



Strong Beginnings: Longhorn-Warrior Youth Lifting Program

A great middle school program is giving young athletes a head start

Bill Gill is the type of coach that athletes remember, with a passion to help kids fulfill their physical potential and achieve their dreams. But after 20 years, the chronic pain of a degenerative disc disease became too much for him to safely instruct at this level. Although his body had been weakened, his passion to continue to help kids was strong and would

not be denied. The result was a lateral shift in his career that has produced an amazing weight training program for middle school athletes.

Coach Gill had served for many years as the strength coach at several schools in the Fairview Park City School District in Fairview Park, Ohio, when back pain got the best of him. Gill then changed his focus and had

several discussions with local football coaches about developing a weight training program for middle school athletes, particularly those from Gilles-Sweet Elementary. The consensus was that the location would be Lutheran West High School in Rocky River, Ohio. "Lutheran West has a great facility to host such a program and was very receptive to the idea of a joint program



The focus of the Longhorn-Warrior Youth Lifting Program is to develop perfect technique to give young athletes a head start in athletic conditioning.

allowing the Fairview boys to train with the Lutheran boys.”

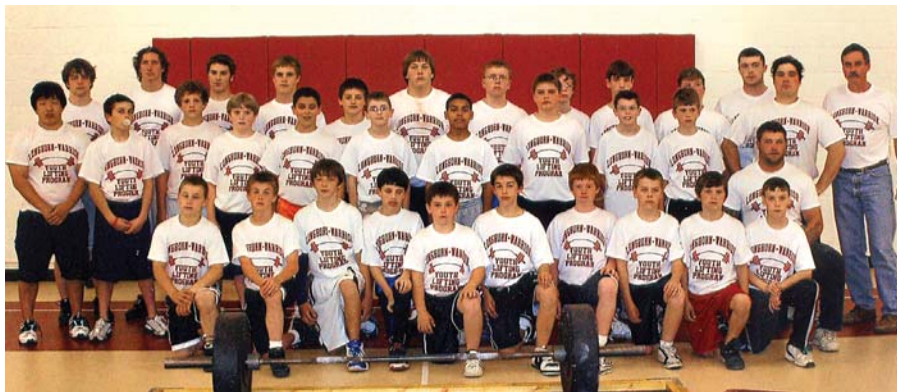
What is fascinating about this arrangement is that most of the young athletes who participate in this program will eventually become either Longhorns at Lutheran West or Warriors at Fairview, and many of the assistant coaches at these schools are students that Coach Gill trained. These schools are football rivals that compete for bragging rights in the community, but their rivalry is set aside when it comes to looking out for the best interests of these young athletes. In fact, the kids all wear T-shirts with the logo Longhorn–Warrior Youth Lifting Program.

The focus of the program is not to get middle school athletes super strong but to teach and develop great technique.



Many athletes who were coached by Bill Gill, such as Zach Williams, who graduated from Fairview in 2002, have returned to help with the Longhorn-Warrior Lifting Program.

“We introduce young athletes to basic multi-movement lifts and agility drills that will improve their range of motion and athleticism,” says Gill. “To safely implement this program, I designed a PVC Olympic bar, and we use BFS styrofoam training plates and Deca Disk plates donated by Dr. Greg Shepard, the CEO/Founder of Bigger Faster Stronger, Inc.” Gill says the use of these training plates allows the bar to be placed at the correct height off the floor. The lifter can address the bar at the proper height



Coach Gill (top row, far right) has developed a great lifting program that is growing in popularity.

to execute the BFS core and Olympic lifts. As the athletes become stronger and can demonstrate good technique, they progress to the BFS Aluma Lite and Ultra-Lite barbells and BFS five-pound training plates.

A lifting platform positioned at the front of the gym allows the boys to gather around and observe from different angles while a coach demonstrates the proper lifting form. “We always begin each session by reviewing and demonstrating the BFS Six Absolutes, says Gill, “Then we have our coaches demonstrate the lifts the boys will be performing that day, such as the power clean, after which they return to the respective lines with their PVC bars and

practice what they were taught.”

Gill believes that one of the values of such a program is that it gives young athletes a head start at getting involved in a heavy lifting program, and this in turn makes it easier for the future coaches of these athletes. “As a former high school coach who had to personally train each individual student who entered the weightroom, I can attest that a trained youth group would be a delight to any high school strength coach. It would relieve him of responsibilities of teaching beginners basic fundamentals, thus allowing him or her to concentrate on serious gains.”

What else can we say? Go Longhorns! Go Warriors! **BFS**

Longhorn-Warrior Coaching Staff

LUTHERAN WEST COACHES

Kurt Schnittger: 2005 West graduate; currently playing football at Grand Valley State University, Grand Rapids, Michigan

John Stock: 2006 West graduate; 2005 state playoffs; currently playing football at Baldwin Wallace College, Berea, Ohio

John Brooks: 2006 West graduate; 2005 state playoffs

Matt Spelich: 2007 West graduate; 2005 state playoffs

Daniel Gesch: Current student at Lutheran West; proficient in Olympic lifts

Corey Blackburn: Current student at Lutheran West

FAIRVIEW COACHES

Zach Williams: 2002 graduate; 2000 state playoffs; member of Warrior Olympic lifting team

Tim Kay: 2001 graduate; 2000 state playoffs; fullback at John Carroll University

Jordan Beach: 2000 graduate, tailback; defensive back at Mount Union College

Mike Boerio: 2001 graduate; state playoffs; United States Marine Corps

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