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Media Release – July 12, 2005.

VARSITY SPEARS WIN IN TRIPLE OVERTIME

For the second time this season, the Niagara Landmark Window Spears varsity team (now 6-1) has triumphed in an overtime squeaker, defeating the Sudbury Northerners 30-24. The Ontario Varsity Football League game was played Sunday in Sudbury.

The Spears took a 10-7 lead into halftime, thanks to Carlo Turavani's 33 yard field goal and an 8-yard rushing touchdown from running back Ron Dith. Fullback Rick Savage extended the lead to 17-7 in the third quarter with a 1-yard rushing major. But the Northerners clawed their way back in the fourth with a touchdown and field goal of their own, knotting the score 17-17 at the end of regulation.

It was a shaky start in the overtime shoot-out, with the Spears fumbling on their first possession. But Spears strong safety Dan Baronas returned the favour with his second interception of the game on Sudbury's subsequent possession. The teams traded touchdowns on their second possessions, with Niagara's score coming on a 4-yard plunge by fullback Dallas Smith. In the third overtime series, Niagara quarterback David Benner connected with Adam Petrina for a 35-yard touchdown catch and a 30-24 lead. On the ensuing Sudbury possession, safety Dan Baronas came up big once again, picking off the Northerners quarterback for the third time in the game to secure the win.

For Spears Head Coach Dave Howe, it was a beautiful ending to a very long, 19 hour day. "I suggested to them after regulation that it would be a long, not entirely happy bus ride home if we didn't pull it out in OT", said Howe. "Fortunately, they got the job done, and once again it was a great character-builder. They showed so much poise – it was a total team effort".

Offensive Highlights:

QB Ben Wilsack (Blessed Trinity): 7/15 passing for 99 yds
QB David Benner (Lakeshore): 5/11 passing for 79 yds, 1 TD, 1 INT
RB Ron Dith (Collegiate): 19 carries for 89 yds, 1 TD
FB Rick Savage (Port Colborne): 14 carries for 54 yds, 1 TD
FB Dallas Smith (Notre Dame): 5 carries for 15 yds, 1 TD
WR Adam Petrina (Blessed Trinity): 5 receptions for 74 yds, 1 TD
K Carlo Turavani (Holy Cross): 3/3 in PATs, 33 yd FG

Defensive Highlights:

LB Kirstyn Carruthers (Blessed Trinity): 7½ tackles
S Dan Baronas (Denis Morris): 5 tackles, 1 batted ball, 3 INTs
DE Mike Chmielewski (St. Francis): 5 tackles, 1 blocked kick, 1 batted ball, 1 fumble recovery
DE Alec Lemaire (Fort Erie): 4 tackles, 1 fumble recovery

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Next Up... The undefeated Niagara Junior Spears (6-0) travel to Toronto to take on the Thunder (2-4) this Sunday, July 17th at 12 noon. Both teams are back at home to take on the Guelph Bears for a season-ending doubleheader on Saturday July 23rd (Junior at 12 noon, Varsity at 4:30pm). Both Spears teams have clinched playoff spots and will now be battling for division titles and a first-round playoff bye.

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Pictures 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 .

Both Head Coaches would be pleased to speak with the media and may be contacted directly. Junior Varsity Head Coach Randy Nunn may be reached at (905)685-0135 (h), (905)980-1210 (c), or via e-mail at rnuhn@niagaraspears.com . Varsity Head Coach Dave Howe may be reached at (905)937-4699 (h), (905)321-0973 (c), or via e-mail at howe@niagaraspears.com .