

Junior Royals have Devil of a time against O-T

Opening-round playoff defeat caps overall successful season for much-improved team

By Steve LeBlanc
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

It's not that the junior Royals Grade 10 players were any less upset than their freshmen counterparts.

However, for a group that knew nothing but defeat last year, the sting of Tuesday's 19-0 opening-round playoff loss to the Oakville Trafalgar (O-T) Devils was no doubt cushioned by a big-picture outlook regarding the season that had just ended.

Even with a drop down to Tier 2 play taken into account, an 0-5 showing in 2008 to a 5-1 run this fall could certainly be viewed as one of the most successful single-season transformations for any Bishop Reding team in recent memory.

"It's a pretty disappointing way to end the season, but we certainly improved a lot (over last year)," said star running back Ryan Ofei, who with a team-high 10 touchdowns powered the Royals to a first-place finish in Halton's Volpe Division. "It's a whole lot better looking back on this season than

last year."

While putting up points wasn't much of a problem through the regular season, Ofei and company hit a brick wall in the form of the Devils, who used their size and speed to full advantage in plugging up both the middle and outside for most of the afternoon.

An inability to spring Ofei loose early on seemed to set the tone for the decisive loss that would come, as the Royals — while remaining focused and disciplined — weren't quite their offensive-formidable selves.

Said head coach Lee Cond, "They've (O-T) got some big guys who came across the line strong."

Even with three fumble recoveries — snagged by Jacob Evans, John Buckles and Chris Basaez — the Royals simply couldn't mount much of an attack in their first playoff game in three years, and only got inside the red-zone as the final few seconds counted down.

O-T didn't have a whole lot more success moving the ball until midway through the second quarter, when Ryan Zigrossi broke loose for a 52-yard sweep touchdown.



TURNOVER: Oakville Trafalgar's Lucas Lacaprara (30) coughs up the ball on a tackle by Bishop Reding's John Buckles during junior boys playoff action at BR Tuesday.

GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

From there the Devils strengthened their lead with another major zone pass from Brady Switzer — just before half-time, while Zigrossi scored again — on a short end-

zone pass from Brady Switzer — with 2:03 left to seal the deal.

Tuesday marked just the second time this season that the Royals

were held under 20 points. Overall they scored 20 touchdowns this fall, compared to a measly one last year.

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