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## **Media Release – July 8, 2006.**

### **Spears Dominate Ironmen**

The Niagara Spears varsity squad (7-0) kept their unbeaten streak alive Friday night, crushing the Steel City Ironmen 41-15. The win knocked the Ironmen (2-5) out of playoff contention and cemented home field advantage throughout the playoffs for the Spears, who already have a first-round bye.

An outstanding punt for a single point from kicker Jonathan Wright put the Ironmen on the board first, but 31 unanswered first-half points from the Spears quickly put the game out of reach. Kicker Carlo Turavani's 37-yard field goal got things rolling for the Spears, and David Benner's 31-yard TD pass to Jedd Gardner gave the Spears a 10-1 lead. Then it was special teams' turn to shine, as James Savoie returned consecutive punts for touchdowns of 45 and 60 yards. "We put a lot of work into special teams this week", said Head Coach Dave Howe. "We always knew James had the speed and ability to make the big return, but he couldn't do it without some key blocks. It was nice to see the effort in practice pay off".

Jeremy Hipperson's 15-yard TD run gave the Spears a 31-1 halftime lead and quarterback Brian Fortier's 10-yard TD pass to Brandon Recek to open the third quarter extended the Spears lead to 38-1. Two late Ironmen TD passes to receiver Brian Ritchie closed the gap to 38-15, before Turavani added a 26-yard field goal for the 41-15 final score.

The game provided another good opportunity for Howe to test the depth of his bench. "Respect and restraint allowed us to get a lot of players into the game early tonight", said Howe. "Some players who have been working really hard got a chance to start, and I'm really happy with how the whole team played and supported each other".

With a bye week for players traveling to the Canada Cup tournament in Winnipeg, the varsity Spears will close out the regular season at home on Saturday, July 22<sup>nd</sup> against the Mississauga Warriors (5-2). The game will be a rematch of last year's OVFL championship game, which the Spears took 25-22 in dramatic double overtime. "They're a very tough team and they'll definitely be coming in here with something to prove", said Coach Howe. "With the bye week, it's like the start of a whole new season. A strong game against the Warriors will give us the momentum we need going into the playoffs".

#### **Offensive Stats (Varsity):**

QB David Benner (Lakeshore): 2/2 passing for 32 yds, 1 TD

QB Brian Fortier (St. Paul/York U.): 3/7 passing for 55 yds, 1 TD

QB Evan Burke (A.N. Myer): 4/7 for 34 yds

RB Jeremy Hipperson (Denis Morris): 13 yds rushing on 6 carries, 1 TD

FB Rick Savage (Port Colborne): 61 yds rushing on 12 carries

WR Jedd Gardner (St. Michael): 31 yd TD catch

WR Brandon Recek (Grimsby): 10 yd TD catch

K Carlo Turavani (Holy Cross): 5/5 PAT, 2/3 field goals (26 & 37, missed from 54)

**Defensive Stats (Varsity):**

SS James Savoie (St. Michael): 8 tackles, 2 punt returns for TDs (45 and 60 yds)

LB John Surla (St. Michael): 6 tackles

DB Blake Allen (A.N. Myer): 4 tackles, 2 batted balls, 1 interception

**JV Spears Fight for Playoff Spot at Home July 16th**

On the Junior Varsity front, Head Coach Brian Duguay calls next Sunday’s game against the Steel City Ironmen “a virtual must win”. Having taken seven of a possible eight points during their recent four-game road swing, a win Sunday will secure a playoff spot for the JV squad. “We’ve played some great football the past few weeks and we’re in total control of our destiny”, said Duguay. “We can’t afford for it to come down to a final game against an undefeated Mississauga team”.

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**Next Up...**

Sunday July 16 – 5:00            Steel City Ironmen at Niagara Spears (Junior)

Saturday July 22 – 12:00        Mississauga Warriors at Niagara Spears (Junior)

Saturday July 22 – 4:00        Mississauga Warriors at Niagara Spears (Varsity)

Saturday August 5                TBA at Niagara Spears (Varsity) – Conference Semi-Final

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](mailto: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](mailto:howe@niagaraspears.com) .

Additional information on the Niagara Spears may be found at [www.niagaraspears.com](http://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](http://www.ovfootball.ca) .

**Niagara Spears Media Contact:**

**Jamie Saunders**

**(905)684-5785 - home**

**(905)988-2104 - cell**

[saunders@niagaraspears.com](mailto:saunders@niagaraspears.com)