

## Beware of dogs

### Sir Winston Churchill Bulldogs looking to build on last year's surprise championship

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The Sir Winston Churchill Bulldogs were a year ahead of schedule when they captured the Varsity League title last season with a 16-4 victory over unbeaten A. N. Myer.

"Sometimes you have to be good and sometimes you have to be lucky and we were a little bit of both. It could have went the other way but it didn't," head coach Peter Perron said.

But now with 35 players back, including 17 starters, the Bulldogs are the favoured team in the 12-team loop that now includes Premier League dropouts Holy Cross and Westlane.

"I wouldn't say we have a swagger as much as confidence. They realize they have to work hard to get there," Perron said.

Being the top-rated team is something the Bulldogs will have to get used to.

"It was kind of nice being the underdogs last year. Now we have the target on our back and everyone is trying to come after us," said slotback/linebacker Ryan Saunders.

Saunders, who had four momentum- changing carries for 41 yards in the second half of last year's championship game, is one of the key cogs in the Bulldogs' quest to repeat.

"He has great character and he's smarter, as is the whole defence," Perron said.

It's the defence that has stepped it up a notch this year and makes the Bulldogs even more formidable.

"It's because of the maturity and the number of players we have returning," Perron said.

And it certainly doesn't hurt that the Bulldogs boast 13 players who suited up for the Niagara Spears this season, including six at the senior level. Saunders was a starting outside linebacker for the senior Spears this summer after filling that role for the junior squad in 2007.

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"I've been doing all sorts of training all summer and I know a lot of guys on the team have The 6-foot-1, 210-pounder says that work ethic is a good omen for Churchill football.

"We're preparing and we're serious about football at Sir Winston this year," the Grade 12 student said.

Following are profiles of the teams in the Varsity football league.

A. N. MYER History lesson: Went 7-0 in regular season, beat Centennial 21-19 in quarter-finals and St. Francis 44-0 in semifinals, before losing 16-4 to Sir Winston Churchill in the final.

Coaching staff: Dave Sauer, Nico Marino, Dave Buchanan, Dan Hagar and Kory Knox.

Expectations: "I think we'll do well. We'll definitely be competitive," Sauer said.

Scouting report: 20 returning players, including 10 starters; average size; athletic; lots of team speed.

Key players: QB Shawn Bayes; RB Nathan Billard; TB Jamie McConvey; LBs John Foss and Rob Adams; and DEs Kevin MacDonald and Joel St. Onge.

Teams to beat: Churchill, Simcoe and Holy Cross.

Last five years: 36-7 (.837) in Varsity and Division 2.

BEAMSVILLE History lesson: went 2-4-1 in regular season and lost 31-7 to Stamford in the quarter-finals.

Coaching staff: John Pellow, Frank Schilte, Jon Gemella, Chris Brown and Paul Hurd.

Expectations: "For this year, it will be to make the playoffs and hopefully upset one of the favoured teams along the way," Pellow said.

Scouting report: 20 returning players, including 12 starters; excellent size, especially among Grade 9 and 10 players; good speed at skill positions.

Key players: WR Nathan Glover; QB Ryan Dalley; SB Tyler Wormald; DLs Spencer Cherwaty and Seth Copeland; LB/OG Colton Cook.

Teams to beat: Sir Winston Churchill and Holy Cross.

Last five years: 15-20-2 (.432) in Varsity. CENTENNIAL

History lesson: Went 2-5 in the regular season and lost to Myer in quarter-finals.

Coaching staff: Rod Richards, Drew Penwarden, Cole Richards, Mike Vallee and David Lavictoire.

Expectations: "We have two goals: to make the playoffs and make a deep run. We thought we under-achieved last year and we plan to rectify that this year," Richards said.

Scouting report: 25 returning players, including 20-21 starters; good size and team speed; entire backfield and linebacking corps return; inexperienced at QB.

Key players: RB Brian Lawrence and Mike Boyd; OL Matt Berg and Chris Cantolini; S Zach Hargrave; LBs Steve Nunes and Kevin Gallagher.

Teams to beat: Churchill and Simcoe.

Last five years: 19-10-1 (.488) in Varsity and Division 2.

## FORT ERIE

History lesson: Went 0-7 and missed playoffs.

Fort Erie coach

Coaching staff: Luc Gerritsen, Dean Gibson, Matt Day, Jeremy Bradt and Kyle Conway.

Expectations: "I'm looking to turn some heads this year. We have the makings of a good team," Gerritsen said.

Scouting report: 25 returning players, including 18 starters; a lot faster and bigger team than last year; QB Matt Woehl was starter with Junior Spears.

Key players: Woehl; FB Cody Conway; WR Will Ryder; TB Clay Grant; LB Craig Sider; DLs Dray James and Kenny Reichelt.

Teams to beat: Westlane, Sir Winston Churchill and A. N. Myer.

Last five years: 31-12-1 (.716) in Division 2 and Varsity.

GOVERNOR SIMCOE History lesson: Went 3-3-1 in regular season and lost 26-25 to St. Francis in quarter-finals.

Coaching staff: D'Arcy McCardle, Jamie Brophy, Cam Donevan, Steve Torok, Chris Book and Andrew Watson.

Expectations: "Our expectations are to try and finish .500 and get better at the end," Mc- Cardle said.

Scouting report: 20 returning players, including eight starters; decent size; middle-of-the- pack team speed; execution

will be key to success.

