

St. Andrew's College makes CISAA finals

The St. Andrew's College Saints first football team defeated Trinity College School 40-0 to advance to the CISAA Championships.

This year for the Saints has been quite remarkable to say the least.

In four games in the CISAA, the Saints have 149 points forward and have conceded zero points defensively.

Head coach Marcello Lio says he believes facing teams in the United States helped in accomplishing this feat.

"The competition down in the US was great for our guys but also brought them to a different level as far as their will to compete when we played our games here. Overall, a great player experience, a great season, now we're heading to the championship game," Lio told The Auroran.

Since arriving in 2019, Lio has always tried to find ways to create player exposure, experience and opportunity for these young athletes.

The Saints, against teams in the USA this season, posted a 1-3 record. The boys took on three teams near the Buffalo area and one team based in Ohio.

As mentioned, it has been a dominant regular season for the group against teams here in Ontario.

The Saints opened up the season with a 51-0 win over Trinity College School, followed by a 38-0 win over Upper Canada College on homecoming. In their final regular season game, the group defeated St. Michael's College 20-0 before trouncing TCS, 40-0 to advance to the finals.

Upper Canada College defeated St. Michael's College 16-7 in their semifinals.

Ahead of the final game of the season for CISAA, Lio said he was very aware of the talent and the drive UCC possesses.

"It's tough to gauge; one thing I know about UCC is they're never the same team than when you played them the first time. They do a great job down there as well preparing their kids and getting better each week. We were in a position then, it was homecoming, might have been a little intimidating for them. We came out firing," Lio said.

"The one thing as we prepared for our semi-final, who we beat 51-0 in the regular season, our goal is high competition, intense practices, keeping our boys in the same mindset as if they were playing the Dallas Cowboys. Nothing changes for us, but I do expect a much bigger fight from UCC. Tactically as well. They always do a good job making adjustments. I'm looking forward to a great championship final."

Lio, who runs a complex, university level offence, has applauded his group for their efforts this year. He appreciates the buy-in from all of his players, regardless of their intentions to remain in the sport moving forward or not.

For more on the finals, which took place Wednesday at Yuli Field here in Aurora after press time, look in next week's edition of The Auroran.

By Robert Belardi