

Warriors have devil of a time

It won't be long before the Ridgeway-Crystal Beach Blue Devils football team ends its 36-year winless streak.

Returning to the gridiron after a lengthy absence Thursday, the visiting Blue Devils gave perennial powerhouse West Park all it could handle before falling 14-7 in the opening game of A League action.

If not for a dropped pass in the end zone at the start of the fourth quarter, the Blue Devils would have ended up with a tie against a school with a 33-11-1 record over the previous five seasons.

"That's how we were trying to teach the guys to play," Blue Devils head coach Cal Nigh said. "We're just elated to be in a game and to be able to play."

It was a start that was unexpected.

"We hoped so, but we weren't sure," Nigh said. "This gives us a really good idea of what we can do."

Making the difference for West Park Thursday was Dylan Howard, who caught a pair of TD passes among seven catches and ended the game with an interception.

"Dylan is Dylan" Warriors head coach Frank Popoli said. "He has terrific hands, is a great athlete and a good kid."

The 6-foot-2, 170-pound receiver, who also plays with the Niagara Spears Junior Varsity team, ended the day with 87 yards receiving and was quarterback Kevin Beardwood's first option.

"That seems to be Beardwood's receiver, if I was a quarterback, I would look to him too," said Popoli, who has watched Howard make plays since minor football.

But it wasn't all fun and games for the 17-year-old Howard, who twice left the field with injuries.

I kind of got the air knocked out of me," said Howard, who had never before been helped off the field twice in one game.

But he was quick to return to play both times.

"It's football. You just have to get back into it," he said.

BULLDOGS 25 SPARTANS 8

Visiting Sir Winston Churchill evened its AAA/AAAA League record at 1-1 by defeating the Westlane Spartans (0-2).

Alex Christie scored on runs of one and five yards for Churchill and added an interception. Quarterback Andrew Krzeczowski scored on a oneyard keeper and Max Cameron booted a 28-yard field goal. On defence, Jarod Cardas forced two fumbles and Matt Finley had three of the Bulldogs' six sacks.

Churchill's quarterbacks were picked off five times and the team took 11 penalties.

"We made too many mental mistakes," Bulldogs coach Peter Partridge said. "Our football IQ was really low today."

BEARS 26 EAGLES 13

Tied 13-13 midway through the fourth quarter, the South Lincoln Bears recorded two late majors to defeat the visiting Eastdale Eagles in A League play.

For South Lincoln: Aaron Shrum caught 17-and 70-yard TD passes from Dan Macaro; Mitch Gardiner scored on a oneyard run; Jason Heffner scored on a seven-yard run; and, Johnny Farrer and Jake Tuck picked off passes.

"They've got a nice team this year," Bears coach Chris Freuere said. "It was a good game."

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THE SCOOP

Warriors 14 Blue Devils 7

Standard Star of the Game: West Park's Dylan Howard with a game-ending interception and seven catches for 87 yards, including TD grabs of 31 and 12 yards.

For the West Park Warriors: Howard, 2 TDs; Kevin Beardwood, 10-16 passing for 106 yards and two TDs; interception by Blake Finora; fumble recoveries by Nigel Montague and Nigel Masenda; sack by Josh Harder. For the Ridgeway-Crystal Beach Blue Devils: Matt Woehl, one-yard QB keeper for TD; Gabe Elijah, 15 carries for 79 yards; fumble recovery by Rob Osborn.

Game stats: First downs: WP 8, RCB 12. Net offence (pass-run= total): WP 106-51=157, RCB 38-93=131. Turnovers: WP 2, RCB 5. Penalties: WP 10-for-50 yards, RCB 3-for-20 yards.

Up next: Thorold is at Ridgeway- Crystal Beach Thursday at 1:30 p.m.