



# Winton Woods: A BFS Journey

Going in the right direction with BFS

## Winton Woods: 2009 State Champions!



**W**inton Woods High School initiated its football program in 1991, under legendary coach Lou Cykar and trusted assistant Dan Bamonte, when Forest Park High School and Greenhills High School merged. Since 1991, this school in Cincinnati, Ohio, has produced more than 200 scholarship athletes. During his time as coach, Cykar also enjoyed tremendous success on the field, winning more than 70 percent of his games.

However, in 1999, when Troy Everhart took over as head football coach and assessed the situation, there

were obvious needs to address. Winton Woods didn't even have a strength room when he arrived. "We literally had all the equipment stored on the upper gym and pulled it in and out to lift. If there was any kind of activity in the gym, we could not lift," says Everhart. "We sprayed some dots on the floor and went to work!"

Everhart felt it was time to take the program to a higher level. "We had plenty of talent here at Winton Woods. What we needed was to instill a work ethic and a commitment to year-round training." Everhart had studied the Bigger Faster Stronger

program for years as an assistant, so his first goal after getting the Winton Woods job was to host a clinic.

Len Walencikowski was their first BFS clinician. "Len was awesome – he really got the athletes going in the right direction," says Everhart. "He poured everything into their clinic to make it special, and from there they really took off." The next fall following the clinic, the Warriors won the league title.

Another big event that happened roughly at the same time was the completion of a new athletic building. The new facility included a permanent



Head football coach Troy Everhart

strength room where the Warriors could use the lessons they had learned from Coach Walencikowski. Says Everhart, “The Boosters really stepped up and made the new building a possibility. Spearheaded by Larry Hofmann and Gerry Kalkbrenner, the athletic building was up and running in less than a year.”

Although Everhart knew they were headed in the right direction, he felt there was even more that could be done, so he decided to have another BFS clinic in 2003. This time they brought in successful coach and BFS clinician Rick Tomberlin. “Rick came

in and challenged the kids.” In fact, at the end of the clinic the Winton Woods Warriors set a national record for the hex bar at that time. “It was a tremendous experience for the kids. The players who were sophomores and freshmen at the clinic were the ones who launched the program forward in the playoffs. That group really broke them through to the level of success they have now.” In 2004 the Warriors won the league title when they were picked fourth in the preseason poll. In 2005, that group broke the playoff drought and got the team into the Ohio playoffs. They have made the

playoffs every year since.

With roughly 480 young men, Winton Woods regularly competes with other schools in the talent-rich southwest Ohio area. “Cincinnati football is some of the best in the country. Winton Woods has played tradition-rich schools like St. Xavier, Elder and Moeller. At least four to five times a year, we play schools that have double our male enrollment, because we believe that the only way to be the best is to schedule the best.”

The Warriors pride themselves on developing toughness through the way they train. “Everything we try to



Quarterback Dominique Brown, #10, and team captain Avery Cunningham, #36, were two leaders on this state championship team.

do is centered on the belief that we are outworking everyone else. There are a lot of things that are different now from when I started, but what hasn't changed is the foundation of the program, which is the strength room. If you try to make the strength room easy, you're asking for trouble. Every belief we have in regards to the strength room comes from BiggerFasterStronger – BFS is the foundation of our success.”

After four straight OHSAA playoff appearances and the Warriors' first regional final appearance along with a league championship in 2008, the 2009 season held many uncertainties. Along with losing a lot of talent and leadership from the 2008 season, the school also faced the prospect of losing its football program. In Ohio, the schools are funded on levies that are voted on by the community. The previous five levies had failed to pass, and their district planned to shut

down athletics should the next levy in November 2009 fail. As a result, the players, especially the underclassmen, played the entire 2009 regular season without knowing if it would be their last in a Warrior uniform.

“With the toughest regular season schedule in their 11 years and the threat of not having a football team in 2010, our players did an outstanding job of compartmentalizing and just focusing on winning,” says Everhart. “I really feel the BFS system aided us in our journey this season. The seniors set a goal and worked extremely hard to accomplish that goal. I am most proud of the fact that even though they lost two games in the regular season, there were no excuses; they just worked harder.”

In November, the week of the first playoff game, the team got a big boost: The levy passed and they knew there would be another season. The weight of uncertainty lifted, the Warriors tore through the Division II playoffs. The

offense erupted for 238 points in the playoffs alone, scoring 69 in the semi-finals and 42 points in the state final. Likewise, the defense turned it on at the right time, allowing an average of only 12 points in the playoffs.

The Warriors coasted through the playoffs and into the school's first state title of any kind. It was the ultimate reward for their program. However, the process has always been what matters most for Coach Everhart. He wants their young men to train hard, prepare hard and compete hard. If they leave the athletic program having learned how to use those tools, then they will be champions.

After the Warriors won the state title, Everhart made a list of all the people who were important to the success of the program. BFS clinicians and staff figured prominently on the list. In addition to the contributions of Len Walencikowski and Rick Tomberlin, Roger Freeborn had aided them with

the Be an 11 concepts. Bob Doyle gave them the idea for their Ultimate Warriors workouts they do each spring, which allowed them to gauge the toughness of the squad, something they really pride themselves on. Coach Everhart also attended clinics and

meetings with Coach Jeff Scurran and Coach Rick Bojak, which provided additional help. However, Everhart says the biggest influence was BFS CEO/ Founder Greg Shepard.

“Aside from the BFS principles and philosophy he created, I remember

meeting with Coach Shepherd in Salt Lake City. At the end of a discussion he asked this question: ‘Why do we do these things?’ While all the coaches there stumbled around for an answer, he hit home with the simple response “TO WIN!” BFS



#22 Jeremiah Goins

The Warriors cheerleaders

#4 Juan Glover

#32 David Hampton

#2 Cornelius Roberts

#32 David Hampton

#22 Jeremiah Goins

#28 Kenno Hollins

#11 Jalen Bradley

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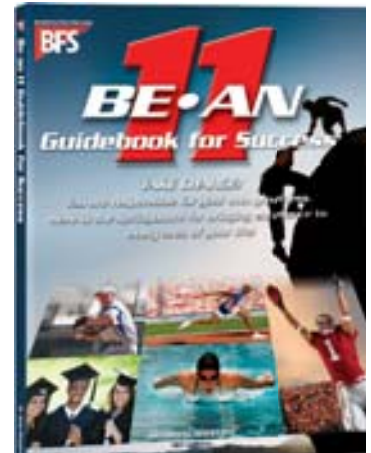
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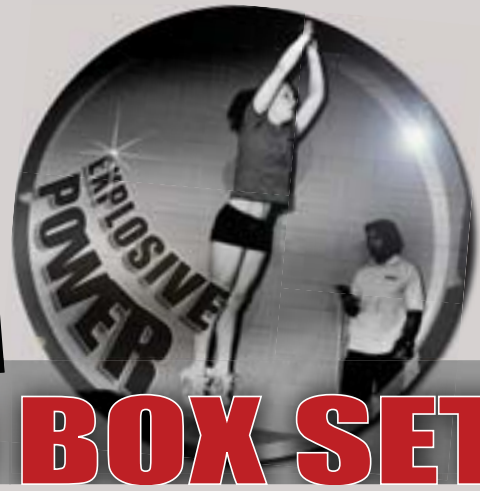
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