

# O.T. practice pays off for SDSS in Ontario title game

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA  
Staff Writer

When the Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans senior boys' rugby team conducts its annual tournament early in the season, it uses a 10-a-side format for a reason.

It forces the Spartans into overtime conditions, which calls for 10-a-side play, said Spartans head coach Jamie Hewitt. Teams usually play with 15 players.

It paid huge dividends for the Spartans when they were forced into O.T. in yesterday's Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations AA gold medal match against the Adam Scott Collegiate and Vocational Institute Lions (Peterborough) in Sarnia.

Playing 10-a-side for two five-minute halves, the top-seeded Spartans successfully defended their OFSAA title with a dramatic 19-17 win over the second-ranked Lions.

As the final score suggested, the contest was close throughout as the Lions took a 5-0 lead in the first half before the Spartans replied with a try by Kyle Miller and convert from Matt Raguseo to reverse their fortunes at the half at 7-5.

The Lions regained the lead in the second half with a try and convert before the Spartans responded with a try by Dylan Stewart to tie the game at 12-12.

The Spartans had a great chance to win the game with just under two minutes remaining in regulation. They had the ball on the Lions' one-metre line but failed to score.

That set the stage for overtime.

During the first five-minute half, the Lions took the ball down to the Spar-

▶ Go to [ofsa.on.ca](http://ofsa.on.ca) for more information on the championships.

tans' one-metre line. But a big defensive stand by the Spartans enabled them to take the ball the entire length of the field for a try by Jamie Gregory and convert from Raguseo to put Stouffville ahead 19-12.

In the second half of overtime, the Lions scored a try on the last play.

But their attempt to tie the game with a convert failed, giving the Spartans the gold medal and their second consecutive OFSAA title.

"It was a nerve-wracking game and an outstanding game," Hewitt said. "These were two evenly-matched teams. But our kids battled."

Hewitt felt a couple of key factors worked in their favour.

One was the players' fitness level as Hewitt noted the contest was extremely physical.

The second, he said, was the performance of Gregory, who filled in for the injured Chris Boake at the critical scrum half position. Boake suffered a hip injury in their final round-robin match victory against Brock High School Thursday.

Making his debut at the position at

the suggestion of Spartans' assistant coach Rob Edmondson, the Grade 12 student's performance mirrored that of Boake.

"For Jamie to make his first start in the scrum half position in the OFSAA gold medal game was remarkable," Hewitt said.

"All 32 guys on the team had plenty of heart and soul and commitment. They were all prepared to play."

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