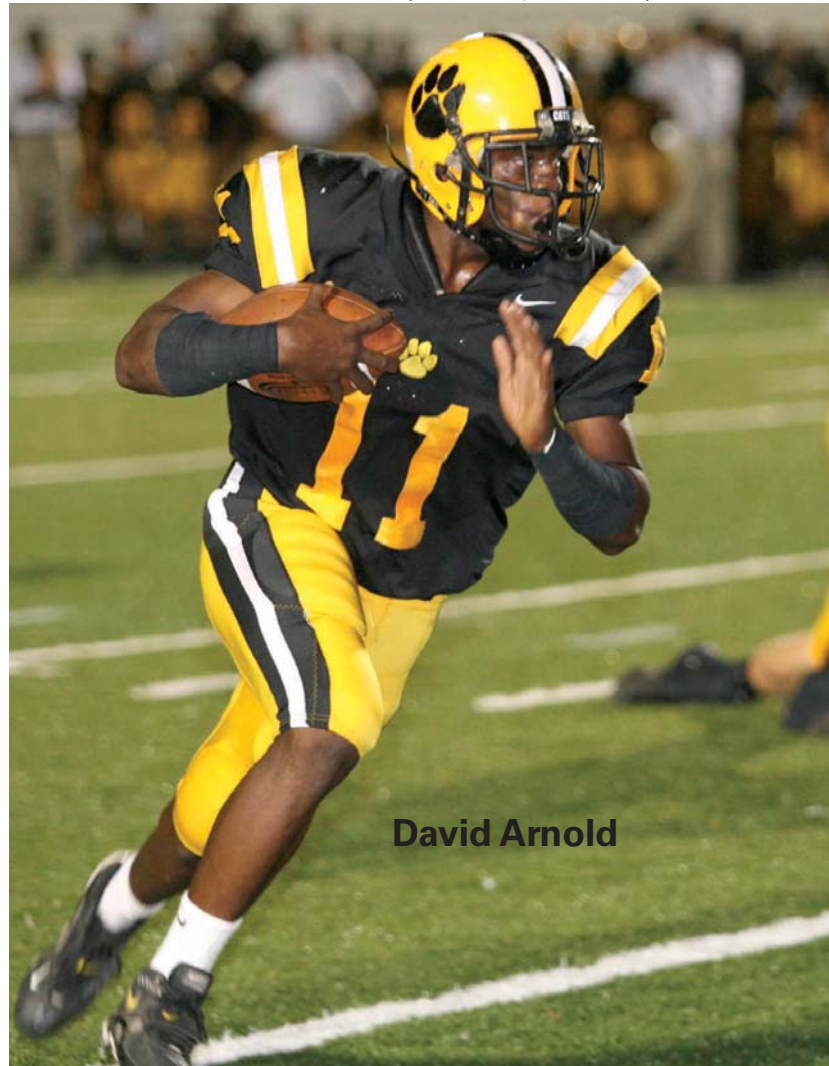




**Tradition of Excellence:**

# *Valdosta High School*

The Wildcats are one of the nation's premier football powerhouses



**David Arnold**

Let's talk numbers. The Wildcats of Valdosta High School have made 29 appearances in the Georgia State Championships, coming away with 23 wins. This proud school from Valdosta, Georgia, has won six national championships, has an 829-183-34 record (a win rate of 80.8 percent), and has had 11 of their players move on to the NFL. You don't get much better than that.

With such a tradition of excellence, it was a serious matter two years ago when it came time to hire a new head coach. The best coach for



Valdosta head football coach Rick Tomberlin (left) with University of Georgia's head football coach Mark Richt.

the job proved to be BFS Clinician Rick Tomberlin, who had coached at

Washington County High School in Washington County, Georgia, for the past 14 years. In that period he went 157-31, with a 91-10 record at home.

Tomberlin's first year was an unusually tough one at Valdosta; but last year the team finished 9-3, made it to the second round of the playoffs, and finished ranked 10th in the state. In this exclusive interview, Coach Tomberlin shares his formula for success and what it's like to take over one of the most prestigious high school football teams in the country.



**Marcus McNair**

**BFS:** You had such outstanding success at Washington County, why did you leave?

**TOMBERLIN:** I don't believe there was any school in the state that I would have left Washington County for other than Valdosta. Valdosta is considered the Notre Dame of Georgia high school football, being the winningest team in the United States and having produced more great players than any other school in the state of Georgia. This was a unique opportunity, and I was ready for a bigger challenge.

