

Coming On Strong: *Mission Oak High School*

A great weightroom is giving this new school a head start



*Mission Oak High School in Tulare, California, is a brand-new school that opened its doors to students on August 14, 2008. The first students are freshmen and sophomores; next year juniors will be added, and after that, seniors. But prior to all this, one of the big questions the school district had to answer was how in the world do you construct a high school athletic department? The answer was **Bob Oliver**.*

Oliver came out of retirement to direct the athletic department at Mission Oak. He had taught his first two years at Tulare Western, his high school alma mater, and then taught for 38 years at Tulare Union High School. “I had retired

last June, but the school district came to me and asked me if I would like to start a program out here as the athletic director. I thought, ‘I might as well – it will give me something to do!’”

All the sports offered at Tulare Western and Tulare Union high

schools will also be offered at Mission Oak. And Oliver has been able to recruit some high-profile coaches. For head coach of the football team, for example, Oliver was able to acquire Mark Gambini, an individual who led Central Valley Christian High School to three straight Central Section titles and a 37-2 record in the process. For the girls basketball team the head coach will be Dave Caetano, who achieved over 500 wins at St. Aloysius, another school in Tulare. The remaining coaches are equally impressive, a testament to Oliver’s commitment to develop a coaching staff of the highest caliber.

Heading the physical education department is Dina Da Silva, a Tulare Western graduate who played softball at Fresno State. Da Silva will also coach girls volleyball and softball. In this regard, Oliver says that his physical education department and athletic department will easily be able to work together “because most of our coaches are also our PE teachers.”

In addition to a great staff, Oliver wanted a great weightroom that would service both the physical education classes and the student-athletes. Having been involved in the design of five weightrooms in his coaching career, and having been a weight training instructor, Oliver says, “I know what works, and I had a good idea of

of what I wanted” and, then it came down to deciding what company to purchase equipment from.

“I was trying to get a happy medium of what would be best for our physical education students and also would give our coaches the leeway to add to that in the years to come. I was approached by a number of equipment companies, but some of the stuff they were throwing into those weight-room proposals was just ridiculous – they looked more like a spa for adults. So I said to myself, ‘Self – you can do better than this.’” And that’s when he turned to BFS.

“I really believe that BFS is the best company around, not just in quality merchandise but in individuals to work with – they are just outstanding human beings, and I enjoyed

working with them. I worked with John Rowbotham and Doug Kaufusi to pick out the equipment that I felt the kids needed and would feel safe with.”

Teaching the Student of Today

With four decades of experience in the teaching profession, Oliver says that there is a lot more pressure on teachers and coaches at all levels than in the past. “There is so much pressure on them to not only be their teacher but also to be somewhat of a father, a mother, a disciplinarian, a priest and a nurse! My daughter has taught kindergarten for the past nine years, and she has to show children how to

brush their teeth and even teach them potty skills! We don’t have anyone taking charge of these young people, and we have kids having kids. It’s easy to have children – that doesn’t take any brains – but it takes a whole lot to be a parent.”

In looking further into how teaching has changed, Oliver says that many kids come from dysfunctional families, with too many kids having to look out for themselves. “It’s gone from more of a team base on how we can get along within in the community to an attitude of individual thought as to ‘How am I going to come out



BFS clinicians Doug Kaufusi (left) and John Rowbotham came to Mission Oak to install the new weightroom equipment.



Delivery and Installation

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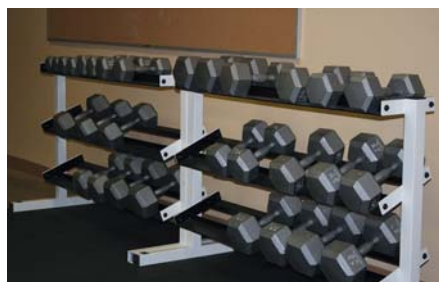
and be OK by myself?” Oliver also believes that much of the apathy that is displayed by some students comes from not having a strong family unit. “If doing nothing is accepted, then why wouldn’t that same behavior be exhibited when that student comes to school?”

To help out his teachers, Oliver

says that Mission Oak has a program for new teachers that lasts an entire summer to orient them on how to handle the challenges facing teachers today. He also says he tries to get the parents as involved as possible in

The completed weightroom, which consists primarily of free weight equipment, will enable Mission Oak to train its athletes to the highest level. BFS looks forward to following their success.

their children’s education. “A child is a product of their environment. At Mission Oak, we want to provide all our students with the best possible environment to learn and become responsible members of society.” BFS





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