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SPORTS



SJOERD WITTEVEEN PHOTO

Stouffville District Secondary School's Dan James (centre) laterals the ball off to a teammate during action in last Friday's YRAA tier one junior boys' championship final rugby game against Father Bressani Catholic High School of Woodbridge at Stouffville. The Spartans won the title 13-8 verdict and will advance to the Barbarian Cup at Fletcher's Field in Markham June 9 and 10.

Spartans tackle YRAA title

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
 Staff Writer

It was only fitting that last Friday's York Region Athletic Association junior boys' rugby tier one final would see the two top teams vie for this year's gold medal.

And it was appropriate that the title tilt, which pitted the Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans against Woodbridge's Father Bressani Catholic High School Eagles, would be closely contested.

Playing the game on their home pitch, the Spartans capped off an undefeated YRAA season with a hard-fought 13-8 win.

The victory also enabled the Spartans to qualify for the Barbarian Cup playdowns, which will feature some of the top junior high school teams in Ontario at Fletcher's Field in Markham June 9 and 10.

"It was a matchup that people were talking about all year," said Spartans head coach Jamie Hewitt. "We were the strongest team in the east division and Father Bressani was the strongest team in the west. Both teams were unbeaten in league play. We were looking forward to this game all year."

Dan James and Hudson Heyden each scored first-half tries for the Spartans, who held a 10-5 halftime lead. Sean Hume added a second-half penalty kick.

Hewitt felt the final outcome was decided by his team's ability to set the tempo.

"We play a technical game, whereas Father Bressani likes to kick the ball a lot. We got off our game a bit but we regained our composure and became focused," Hewitt said.

In playing technical ball, Hewitt revealed much of it is predicated on defence.

"Our defence was spectacular. I told the guys, 'If you don't get scored on, you won't lose.'"

Looking ahead to the Barbarian Cup, Hewitt feels his team can be competitive.

"If we play our game, we can beat anybody. We've just got to stay focused and play technical rugby."

In the girls' YRAA senior final at Thornlea Secondary School on Friday, the Spartans advanced to the final by defeating Markham District High School 5-0 in their semi-final contest before succumbing to the defending champion Brother Andre Catholic High School Cardinals 17-0.

We were looking forward to this game all year.



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