

## Ugly losses are mounting

By **BERNIE PUCHALSKI , STANDARD STAFF**

The Sir Winston Churchill Bulldogs football team knew it was in tough hosting the unbeaten St. Paul Patriots in AAA/AAAA football action Thursday afternoon.

But things got a whole lot tougher after a bruising victory over Denis Morris last weekend. Starting quarterback Alex Krzeczowski was lost with a concussion, linebacker Jarod Cardas was knocked out with a leg injury and top receiver/ punter Max Cameron will miss four to six weeks with a broken hand.

The end result Thursday was as unflattering as it sounded: a Thanksgiving turkey of a game which came a few days early. When the final second ticked off the clock, St. Paul (5-0) emerged with a 63-8 victory over Churchill (3-2), the three-time defending Varsity 1 League champions.

"It has been a long time since we had it handed to us like that, and the kids aren't too happy about it," Bulldogs head coach Peter Partridge said.

There was little in the way of positives the Bulldogs could take from the game.

"They out-everythinged us and they deserved all 63 points," Partridge said.

It was a game that served as a huge eye-opener for a Bulldogs team that has enjoyed a ton of success in recent years at the Varsity 1 level.

"We knew they were very good, but when you get it handed to us like we did today, it's tough," Partridge said.

Churchill has plenty of company in the beat-down department as the former Varsity 1 schools have all struggled adjusting to the three-down football and the impressive football programs of the former Premier League teams. A. N, Myer went into its Thursday game against Notre Dame being out-scored 161-0 in three games against former Premier League teams. They ended up on the short end of a 57-0 score.

"There's no question this isn't the first time there's been some big beat-downs in the league this year," Partridge said. "Hopefully, we don't see too many more."

St. Paul head coach Rick Oreskovich believes all the blowouts are part of the cyclical nature of high school football.

I think each team is on a down year," he said. "If they all came up last year or the year before, it would be a lot more competitive."

In hindsight, Oreskovich agrees it might have been a good idea to give the former Varsity 1 teams a year of getting used to three-down football before combining them with the Premier League teams.

"That would have been a great idea. Or we could have two divisions again where Premier teams have got to go over and play a couple of Division 2 teams.

"But when it comes to playoffs, they separate. I don't know if some of these triple A schools can handle the quad A schools."

The Niagara Region High School Athletic Association decided this year to have football follow the same rules as other sports and base the composition of the leagues on school population. It has resulted in bigger school-size disparities in this year's new AAA/AAAA league that what existed in the old Varsity 1 loop.

"Absolutely, and the other key too is junior football. You have to have a junior football program with focused coaches who want to win," Oreskovich said.

Former Varsity 1 League coaches are quickly realizing the commitment required by the coaches and players to succeed at the highest level of high school football in Niagara.

"If you think you're going to coach in Premier by coming in in September, you're not unless you have great players," Oreskovich said. "On offence, we do this 12 months of the year.

"Our quarterback and our receivers play touch football all year round and we also go in the gym."

#### GATORS 61 REDMEN 0

Lakeshore Catholic improved to 5-0 in by romping over visiting Denis Morris (2-3).

Nick Boulard scored two touchdowns for the Gators and single majors were recorded by Keaton Spratt, Brandon Legault, Jacob Foran, Jesse Benson, Kyle Gray and Morgan Lavoie. Greg Huffman converted all the majors and booted an 18-yard field goal.

"We had 10 starters out," Redmen coach Paolo Sirianni said, adding he started a fourth-string quarterback and a third-string tailback.

#### THUNDER 48 MUSTANGS 14

Cody Chermericka scored on an 80-yard punt return, a 20-yard run and a five-yard TD pass from Mike Antonucci to lead Blessed Trinity (3-2) over St. Mike's (1-4).

Also scoring for the Thunder were Jason Baum on runs of 10 and 40 yards; Nick Booden on a 50-yard interception return, and Curtis Poos on a five-yard run.

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#### THE SCOOP

Patriots 63 Bulldogs 8

Standard Star of the Game: St. Paul Patriots' Ryan Nieuwesteeg with TD runs of five, six and 41 yards and a nine-yard TD pass reception.

For the St. Paul Patriots: Nieuwesteeg, six carries for 67 yards, four TDs; Evan Murdza 7-for-7 passing for 167 yards, including TD passes to Nieuwesteeg, Stephan Oreskovich (63 yards) and Harry McMaster (12 yards); 10-yard TD run by Stephan Oreskovich; one-yard TD run by Andrew Oreskovich; 25-yard fumble recovery return for a score by Michael Stevens; two interceptions and a punt block by Anthony Stranges.

For the Sir Winston Churchill Bulldogs: Andrew Christie, 17 carries for 58 yards, including two-yard TD run; interception by Jacob Bromhall; fumble recovery by Greg McCormick.

Game stats: First downs: SP 12, SWC 5. Net offence (pass-run= total): SP 179-142=321, SWC 10-101=111. Turnovers: SP 2, SWC 10. Penalties: SP 5-for-45 yards, SWC 2-for-20 yards. Scoring by quarters: SP 21-27-8-7=63, SWC 7-0-0-1=8.

Up next: Churchill is at Blessed Trinity (3 p.m.) and Denis Morris is a Notre Dame (3:30 p.m.) Friday