Key players: RB Greg Bush; WRs Andrew Richard and Guy McKey Jr.; LB Geoff Williams and Jake Barber; DT Jake Barber; K/etc. Liram Hajrullahu.

Teams to beat: Churchill and Westlane as darkhorse.

Last five years: 24-15-2 (.625) in Varsity. GRIMSBY

History lesson: went 1-6 in regular season and missed playoffs.

Coaching staff: Pete Mitchell, John Kent, Mark Walker, Mark Gilbert, Jim Wright and Gino Mosca.

Expectations: "We have some talent. We hope to make the playoffs," Mitchell said.

Scouting report: 22 returning players, including 12 starters; average size, good team speed; older students new to football on defence.

Key players: SB/QB Victor Bibby; QB Lukas Spagnolo; RB Bryan MacRitchie; MLB Corbin Dailey; DB Dan Penfold; DL Mike Moran.

Teams to beat: Sir Winston Churchill, Holy Cross and Westlane.

Last five years: 5- 27-1 (.167) in Varsity.

## HOLY CROSS

History lesson: Went 1-6 in Premier League and missed playoffs.

Coaching staff: Jim Craig, Brian O'Rourke,

Lou Stranges, Dean Memme and Randy Nunn. Expectations: "We're hoping to be competitive in a new league while trying to get accustomed to playing four-down football again," Craig said.

Scouting report: 18 returning players, including 10 starters; medium size; good team speed; 36 players on roster.

Key players: RB Jared Nunn; FB Tyler Gamble; WR Matt Bayley; LB Adam Smith; DB Jordan Davis; DL Alex Windsor.

Teams to beat: Sir Winston Churchill, Westlane, Governor Simcoe.

Last five years: 7-32 (.179) in Premier League.

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL History lesson: Went 5-2 in regular season, beat Collegiate 24-17 in quarter-finals, Stamford 18-14 in semifinals and Myer in the final.

Coaching staff: Peter Perron, Peter Partridge, Steve Cook, Scott Hill, Jim Thibodeau and Bob Krzeckowski.

Expectations: "Our expectations will be quite high but it will be a good, challenging league," Perron said.

Scouting report: 35 returning players, including 17 starters; average size but athletic; fast and strong; 13 Niagara Spears on roster.

Key players: RB Gary Spero; QB John Krzeckowski; DE Mattin Majidi; FB/LB Ryan Saunders; TE Jeff Finley; DE/LB Gavin Cook; DB Josh Brown-Murie.

Teams to beat: Westlane, Holy Cross, Myer and Stamford.

Last five years: 25-14-1 (.638) in Varsity. STAMFORD

History lesson: went 5-1-1 in regular season, beat Beamsville in quarter-finals and lost to Churchill in semifinals.

Coaching staff: Brad Martin, Adam Grant, Gary MacDonald, Kitchener Howard and Sam Michitsch.

Expectations: "To make the playoffs," Martin said.

Scouting report: 24 returning players, including eight starters; decent size and team speed; team more focused this year after error-prone and undisciplined loss in semifinals last year.

Key players: SB Robbie Farquharson; QB Cam Brockwell; RB/FB Isaac Dell; LB Doug Borowski; DTs Frankie Cutts and Hunter Bowman.

Teams to beat: Churchill, Holy Cross and Westlane.

Last five years: 22-17-1 (.563) in Varsity and Division 2.

ST. CATHARINES COLLEGIATE History lesson: Went 3-3-1 in regular season and lost to Churchill in quarter-finals.

Coaching staff: Chris McBride, Brad Anderson and Todd Hill.

Expectations: "We're going to try and improve week by week," McBride said.

Scouting report: 15 returning players, including five starters; bigger and younger team compared with 2007; good team speed.

Key players: QB Terry Hall; RB Jake Harper; SB John Spink; LB/DL D. J. Gagnon; tackles Chad Williams and Willie Plett.

Teams to beat: Beamsville and Westlane.

Last five years: 9-25-2 (.278) in Varsity. ST. FRANCIS

History lesson: Went 5-2 in the regular season, beat Simcoe in quarter-finals and lost to Myer in semifinals.

Coaching staff: Gord Barber, Sean Jones, Glen Timluk, Jay Lennox, Sean Santoro and Jay Cukierski.

Expectations: "We hope to be competitive; the same thing I said last year," Barber said.

Scouting report: 25 returning players, including 10 starters; half-decent size and pretty good team speed; hard working.

Key players: QB Colin Donnelly; RB Sandro Sferrazza; WR Mitch McPherson; LB Bobby Vander Zalm; DBs Jesse Crisp and Pat Dowd.

Teams to beat: Holy Cross, Westlane, Churchill and Myer.

Last five years: 20-21-1 (.488) in Varsity and Division 1.

WESTLANE History lesson: Went 2-5 in Premier

League and missed playoffs. Coaching staff: Jason Babony, Scott Ellis,

Bruce Litke, Stan Reid, Jon Quagliariello and Tim Hough.

Expectations: "Hopefully we will be competitive in the new league. We will have a target on our back making the transfer to Varsity from Division 1," Babony said.

Scouting report: 12 returning players, including seven starters; QB Brandon Legault transfers from Lakeshore Catholic; good size on lines; speedy backfield.

Key players: TB Dave Handley; WR Jim Farhat; FB/OL Matt Lake; DT Gerard Landrum; S Darren Butcher; LB Wes Huggins.

Teams to beat: Myer, Stamford and Churchill.

Last five years: 12-27 (.308) in Premier and Division 2.

trained all summer," Saunders said.

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