**BFS:** How has Washington County done since you left?

**TOMBERLIN:** In '06 they played in the state semifinals, but they fell off a bit this year.

**BFS:** What struggles did you face during your first year at Valdosta?

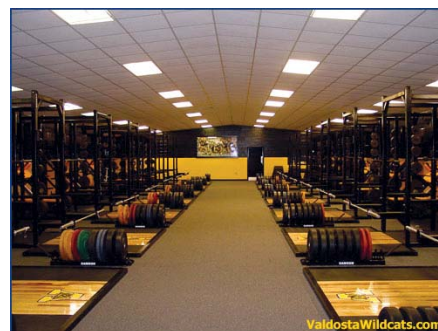
**TOMBERLIN:** We had some challenges, such as our schedule. We played the toughest schedule in the history of Georgia football, bar none. We played one of the best teams in Utah, one of the best teams in Florida, and one of the best teams in the Atlanta area. Also, four of the teams in our region had open dates before they played us, whereas our open dates were at the end of the year – we played 10 games in a row without an open date.

**BFS:** What were some of the highlights this year?

**TOMBERLIN:** We played the same schedule as we did last year, but we had four shutouts; in fact, six teams did not score on our number-one defense. We lost 18-8 to the eventual 5A state championships winner, but with a minute to go in the game it was 11-8. In the playoffs we lost 21-18, and the other team played great and went on to be the only undefeated team in 5A, with 12-0. Overall we did great: We finished 9-3, our B team was undefeated, our freshman team finished 6-1, and one of our middle schools – we have two – won the South Georgia League championships.

**BFS:** Why do you schedule such non-conference teams that are so tough?

**TOMBERLIN:** It was hard for Valdosta to get teams to play them, but the person who made our current schedule was not a coach and is no longer with us. Now I'm making the schedule, which will be much more



Football strength begins in the weightroom, and there are few high school weightrooms as nice as the one at Valdosta High School.

conducive to achieving the success we are aiming for. And our region decided to have a common open date, so now our regional opponents don't have the advantage of having two weeks to get ready for us.

**BFS:** What changes did you make when you came to Valdosta?

**TOMBERLIN:** I believe in being upbeat, getting a lot of players to come out for our teams, having a strong relationship with the teachers and always being accessible.

**BFS:** What does the team look like next year?

**TOMBERLIN:** Well, we lost some good defenders and only have three starters back, but on offense we've got six starters back. And as I said, our B team was undefeated and our freshman team was 6-1, so we feel like we have a foundation of good programs. And, of course, we have a great strength and conditioning program with BFS.

**BFS:** Is Valdosta popular for college scouts?

**TOMBERLIN:** We try to make college recruiters realize that we are very accessible. We roll out the red carpet for them, have game film and transcripts accessible, and make certain our players are available to them.



