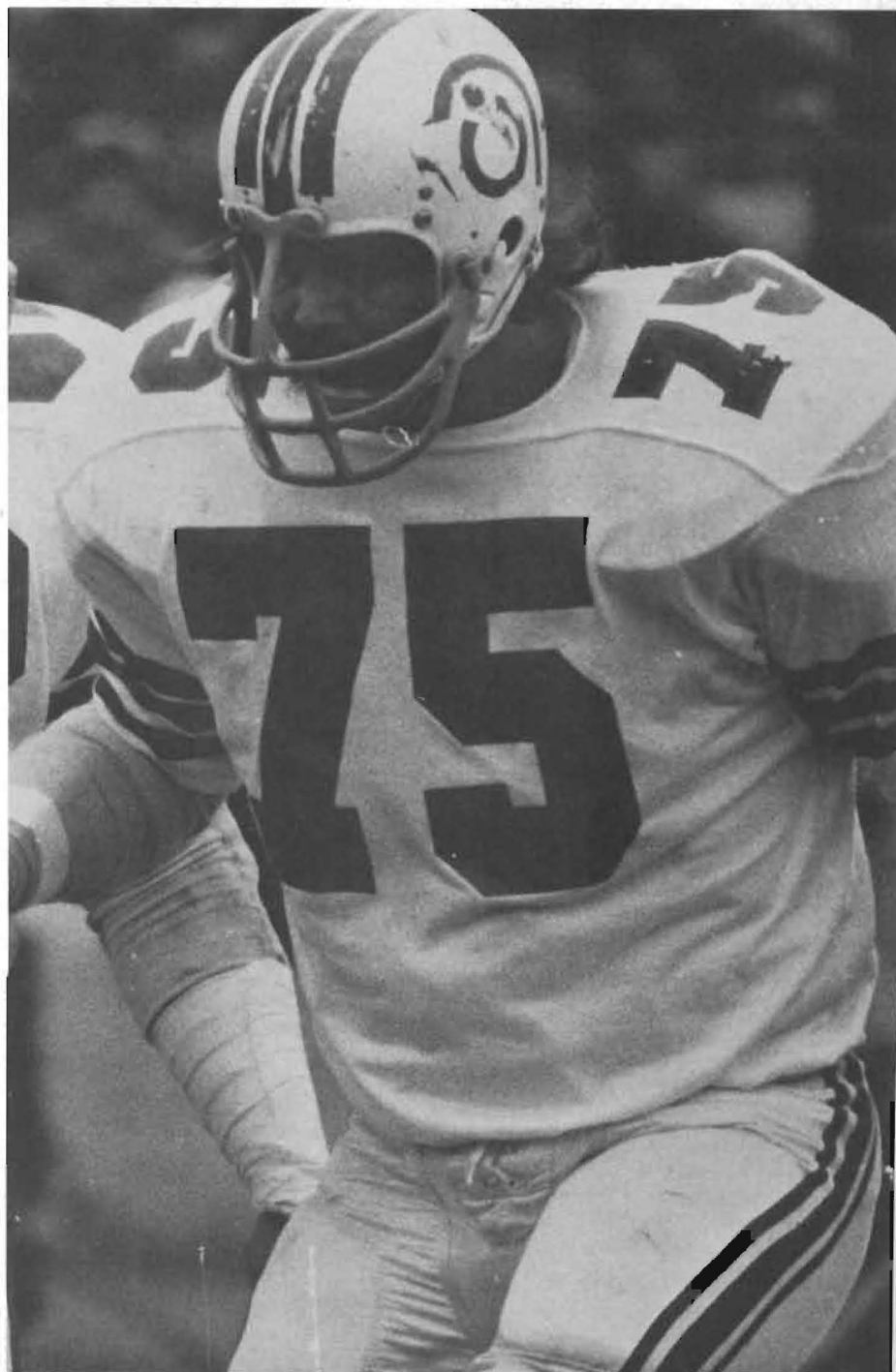
"I may have started waves," Judges says now. "I guess it was my fault. But after being on the

injury reserve list until the 10th game, I wanted to play football." This created the problem for Cahill.

The Argo coach may have felt he had a chance to sneak Judges through on waivers. After all, who would know about some kid just up from junior football. Well, B.C. Lions did. And Hamilton Tiger-Cats. And the Alouettes. All three clubs claimed him and the Alouettes won him because of their lowly standing at the time.

He finished the 1968 season with the Als, then had trouble nego-

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Agressiveness, not quickness, is Judge's trump card.

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tiating a contract for 1969. Rather than accept what he considered vastly unfair considerations, he sat out the entire season. Well, he sat out the Alouette season, but he played for Bramalea Satellites of the Senior ORFU. "I had a ball," he recalls, "but I learned a lot too. They had quite a few former pros with Bramalea and they helped me."

Judges was grateful when the new broom swept clean in Montreal in 1970. Sam Berger and Red O'Quinn came in from Ottawa and Sam Etcheverry took on the coaching chores. Judges got the contract he wanted and reported in a happy frame of mind. "The very first day they put me in at defensive tackle and I've been there ever since." That was before the AIs needed him for defensive end.

His major problem is to maintain his weight at the 245-pound level. "I have to watch my diet all the time and do a lot of running. I have a tendency to get fat easy. Even during the season I can put on weight. I do some weight lifting but that's a problem too because I can build muscle as easy as I can put on fat."

Although he was a sprinter in high school—"I never won big meets, but I finished third and fourth in the Toronto District school finals"—he doesn't consider himself as especially quick in football.

"I suppose aggressiveness is my main asset in football. I'm not quick like Stillwagon. I can't run around like Stillwagon and Granny Liggins but I guess I'm quick for a physical tackle. I guess you could say I'm almost a quick physical tackle, if you can figure that out."

Judges doesn't classify himself as a mechanic "because you need papers for that. But I've always been a motor freak. I like tinkering with motors." He thinks he got the feeling for motors from his father who used to race cars when Gordie was a kid.

He got the urge for power boating while he was water skiing and last winter he took his boat—Thumper, which he built himself to Florida for some regatta racing. Unfortunately he couldn't race this latest in a long line of Thumpers himself because his knee, which had undergone post-season sur-

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gery, wasn't strong enough at the time.

Gord hurt the knee during the Eastern Conference Semi-Final playoff game with the Argonauts. He went to see a doctor in Oklahoma who specialized in the type of operation he needed. He underwent the operation the day before last Grey Cup game. After returning home, he waited only until he could remove the cast, then headed for the regatta circuit in Florida near the end of January.

His friend Dave Norton had a 1956 bread truck that he had converted into a camper and they hauled Thumper down behind them. First stop was for the prestigious Southland Regatta at St. Petersburg where Norton drove Thumper to first place against more than 20 rivals in the Super Stock Class of Limited Inboards. Next stop was Miami where Thumper was second in the Miami Orange Festival Regatta.

One personal goal Judges has for this year is to get past the first round of Schenley balloting for Most Outstanding Canadian player. He has won the Montreal nomination twice, but lost out in Conference finals—last year to Gerry Organ.

Gord and Dawn Judges have one child—3½ year old Bret. "People ask me who I named him after, and I always say Bret Maverick, and that I'm going to name the next one Bart (from the TV series)." But he laughs and admits to just kidding.

Although he's a mere youngster of 27, Gord admits he has given some thought as to when he should retire. And he came up with the answer too.

"I want to play until they carry me off in a box. That's why I play each game like it's the last—like there's no other game after this one. That's my philosophy on football." ●

Judges looks toward a Schenley nomination for '74.

