

Burton, Honce provide spark for Bellport

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Bellport has an iconic history and its players knew a playoff spot was at stake in yesterday's Division II game against Half Hollow Hills West.

"We had a slim chance if we lost this game," senior Mike Burton said. Burton, along with plenty of support from his teammates, made sure that did not happen as Bellport (4-3) quickly erased a 10-0 deficit and scored all of the game's remaining points in a resounding 42-10 victory.

"This," Burton said with a big smile, "is a big relief."

Burton caught a 43-yard pass from Justin Honce less than three minutes into the second quarter. Hills West (3-4) fumbled on the next possession, Justin Winter recovered and Bellport took over on the opponent's 9-yard line. Three plays later, Travis Houpe dashed into the end zone for the first of his three touchdowns and Bellport led 14-10. That erased the quick lead Hills West had built on a 35-yard field goal by Kevin Stanis and quarterback Chris Busuttill's two-yard scoring pass to Randy Davis.

"We all knew the pressure was on," said Houpe. "Down 10-0, we were a little nervous."

Bellport coach Joe Cipp was more than nervous.

"You think you are going to lose 50-0, that is how you actually think," said the venerable Cipp, who is in his 32nd year and is just three games shy of Tom Cassese's [Suffolk](#) record of 209 career victories. "I thought we played pretty solid after that . . . We're starting to look like Bellport football."

Quarterback Justin Honce added, "Being down 10-0 was not the way we wanted it, but we're happy about [the result]. Forty two unanswered points is a great thing."

Bellport made it a 20-point second quarter when Burton picked off a pass on the 5-yard line of Hills West. "I was there at the right time," he said. Honce eventually scored from the one on a keeper and it was 20-10 at halftime.

Hills West put on a wonderful halftime show for homecoming and the crowd buzzed when it spotted famous alumnus JeVahn Cruz, the 2009 Hansen Award winner, on the sidelines. But it was not enough motivation on a day when Bellport channeled its long history as a football powerhouse.

The Clippers scored 22 points in the third quarter on touchdown runs of 16 and 15 yards by Houpe and a 76-yard punt return by Armand Correa. Houpe rushed for 120 yards and now has 633 on 100 carries for the season.

Bellport plays undefeated Newfield next week.

"We feel like we can play with anybody," Honce said. "This week we handled Hills West. Now we have to go handle Newfield."