

Outlaws win OPFL Bantam championship



By Brian Lockhart

It was a Cinderella Story ending to the season for the Orangeville Outlaws Bantam football team when they claimed the Ontario Provincial Football League championship with a win over the Guelph Gryphons on Monday, August 7, in St. Catharines.

The Outlaws finished the regular season in fourth place with a 5-5 record.

The big turn around came in their semi-final game against the first place Toronto Jets. The Jets had an 8-2 record allowing only 80 points to be scored against them.

After stunning the Toronto team with a 26-22 win to sent the Jets packing on July 29, the Outlaws geared up for the final against the second place Guelph Gryphons.

The Outlaws came out strong and fast in the first half of the final to lead 17-7 in the second quarter.

Aidan Murray scored two Orangeville TD's as well as a three point field goal.

Jacob Hosford scored a two point convert to top the O-ville scoring a the end of the second quarter.

The Guelph team kicked a field goal late in the half to bring their score up to ten.

The Gryphons narrowed the score early in the third quarter after driving to the O-ville one yard line then scoring on the next play and kicking a successful one-point convert to tie the game at 17.

The Outlaws went ahead in the third quarter when quarterback Shamsher Hundal threw to Jack Roud to take the ball to the 29 yard line. The Outlaws battled to the seven yard line and followed up when Aidan Murray went through the middle for his third touchdown of the game.

Titus Lyall-Ashby made good for the extra two points catching a pass in the end zone on the convert.

With an eight point lead and one quarter to go the Outlaws stepped up their defence including a quarterback sack from Jacob Hosford and a pass interception from Joshua Yumul for the turn-around.

The Gryphons scored with the three minute flag up to close the score to 25-23 and putting the pressure on the Outlaws to slam the door on any attempts in the final minute.

The Outlaws stopped the convert attempt to end the game and give them the win and the championship.

?We were pumped up and ready to win. They got really close on that last touchdown. We just persevered and beat them,? summed up Outlaws wide receiver Titus Lyall-Ashby.

Outlaws tight end Jack Roud said the strong start worked to give the Orangeville team an early edge.

?We started off very strong, then we let them come back a bit. We held them off for the win.?

Head coach Jim Walsh said the win was the result of hard work by a team that had many new players but came together in the end and worked hard on their skills.

?We were the fourth seed. We had nine brand new players that had never played football before,? Walsh said after the game. ?We got better all year long. Nobody expected us to even be here, never mind to win it. We lost to Toronto (the number one seed) twice and we lost to these guys (Guelph) twice in the regular season. We just adapted. We have a great group of coaches and players. They are sponges for information and learning. It was our game plan to go up early. They (Guelph) have never been behind all year so we thought we would come out and press the issue and see what they had. We got ahead and kept going and hung on as tight as we could.?

When the Gryphons scored to bring them within two points of tying the game, Walsh said his team knew what they had to do. ?They're actually a pretty savvy group. They understood that they had to get two points just to tie us. They knew what their mission was, they went out there and did it.?