

Staying the Course

Coach Alex Jackson knew a good thing when he saw it with BFS



(Action photos by Radocaj, HP Image Zone)

Loyalsock High School

Nick Tate uses his quickness and strength to make a big-time tackle.

“If something works, then stay with it!” would be a good motto to describe Alex Jackson’s coaching philosophy. Coach Jackson is the defensive coordinator at Loyalsock High School in Loyalsock, Pennsylvania, and has been using the BFS program for 12 years at several schools. He is sold on BFS, he says, “hook, line and sinker.” And with good reason.

Jackson started coaching in 1995 at Jersey Shore Senior High School in Jersey Shore, Pennsylvania. Jackson was hired by his former high school coach, Dick Delaney. “At the time we didn’t have a specific weight training program at Jersey Shore – it was literally about four or five kids coming into the gym on their own doing what they wanted,” says Jackson. So Dick and I started looking around for programs, and he came across BFS. I really like it, especially for organizational purposes because it made it really easy for us.”

Jackson says it was difficult at first to get their athletes to believe in the program and “fulfill all our expectations we had for them in completing the log books and using proper form and correct spotting techniques.” Gradually, however, continues Jackson, the kids started coming around; more kids started showing up for their off-season workouts, and two years later Jersey Shore won its first district championship and

playoff game in the history of the school.

After taking a short break to coach at a nearby Division II college, Jackson was hired at Loyalsock to once again work under Coach Delaney.

“Loyalsock had a history of having good athletes but average teams,” Jackson says, “and one reason is that we don’t have many kids come out for football. We’re a small school, graduating about 100 kids a year. And just as with Jersey Shore, we only had a few kids doing what they wanted in the weightroom; they didn’t have the team concept. The following year we had a young team, lots of sophomores and juniors. These kids had an unbelievable work ethic; they did exactly what we asked of





Will Kelly makes a tremendous catch for big yards.



unbelievable work ethic

them, and the improvement they made in just the first two months was unbelievable. The enthusiasm is contagious: We'd have 30 kids a day working out in the weightroom, a remarkable turnout, as we only have about 40 kids in the program." The upshot of all this enthusiasm is a winning program that went from 3-7 to 6-4 and then a playoff berth, which had not been accomplished since 2001.

Coaching Challenges

Jackson says that getting a program going and keeping it going is especially difficult on coaches in today's high schools, especially coaches taking over existing programs. "You have to get the kids to believe in what you believe in, and that can be tough if they're older athletes who have been working under a different system. Also, if you don't have a unified program

and the athletes' other coaches are telling them how to train using methods that are different from yours, often the kids just do their own thing rather than trying to please everyone." And there are other pressures.

"In this part of the country at least, you go into a program and you are expected to win. No matter what they say in the board meetings, they expect you to win the first year. Winning takes an astronomical amount of a coach's time and effort. There are many assistant coaches who just want to show up in August, and that doesn't cut it. It's a tough situation. I remember when I first came here, I had parents who would tell me right to my face, 'We don't believe in what you're doing - it's crazy!' I had one father who was really adamant about it; but now every time I see him, he apologizes, saying to the effect, 'I'm so sorry - I can't believe



#20 Jesse Eggerton



Steve Dewar



Pat Carey

what the BFS program has done for my son, not just his physical structure but also his attitude.”

As examples of how the BFS program has transformed his athletes, Jackson points to three players who weighed less than 135 pounds as freshmen. Two of them now weigh 215 pounds, and the third weighs 195 pounds. Here are the best results in strength and conditioning made by these three players, plus one other – a 150-pound wide receiver who is, pound-for-pound, the strongest athlete on the team: clean: 295, 285, 245, 225; squat: 560, 500, 475, 425; bench press: 375, 345, 320, 255; forty: 4.38, 4.40, 4.41, 4.43. And that’s not all.

“These four athletes decided to run track independently [the school has no track team]. They can run 11.3 to 11.5 in the 100-yard dash and 22.9 to 23.5 in the 200. One can long-jump in the 20-foot range, one can shot-put 46 feet, and they are all part of a 4 x 100 relay team that has yet to lose,” says Jackson. These four young men are on the brink of qualifying for state without having had any track experience or coaching beforehand.

“Parents who were once nonbelievers are now seeing what this amazing program can do for a young athlete in any sport. I am a firm believer in the BFS program, above all others, to help develop athletes to be the best in whatever sport they choose.” **BFS**



Coach Alex Jackson

amazing program



FB/DE Austin Knighton squats 450



T/NG Nick Tate cleans 295



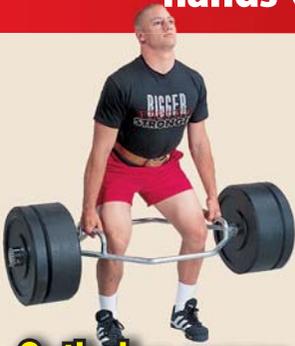
OT/ML Jamie Van Fleet deadlifts 450



S/WR Jesse Eggerton performs heavy glute-ham raises

TOTAL PROGRAM CLINIC

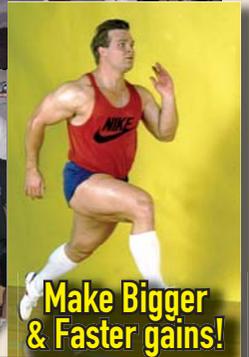
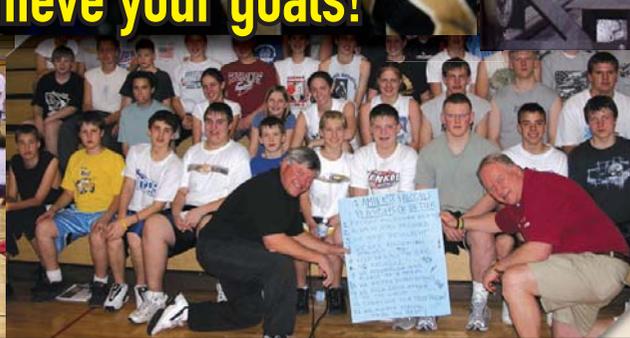
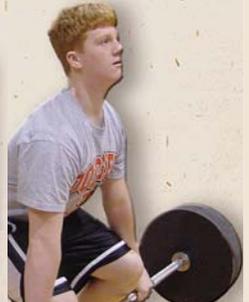
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