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Valley Forge's L.P. Spence breaks loose for an 18-yard gain against Malvern. At the end of the play, he suffered a gruesome leg fracture.

## Valley Forge is no match for Malvern

Two key injuries did not help the Trojans. In the end, it was Chris Downs and the Friars rolling, 40-0.

By Brian Miller

MALVERN — Football, like life, is a game of breaks. And that axiom was never more evident to Valley Forge Military Academy than this week.

On Tuesday's practice, the team's starting quarterback, postgraduate Chase Lacey, broke the fourth quarter's nonleague game with Malvern Prep, albeit with a consistent wealth of taps and peddling on his left hand. He played the entire game, both on offense as a widest end as a defensive back.

L.P. Spence wasn't so lucky. The Trojans' fine senior tailback, who at 6-foot-3, 210 pounds was sure to command Division I college interest this fall, suffered a ugly bone break in his lower right leg after carrying for an 18-yard gain early in the second quarter of what would eventually be a 40-0 Malvern Prep victory.

He was eventually sent by ambulance to a local hospital. He was repaired by both sides as he was driven off the field, but the image of the injury was hard for anyone to forget.

"I know I had trouble looking at it," said Valley Forge coach Mike Muscella. "It was hard for me to get my mind back into coaching. That was the ugliest thing I ever saw."

To the Trojans' credit, they hung in against a talented Malvern team that has one of the best tailbacks in the state. Chris Downs opened his senior season in fine style too, rushing the ball 18 times for 117 yards, while scoring four touchdowns.

Valley Forge simply doesn't have the depth to toe talent such as Lacey and Spence. Muscella was forced to use younger players and Malvern obligingly took advantage of five lost fumbles and six sacks off the Friars' six scoring drives, none started in Malvern territory.

"I really think if Spence didn't get hurt, it would have been a dogfight all the way," said Malvern coach Gump Pellegrini. "It was a shame to lose him, because he was a load. He looks like a great player."

The ball game was really given to Malvern by Pellegrini's admission. "It was really a 129 game. The other 28 points came from turnovers."

Henderson and the air game will be needed to ward off the eight- and nine-man fronts that will be deployed to stop Downs.

Valley Forge M.A. 0 0 0 0 — 0  
Malvern Prep 0 20 19 7 — 40

Malvern Prep's Chris Downs takes the handoff from quarterback Shawn Gallagher (rear). Downs rushed for 117 yards and four TDs.

MP: C. Downs 57 run (kick failed)  
MP: C. Downs 7 run (kick failed)  
MP: Edgerton 8 pass from Gallagher (C. Downs run)  
MP: C. Downs 25 run (kick failed)  
MP: C. Downs 15 pass (kick failed)  
MP: Lee 7 run (kick failed)

## 1997 MP 40 VFMA 0 article and boxscore

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