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Spears Come up Short in Essex

Both the Junior and Varsity squads of the Niagara Spears played catch-up for much of their doubleheader games in Essex Saturday. After the Junior Spears fell behind 35-8 at the half, a three touchdown comeback in the second half came up just short, as Niagara fell to the Ravens 38-29. In senior action, a stingy Essex defense held the Spears to just 25 yards rushing hanging on for a 42-26 victory that was certainly closer than the score suggests.

In the Junior game, the Spears defense held tough on Essex's opening drive, stopping the Ravens on fourth down on the Spears 1-yard line. On the very next play, quarterback Matt Woehl connected with receiver Max Cameron on a 96-yard TD pass to give the Spears a 7-0 lead. The shift in momentum was short-lived however, as Essex launched into a 4-touchdown barrage, including a 70-yard punt return and a 90-yard rushing major. Niagara's only other point in the first half came from an Allesandro Arghittu punt which Essex couldn't retrieve out of the end zone. It was all Spears in the second half however, as Jordan Clout returned the opening kick-off 94 yards for the major. David Handley's 1-yard rushing TD closed the gap further, but a 25-yard Essex field goal extended the Ravens lead to 38-22. A late 10-yard TD pass from Woehl to Dylan Howard made it interesting, but the Junior squad ultimately ran out of time, losing 38-29 and falling to 2-4 on the season.

Comments from Junior Head Coach Brian Duguay: *"A really ugly second quarter and some shaky special teams really hurt us. This game felt a lot like Kingston...terrible start and a great second half that fell just a little short. We outscored them 21-3 in the second half, but it was just too big a hole to climb out of. The passing game was solid, but 52 yards rushing on the day just isn't good enough. If you want to win in this league, you have to have a more balanced attack. We've got two winnable games coming up (at Brantford and home against Guelph), and we need to win them both if we want a post-season."*

OFFENSIVE STATS - JUNIOR

QB Matt Woehl: 12/35 passing for 215 yds, 2 TDs, 1 INT
RB David Handley: 11 carries for 26 yds, 1 TD
RB Jordan Clout: 3 carries for 24 yds, 94-yd KO return for TD
WR Max Cameron: 5 catches for 146 yds, 1 TD
WR Lucas Schinkel: 3 catches for 36 yds
WR Mackenzie Steele: 2 catches for 29 yds
WR Dylan Howard: 1 catch for 5 yds, 1 TD
K Alessandro Arghittu: 4/4 PAT, single point on punt

DEFENSIVE STATS - JUNIOR

LB John Rush: 9½ tackles, BB
DB Jacob Bromhall: 8 tackles
LB Josh Doucet: 6 tackles
DL Kevin Denhollander: 4 tackles, sack
DB Matt Furgiuele: 4 tackles, BB
FS Johnny Lapenna: 3½ tackles, 2 BB

In the senior half of the doubleheader, Ravens quarterback Austin Kennedy posted Essex to an early 7-0 lead on a 4-yard rushing TD. However, Spears quarterback Matt Beardwood quickly answered back with a 12-yard TD pass to Jake Harper to knot the game at 7. Essex stretched the lead to 21-7 on consecutive TD passes from Kennedy to Dylan Whitfield (10 yards) and DeAndre Lewis (34 yards), before Beardwood's 1-yard scamper across the goal line late in the second quarter closed the gap to 21-19 at halftime. The teams traded touchdowns to open the third quarter on 1-yard dives by Kennedy for Essex and Kyle Mataya for Niagara. Ravens tailback Darnell Walcott's 2-yard rushing major gave the Ravens a 35-26 lead in the fourth quarter, and a 15-yard interception return for a touchdown by Ravens defensive back Chris Deneau in the dying minutes sealed the 42-26 victory for Essex. Niagara falls to 3-3 on the season, with two games remaining.

