

Business as Usual at

Bellport High

An 11-0 season and a major championship is not just a dream, but an expectation for this Long Island Football Team

ACTION PHOTOS COURTESY RICK BERK, ULTIMATE ATHLETE MAGAZINE



Jeff Cipp (left), Joe Cipp Jr., (center) and Joe Cipp II proudly display their Long Island Championship Trophies. Assistant coaches Roy Still and Chris Bauman are Jeff Cipp's godchildren.



2005 Heisman Winner Reggis Bush with Stephen Schwicke and Jeff Cipp in New York City at the High School Heisman Luncheon, which honors the top 22 players from New York, New Jersey and Connecticut

The nature of high school sports being what it is, there are often anomalies in which a school with a losing tradition comes away with a few upsets and many even a championships. Bellport High School in Bellport, New York, is not one of those teams. Since 1976 the Clippers have amassed a 33-13 playoff record that has resulted in two state titles, five Long Island championships, and 16 league, division or coun-

ty titles. The 2005 season was no exception, although a bit more incredible than usual.

After ending the regular season with a perfect 8-0 record, which included two shut-outs, the Clippers faced Newfield High School in the division play-offs. Newfield just so happened to be coached by a Bellport graduate who got his team to the playoffs for the first time in its school's history. The Clippers were an

irresistible force on offense and an immovable object on defensive as evident by a 66-0 result that included several incidences of Bellport players "taking a knee" to avoid making the score much worst.

The next game was the Long Island County Championship, this time being against West Islip High School. It was a rematch of a game these two teams played in the regular season, the result

being a 6-0 overtime victory for the Clippers. This game, which was played to a packed stadium, produced another shutout for the Clippers, but this time the offense got going and they scored 30 points, 24 in the first quarter.

Finally, it was the Long Island Championship. Because there are so many schools with football programs in the area, and the financial drain of adding additional playoff games, this was the highest level of championship Bellport High School could achieve. The opponent was Power Grader City, which had just won its 22nd straight game. This time the team that has adopted the nickname “junk yard dogs” could only put eight points on the scoreboard, but the defense wouldn’t let up as it again shut out its opponent, resulting in a final score of 8-0! Although there is no state championships for Bellport, there is a state-wide rating system and this year it ranked Bellport fourth in the state of New York.

