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Spears Sweep Doubleheader in Essex

Canada Day turned out to be “Spears Day” in Windsor Saturday, as both Niagara Spears squads rebounded from 10-0 deficits to sweep a pivotal doubleheader with the Essex Ravens. The Junior Spears (3-3) mounted 30 unanswered points in their 30-10 victory, while their Varsity counterparts (6-0) will take over the OVFL’s #1 ranking after handing the senior Ravens their first loss of the year in an intense 22-17 battle.

The Junior Spears fell behind 10-0 before running back Devon Egerter’s 3-yard rushing touchdown and a Julian Tropea rouge closed the gap to 10-8 at halftime. In the third quarter, quarterback Derrick Peachy connected with Gary Spero for a 48-yard TD strike and Tyler Decou added a 5-yard rushing major to vault the Spears to a 22-10 lead. Tropea added a second rouge before a fourth quarter sack by Spears linebacker Cody Herbert forced a Ravens fumble, which Jamie Singleton scooped up and ran 70 yards for the touchdown.

After dropping their first two games at home, JV Head Coach Brian Duguay is encouraged by his team’s recent progress. “We got off to a shaky start, but taking 7 out of a possible 8 points on this four game road swing can’t help but create some momentum”, said Duguay. “We’ve still got two tough home games ahead of us (Steel City and Mississauga), but we’re back in contention and in charge of our own playoff destiny”.

Offensive Stats (Junior):

QB Derrick Peachy (Denis Morris): 6/9 for 92 yds, 1 TD
RB Tyler Decou (St. Michael): 14 carries for 74 yds rushing, 1 TD
WR Gary Spero (Sir Winston Churchill): 1 catches for 48 yds, 1 TD
K/TE Julian Tropea (St. Michael): 4/4 PAT, 2 rouges, 1 catch for 34 yds

Defensive Stats (Junior):

DB Justin Hipperson (Denis Morris): 7 tackles, 1 INT
LB Adam Grilj (Blessed Trinity): 10 tackles
LB Jamie Singleton (St. Paul): 2 tackles, 1 FR returned 70 yds, 1 TD

Down 10-0 at halftime, the Niagara Varsity Spears were also slow getting out of the gate Saturday. But running back Rick Savage closed the gap early in the third quarter with a 2-yard rushing TD, and consecutive TD passes of 4 and 26 yards to start the fourth quarter from quarterback David Benner to Giancarlo Rampanaro put the Spears in the lead for good. Spears kicker Carlo Turavani added a rouge on the ensuing kickoff and was good on all 3 PATs. A late TD brought the Ravens to within 5 points before time ran out on what many have acknowledged to be the biggest game of this OVFL season.

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Varsity Spears Head Coach Dave Howe conceded that it may have taken his squad a quarter to wake up after the four-hour bus trip to Windsor. “We weren’t as pumped up as they were at the start”, said Howe. “They did a good job attacking our run game, but we didn’t panic. We stayed positive and made the adjustments we had to. We shored up our defense and came out with a more balanced offense”.

Offensive Stats (Varsity):

QB David Benner (Lakeshore): 9/20 passing for 127 yds, 1 TD
RB Jeremy Hipperson (Denis Morris): 161 yds rushing on 24 carries
FB Rick Savage (Port Colborne): 38 yds rushing on 14 carries, 1 TD
WR Giancarlo Rampanaro (St. Paul): 74 yds receiving on 6 catches, 2 TDs
K Carlo Turavani (Holy Cross): 3/3 PAT, 1 rouge

Defensive Stats (Varsity):

DE Steve Cecchini (Denis Morris): 7 tackles, 1 sack
LB Tyler DeMoel (Denis Morris): 6½ tackles
SS James Savoie (St. Michael): 6 tackles
LB John Surla (St. Michael): 5½ tackles

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Next Up... The Varsity Spears host the Steel City Ironmen on Friday, July 7th at 6:30pm at West Park High School in St. Catharines. **Please note the new date and time for this game.**

The JV Spears take a week off to allow players to attend the Canada Cup Tournament in Winnipeg. They host the Ironmen on Sunday, July 16th at 5:00pm.

Both Head Coaches would be pleased to speak with the media and may be contacted directly. Junior Varsity Head Coach Brian Duguay may be reached at (905)687-9396 (h), (905)327-2465 (c), or via e-mail at duguay@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 .

Additional information on the Niagara Spears may be found at www.niagaraspears.com. **Gameday pictures are available upon request.** 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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