



Three-Peat State Champions *Ithaca High School*

Insight into a great football program that went 42-0!

Build it and they will come,” that memorable line from the film *Field of Dreams*, brings to mind what happened at Ithaca High School in Michigan. In 2012 the school finished a \$1 million renovation on their football stadium. The difference is that the athletes were already there. And they were winning.

It’s the nature of high school sports

that with fluctuations in talent every year, it’s difficult to stay on top. Just about every team, at some point, has a shot at a state championship. The 2010 season was such a year for the Yellowjackets when they went 14-0 and captured the state title – but the story doesn’t end there.

In 2011 they again went 14-0, and then again in 2012, becoming the only

high school football team in the state to go undefeated. Their 42 straight wins add up to the longest winning streak in the playoff era of the Michigan High School Athletic Association, putting Ithaca in a three-way tie for the fifth-longest winning streak in the country.

We asked head football coach and athletic director Terry Hessbrook if there had been any concern that the

athletes would become complacent in their training after winning their first state championship. Coach Hessbrook replied, “Our coaching staff and our kids just don’t have that mentality. We have a blue-collar approach that our kids really bought into. We show up for practice every single day, check in and check out, and try to outcondition everybody else. Our kids don’t do curls to look good on the beach. They squat and deadlift, even though it’s hard, because they know that this is an athletic workout. If someone is going to beat us, they will have to be willing to outwork us. And we like to think that we won’t be outworked by anyone!”

The team’s work ethic is an attitude the community appreciates. “We have fans show up two hours before kickoff to ensure they get the spots they want to sit at during the game,” says

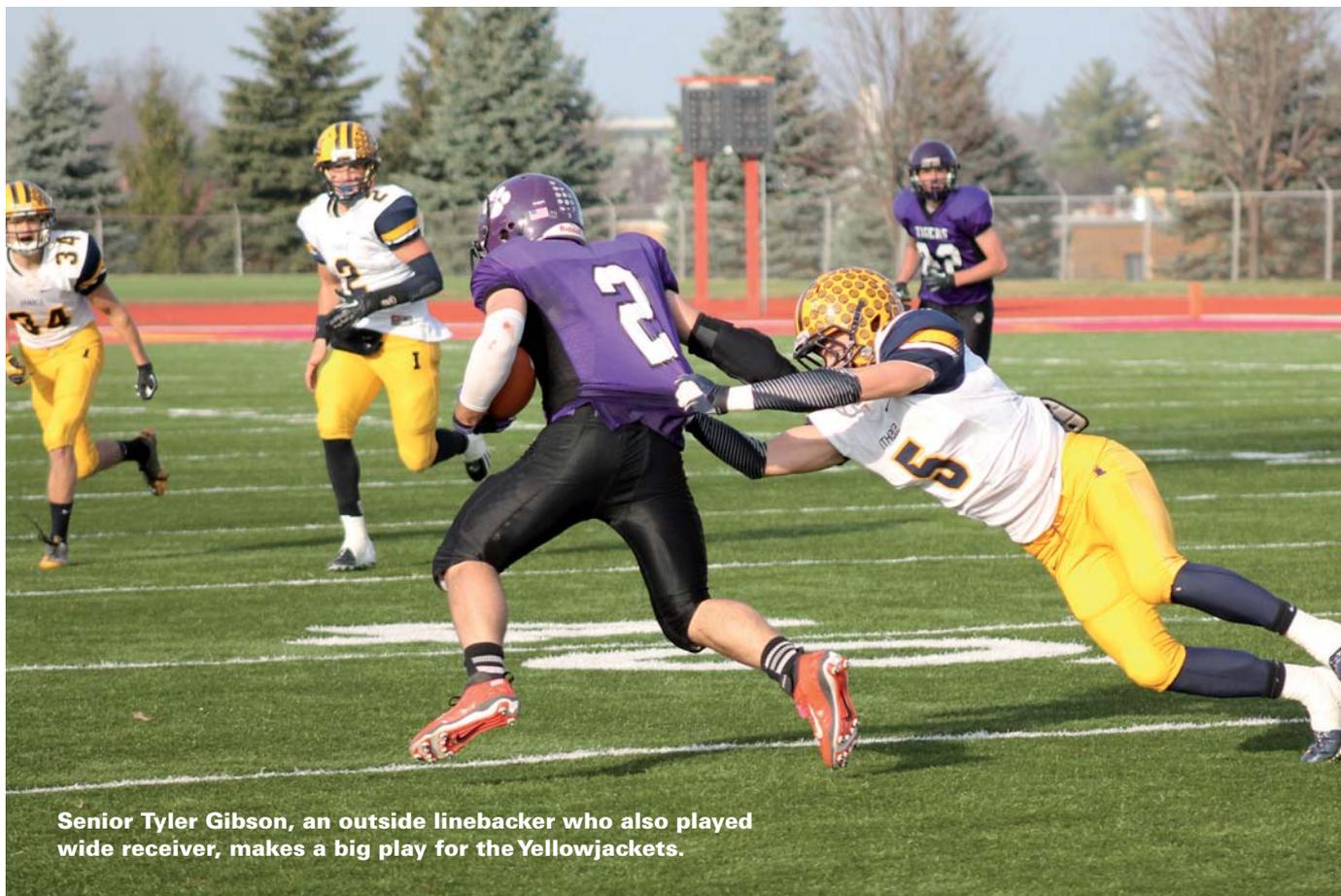
Hessbrook, who has seen up to 5,000 people fill the stands. “Our football team has a tremendous following – in fact, the same can be said for all our athletic programs.”

