

Breathing Easy at Sibley East High School

How BFS helped turn around a 0-9 football team



BY **CHUCK HARTMAN, HEAD VARSITY FOOTBALL COACH**

When you want to win as badly as you need to take that next breath, you will win.”

That was the moral of the story I told the Sibley East Wolverines football team on the first day of practice

in August. But in truth, it was back in January that the Wolverines showed they wanted that next breath and wanted to win.

When I took the job as head football coach in Arlington, Minnesota, in 2008, the team had struggled through

a 0-9 season. They hadn't had many close games. I promised to make strength and conditioning a priority in our program. Over the summer I saw how difficult it would be for this team.

Strength training had not really been a priority for the players. Some

guys lifted at school, some trained at local health clubs, and some didn't train at all. When we tested at the end of the summer, we had one player who could run under 5.0 in the forty, and two who could squat over 300 pounds. I have always believed that the power clean is one of the most important lifts an athlete can do. In the summer of 2008 we had one player who could clean 185, and another who could do 165. As for the rest of the team, the next-strongest clean was 135 pounds. Still, the Wolverines won their season opener over rival Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop and had several close games.

Although we finished a discouraging 1-8, we were only 18 points away from a .500 season. Our players started buying into the program and playing hard for each other. The kids "held the rope" for each other because they had been training together over the summer.

In 2009 the Wolverines were only four points away from a .500 season, nearly upsetting a couple of state-ranked teams in the process. Still, a playoff loss ended the season early. In Minnesota almost every team makes the section playoffs. Our section has nine teams, so somebody has to stay home. On the field and in the weightroom things started to improve. We now had more than a handful of kids who could clean over 200 pounds, including 240 pounds and 230 pounds. Our all-conference fullback/linebacker squatted 515, setting a school record and winning the Iron Man Trophy. A bunch of guys were clocking respectable forty times. We were getting better, but I decided it was time to have a BFS clinic.

Gridiron CPR

The week before the 2009 winter break, BFS clinician Doug Ekmark



Coach Chuck Hartman gets his team ready for the gridiron.

came to campus. Doug put on a great clinic for our student athletes. I invited all the coaches and athletes from all the boys and girls sports. Some parents also came to learn how they could help their boys and girls compete in the tough Minnesota River Conference. All in all, the clinic was a success.

It helped get the kids, coaches and parents on the same page as far as what we needed to do. Lift, lift big, and do everything like an "Eleven."

The weightroom now stays in high gear during the off-season. When we first started the program in 2008, we were lucky to have 10 kids lifting in the off-season. There was an attitude that lifting was somehow bad for other sports – of course, nothing could be further from the truth. Having the clinic helped the kids buy in; we had increased numbers, and the team lifted all winter, spring and summer. We added a strongman training component with tires, kettle bells, ropes, truck pushing and of course the "Tug." But the focus was still on the big three lifts (parallel squat, power clean

and bench press) as well as hamstring development (SLDL, RDL, glute-ham raise) and the BFS 1-2-3-4 Flexibility program.

When the summer ended, we had two 500-pound squatters and a dozen or more who could "BTG" 330 or more. On the power clean, co-captain Orlando Castillo destroyed the old school record by racking 275 pounds. Orlando also set a school record by squatting 560 pounds. What makes those numbers more staggering is that Orlando weighed in at only 200 pounds when he did those record lifts. Co-captain McKoy Rodning, who earned a scholarship to Southwest Minnesota State to play football, cleaned 240; and another couple of seniors (linemen Ben Melsha and Teddy DuFrane) racked 250. We also had six more kids clean at least 200 pounds going into the season. This increased strength also translated into faster forty times. But would all this hard work and improvement in the weightroom translate to success on the gridiron?

We opened the season with a promising shutout win over Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop, but we followed it up with a loss to open the conference season. In a way, that loss was a good thing. It humbled us. It showed the kids we had to stay "Poor, Hungry and Driven" every week. "PHD" became one of our slogans the rest of the season. We bounced back with a 14-13 come-from-behind victory over defending conference champs Le Sueur-Henderson, a team we had not defeated in several years. In that game we ran the ball 55 times in the second half while coming back from 13 points down. Senior Michael Bullert sealed the win with an interception with 30 seconds left. We followed that up with more wins, including our homecoming

game. Our only other loss of the regular season was to the conference champs, who also wound up finishing second in class 3A in the state. We wound up tied for second place in the conference, which was the school's best finish in years. We got stronger as the season went on because we followed

the BFS in-season program all season long.

Several school records were set during the season, including rushes with 474; runs in a game (73); and yards in a game and single season. Junior running back Logan Reid set a school record with nearly 1,200 yards rushing. That

sounds like a modest number until you consider one of his backfield mates, Tyler Pasvogel (who also led the team in interceptions), had nearly 700 yards. The key to any rushing attack is a good line, and we had a good one this year. Senior Teddy DuFrane was voted the top offensive lineman in the conference



#34 Logan Reid

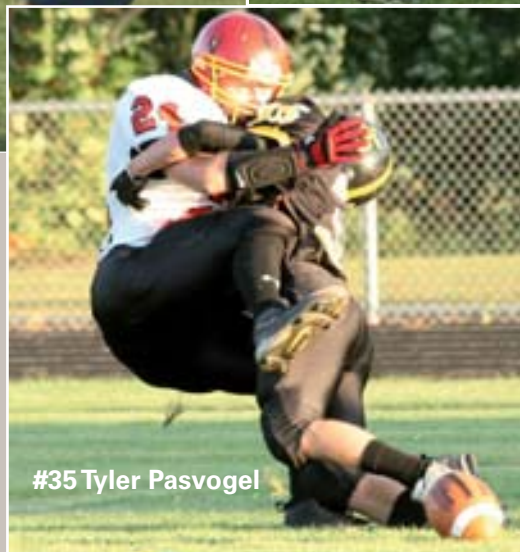


#34 Logan Reid



#44 TE Tyler Bates

The Wolverines' conditioning paid off in the 2010 season as they never lost a lead in the fourth quarter.



#35 Tyler Pasvogel



#26 Lucas Schwoppe

by the conference coaches, and he was named to several all-area teams. We were also undefeated at home.

Senior QB and co-captain Lucas Herd might have summed up our success best. He said, “Coach, I don’t care what my stats are as long as we win – that’s my job.” It is truly amazing what

you can do when nobody cares who gets the credit. This is also why I must credit my staff – they do a great job.

BFS is a great program. It’s like our wishbone offense and odd-front defense: simple, but when executed with great fundamentals, enthusiasm and coaching, it delivers great results.

A big reason for the success on the field is that the kids made an investment of time in the weightroom and with each other. It sounds cliché to some people, but they paid for those wins in sweat equity as a group. What’s more, this bunch of seniors raised the bar for future Sibley East teams. BFS



Pulling at the left of the tug are Ali Pedraza (orange shirt) and Robert Harter. On the right side of the tug is Logan Reid.



Orlando Castillo, Iron Wolverine Award Winner



(l to r) Mike Boe, Orlando Castillo, Teddy DuFrane



Miah DuFrane