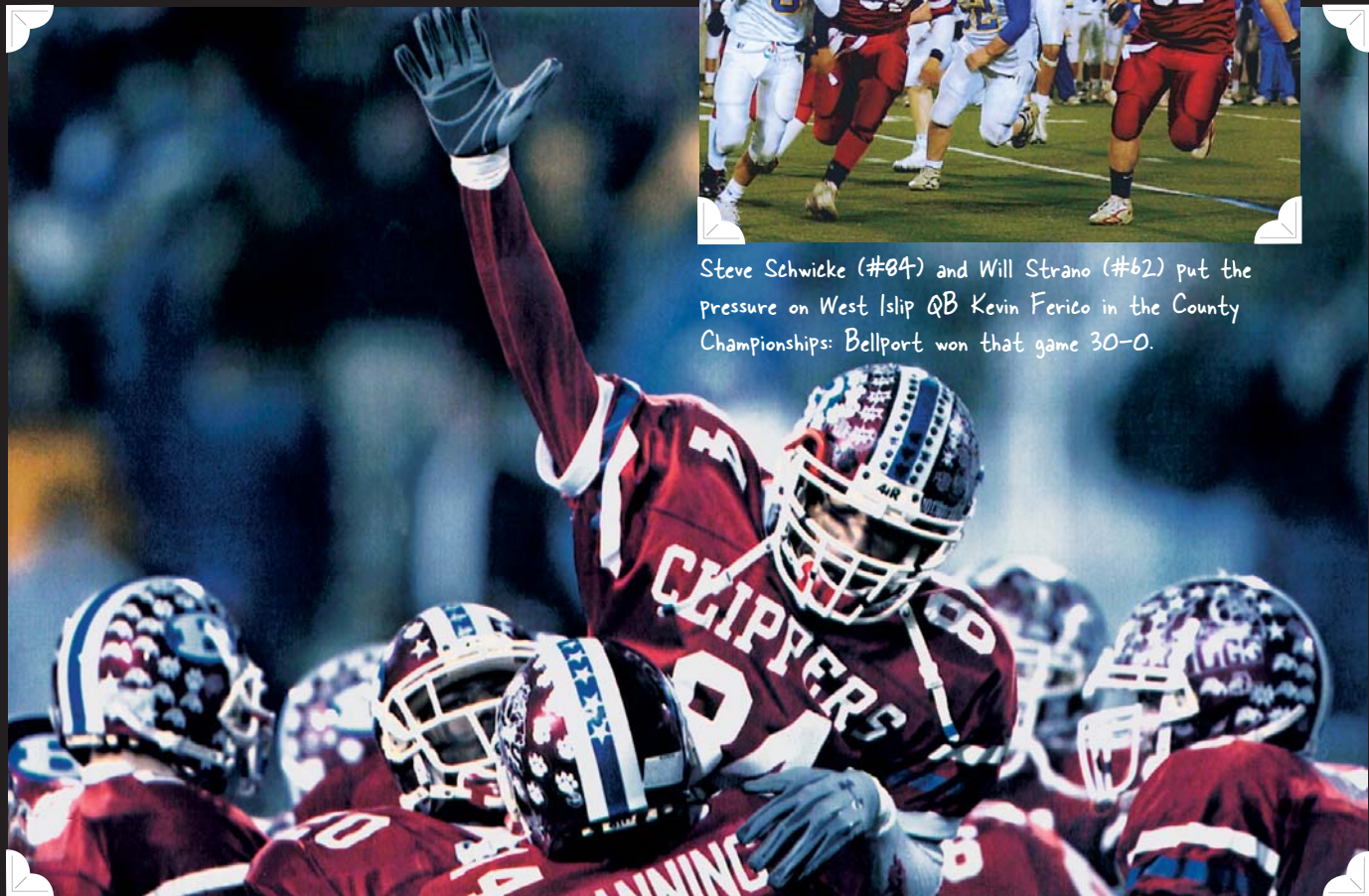
In looking back at the year, a case could be made that “Defense wins championships,” as the Clippers only allowed their opponents an average of 5.2 points a game. In fact, the Clippers only allowed 16 points total in the first quarter and did-



The Bellport high school varsity cheerleading team, coached by Heather Arden, uses the BFS program.

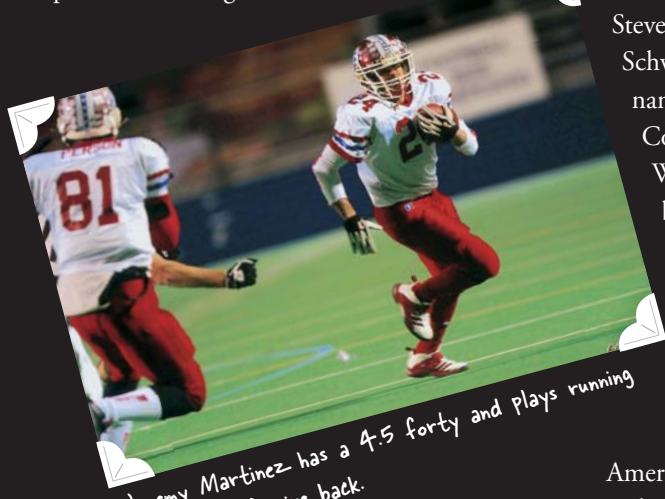


Steve Schwicke (#84) and Will Strano (#62) put the pressure on West Islip QB Kevin Ferico in the County Championships: Bellport won that game 30-0.



#84 Jonathan Spruill leads another Clipper celebration

n't get scored on in the second quarter all year. So as not to run up the scores and humiliate their opponents (except in playoffs, where it's not wise to be conservative), often during the third and fourth quarters of their games the starters are pulled from the games.



Jeremy Martinez has a 4.5 forty and plays running back and defensive back.

Impressive as the defense was, it wasn't as if the players on the other side of the ball were slacking off -- especially when you consider many of their athletes

played both ways -- as they averaged 35.3 points a game.

If you had to single out one player who made the most impact on the team, that would be Steve Schwicke.

Schwicke was named the Collata Award Winner as the best

Linebacker in Suffolk County. He made All-League, All-Division, all-County, All-Long Island, All-State, All-Metropolitan and All-American. He will be attending Stony Brook College this year on a full-ride scholarship.

