

# **Bulldogs' season ends with playoff loss to Thunder**

By **BERNIE PUCHALSKI , STANDARD STAFF**

In the last three years, the end of the Sir Winston Churchill Bulldogs football season was heralded by a wild celebration and the hoisting of a championship trophy.

On Thursday, the Bulldogs season ended with a 45-7 road loss at Blessed Trinity in the AAA/AAAA quarter-finals and the realization of just how good the calibre of football is among the better teams in the former Premier League.

Head coach Peter Partridge's end-of-season address to his team was a plea that the players need to get quicker and stronger if they wanted to attain anywhere near the level of success they had in winning three straight Varsity 1 crowns.

"Certainly the old Premier League teams take football a little more seriously 12 months of the year. The league is faster, more aggressive and tougher and we have to rise to the occasion. It's a good learning experience and we will learn from it," Partridge said.

He agreed Churchill's first go-around in the AAA/AAAA league was an eye-opener.

"We're used to coming in the first week of school and getting going with football. I guess we've kind of had our ears pinned back in a few games against some of the teams that go most of the year."

One Churchill player who couldn't be accused of not playing tough was Grade 12 running back Alex Christie.

The 5-foot-8, 180-pounder suffered a concussion in last week's game against Lakeshore Catholic and spent all of Tuesday in bed before playing in Thursday's game.

"I had to play. The team needed me to have an impact and I gave it what I got," said the 17-year-old player, who rushed for 131 yards and an 80-yard TD in the game.

Christie and Bulldog quarterback Andrew Krzeczowski probably tied for the team lead in the most hard hits received during the season.

"It's a new league, we lost a lot of our impact players last year and hopefully next year, we can get in the gym in the off-season and get to them next year. In this league, the hitting is something and they think football 12 months of the year," Christie said.

He plans to return for a second year of Grade 12 and says the Bulldogs will be more prepared for the league next season.

"The captains will get them ready," he said.

On Thursday, the Thunder looked ready and were nothing like the squad that eked out a 16-3 victory over Churchill in the sixth week of the regular season.

"I commend BT. They had a tremendous performance today. They were so physical and they over-powered us on both sides of the ball. They created big lanes for their running backs and they shut our whole offence down," Partridge said.

For Blessed Trinity head coach Brad Hubbard, the biggest difference between the two games was his team's attitude.

"We finally realized our potential and the guys realize and appreciate the scouting reports. And I think we had a good week of practice. The guys were focused and I think it showed today."

Hubbard will be looking for more of the same in next Friday's playoff championship semifinal at Notre Dame.

"We have to replicate the same amount of execution and discipline and win the turnover battle. Any team in this league, especially in the playoffs, if you hand over the ball, they're going to make you pay."

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## THE SCOOP

Thunder 45 Bulldogs 7

Standard Star of the Game: BT's Cody Chemerika, eight catches for 121 yards, including TD runs of 55 and 23 yards, and three catches for 77 yards.

For the Blessed Trinity Thunder: Chemerika, two TDs; Jason Baum, 14 carries for 137 yards, including TD runs of 54 and 39 yards; Kyle Kewell, 6-10 passing for 117 yards; Curtis Poos, one-yard TD run; D.P. Mainse, 17 yard TD run; sacks by Nick Bodden, Joel Williams and Joe Blackborow; fumble recovery by Jaskson Rand.

For the Sir Winston Churchill Bulldogs: Alex Christie, 16 carries for 131 yards, including an 80-yard TD run; fumble recovery by Adam Bosse.

Game stats: First downs: BT 18, SWC 4. Net offence (pass-run= total): BT 117-355=472, SWC 12-139=151. Turnovers: BT 1, SWC 2. Penalties: BT 4-for-45 yards, SWC 1-for-15 yards.

Up next: Blessed Trinity is at Notre Dame next Friday in the semifinals for the AAA/AAAA League playoff championship.