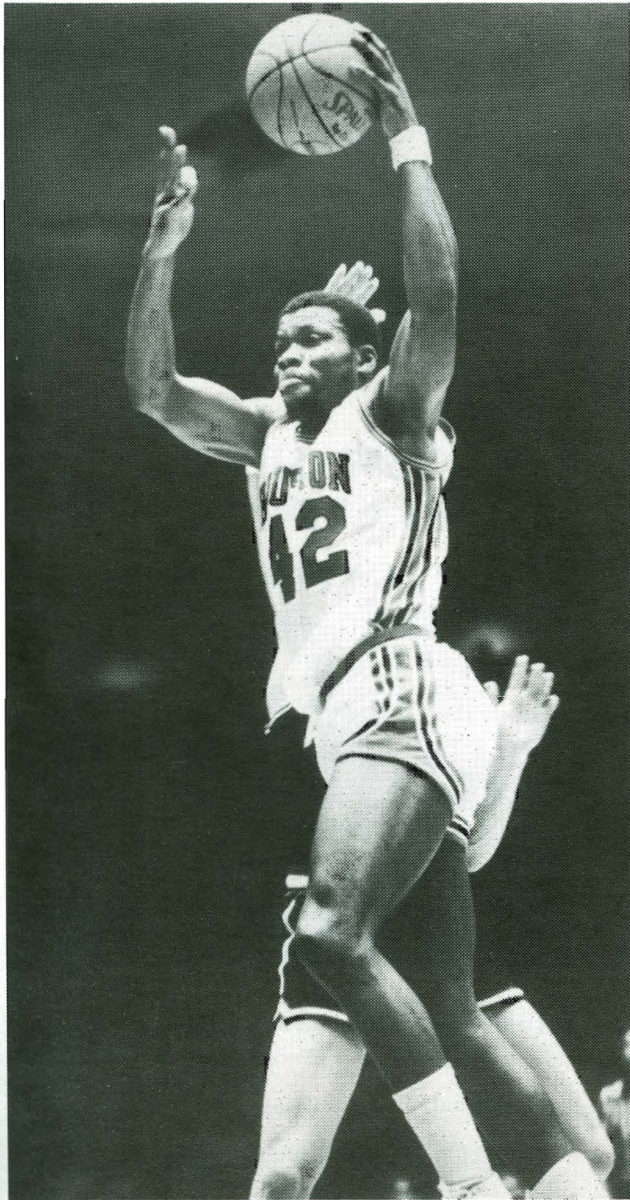


HOUSTON BASKETBALL

by Bill Thomas
University of Houston
Strength Coach and
Greg Shepard



Cougar Guard Mike Young Benches
350 and Legally Squats 450

On April 2nd of this year at the final four in Albuquerque, the Houston Cougars played what we at Bigger Faster Stronger would call a historical, trend-setting event. The Cougars of Houston had been called Phi Slama Jama, the Doctors of Dunk and the Sultans of Slam. However, the general public did not know what this really meant. Now for this Saturday night spectacular N.C.A.A. event the No. 1 ranked Cougars were going to be tested against No. 2 ranked Louisville in front of some 50 million people.

What was seen was a very, very different game of basketball. It seemed like almost every point was a dunk. The Cougars were not the stereo-typed skinny basketball players, but solid, powerful men who were physically awesome. Basketball technicians might call their style of play "rough on the edges and lacking skill" but no one could deny the dominant role of such remarkably big and strong athletes in this basketball game.

After soundly thrashing Louisville, Houston was to take on North Carolina State for all the marbles. The biggest, fastest and strongest team did not win. I guess that's what makes coaching interesting. N.C. State Coach Jim Valvano masterfully coached and motivated his team to victory. The great basketball technicians breathed a sigh of relief, but the smart basketball coaches asked, "What does Houston do that we can do?" The answer to that is to lift on a power weight training program geared to athletes and specifically basketball players. It shouldn't be so difficult to believe that a bigger faster stronger athlete will also be a better basketball player just as he would be a better football player.

The University of Houston Basketball program has been one of the finest in America for many years.

Coach Guy Lewis has had tradition and a national reputation in his program for over 25 years. The 1983 "Cougars" are carrying this legacy and are becoming one of his better teams.

As a positive, eventual indication of this team's success, the "Cougars" are involved in a strength and conditioning program for the first time in the history of the program. The "Doctors of Dunk" love to pump iron and have been increasing their performance level along the way.