Winning is a Family Matter

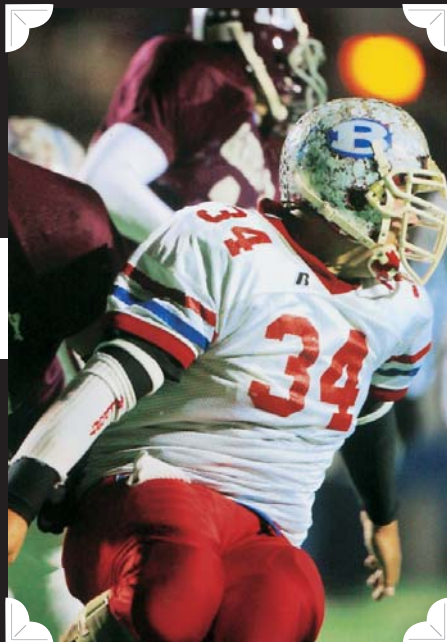
Located in Eastern Long Island, Bellport High School has been one of the winningest football programs in the



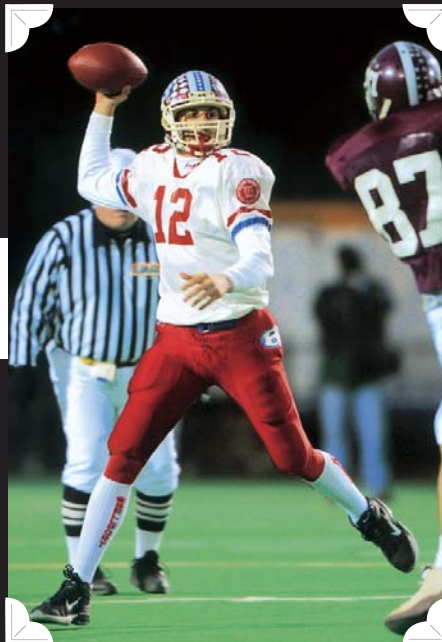
Vaughn Flake (#26), James Prendergast (#35), Danzal Person (#81), and Jay Varney (#22) swarm to the ball. Bellport had shut-outs in all three of their playoff games.

country since Head Coach Joe Cipp, Jr. took over in 1976. He has coached 14 championship teams, with seven being undefeated. Nicknamed "Papa Pigskin," Joe has made Bellport football a family affair as his son Joe Clipp III is the assistant head coach and offensive coordinator, and his son Jeff is the defensive coordinator. Both sons played at Bellport under their father.

One of the keys to Bellport's success is the BFS program. In addition to the core lifts of clean, bench, squat and Hex bar deadlift, Jeff says they added the push



Jason Dent is the all-time rushing leader at Bellport.



All-league Quarterback Mike Pepe is being heavily recruited by many Division I colleges.



All-State Ed Gowins is an All-State linebacker and running back.

press as an advanced auxiliary. "The push press is explosive and uses the whole body." He adds that although he used the regular deadlift when he played ball, he prefers the Hex bar because it's easier on the lower back. And the players love it. Bellport had one player that could do 745 pounds on the exercise, but never went any heavier because they couldn't fit any additional plates on the bar!

To motivate athletes and ensure proper adherence to the BFS principles, Jeff Cipp acknowledges the value of sponsoring clinics. "I would like to thank Jim and Mandy Brown and Len Walencikowski for the inspiration they put within me while attending the BFS clinics and giving me the knowledge and expertise to teach and coach my athletes the BFS program." He adds that another key to their success is goal setting -- high goal setting.

"Our goal is always to go 11-0. "Usually we give the players time off



The BFS dot drill is a key to footspeed for this great team.

after the season, but last year they wanted to get right back into the weightroom. They worked their butts off, five days a week, doing everything that was required with speed training, plyometrics, and of course weight training. There's no question that the dedication and hard work our players showed in the off-season program helped make that 11-0 goal possible."

At Bellport High School, winning

football games has become an important part of community pride. Before games, which are always packed, storefronts will be lined with banners supporting the team. This year after even the local fire department got involved, with their trucks serving to escort the team throughout the city in a makeshift parade. Says Jeff, "Bellport football is like a family, once you're in it, you're in it for life!" **BFS**



Ed Gowins can deadlift 600 pounds



Ed Gowins



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