

Warriors corral Mustangs in YRAA football final



By Jake Courtepatte

The Huron Heights Warriors of Newmarket once again proved why they are one of the top high school football programs in the country.

A rematch between the Warriors and the St. Max Mustangs of Aurora, which saw the Warriors trot to a 42 ? 3 win in the York Region final last season, once again ended with the Warriors the victor: in their thirteenth consecutive trip to the championship game.

In a battle between two teams who on average gave up less than four points per game over the regular season, it was defense that shone through in a tight 21 ? 7 victory for the Warriors.

As they have all year, the Warriors took to the ground for a time-consuming, ?move-the-chains? style attack on the game's opening drive, held on a cold and windy Saturday night at St. Max in front of a large crowd.

After a seven-minute possession that moved the ball 80 yards, Mike Strumos broke the plane for the Warriors to take a 7 ? 0 lead. A quick two and out for the Mustangs on their first drive took just over a minute, though they recovered a fumble on the first play of the next Warriors possession.

In an offense that completely contradicted that of their opponents, the Mustangs utilized the arm of all-star quarterback Ben Langlois all season in an air assault. It took only two plays for Langlois and his offense to reach the end zone, starting with a good completion on a scramble for 42 yards to end the first quarter.

Langlois then found receiver Nolan Lovegrove in the back corner of the end zone on the opening play of the second, an 18-yard completion.

Another slow romp up the field for the Warriors ate the rest of the clock in the second quarter, getting Huron inside the St. Max 20 in the final minute of the half.

The St. Max defense was able to stop the run just inches short of first down on the ten-yard line with fourteen seconds to go, while the offense came on the field to take a knee and end the first half in a 7 ? 7 tie.

In a common play for the Warriors, quarterback Colin Grant kept the ball himself to run it in for the major five minutes into the third quarter to restore the Huron lead. Huron back Aiden Mielczarek capped off the scoring in the game late in the fourth quarter, running 25 yards for the touchdown after a pitch from Grant to make it 21 ? 7.

Mielczarek was named game MVP.

?It truly was a game of missed opportunities for us,? said St. Max head coach, Joe Gaudio. ?When we had our moments to capitalize on Huron's mistakes we didn't do so, but they were able to capitalize on ours. Simple as that.?

In a long and grueling YRAA season, Gaudio said he was ?very proud? of his team during the game and all season long.

?Very proud once again of these boys for being one of the top teams in the GTA and top 40 in the country - they truly had a great season.?

The Warriors move on to face the champions of Southwestern Ontario in OFSAA, next week at Tim Hortons Stadium in Hamilton.

Meanwhile, the King City Lions ran over the Bill Crothers Colts in the Tier 2 YRAA final 31 ? 0 earlier on Saturday.