

# SDSS grounds powerhouse in championship final

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Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans head coach Jamie Hewitt couldn't be more pleased with the manner in which his senior boys' rugby team performed at their annual invitational tournament.

Especially since the Spartans won the event with a hard-fought 15-7 victory over a perennial high school powerhouse in Barrie Central Collegiate in the championship final last week.

Trailing 7-0 within the first two minutes of the contest, the Spartans rallied with two tries before halftime to take a 10-7 lead.

The Spartans added an insurance try on the last play of the game.

Paul Geiger, Curtis Crago and Pat Laffan each recorded one try for the defending York Region Athletic Association champions.

"We played very well," Hewitt said. "Even when we were down, the guys dug down."

"To beat Barrie Central was huge. They're one of the top high school rugby programs in the province."

"Barrie Central had a couple of good players and we shut them down. Our defence was outstanding," he said.

With the tournament being played on the field turf at Bill Crothers Secondary School due to wet conditions on their own pitch, the Spartans reached the final after winning their first game over Crothers 24-0.

With a couple of teams forced to withdraw from the tournament, the Spartans played their reserves in the second game and prevailed 35-15.

Advancing to the semifinals, the Spartans defeated Alexander Mackenzie (Richmond Hill) 30-0.

Entering the tournament, which also featured another rugby powerhouse in Oakville Trafalgar, Hewitt had an inclination his club could emerge victorious.

"I thought maybe we could win, even though we started out slow in our first game against Bill Crothers," he said.

What buoyed the club, Hewitt noted, was their character, especially since the core of the team has been together for a few years.

"Our guys have been here for a long time and they've developed chemistry. They never get down on each other and that's huge. And if they have a bad game they know how to correct things."

"I thought we just got better as the day went on."

In defeating Barrie Central, Hewitt felt it should further strengthen the confidence of his club.

Should the Spartans gain a berth in the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations playdowns, Hewitt said their win over Barrie Central could bolster their ranking.

"If the guys can keep a level head, we'll see what happens in June," Hewitt said.

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