Strength Coach Bill Thomas has implemented a twelve month conditioning program. The "Coogs" train (3) sessions a week in the off-season and (2) sessions a week in the in-season period. After a semester of work, the results have been positive and encouraging.

For instance: All players brought their percentage of body fat down to acceptable levels (10% or less) and the team has matured in the areas of injury reduction, by truly receiving and accepting proper body maintenance and change.

The players have a 12 month **Conditioning** book, which contains nutrition, stretching, form running, and weight training schedules.

The "Cougars" get tested (3) times a year on the Standing Long Jump, Vertical Leap, Bench Press, Squat, Power Clean, situps, pushups, and a standardized flexibility test.

Akeem Olajuwon, the seven foot center from Nigeria, leads the Cougars and nation in blocked shots per game at a pace of 6 per game. Incidentally, he squats 400 pounds. The "Cougars" are out-rebounding the opposition by 11 rebounds a game.

Some players have made nice progress on the team; such as; Dan Bunce a 7', 256 lb. reserve Center, has lost 42 lbs., increased his vertical leap 1½", and improved his strength level 35%.

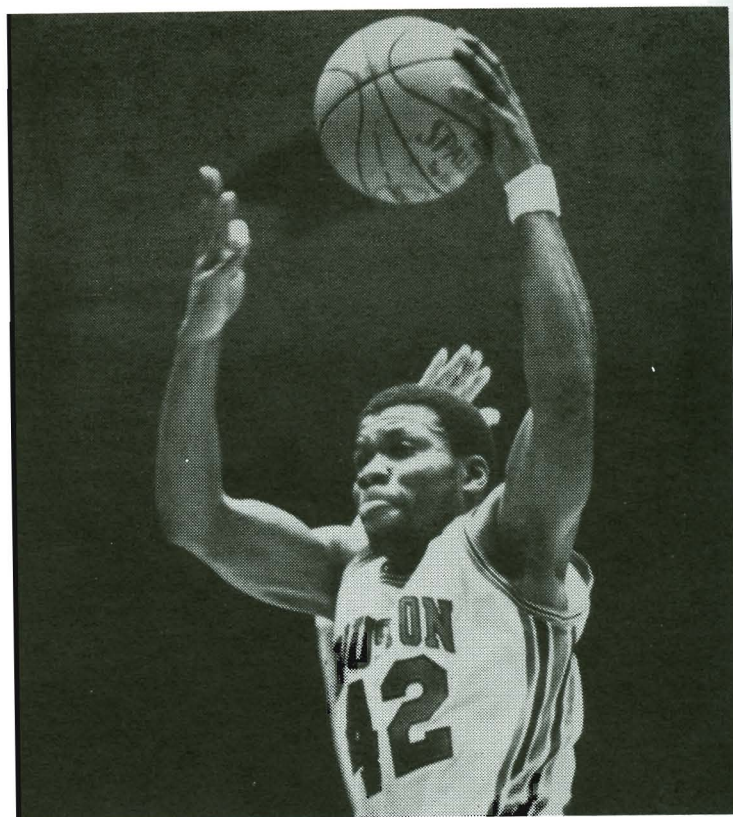
Mr. "Cougar" on this team is Guard/Forward Mike Young. Mike is 6'6", 225 lbs., and runs like Kellen Winslow and shoots like Jamal Wilkes. His strength work has helped make Mike one of the premier players in the Southwest Conference. Mike is working hard In-Season and expects to keep getting stronger!! He is an outstanding person in every phase, who holds "Cougar" Basketball Weightlifting records in the Bench Press and Squat. Mike is averaging 18 points a game to rank 3rd in the Conference.

Reid Gettys is the most under-rated player on the team. He is the "Cougars" answer to Indiana's Randy Whittman. Reid has just touched the surface of his ability. He has gained 5 lbs. of muscle and has greatly improved his floor sense because of not being timid and unsure of contact. He is one of the more rugged players in the Conference. He is the 2nd leading assist man in the SWC, at 6'6", 205 lbs.

These are but a few of the squad of 15, who clearly have made improvements through the Strength program. With losing only one senior off the starting five, next year looks even more powerful for the Cougars of Houston. To have the most physically developed team is not a goal but a **Demand** for the "*Sultans of Slam*."

Bill Thomas
Strength Coach
Cougar Basketball

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