

Back to the Basics at Newman Catholic High

How a struggling football program made a serious run for a state championship

The BFS program that Newman Catholic HS put into work has been a huge impact on our wrestling program. Our wrestlers bought into the BFS and have shown great progress with leg strength and quickness. I have been coaching for many years at Newman and what I see on our wrestlers have really shown a positive growth.

Areas that have improved include:

- Explosion; Skills; Ability to stay in position
- Quickness & Reaction; Wrestlers Response Time

We are enjoying a great season because the wrestlers have confidence in areas of wrestling that used to be troublesome. BFS has given strength, quickness, explosion and confidence to our athletes at Newman. Beating the computer is a welcome challenge by Newman athletes.

Mike Dirksen is the head football coach at Newman Catholic High School, and ever since 1977 when he picked up a copy of the *BFS Total Program Book*, Dirksen has always been a BFS coach. But you wouldn't know that if you looked at his records in 2005 and 2006, as his team only won a total of seven games. The Knights from Mason City, Iowa, who had previously enjoyed a tradition of winning, were struggling; so he decided to take a closer look at what he was doing to see what was wrong.

"Ten years ago a lot of kids who came into our football program were strong because they came off the farm and for fun had played a lot of sandlot sports. You just don't have that anymore," says Dirksen. "That whole environment has changed, and video games have not helped the problem, to the point where we feel that a kid has to lift weights not just to perform well but also just to be healthy." A good point, but Dirksen discovered there was another answer.

"When our program started dropping off, we looked at other schools that were doing BFS exclusively, and



Mason City Globe Gazette photo

this made us realize that we were not following the BFS program exactly. We had gradually made some changes

to the program that we thought would work better. As a result, we were getting athletes who were lifting too



Mason City Globe Gazette photo

With an 11-1 record, the seniors at Newman Catholic High School will have memories that will last a lifetime.



Mason City Globe Gazette photo

It was an exciting year for the Knights, who made it all the way to the semifinal game for the state championship.

much, and many who were not lifting heavy enough and as such were not making gains. We looked at the BFS program again and decided to go with exactly what the program recommended. We also brought in Tom Wilson to give a BFS clinic and a Be an 11 seminar last year to solidify what BFS teaches. Our athletes came away from those events believing they could get much stronger if they worked hard and kept with the program.”

The result was much better than anyone could have predicted. They had a run of 11 games, often winning by two touchdowns or more, and made it to the semifinals, just falling short of the finals with a 10-6 loss.

But it isn't just football that has benefited from BFS, as the girls basketball team won three postseason games, a much better result than expected; the wrestling team had one of their best seasons ever, winning 20 matches; and the baseball team is expected to repeat as conference champions.

A Show of Support

Although Newman Catholic is a private school, Dirksen says that the students enjoy outstanding athletic facilities due to the support of the administration, parents and other members of the community. “Over the last three years the Newman family raised nearly a half million dollars, which was matched by in-kind donations, to improve the facilities.

We now have a beautiful athletic complex that is a tribute to their support.” Among the improvements, says Dirksen, are a new weightroom, football and baseball/softball field improvements.

Dirksen has been coaching for over 30 years and doesn't believe that the attitude of young people has changed that much. What Dirksen says it takes for success, however, is



The Knights wrestling team had a great year with 20 wins. Here is a photo of this great team; a testimonial from head wrestling coach Mark Bertsch is shown at top of page 16.



April 1, 2008 7:29AM Newman Catholic Knights
 Weekly Workout Schedule for the week of January 28, 2008
 Bigger Faster Stronger Page 1

Athlete Information: Timpe, Jace ID Number: 0922
 Grade/Period: 11 Sport / Positions: FOOTBALL
 Week # 7 of a 8 week workout. Workout Schedule: KNIGHT 3-DAY

Day Number — 1

Core Lifts	Did you BEAT THE COMPUTER on your last set?					Reps hit	Auxiliary Lifts	New Weight	
	Set 1	Set 2	Set 3	Set 4	Set 5			Set 1	Set 2
Box Squat	5x 380	4x 395	3x 415	2x 425	1x 445	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ground Based Jumper	10x 110	10x 110
Towel Bench	5x 245	4x 250	3x 265	2x 270	1x 285	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Straight Leg Dead Lift	10x 80	10x 80
							Bench Pull-Up	10x 0	10x 0
							Lat Pull Down	10x 120	10x 120
							Hor. Pulls Machine	10x 115	10x 115
							Lunges	5x 55	5x 55

