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SPEARS TAKE TWO IN HALTON

For Head Coach Dave Howe, Sunday's varsity game between his Niagara Landmark Window Spears and the Halton Invictas must have looked eerily familiar. Like the Junior Spears game he took in just a week earlier, he watched a three touchdown lead seemingly evaporate, only to win in overtime 42-39.

"Penalties kept some key drives alive for Halton, and they got some momentum back", said Howe. "This game taught us a few things. We dominated the first quarter, but you can never let your guard down...it only takes one play, and unfortunately it happened to us three times". Where the Spears relied on a strong defensive effort in their opener, it was the offense that turned it up in Burlington. Running Back Ron Dith racked up 109 yards on the ground, including two touchdowns and fullback Rick Savage wasn't far behind with 102 rushing yards and one touchdown. Martin Pyttewski, Jerimy Hipperson and quarterback Ben Wilsack also had rushing majors for the Spears and kicker Carlo Turavani was a perfect 6 for 6 in PATs.

A late Invictas touchdown and a recovered on-side kick set up a dramatic 39-yard field goal from Invictas kicker Richard Rodrigues to send the game into an overtime shootout. Rodrigues connected with his second field goal of the game on the Invictas first OT possession. But the lead was short-lived, as Spears quarterback David Benner responded with a 31 yard completion to receiver Adam Petrina and Dith ran it in from the 4 yard line for the winning score.

Howe's goal for Saturday's home game against the Huronia Stallions is simple: "Balance", said Howe. "We need a strong showing on both sides of the ball with everyone playing up to their full potential. The Stallions are a strong team and should prove to be our toughest challenge yet".

Offensive Highlights (Varsity):

QB Ben Wilsack (Blessed Trinity): 3/5 passing for 63 yds

QB David Benner (Lakeshore): 1/1 passing for 31 yds

RB Ron Dith (St. Catharines Collegiate): 109 yds rushing on 16 carries, 2 TDs

FB Rick Savage (Port Colborne): 102 yds rushing on 20 carries, 1 TD

RB Jerimy Hipperson (Denis Morris): 30 yds rushing on 5 carries, 1 reception for 29 yds

K Carlo Turavani (Holy Cross): 6/6 in PATs

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Defensive Highlights (Varsity):

DE Mike Chmielewski (St. Francis): 7 tackles, 2½ sacks, 1 BB
LB Kirstyn Carruthers (Blessed Trinity): 6½ tackles, 1 sack
DB Blake Allen (A.N. Myer): 7 tackles

Earlier in the day, Niagara’s junior Spears had a little easier time with the Invictas as a dominating ground attack and over 400 yards in total offense allowed the Spears to glide to a 42-7 win. Three touchdowns from fullback Nick Moreau gave the Spears a 21-7 halftime lead and Jedd Gardner opened the fourth quarter with a 17 yard touchdown reception from quarterback Jordan Nunn. Rushing majors from running backs Jordan Barker and Ben DiMartino soon followed. Barker finished the day with 126 yards on nearly 10 yards per carry and Moreau ended up with 125 rushing yards.

Junior Head Coach Randy Nunn was pleased with his team’s performance. “This was, in almost every aspect, a far superior performance to what we saw in week one”, said Nunn. “They worked as a team, there was so much more intensity and they were clearly more focussed. Our O-line really stepped it up”. Defensively, it was a near-perfect day for the Spears, as the only Invictas touchdown came as the result of a punt return. “The biggest improvement I saw was in our defensive secondary”, said Nunn. “Everyone was playing with so much more confidence”.

Offensive Highlights (Junior Varsity):

QB Jordan Nunn (Holy Cross): 4/9 passing for 51 yds, 1 TD, 2 INTs
FB Nick Moreau (Stamford): 125 yds rushing on 18 carries, 3 TDs
RB Jordan Barker (Sir Winston Churchill): 126 yds rushing on 13 carries, 1 TD
RB Ben DiMartino (St. Michael): 89 yds rushing on 8 carries, 1 TD
WR Jedd Gardner (St. Michael): 3 receptions for 32 yds, 1 TD
K Julian Tropea (St. Michael): 5/5 in PATs
K Jordan Salvatore (Governor Simcoe): 1/1 in PATs

Defensive Highlights (Junior Varsity):

LB Steve Cecchini (Denis Morris): 8½ tackles, 1 sack
LB Ryan Chmielewski (St. Francis): 3 ½ tackles, 1 sack, 1 BB
DT Craig Kitchen (Stamford): 1½ tackles, 2 sacks

Pictures from the Junior Varsity game are available upon request. Additional information on the Niagara Landmark Window Spears may be found at www.niagaraspears.com .

Additional information on the OVFL, including standings, schedules and comprehensive individual and team statistics may be found at www.ovfootball.ca .

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Next Up... Both Spears teams are back at West Park High School in St. Catharines for a doubleheader on Saturday, June 11th. The junior Spears take on the Twin Cities Predators at noon, and the senior squad hosts the Huronia Stallions at 4:30pm.