Photos by Paul Leavy and Conner Bowen



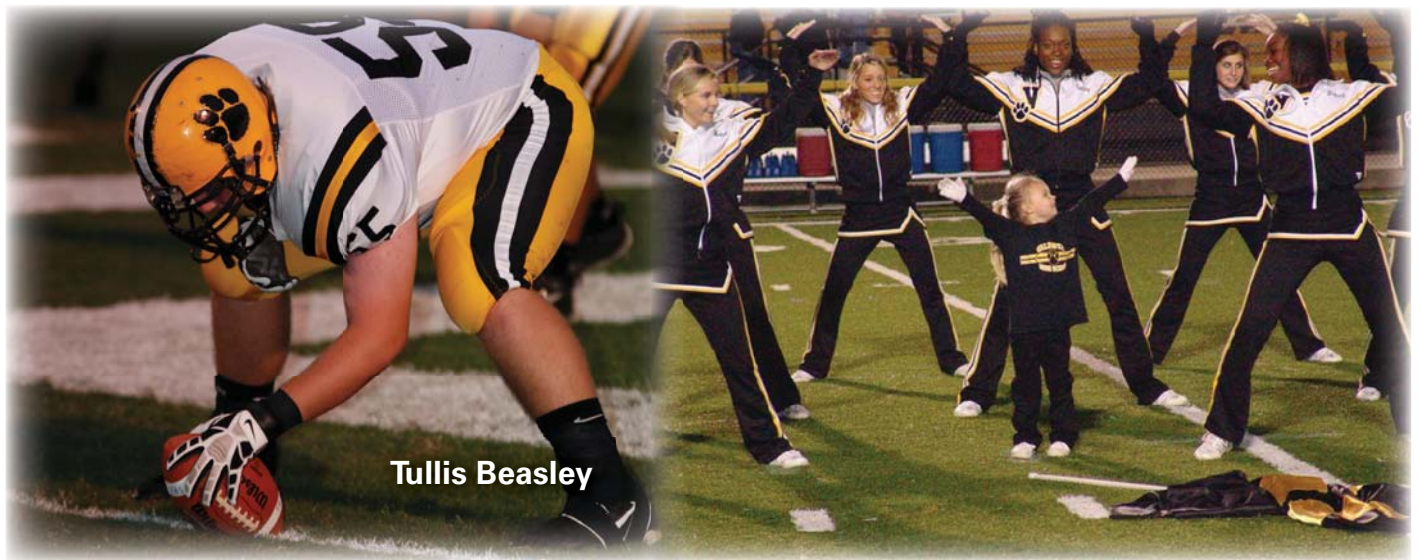
**Darris Roberts**

**Curtis Weatherspoon**

**Marcus Ewings**

**Marcus McNair**

# **GAME DAY! GAME**

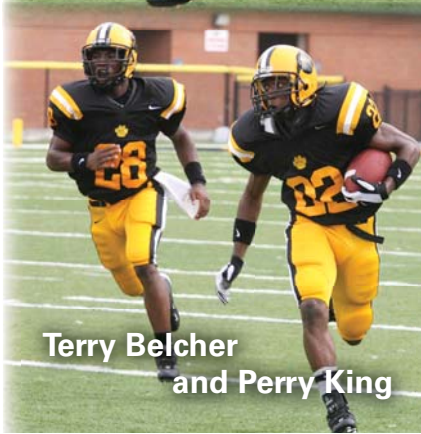


**Tullis Beasley**





Chucky Alford



Terry Belcher  
and Perry King



# DAY! GAME DAY!

This past spring we had 36 college recruiters come by to actively recruit our players; so if a player is good enough, we can help them get their foot in the door to get a scholarship.

**BFS:** What general advice would you give to young coaches just starting out?

**TOMBERLIN:** Young coaches need to really ground themselves in the fundamentals of the game and need to realize that you don't go into coaching just to win games but to help

people. I tell young coaches not to get discouraged – don't feel as though you have to pursue becoming a head coach with lightning speed. Just find a good program that you can learn from, and do a lot more listening than you do talking. Also, set high goals.

**BFS:** Do you have strong community support at Valdosta for your team?

**TOMBERLIN:** The athletic IQ of the community here is very high, and our fans really appreciate foot-



Cleveland Field – Home of the Wildcats

ball. Our stadium seats about 11,500, and we often play to packed houses. We have a touchdown club Monday





Michael Turner

Photo by Corner Bowen, Owens Studio

nights after practice to answer questions, and we get up to 75 people. We have a weekly TV show that is broadcast several times a week, and a live radio show at a local restaurant that is broadcast every Wednesday. Football is a way of life at Valdosta. BFS



Valdosta is the winningest high school football program in the country, with six national champions, 23 state championships and an 829-183-34 record!



# THE BFS TOTAL PROGRAM



## THE BFS TOTAL PROGRAM

The Bigger Faster Stronger Total Program is a total conditioning program for all athletes regardless of sport, age or gender. The BFS program improves all aspects of athletic performance, including strength, power, speed, agility and flexibility. It also creates unbelievable intensity and progress in the weightroom. We guarantee that every athlete will break at least eight personal records per week—week after week, month after month, year after year. No other program comes even close!

Since 1976 the BFS Total Program has been used by over 10,000 high schools not just to improve performance on the football field, but to unify all sports programs to improve all school sports. Such unification makes the organization and administration of all strength and conditioning programs much easier so that coaches can spend more time coaching.



## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The BFS Total Program workout is set up on four-week cycles. Each cycle consists of three 45-minute workouts per week to build strength with weight training, and two workouts devoted to improving agility, running speed, jumping ability, and muscular endurance. Flexibility training is performed every day. During the season, the athlete only trains twice a week but still strives to break personal records – after all, why train your body to be weak?

