



www.niagaraspears.com

Media Release – July 8, 2007.

Niagara Spears Mount Dual Comeback Wins

With one regular season game remaining for both the Junior and Varsity squads of the Niagara Spears, the playoff picture is starting to come into focus. Both teams overcame early double-figure deficits to win games this past week. Justin Hipperson's punt through the end zone on the final play of the game gave the Junior Spears a dramatic 30-29 win over the Bisons in Brantford on Thursday. Meanwhile, the Varsity Spears trailed the visiting Hamilton Ironmen 14-3 in the second quarter, before exploding for 42 unanswered points and a 45-14 win Friday night.

In the Junior game, Brantford got out of the blocks quickly, taking a 14-0 lead with touchdowns on their first two possessions. A conceded safety and quarterback Matt Beardwood's 25-yard completion to Spears receiver Andrew Arcari closed the gap to 14-9 at halftime. Niagara took the lead in the third quarter with rushing majors from Nathan Zavarella (15 yds) and Devon Egerter (7 yds). Zak Marchant extended the Spears lead to 29-14 with his 30-yard interception return for a touchdown to close out the quarter. The Bisons stormed back in the fourth quarter however, with Brandon Flick's third rushing TD of the game and a stunning 100 yd flea-flicker pass to Bison receiver Kyle Cogger. A successful 2-point conversion knotted the score at 29 with five minutes remaining. Driving the length of the field on the ensuing Spears possession, Justin Hipperson punted from the Brantford 30-yard line for the decisive single point as time expired. With the win, the Junior Spears locked up home field advantage for a July 28th wild card game. **Final score: Niagara Spears (6-1) 30 – Brantford Bisons (1-6) 29.**

OFFENSIVE STATS - JUNIOR

QB Matt Beardwood: 11/19 passing for 169 yds, 1 TD, 1 INT

RB Nathan Zavarella: 18 carries for 146 yds, 1 TD

RB Andrew Barry: 11 carries for 70 yds

Devon Egerter: 9 carries for 58 yds, 1 TD

WR Andrew Arcari: 1 catch for 25 yds, 1 TD

WR Jake Harper: 5 catches for 66 yds

WR Gary Spero: 3 catches for 57 yds

TE Andrew Birnie: 2 catches for 33 yds

K Jon Demetriades: 3/4 PAT, 0/1 FG (17 yds)

DEFENSIVE STATS - JUNIOR

DB Justin Hipperson: 7½ tackles

DB Zak Marchant: 4½ tackles, 1 INT returned 30 yds for TD

LB Ryan Saunders: 4½ tackles

LB Cody Herbert: 4 tackles

DE Zack Davis: 4 tackles, 1 sack

→ over →

In Varsity action, the Spears and Ironmen traded punts for most of the first quarter before Hamilton quarterback Michael Chase connected with Tydell Price for a 41-yard TD pass early in the second quarter. Julian Tropea's 14-yard field goal closed the gap to 7-3, but Chase then hit Paul Gerbording for a 72-yard TD pass and a 14-3 Hamilton lead. Spears starting quarterback Nick Coutu responded with a bomb of his own, finding Jedd Gardner for a 72-yard major, narrowing the Hamilton lead to 14-10 at halftime. The Spears dominated the second half however, exploding for 5 touchdowns. Running back Jerimy Hipperson's rushing majors of 17 and 6 yards got things started, and Ricky Savage ran into the end zone from 9 yards out to give the Spears a commanding 31-14 lead after three quarters. The Spears passing game took flight in the fourth quarter, as second half quarterback Evan Burke connected with Jason Gagnon on a 16-yard TD pass and with Gardner on a 75-yard TD bomb. Gardner finished the day with a staggering 218 yards receiving and two touchdowns on four catches. With the win, the Spears have wrapped up their third consecutive Golden Horseshoe Division championship and a first round playoff bye. They will host an Adam Conference semi-final game on the weekend of August 4-5. **Final score: Niagara Spears (7-0) 45 – Hamilton Ironmen (3-4) 14.**

OFFENSIVE STATS – VARSITY

QB Nick Coutu: 1/7 passing for 87 yds, 1 TD, 1 INT
QB Evan Burke: 5/7 passing for 246 yds, 2 TDs
WR Jedd Gardner: 4 catches for 218 yds, 2 TDs
RB Jerimy Hipperson: 11 carries for 127 yds, 2 TDs
RB Ricky Savage: 14 carries for 53 yds, 1 TD
WR Jason Gagnon: 2 catches for 28 yds, 1 TD
K Julian Tropea: 6/6 PAT, 1/1 FG (14 yds)

DEFENSIVE STATS – VARSITY

LB Ryan Chmielewski: 6½ tackles, 2 FR
DB Jordan Duncan: 6½ tackles
DE Steve Cecchini: 5½ tackles, 1 sack, 1 BK
DB Andrew Meyer: 2 tackles, 1 BB, 1 INT
DL Shane Baxter: 3 ½ tackles

NEXT UP: After the OVFL bye week, the Varsity Spears (7-0) travel to Brantford for a game against the Bisons (5-2) on Saturday, July 21st at 1:00pm. Meanwhile, the Junior Spears (6-1) travel to London on Sunday, July 22nd for a 2:00pm game against the undefeated Falcons (7-0).

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:

Jamie Saunders, President
Niagara Varsity Football Club
(905) 684-5785 – home / (905) 329-7104 - cell
saunders@niagaraspears.com