

Ottawa camp for kids is about more than football

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Sun Media

Victor Tedondo wants to see young Ottawa-area football players get better, but he also says there's much more than football at stake in life.

Tedondo, whose Ottawa Gridiron Football Camp for players 7-18 begins tonight at the Louis Riel Dome, has a star-studded cast of helpers who will put the youngsters through a series of drills and scrimmages, but will also provide some words of wisdom.

"We want to make them good football players, but we also want to make them good students and good people," says Tedondo. "Some of the kids think football is everything. We've got a guy like Jock Climie, who's a lawyer. His message is stay in school, that's the only way you can succeed."

Tedondo has big hopes for the camp, which he hopes might evolve into a twice-yearly local event. Just 22, Tedondo, who played community football for the Gloucester Dukes and Myers Riders and high school for St. Peter's, was on the University of Ottawa team for one season. Still a student at U of O, the running back plans to play for the Ottawa Sooners next season.

He's got an impressive list of instructors on hand for this weekend's camp, including former CFLers Jeff Koradi, Darren Joseph, Climie and Pat Fleming, along with coaches Mike Johnson and Randy Bellini.

While there is a \$199 fee for the camp, Tedondo won't turn away any players.

"Some kids can't afford to pay the money," he said. "It's a lot of money for some parents. We will take care of them. They won't have to pay."

It's important for Tedondo that this camp succeeds.

'Will help the kids'

"I have a little brother, Harold, who's turning seven in September," says Tedondo. "He's looking forward to playing football with the Cumberland Panthers. There are so many kids playing football in this area — 4,000 of them. This camp will definitely help them. When I played, there were no high-calibre camps in Ottawa. The closest was Ron Dias' camp in the Toronto area and central Montreal. A lot of local football clubs and high schools lack the necessary funding to run their football programs. Twenty to 30% of each athlete's registration fee will go back to the home organization."

There will also be 20 players from James



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