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Media Release – June 4, 2007.

Niagara Spears Continue Winning Ways

Both the Junior and Varsity squads of the Niagara Spears continued their excellent start to the 2007 Ontario Varsity Football League season with convincing wins over the weekend. The Varsity Spears jumped out to an early 24-0 lead Saturday over the visiting Sault Ste. Marie Sabercats and coasted to a 47-26 win. Meanwhile, the Junior Spears traveled to Wentworth where they too built an early lead, scoring 21 unanswered 1st quarter points and hanging on for a 30-16 win over the Panthers.

Nick Moreau scored a 16-yard rushing major on the Varsity Spears' first possession. A Julian Tropea 21-yard field goal and a 40-yard rushing TD from Brandon Carrier posted the Spears to an early 17-0 lead. Alex Radojuic took over quarterback duties from starter Nick Coutu in the second quarter and quickly extended the lead to 24-0 with an 8-yard TD pass to Ben Blackladder. Sault pivot John Mullin scampered into the end zone to narrow the gap to 24-7 at halftime. It was Spears QB Evan Burke's turn to connect with Blackladder in the third quarter, this time from 21 yards out. Coutu re-entered the game in the fourth quarter and connected with Jordan Johnson on a 45-yard TD pass and with Jon Quaqliariello on a 35-yard major. Two late touchdowns from the Sabercats were too little, too late.

Head Coach Dave Howe was pleased with his team's play and was glad to be able to rotate so many players into the game. "Our goal is to make sure we are good and deep at all positions, so it was nice to see so many players step up", said Howe. The Varsity Spears (2-0) travel to Brampton to take on the Bulldogs (2-0) next Saturday, June 9th. "Brampton has a lot of team speed and some great athletes", said Howe. "This should be our toughest test of the season so far".

OFFENSIVE STATS - VARSITY

QB Nick Coutu: 4/6 passing for 126 yds, 2 TDs, QB rating: 149.31

QB Evan Burke: 2/3 passing for 35 yds, 1 TD, QB rating: 145.83

RB Brandon Carrier: 7 carries for 69 yds, 1 TD

RB Nic Moreau: 7 carries for 43 yds, 1 TD

WR Ben Blackladder: 2 catches for 29 yds, 2 TDs

WR Jordan Johnson: 1 catch for 45 yds, 1 TD

WR Jon Quaqliariello: 1 catch for 35 yds, 1 TD

DEFENSIVE STATS - VARSITY

DL Steve Cecchini: 3½ tackles, 2½ sacks

LB Ryan Miller: 5 tackles

DB Jordan Duncan: 1 sack, 1 BB, 1 fumble recovery

DB Dave Benner: 3½ tackles, 1 fumble recovery

In Sunday's Junior game, Devon Egerter scored in the opening minute on a 43-yard rushing major. Quarterback Matt Beardwood connected with Gary Spero for a 15-yard TD catch and running back Andrew Barry's 9-yard rushing major gave the Spears an early 21-0 lead. Evan Cook's 21-yard TD catch accounted for Wentworth's first points and a conceded safety narrowed the score to 21-9 at halftime. Zak Marchant's tackle in the end zone added another two points for the Spears to begin the third quarter and a second rushing TD from Andrew Barry extended the Spears lead to 30-9. A late Panthers touchdown made the final score 30-16. Josh Hipperson tied an OVFL record with three interceptions in the game.

Although happy with the win, Head Coach Brian Duguay was less than pleased with his team's sloppy play after a near-perfect first quarter. The Spears coughed up the ball four times on fumbles. "The inconsistency is really troublesome", said Duguay. "It's like we just let up on the gas and coasted those last three quarters. There were certainly a lot of teaching moments in there". The Junior Spears (2-0) will return home to host the Chatham Cougars (0-2) next Sunday at 3pm at West Park in St. Catharines.

OFFENSIVE STATS - JUNIOR

QB Matt Beardwood: 7/7 passing, 121 yds, 1 TD, 1 INT, QB rating: 118.75

RB Devon Egerter: 16 carries for 129 yds rushing, 1 TD

RB Nathan Zavarella: 10 carries for 96 yds rushing

RB Andrew Barry: 10 carries for 60 yds rushing, 2 TDs

WR Gary Spero: 1 catch for 15 yds, 1 TD

WR Jake Harper: 2 catches for 46 yds

DEFENSIVE STATS - JUNIOR

DB Justin Hipperson: 1½ tackles, 2 BBs, 3 INTs

LB Ryan Saunders: 4½ tackles

LB Cody Herbert: 4½ tackles

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)682-3754 (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 may be found at www.ovfootball.ca.

Thank you for your continued support. For more information, please contact:

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