One of the most important principles of our strength program, especially our Readiness program for middle school athletes, is to never sacrifice technique to lift heavier weights. To help achieve perfect technique BFS has developed six training principles called “Absolutes” that are amazingly effective in teaching perfect technique, not only in the weightroom but also in any sport. Learn the BFS Six Absolutes and you can elevate your strength and sport coaching abilities dramatically.

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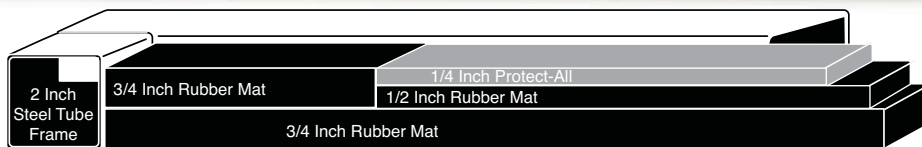
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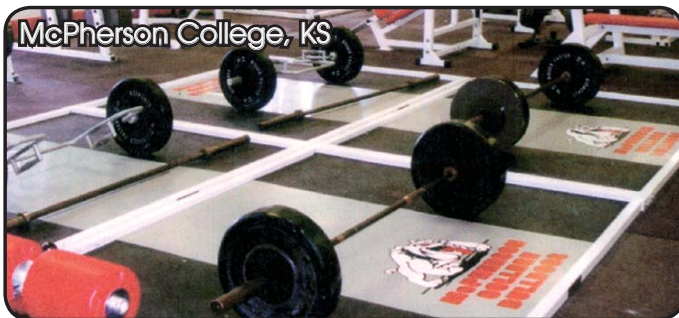


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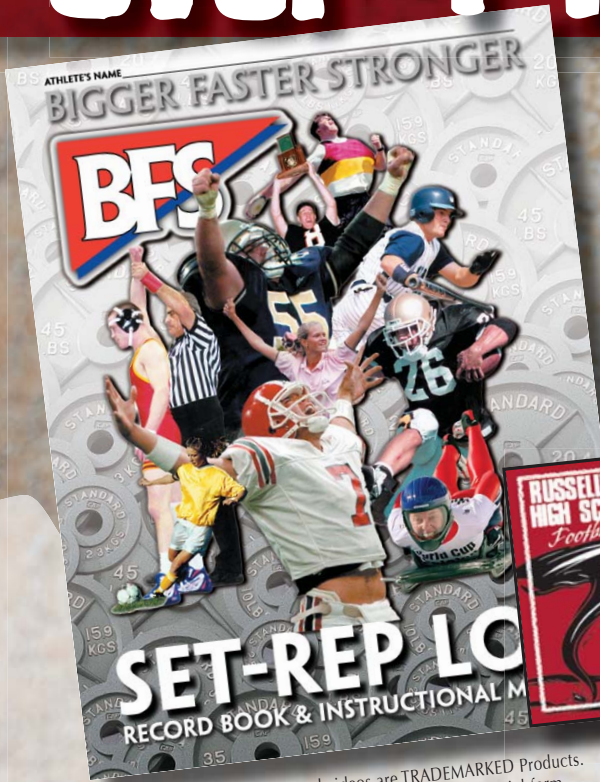
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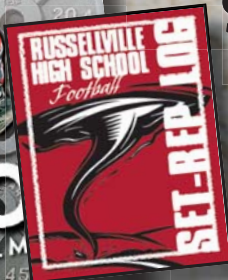




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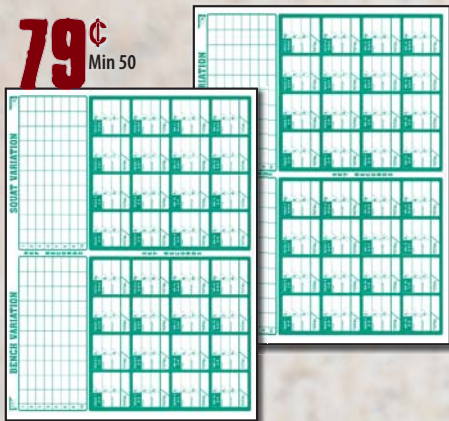
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