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**Media Release – July 1, 2007.**

## **Spears Split Weekend Games**

Despite squandering a 30-point lead, the Niagara Varsity Spears (6-0) held on to defeat the Wentworth Panthers (3-4) in a 51-44 shootout. The Ontario Varsity Football League game was played in Rockton on Saturday. Meanwhile, the Junior Spears (5-1) suffered their first loss of the year on Sunday, falling to the undefeated (6-0) Brampton Bulldogs in a seesaw battle at West Park in St. Catharines.

The Varsity Panthers scored on their first possession, driving the field with an effective passing attack. Travis Pede ran the ball into the end zone from one yard out to give the Panthers their first and only lead of the day. The Spears roared back with a vengeance however, scoring touchdowns on all five of their first half possessions. Rick Savage started the onslaught with a 1-yard plunge, followed by two Nick Moreau rushing touchdowns of 1 and 11 yards. Quarterback Nick Coutu then connected with Alex Radojuic on a 36-yard TD pass and Jerimy Hipperson ran one in from 1 yard out to give the Spears a commanding 37-7 lead. Late in the half, a 17-yard touchdown pass from Panthers QB Donnie Marshall to Darren Neill narrowed the Spears halftime lead to 37-14. Two quick passing touchdowns from Marshall to Neill (18 yards) and Nathan Ferro (39 yards) to begin the third quarter cut the lead further to 37-28. However, second half Spears quarterback Evan Burke then connected with Jason Gagnon (8 yards) and Brett Maitland (85 yards) to extend the Spears lead to 51-28. The Panthers were far from finished though, as two fourth quarter passing majors cut the lead to 51-44. A Panthers onside kick in the final minute was batted around for what seemed an eternity, before Spears William Austin finally got a handle on the ball to preserve the win. **Final score: Niagara Spears – 51 Wentworth Panthers – 44.**

The game marks the second straight week that the Spears have defeated a team with a former CFL coach at the helm. The Panthers were coached by former Ti-Cat Head Coach Greg Marshall, while former BC Lions Head Coach Joe Paopao led last week's Spears opponent, the Halton Invictas. "This was clearly our toughest game of the year", said Spears Head Coach Dave Howe. "We lost some momentum when they scored at the end of the half, and they came out firing on all cylinders in the third quarter. We won some key battles in terms of field position. In the big picture, facing some mid-season adversity will only help us. We know what we have to work on and we just have to keep getting better".

### **OFFENSIVE STATS – VARSITY**

QB Nick Coutu: 2/2 passing for 74 yds, 1 TD  
QB Evan Burke: 3/6 passing for 100 yds, 2 TDs  
RB Ricky Savage: 7 carries for 26 yds, 1 TD  
RB Jerimy Hipperson: 5 carries for 17 yds, 1 TD  
RB Nic Moreau: 6 carries for 44 yds, 2 TDs  
RB Brandon Carrier: 4 carries for 52 yds  
RB Jordan Barker: 3 carries for 51 yds  
TE Alex Radojuic: 2 catches for 74 yds, 1 TD  
WR Jason Gagnon: 1 catch for 8 yds, 1 TD  
SB Brett Maitland: 1 catch for 85 yds, 1 TD

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### **DEFENSIVE STATS – VARSITY**

DB Ryan Miller: 9 ½ tackles  
LB John Surla: 6½ tackles  
DL Rob DelPriore: 5½ tackles, 2 sacks, 1 fumble recovery  
DB Alex Hunchak: 2½ tackles, 2 sacks, 1 INT  
LB Ryan Chmielewski: 4½ tackles, 1 sack  
DL Shane Baxter: 4½ tackles

The Junior Spears scored on their opening drive Sunday, as Devon Egerter scored a 17-yard rushing TD. After picking up two points on Niagara's conceded safety to open the second quarter, Brampton took the lead on Julius Jones-Carter's 8-yard rushing TD. The Spears gathered momentum at the close of the half, as a huge rushing TD from the Bulldogs was called back on a penalty. On the next play, Spears defensive back Jack Rush picked off the Brampton pass and ran 30 yards into the end zone to give the Spears a 14-8 halftime lead. Brampton regained the lead early in the second half, as Emmanuel Palmer caught a 29-yard TD pass. Nathan Zavarella responded for the Spears with a 2-yard rushing TD to give Niagara a 21-15 lead after three quarters. Palmer then hauled in an 80-yard TD pass to regain the lead for the Bulldogs, who extended the lead to 29-21 as Adrian Dolly returned his interception for a major. Niagara drove the length of the field on their final possession, falling just short with an incomplete pass in the end zone as time expired. **Final score: Brampton Bulldogs – 29 Niagara Spears – 21.**

“Mistakes and penalties really hurt us, especially in the fourth quarter”, said Junior Head Coach Brian Duguay. “Brampton made some good adjustments and we didn't”. Duguay also took some positives from the loss. “I'm proud of our players - they certainly didn't quit, especially on that last drive. We needed to have that intensity and sense of urgency for four quarters”, said Duguay. “We'll take some positives from this. Adversity provides learning opportunities and we know the areas that need work”.

### **OFFENSIVE STATS - JUNIOR**

QB Matt Beardwood: 14/30 passing for 175 yds, 2 INTs  
RB Devon Egerter: 29 carries for 129 yds, 1 TD  
RB Nathan Zavarella: 4 carries for 8 yds, 1 TD  
WR Jake Harper: 6 catches for 73 yds  
WR Gary Spero: 3 catches for 43 yds  
TE Andrew Birnie: 2 catches for 40 yds

### **DEFENSIVE STATS - JUNIOR**

LB Ryan Saunders: 6½ tackles, 1 BK  
DB Justin Hipperson: 5½ tackles, 1 FR, 1 INT  
LB Jack Rush: 1 tackle, 1 INT returned for TD  
LB Gordon Bradmore: 4 tackles

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**NEXT UP:** The Junior Spears (5-1) travel to Brantford next Thursday, July 5<sup>th</sup> for a 7:00pm game against the Bisons (1-5). Meanwhile, the Varsity Spears (6-0) host the Hamilton Ironmen (4-2) at West Park next Friday, July 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm.

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](mailto: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](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 may be found at [www.ovfootball.ca](http://www.ovfootball.ca).

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

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