

# Bulldogs' home away from home

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Contesting Varsity 1 football championships in Niagara Falls is becoming old helmet for the Sir Winston Churchill Bulldogs.

In 2007, the Bulldogs knocked off the A. N. Myer Marauders on that school's snow-covered home field.

Last year at the Kalar Sports Park in Niagara Falls, the Bulldogs rallied from a 14-0 deficit to beat the Stamford Hornets 15-14.

Stamford and Churchill will do it all again Friday at 1 p. m. at Stamford.

"I don't believe there is any home-field advantage in high school football," Churchill head coach Peter Partridge said.

In 2007 and 2008, the Bulldogs had as many or more fans cheering them on as their opponents did.

"It's not like we're travelling to the Big House in Michigan in front of 110,000 fans," Partridge said.

Stamford played four night games at Kalar Sports Park this season and head coach Brad Martin has seen enough.

"Tell you the honest truth, we've had four night games and four trips to the hospital. I'm a superstitious guy," he said with a laugh.

Given the past two championships, Martin doesn't give much credence to home-field advantage or with what has happened prior to this year's final.

"It's one of those types of years where a lot of people can beat each other."

Last season, Stamford would have been considered by most observers to be a slight favourite in the final, but this year the Hornets are clear underdogs.

"Churchill is a tough team and they've proven it throughout the whole year," Martin said. "I think we're very much the underdog."

Partridge expects a tough, physical, low-scoring game that will be won or lost on the line of scrimmage.

"I think conditioning will play a big part, especially in the latter stages of the game," he said.

To knock off the Hornets, the Bulldogs need to contain Robbie Farquharson, who had TD runs of 91, 89 and 45 yards in Stamford's 47-40 semifinal victory over Beamsville.

"He is extremely dangerous every time he touches the ball, and we must be aware where he is on the field."

Partridge is also concerned with quarterback Cam Brockwell

"We also must put pressure on their quarterback who is agile, experienced and has a nice arm."

On offence, the Bulldogs need to be patient, establish their running game and minimize mental mistakes and the resulting penalties.

Stamford isn't expecting any surprises from the Bulldogs.

"What they do, they do very well," Martin said. "They run the ball well and when they throw, they're nice patterns and they have good protection."

He feels the Bulldogs have excellent skill players, but that's not the biggest factor why Churchill is gunning for its third straight crown.

"I think the success they've had over the past couple of years is because of their offensive and defensive lines," Martin said.

The Bulldogs pounded Stamford 48-12 in the second week of the season, but Partridge isn't expecting to be as fortunate this time around.

"Stamford had a tough first half against us last time," he said. "We returned an interception for a touchdown, a kickoff for a touchdown and they turned it over two or three times.

"That put them in a big hole, which made it difficult for them to come back."

Martin believes the final score of the regular season game wasn't indicative of the game.

"We had a lot of turnovers. We're an extremely young team this year and it has been an unusual year. We've been up and down and up and down. We're happy we're in the finals but we know we have a helluva job ahead of us."