

Bulldogs storm back

Erase 14-0 deficit to capture crown, finish undefeated

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The Sir Winston Churchill Bulldogs put their faith and trust in Alex Christie and the rookie running back more than held up his end of the deal.

Subbing for veteran running back Gary Spero, who went down with a concussion on the second play of the game, Christie turned in a superb performance as the Bulldogs rallied to edge the Stamford Hornets 15-14 to capture the Varsity 1 high school football championship at Kalar Sports Park in Niagara Falls.

The championship is the second in a row for the Bulldogs, who finish the season a perfect 10-0.

The loss was the first of the season for Stamford after nine wins.

"This is astonishing; I'm so happy we won this," said Christie, a 15-year-old Winnipeg native.

Christie, who scored four touchdowns a couple of weeks ago in a playoff game versus Beamsville, was pressed into service immediately when Spero was injured making a block on two plays into the game.

Christie's performance was no surprise to Sir Winston offensive co-ordinator Peter Partridge.

"The kids call him Spero Jr.," Partridge said. "He's a heck of a kid and he works so hard. He knows the game and he's aggressive. We put him everywhere. The more the season went on, the more he played both offence and defence."

Perhaps Christie's most important contribution came late in the game with the Bulldogs clinging to a one-point lead.

Sir Winston Churchill gave Christie the ball on six straight carries in the final three minutes and he responded with six solid runs, which enabled the Bulldogs to run out the clock.

"We have the utmost trust in him," Partridge said. "It's not only the confidence the coaches have in him, but the other players have the utmost confidence in him."

"They think he's unbelievable and he proved it today."

Christie, who moved to St. Catharines with his family when his father was transferred to the area, had only one thing on his mind during the final few minutes.

"I didn't want to fumble," Christie said. "I was terrified. I held on to the ball and just ran."

The Bulldogs needed a spirited comeback to repeat after falling behind 14-0 early in the second quarter.

"When we get pumped up like "We played shutout defence in the second half. We had a nice little talk with them and they stepped up and did what they had to do."

The Bulldogs completed their comeback in dramatic fashion with 6:17 remaining when Max Cameron jumped on a loose ball in the end zone for a touchdown following a fumble. The Hornets were pinned deep in their end and were unable to give themselves any breathing room near their own goal line thanks to some ferocious defence by Churchill.

"We're never out," Perron said. "One play can turn anything around. When we smelled blood, we took it."

Churchill's comeback began with a touchdown late in the second quarter when quarterback John Krzeczowski found tight end Jeffrey Finley in the end zone with a three-yard pass. The Bulldogs trailed 14-6 at the half when the convert failed.

Churchill began the second half in surprising fashion when they called for an onside kick and recovered the ball. They parlayed that into a 21-yard field goal by Jonathan Demetriades to close the gap to 14-9, setting the stage for Cameron's winning major.

As the final seconds ticked off, the Bulldogs let loose with emotion, piling into the middle of the field. They briefly composed themselves to shake hands with the Hornets, then went wild again after being awarded the championship trophy.

"It's all about hunger," Perron said before joining the celebration. "It's nice to get behind one team. You don't have to cheer for junior or senior. This is school spirit."

we can, nothing stops us," Sir Winston Churchill head coach Peter Perron said.

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THE SCOOP

Bulldogs 15 Hornets 14

Standard Star of the Game: Sir Winston running back Alex Christie.

For the Sir Winston Churchill Bulldogs: Jeffrey Finlay touchdown; Max Cameron touchdown; Jonathan Demetriades 21-yard field goal.

For the Stamford Hornets: Donald Schuell touchdown.

Through the air: Sir Winston's John Krzeczowski 10- 18, one TD, 2 ints; Stamford's Cameron Brockwell, 11-16, 2 TD's.

By the quarter: Stamford led 7-0-after one quarter, 14-6 at the half and 14-9 after three.

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