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## Spears Battle Brantford and Mother Nature (May 31, 2008)

The Niagara Spears captured three out of a possible four points in Ontario Varsity Football League action Saturday at West Park in St. Catharines. The game between the Junior Spears and the Brantford Bisons ended in an 18-18 tie when thunderstorms moved in with twelve minutes remaining in the fourth quarter. Fortunately, the Varsity game which followed was a largely sun-soaked affair, as the Spears dominated the Bisons 33-1.

In Junior action, the Spears found themselves in a hole early, as Bison running back Brandon Flicks returned the opening kickoff 95 yards for a touchdown. A Bisons fumble recovery then set up Keegan Wainman's 47 yard rushing major, giving Brantford a 12-0 first quarter lead. It was all Niagara in the second quarter however, starting with a 13-yard field goal from Spears kicker Mitchell McMullen. After a Brantford punt, the Spears then drove the field and scored on quarterback Matt Woehl's 1 yard plunge. Spears defensive back Cory Pattison's 37 yard interception return then set up Sandro Sferrazza's 9 yard rushing touchdown, giving the Spears a 16-12 halftime lead. The Bisons took an 18-16 lead early in the third quarter on Keegan Wainman's second rushing touchdown of the day from 1 yard out. Early in the fourth quarter, with storm clouds looming, Brantford conceded a 2 point safety after Niagara pinned the Bisons near their own goal line. With the game tied 18-18, a major thunderstorm then took over the action, sending fans scurrying to their cars and both benches to their dressing rooms. Officials waited an hour for lightning to clear the area, but were ultimately forced to call the game. By rule, the game was officially recorded as a tie, with each team receiving one point.

**CAMPBELL'S PLAYER OF THE GAME** *Niagara: WR Curtis Kelly; Brantford: RB Brandon Flicks*

### **POST-GAME COMMENTS FROM SPEARS JUNIOR HEAD COACH BRIAN DUGUAY:**

*"You never like to get behind early. I think we were a little shell-shocked after that opening kick-off return, but we were able to shake it off and had a very strong second quarter. After the way we struggled offensively last week in Mississauga, we had a much better game today, much more balanced. We were able to get a lot more players involved this week, and that's always going to pay dividends over the course of the season. Brantford always gives us a good game. They're well coached, they hit hard and they're also very disciplined. It's too bad we couldn't finish the game. We had both the momentum and the wind in the fourth quarter, but the safety of the players and our fans has to come first."*

### **OFFENSIVE STATS - JUNIOR**

QB Matt Woehl: 8/15 passing for 111 yds, 1 INT, 5 carries for 17 yds, 1 rushing TD  
RB David Handley: 8 carries for 58 yds  
RB Jurrell Gaddishaw: 6 carries for 47 yds  
RB Sandro Sferrazza : 7 carries for 33 yds, 1 TD  
WR Curtis Kelly: 5 catches for 71 yds  
WR Daniel Tisi: 2 catches for 35 yds  
K Mitchell McMullen: 13 yd FG, 1/2 PAT

### **DEFENSIVE STATS - JUNIOR**

LB Justin Hipperson: 7 tackles  
DB Cory Pattison: 37 yd interception return  
LB Brad Souter: 2½ tackles  
DL Ian Marouf: 2 tackles, blocked kick, batted ball  
LB Devon Miller: 3 tackles  
LB John Rush: 1½ tackles

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In the Varsity game, Niagara kicker Julian Tropea settled for a single point on a missed 47 yard field goal attempt on the Spears first possession. Later in the quarter, Nick Coutu connected with receiver Gary Spero on a perfect 22 yard TD pass to give Niagara an 8-0 lead. Brantford's lone score on the day came courtesy of a punt that went out through the side of the end zone late in the opening frame. After the teams traded 5 punts in the second quarter, Coutu again connected with Spero for a 10 yard major and a 15-1 halftime lead. After an unremarkable third quarter, the Spears defense stopped the Bisons on fourth down in the Niagara red zone early in the fourth quarter. Tropea notched a 42 yard field goal on the ensuing Spears drive, giving Niagara an 18-1 lead. Two late rushing touchdowns from Andrew Barry (4 yards) and Nic Moreau (11 yards) put the game out of reach. A monstrous Tropea kick-off after the Moreau score sailed through the uprights and out of the end zone for a single to seal the 33-1 victory.

**CAMPBELL'S PLAYER OF THE GAME** *Niagara: RB Andrew Barry; Brantford: DL Jesse Williams*

**POST-GAME COMMENTS FROM SPEARS VARSITY HEAD COACH DAVE HOWE:**

*"A very good week of practice paid off for us; we focused on the fundamentals and it showed today. We did a lot of little things well. The short passing game was clicking and the overall form and technique was back to where we wanted to see it. It was a solid team effort on all three aspects of the game: offense, defense and special teams. Last week, you could see the "greenness" of this team; they looked much more comfortable and confident today. Nick (Coutu) had a strong game at quarterback and threw two really nice TD balls to Spero. Andrew Barry and Devon Egerter also gave us a really nice 1-2 punch at the running back position today. I am especially happy for Larry Bone, getting his first win as our new offensive coordinator. Defensively, we were tough to handle today, a lot of swarming and a lot of gang tackles. It was great to get everyone onto the field – we're only as good as our next player. Looking ahead to Halton, (Head Coach) Chris Handley has coached in both the NFL and CFL. They had a good player turnout this year, so we're preparing for a tough game."*

**OFFENSIVE STATS - VARSITY**

QB Nick Coutu: 10/17 passing for 112 yds, 2 TDs  
QB/SB Kyle Mataya: 2/2 passing for 37 yds; 2 catches for 33 yds  
RB Andrew Barry: 15 carries for 135 yds, 1 TD  
RB Devon Egerter: 13 carries for 48 yds  
RB Nic Moreau: 3 carries for 26 yds, 1 TD  
WR Gary Spero: 2 catches for 32 yds, 2 TDs  
WR Jon Quagliariello: 3 catches for 46 yds  
K Julian Tropea: 1/2 FG (missed from 47 yds, made from 42 yds), 4/4 PAT, 2 rouges

**DEFENSIVE STATS - VARSITY**

LB Adam Grilj: 5 tackles, batted ball  
DB Jonathon Jones: 5 tackles  
DB Jordan Duncan: 4½ tackles  
LB Gordon Bradmore: 2 tackles, 6 yd interception return  
DL Bryan Summers: 2½ tackles

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**NEXT UP:** Both Spears teams are back at West Park on Saturday, June 7<sup>th</sup> for a doubleheader against the Halton Invictas. The Junior Spears (0-1-1) take on the Junior Invictas (0-2) at 12 noon, while the Varsity Spears (1-1) take on the Varsity Invictas (0-2) at 4:00pm.

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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