

# Lacey Township coach, son share football championship

By JOHN O'KANE, For The Press | Posted: Sunday, December 5, 2010



Lacey coach Craig Cicardo Sr. hugs 40 Matt Uveges at the end of the game. Saturday December 4 2010 Lacey wins over Delsea for the South Jersey Group III Championship at Lacey High School. (The Press of Atlantic City / Ben Fogletto)

Photo by: Ben Fogletto

**LACEY TOWNSHIP** - Lacey Township High School quarterback Craig Cicardo comes over to the sideline after almost every single play to talk to his father.

He's not looking for a pat on the back or words of encouragement.

He's looking for the next play.

Cicardo's dad, Craig Cicardo Sr., is the team's offensive coordinator and calls the team's plays.

That combination worked well this season as the Lions finished 12-0 with a 56-7 win against Delsea Regional in the South Jersey Group III final Saturday.

The Cicardos go out of their way to make sure that on the field, it's player and coach.

But after the game was over, the two found each other and gave one another an emotional hug as dad and son.

"We didn't say anything," Cicardo Sr. said. "That's the first time I've seen him cry in years. I told him I loved him and that all my years of being all over him was worth it today."

"I tried not to break down emotionally for four years. Sometimes I've tried to be his coach too much, even at home. ... Today makes everything worth it - the four years of trying to maintain a coach-player relationship with my son. Especially when sometimes people think you're doing your son a favor and things like that. We tried to overemphasize over the four years that it was coach and player, but he is my son and I love him to death."

Lacey's running game was so dominant Saturday that Cicardo didn't need his arm much. He threw only five passes for 10 yards but did score two rushing touchdowns.

On the season, Cicardo threw for more than 1,600 yards and 16 touchdowns while running for more than 500 yards and 18 touchdowns.

Cicardo Jr. was emotional after Saturday's game, in part because of the accomplishment but also because he was able to do it with his father.

"I thanked him for everything he's done for me, everything he's done for all of us ever since we were little," Cicardo said of his dad. "He worked so hard this year, all day and all night, just to make us the team we are today. We could never thank him enough for everything he did and I love him so much."

Saturday was Lacey's fourth sectional title. The Lions are one of the premier football teams in southern New Jersey and Cicardo Sr. knows the pressure that comes along with that as well as anyone.

He was one of longtime Lacey coach Lou Vircillo's first quarterbacks. He was a backup on the 1982 team that won a conference title and was the starting quarterback as a senior in 1983.

"Having him around just made me feel so comfortable," Cicardo Jr. said. "I felt so confident that he was going to make the right calls and do everything it took to win. ... He got on me more than everyone else but all it did was benefit me and made me a better player. I can never thank him enough."

And the Cicardos take their football home.

The two practiced and developed hand signals at home and occasionally, when Cicardo Sr. was watching tape, he would get the younger Cicardo off of his Xbox to come take a look.

But punishment for football errors never came home - except in jest.

"When I would mess something up he would tell me that I wouldn't get dinner," Cicardo Jr. said.

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