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# SYOSSET-JERICHO

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## Sports

### Syosset Youth Football Midget Black NSFL Super Bowl Champions

The 2006 Syosset Midget Black football team faced many obstacles, including an extremely difficult schedule and an undersized team. With limited expectations but lots of heart and determination, the team forged ahead into the season, taking on all opponents in their quest for destiny. That destiny was to do what no other Syosset youth football team had done before: repeat as champion of an NSFL Super Bowl. Early on, Coach Ed Klobus presented a challenge that was repeated throughout the season: "anyone, anywhere, anytime - fear no one." Most of the players on this team have competed together on the field of battle for the past five years and know that discipline, preparation, sacrifice and courage are needed to take on such a tremendous challenge. Answering the challenge began on the hot summer day of August 1 and continued through the cold November days, into the Thanksgiving holiday weekend.

The difficult schedule began with the first game of the season and one of the biggest, fastest teams in the league - Brentwood. This was the inaugural game on the new turf field at Syosset-Woodbury Park, with a dedication ceremony held before the game including important town officials. On this very hot day, Syosset coped with their lack of size by unleashing a throwback attack that dated back to the great West Point Army teams of the 40's. Syosset used the single wing offense, where the power of many is greater than the power of the individuals. Combine that with some misdirection, Brentwood was baffled all afternoon. It was an offense perfectly suited to the Braves offensive line, including Matt McGahan, Peter Guiffre, Joey Greenstein, Nick Ronayne, Joey Ditizio, Robert Ditizio, Richie Prestegaard, Jonathan Klobus, Jack Parlo, Evan Lowitt, Tyler Fielding, Jack Randazzo, Vinnie Speranza, and Bryan Ochs. This brand of "caveman football", as an opposing coach described it, used brute force to control the game by keeping the powerful Brentwood offense on the sideline. While Syosset surprisingly had an opportunity to win the game, they came up just short and ended up tied with a very strong opponent. The tie served notice to the league,

coaches, parents and players that this Braves team had what it took to answer Coach Ed's challenge.

The season's success was set in motion as the Braves continued to push opponents up and down the field for victory after victory. One victory early in the season included North Babylon, an historically dominant and tough opponent. Riding this wave of success, Syosset gained confidence heading into their challenge against undefeated Copiague. This game was the ultimate team against the ultimate one-man gang. The Braves identified this game as their annual dedication to their fallen hero in the war in Iraq, Lt. Matt Lynch, USMC. The team traded touchdowns with Copiague's outstanding RB gaining an edge after a poor call by the officials for an illegal formation denied Syosset a scoring drive and contributed to this narrow defeat.

Syosset finished the season with wins over the huge West Hempstead team, Plainedge, Levittown Black, Levittown Gold, and Wantagh White. A regular season ending record of 6-2-1 put the Braves third in the powerful NFS Western Division. They proved they could play with the best and were ready for their post-season playoff challenges.

In the first round, the Braves faced a powerful Eastern Division Broad Channel team. Led by quarterback Ryan Klobus, who made a fantastic comeback after breaking his leg on the last play of the 2005 season, Syosset ran three entirely different offensive schemes, keeping Broad Channel guessing all day on what formation to expect next. Anthony Carchietta, the team's second leading scorer with 10 touchdowns during the regular season, ran for three touchdowns and two extra points to lead Syosset to a decisive 26-6 victory.

Next up was the solid team Bethpage Blue who also finished the regular season 6-2-1. The Braves quickly took control with Robert Speranza scoring three of his team leading 22 touchdowns for the full 2006 season. At the end of the first quarter with a 20-0, lead defensive plays by Derek Napolitano, Jack Randazzo, Tavis Hammer, Perry Feinstein, Matt Costa, Michael Calisto, Ryan Condon, Chris Castoro, Joey Ditizio, and Robert Ditizio finished off the Bethpage team. Bethpage's only chance to score was stymied by a stout Syosset goal line stand from the one-yard line on first down...four plays later and not able to score, Bethpage's playoff hopes were dashed.

It was back to the Super Bowl for the second time in three years for Coaches Klobus, Napolitano, McGahan, Prestegaard, Lehrhoff, Speranza, Parlo and Feinstein. Several of the players were in their third Super Bowl. After Syosset won the toss, the team was inspired by Jack Parlo gutting out a performance on what turned out to be a

broken foot. Robert Speranza scored on the opening drive with a 5-yard run. However, Wantagh came right back with a 60-yard scoring run on its very first play from scrimmage. This was the Super Bowl and Syosset knew this opponent was not going to just roll-over and quit. Wantagh Gold was an NSFL league powerhouse that recorded three of its own Super Bowl victories in past years and was a difficult opponent in past seasons for the Syosset program. Syosset brought out its dependable and grinding single-wing offense and pushed Wantagh down the field, capped-off with Anthony Carchietta scoring from the 7-yard line. After the defense forced a turnover, Syosset was faced with a third and 26. Syosset broke out of hibernation a picture-perfect reverse play sending Perry Lehrhoff sprinting down field for a 65-yard touchdown run that broke Wantagh's spirit. Robert Speranza scored twice more over the course of the game, leaving Wantagh playing from behind all afternoon. Three sacks by Jonathan Klobus and Joey Greenstein, big hits by the Napolitano brothers, Ditizio brothers, Parul Jaggi, Jordan Rauch, Hammer, Carchietta, Prestegaard, Condon and Fielding, a fumble recovery by Vinnie Speranza and an interception by older brother Robert kept the mighty Wantagh offense at bay all day. Justin Napolitano finished off the game with a power full-back run for a touchdown giving Syosset their 39th point of the game - a season high for the Braves offense.

Destiny was met on this day by a group of boys who dedicated themselves to hard work and discipline. The coaches emphasized you must work hard for everything you want in life and to earn respect. The goal of repeating as Super Bowl champions was now complete. An accomplishment this family of football players will cherish with memories for the rest of their lives.

The coaches could not have asked for a greater end to a season. A season consisting of over 60 practices, 4 scrimmages, 9 season games, 3 playoff games, rain, heat and cold. Thanks to all the teams' parents who made the evening and weekend sacrifices for their boys and a very special thanks to team mom Janine Prestegaard for all her hard work (and also for making the best chocolate chip cookies on earth). Thanks also to the Syosset Cheerleading squad coached by Lisa Klobus, Maria Ditizio and Megan Halleran with cheerleaders, Rachel Klobus, Elissa Ditizio, Baily Halleran, Julia Guiffre, Juliana Iavaronne. Their enthusiasm and spirit kept the Syosset Midget Black team fired up throughout the entire season.



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