Day Number — 2

Core Lifts	Did you BEAT THE COMPUTER on your last set?					Reps hit	Auxiliary Lifts	New Weight	
	Set 1	Set 2	Set 3	Set 4	Set 5			Set 1	Set 2
Power Clean	5x 150	4x 155	3x 165	2x 170	1x 180	<input type="checkbox"/>	Glute Ham	10x 0	10x 0
Dead Lift	5x 305	4x 315	3x 330	2x 340	1x 355	<input type="checkbox"/>	Incline Press	10x 125	10x 125
							Heavy Dips	10x 0	10x 0
							Power Press (Jammer)	10x 100	10x 100
							Boxer Beginner Level	10x 0	10x 0
							Curls	5x 85	5x 85

Day Number — 3

Core Lifts	Did you BEAT THE COMPUTER on your last set?					Reps hit	Auxiliary Lifts	New Weight	
	Set 1	Set 2	Set 3	Set 4	Set 5			Set 1	Set 2
Parallel Squat	5x 355	4x 370	3x 385	2x 395	1x 415	<input type="checkbox"/>	Straight Leg Dead Lift	10x 80	10x 80
Bench Press	5x 235	4x 245	3x 255	2x 260	1x 275	<input type="checkbox"/>	Glute Ham	10x 0	10x 0
							Lat Pull Down	10x 120	10x 120
							Call Raises	10x 200	10x 200
							Pull-Ups	10x 0	10x 0
							Lunges	5x 55	5x 55

The Knights found that the secret to turning around their program was following the BFS program exactly as written.



developing leaders who will inspire other athletes. “I try to instill in our kids at Newman the attitude that ‘We’ve got to make it happen.’ If you can instill in your athletes this idea of personal responsibility, and they have enough leaders on the team encouraging their teammates to go in that direction, you can get a lot out of a young athlete.”

One aspect of this personal responsibility is staying focused by lifting as a team. “We have some nice gyms in this area when you consider the size of our community, and we used to have a problem with our kids wanting to train at them rather than at school. While they can certainly get strong working out someplace else, I tell my kids that it’s the team that wins championships, so we require that the kids who play for us lift as a team.”

Although he encourages his athletes to continually break personal records, Dirksen only tests twice a year. “We run these tests like a combine at North Iowa Area Community College, a local college, and we have a lot of fun with it. And I’m also not big on personal stats for our players, but team stats yes – I stay away from focusing too much on the individual results.”

Although he promotes personal responsibility for athletes’ training, Dirksen does monitor other aspects of their school life. “I believe in looking at the education of our kids as a whole, so I monitor to see if they have any detentions and tardies. I want them to be Elevens all the time.” These goals are reflected in the team’s mission statement, as shown in Figure 1.

Asked if there was a concern that with their success last year his athletes would not be motivated to train

as hard for the next season, Dirksen replied, “Absolutely not! Yes, we had a bump in our program a few years ago, but our kids are confident because they know what each of them must do to perform well on the field. They understand, and our motto to start off this season reflects this belief: that last season ‘Wasn’t an Accident.’” **BFS**



BFS Tom Wilson gave a BFS clinic and Be an 11 clinic last year to jump-start the Knights’ entire athletic program.

FIGURE 1

Mission Statement Newman Catholic High School Football

The Newman Catholic football program

- Operates with integrity
- Promotes a fun experience for all athletes
- Promotes an atmosphere that teaches responsibility and Christian values (a high level of morals and ethical standards)
- Encourages competition
- Promotes hard work, is thorough and is professional
- Creates excitement for fans
- Promotes pride and confidence in a team effort
- Promotes the value of education



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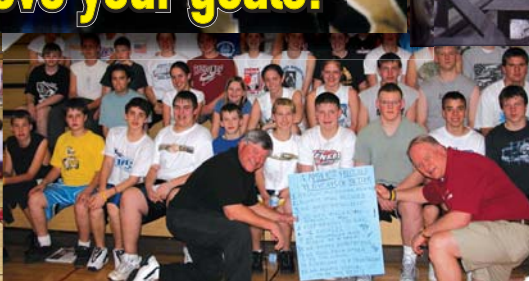
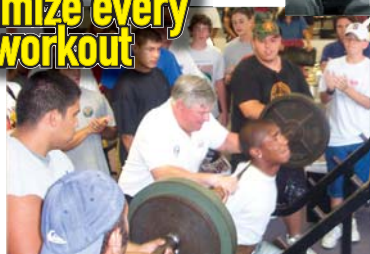
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