Another reason for the success of Ithaca athletes is their workout. Hessbrook, who graduated from Ithaca in 1985, attended a BFS clinic in 2001 and convinced the school board to put the BFS program into the school curriculum the following year. “We offer the BFS program as a class. Some trimesters we offer girls-only classes; some trimesters we offer coed classes. We do the six core lifts and the dot drill, we use the BFS cards and we try to test them every month. It has gone over quite well.”

Because Ithaca is a small school with only 400 students, Coach Hessbrook’s coaching staff encourages all their athletes to play multiple sports. He

says, “Because of the size of our school we need to have as many of our kids as possible playing multiple sports.” He adds that the auxiliary lifts in the BFS program allow for flexibility and sport-specific applications, but that they always focus on the core lifts, year round.

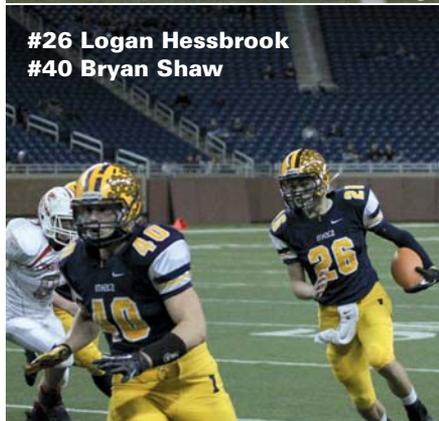
As for the new stadium, an incredible facility that includes a jumbotron, it was a project that was accomplished entirely through private donations. Steve Smith is an Ithaca graduate who has three grandsons who play football, including Yellowjackets quarterback Travis Smith. He and another Ithaca alumni, Dan Macha, helped the school organize a fundraising committee to finance the renovations. According to Coach Hessbrook, Smith not only helped with the committee but also agreed to match funds for any money raised.



Senior Tyler Gibson, an outside linebacker who also played wide receiver, makes a big play for the Yellowjackets.



