



Timmy Haehl

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There has been a lot of talk throughout the years about how "Bellevue recruits and cheats every year". For the longest time, many of the people involved in the program have decided to let people talk all they want, not getting into arguments about how we DO NOT cheat the system. I am one of those people. I was convinced that our success would be credited to the hard work we put into each and every season. Every year, the hard work (I urge you to ask a current or former player about Fort Worden) goes unnoticed. Today, as many of you know, an article in the Seattle Times was released with very little information regarding the "cheating" that apparently has been going on. Since I am not a player in the program anymore, I do not know very much about it, but from what I've heard, the article has completely exaggerated what has happened. In response to this, I've seen a ton of posts from people from other schools and teams, but also people who used to play in the [Bellevue Wolverines](#) Football program. These posts have ranged from support of the program to people saying they are "not surprised." To those who are not surprised: Let me give you a little insight as to the apparent "recruiting" that goes on.

Here is the starting lineup from the 2013 State Championship team and a few notes from me as to why these guys are important to me:

Offense:

[Henry Roberts](#) - met this kid in 7th grade. Went to Chinook Middle School together and now he's going to play at UW with more of these guys.

[Morgan Richey](#) - my first class with him was in 2nd grade at Medina Elementary, played football with him since the 4th grade!

[Marcus Griffin](#) - Marcus came in right before sophomore year from Kirkland. There is a special bond between a center and a quarterback, and you'll never meet a more genuine man.

[Chris Medzegian](#) - Ziggy... him and I had gone to school since KINDERGARTEN. We live no more than a five minute walk from each other and were carpooling to our junior football practices since the 3rd grade.

Alec Palander - Not only had I gone to school with him since 1st grade, but this is the toughest guy you'll ever meet. Hell of a wrestler too.

Tristan Svenson - BUT WAIT! There's more guys who I have gone to school with since elementary school! This is also one!

Ross Connors - You're joking! ANOTHER guy who I've known and gone to school with since I was 3 years old?! Guess Bellevue starts recruiting when we are in elementary school...

Max Richmond and **Sam Richmond** - The two crazy brothers who I have known since I was in junior football when I spent Saturday mornings at Bellevue High School watching the younger teams play.

Timmy Haehl - lived in Bellevue since the day I was born.

Budda Baker - played for the Newport Knights in junior football, but little did you know he lived no more than 5 minutes from Bellevue High School! Due to the Bellevue School District's open enrollment policy, he could go Newport or Bellevue, and I'm sure glad he came to Bellevue because I am privileged to call him one of my best friends due to playing together and messing around in class together.

Defense:

Shane Bowman - Met this kid in 8th grade at Chinook Middle School. Happy to say he will always be one of my best friends because of the bond we formed from playing Bellevue football.

Brandon Kelly - Sat next to him in 6th grade math class. You wouldn't know it, but he's the most artistic guy I've ever met.

Marcus Griffin - WHAT! Bellevue has guys who play both sides of the ball?! Is that illegal?! -__-

Omar Dyles - The lone sophomore who started on this squad. Moved from California with his family to Bellevue the summer before he was a freshman.

Rio Morales - First met Rio in 7th grade when I played on his older brother Ari's team as a junior wolverine after they moved to Bellevue from Oklahoma. Went to school with him for 6 years by the time we graduated.

Ross Connors - Another player who plays both ways? What is it with these guys!?

Mustafa Branch - Went to the Bush School in Seattle as a kid and moved out of state for awhile, only for his mom to get a job back in the area when he was a sophomore and he came to Bellevue High.

Timmy Haehl - both ways... something must be wrong here!

Budda Baker - it's gotta be a joke at this point, right? Ha..

Jack Michael - Lived up the street from me all my life.

Ryan Gilbert - ALSO has lived up the street from me all of my life.

So, for all of you who think Bellevue has been recruiting since the beginning of time, count the guys who I had not gone to school with or played sports with prior to high school. I count 3 out of 20. Count the guys who I consider some of my best friends and brothers: 20 out of 20.

Feel free to look at seasons before 2013 as well. Even 2014! More often than not, the most talented guys on the team are usually the ones who have been in the Bellevue Junior Football program! (If you don't believe me, look at the success of each and every level in the junior leagues, year in and year out.)

If anyone wants to continue to bash on the program, do as you please. But you must first ask yourself if you've ever truly witnessed a night practice at Fort Worden, talked to a former player about what the program means to them, or talked to a coach, because I can promise you the former players that are now coaches will have some strong words for you about tradition, brotherhood, and 'attention to the little things' (as Butch would say) (Matt J Razore, Danny Razore, John Coombs, Tracy Ford, Camden Warren). The list goes on. It's a shame that people try to take away from arguably one of best times in a person's life. Bellevue Football isn't about the wins, the losses, or the championships. It's about life.

Thanks for your time.