Comments from Varsity Head Coach Dave Howe: *"We got what we expected from Essex today...this was a very tough, very physical game. With eight men in the box, they really took away any kind of running game. With the bye-week, we'll be concentrating on fundamentals and getting everyone healthy. We've been working on a depleted roster for most of the season, so it will be good to have some time off to rest up and focus on the task at hand. We'll need to win out the rest of the season, but I think we're up to the challenge."*

OFFENSIVE STATS - VARSITY

QB Matt Beardwod: 22/40 passing for 281 yds, 2 TDs, 1 INT, 1 carry for 1 yd, 1 TD
RB Nathan Zavarella: 2 carries for 3 yards, 2 catches for 40 yards
FB Stephen Muzamhindo: 7 carries for 15 yds
WR Jake Harper: 6 catches for 90 yds, 1 TD
WR Curtis Kelly: 4 catches for 27 yds
WR/K Alex Charette: 5 catches for 68 yds, 1 TD, 2/3 PAT

DEFENSIVE STATS - VARSITY

LB Jack Rush: 7 tackles
LB Ryan Saunders: 5½ tackles
LB Adam Grilj: 5½ tackles
DB Keil Elliott: 3 tackles, INT
DB Justin Hipperson: 3 tackles
LB David Postman: 3 tackles
LB Brad Souter: 2½ tackles, 1 sack

NEXT UP: The Junior Spears (2-4) and Varsity Spears (3-3) will both have a bye during the coming week before traveling to Brantford to face the Bisons in a doubleheader on Saturday, July 11th. The Junior game gets under way at 2:00pm and the Varsity game starts at 8:00pm. Both games will be played at the Gretzky Centre.

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The complete 2009 Niagara Spears schedule, with results to date, is attached

Both Spears teams practice at 6:00pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights at West Park. Members of the media are welcome to stop by to speak with coaches and players.

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), (289)213-6791 (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 Ontario Varsity Football League may be found at www.ovflontario.com.

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

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2009 Schedule

Current as of June 28, 2009.

TEAM	DATE	TIME	VENUE	VISITOR	HOME
Junior	Sat May 23	12:00	West Park	Hamilton Ironmen - 42	Niagara Spears - 7
Varsity	Sat May 23	4:00	West Park	Hamilton Ironmen - 39	Niagara Spears - 7
Junior	Sat May 30	1:00	St. Marcellinus HS	Niagara Spears - 6	Mississauga Warriors - 24
Varsity	Sat May 30	4:00	St. Marcellinus HS	Niagara Spears - 13	Mississauga Warriors - 3
Junior	Sat Jun 6	1:00	Loyalist Collegiate	Niagara Spears - 14	Kingston Grenadiers - 15
Varsity	Sat Jun 6	7:00	Rocky Dipietro Field	Niagara Spears - 14	Sault Ste. Marie Sabrecats - 24
Junior	Sat Jun 13	12:00	West Park	Georgetown Crimson Tide - 7	Niagara Spears - 57
Varsity	Sat Jun 13	4:00	West Park	York Simcoe Storm - 8	Niagara Spears - 43
Junior	Sat Jun 20	12:00	West Park	Halton Cowboys - 0	Niagara Spears - 61
Varsity	Sat Jun 20	4:00	West Park	Halton Cowboys - 7	Niagara Spears - 37
Junior	Sat Jun 27	3:30	Essex High School	Niagara Spears - 29	Essex Ravens - 38
Varsity	Sat Jun 27	7:00	Essex High School	Niagara Spears - 26	Essex Ravens - 42
	Sat Jul 4	B Y E W E E K			
Junior	Sat Jul 11	2:00	Gretzky Centre	Niagara Spears	Brantford Bisons
Varsity	Sat Jul 11	8:00	Gretzky Centre	Niagara Spears	Brantford Bisons
Junior	Sat Jul 18	4:00	West Park	Guelph Bears	Niagara Spears
Varsity	Sat Jul 18	12:00	West Park	Guelph Bears	Niagara Spears
Playoffs	Sat Jul 25	W I L D C A R D G A M E S			
	Sat Aug 1	C O N F E R E N C E S E M I - F I N A L S			
	Sat Aug 8	C O N F E R E N C E F I N A L S			
	Sat Aug 15	L E A G U E C H A M P I O N S H I P			