

## **The Comeback**

by R Brent Smith

The players have seen this before. They hate it. The man had his time, his years of glory. It is their time now. But, once an all-pro quarterback, Brock Emmett is back for another spin. His chronological age is 63 but rejuvenation has him in peak condition. With his past experience, he saw the game and it slowed down for him. That made it easy for him to see the defensive coverages, make his reads; receiver one is covered, receiver two is running into coverage, receiver three is one on one with a much smaller man. Put the ball high and let receiver three highpoint it. Brock shows well in practice, his arm is strong and accurate, his reads right on. He wins a chance to show his stuff in the coming exhibition game. The young quarterbacks, assigned to the bench for this game roll their eyes. This old fart is stealing their opportunity, their livelihood. He has lived his glory days. It is their time now.

In the game, the opposing defence is pulling stunts and rushes that Brock never saw in his playing days. The pressure is coming fast and from every direction. He is hurried into poor decisions, bad throws. He looks like an unprepared rookie, not an experienced ace. His confidence shaken; he is benched at halftime. The game has changed since he last played some thirty years ago. It is faster, more complex, the players are more specialized. The play book is complex and confusing. The voice in his helmet is a distraction. In his playing days, he was allowed to control the game, no voice telling him what play to run, no voice cussing him out for a wrong decision. Brock spends the second half of the game on the bench, head down, alone. His reluctant teammates want nothing to do with this blast from the past. Like a scab crossing a picket line, he is shunned, unwanted. This is a team game. Without the support of your teammates, you won't survive. Brock learns a lesson that day – leave the glory years in the past.

There are rumours of a league being started for guys like him: their youth restored and chomping at the bit to compete once again. Maybe there is a place for Brock there.