#23 Luke Bunting



**#26 Logan Hessbrook
#40 Bryan Shaw**



**#10 Caden Kipp
#22 Dakota Reeves**



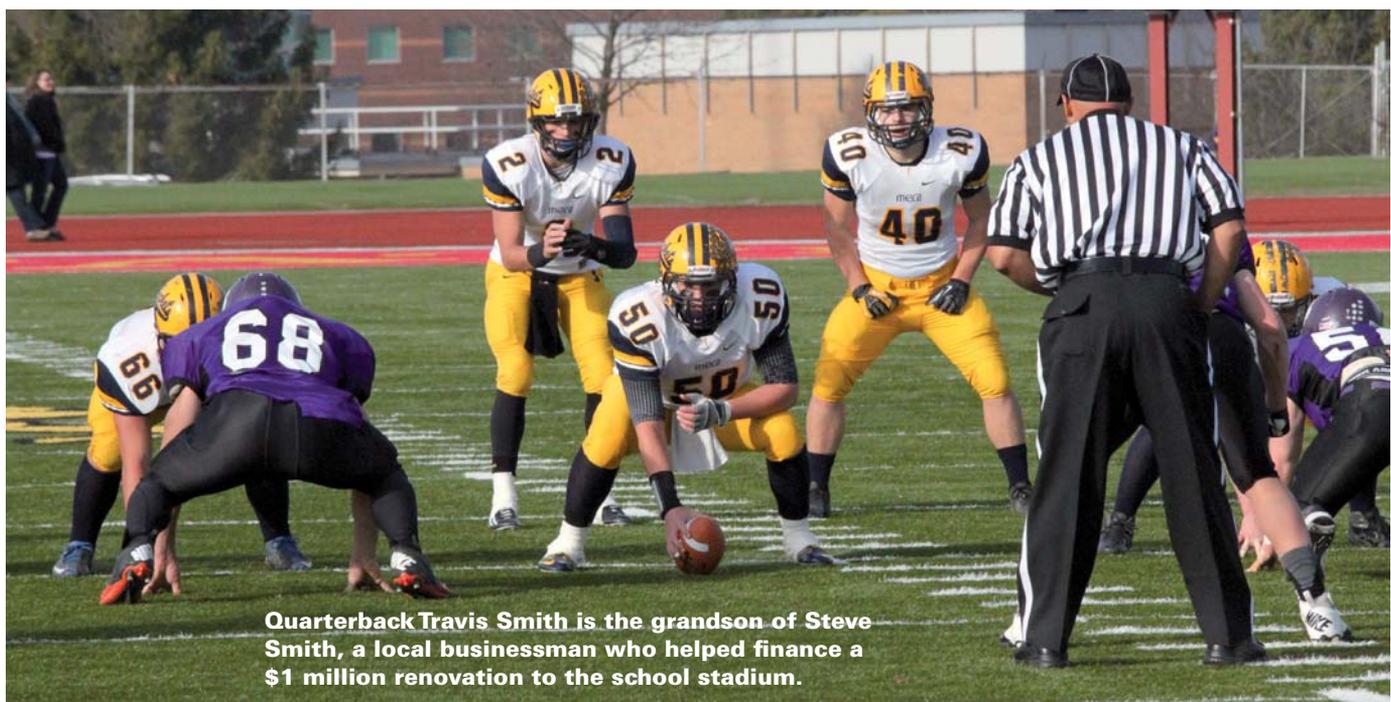
#55 Josh Capen

A few of the hard-working players who were a part of Ithaca's 42-0 winning streak!

Hessbrook and his coaching staff have very high expectations for the 2013 season, with many talented athletes coming back, including a returning starting quarterback. With

or without a full slate of returning players, Ithaca's prospects are excellent for another dream season – after all, the school won those three state championships with three different

quarterbacks. As Hessbrook says, “At Ithaca our kids have bought into what we are selling; they believe in the coaching staff, and the coaching staff believes in them!” **BFS**



Quarterback Travis Smith is the grandson of Steve Smith, a local businessman who helped finance a \$1 million renovation to the school stadium.

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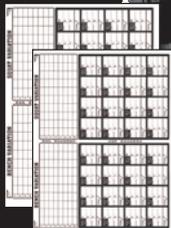


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