



King City Lions ride 'The Bounce' to YRAA repeat

By John Cudmore

November 19, 2011

Game of inches. Game of bounces.

Put those together for one side and it's usually a lethal and winning combination.

The King City Lions parlayed those ingredients into some late dramatics to pull out a 10-9 victory over the Huron Heights (Newmarket) Warriors in the York Region Athletic Association senior boys football Tier 1 championship game Saturday night at St. Joan of Arc Catholic High School in Maple.

The Lions packed their scoring into the fourth quarter – in a span of less than three minutes, in fact – capped by a hold-your-breath 32-yard field goal from Julian Gutierrez with 4:09 remaining in regulation time. Gutierrez's kick struck the crossbar, popped up, performed a brief jig, then fell King City's way for the winning points.

"My heart dropped," said Gutierrez. "I heard it hit the (bar) and didn't know what to think. Then I heard the crowd noise."

The winning kick came after Josh Baird drove the Lions 82 yards moments earlier, capped by a 12-yard touchdown strike to Marcus Arkarakas who bounced off tacklers and spun into the end zone with less than seven minutes left. Baird also connected with receivers Luca Celebre, Taylor Calverley and Arkarakas on the Lions only sustained drive of the game.

After holding the Warriors on downs, a shanked punt gave King City the ball at the Huron Heights' 32-yard line and three plays later Gutierrez delivered

"It was definitely a scare," conceded Baird. "We couldn't turn it up any higher in the fourth quarter. (Huron is) definitely a talented team and we knew coming into this game we were in for a full-out dogfight. There's definitely some bad blood out there on the field."

Fittingly, perhaps, the subject of fourth quarters has been a focal point for the Lions all season since losing a pre-season re-match against the 2010 Metro Bowl champion Holy Trinity Titans in the final minutes.

"All year long we've talked about owning the fourth quarter," said Lions co-head coach Jeff Masterson. "When you put up 10 in the fourth quarter like that, man alive."

The win sends King City into a Metro Bowl semifinal game Thursday at noon against the Conference of Independent Schools Athletic Association champion St. Andrew's College (Aurora) Saints. Game time at Esther Shiner Stadium in Toronto is noon.

For the Warriors it was the eighth straight year in the YRAA final. It is a nice run, but the third consecutive time the result has been disappointing after four straight wins. Twice in a row now the season has ended at the hands of King City.

"Talk about a game of inches," said Huron Heights' head coach Al Rover, whose team controlled the defensive struggle for three quarters. "If it hits the post and bounces out, it's a dead ball. I can honestly say the game could have gone either way and that's what hurts about the last two years.

"We talked to the kids about the legacy of the program and how proud we are of them.

Huron Heights quarterback Kaleb Scott was by far the best of the Warriors. In addition to managing the

option, he also played defensively in the backfield and returned kicks.

"We just started to de-materialize," said Scott, whose 15-yard run capped a 67-yard scoring drive midway through the first quarter. "That's how it goes sometimes, and they caught some breaks. Maybe I should have jumped up and swatted it out."

Scott also tossed a two-point conversion to Evan LeBer. Combined with a punted single in the second quarter, it staked the Warriors to a 9-0 lead.

This article is for personal use only courtesy of yorkregion.com - a division of Metroland Media Group Ltd.
