

QUEST FOR GREATNESS

by Dr. Greg Shepard

LAKELAND UNION HIGH SCHOOL Minoqua, Wisconsin

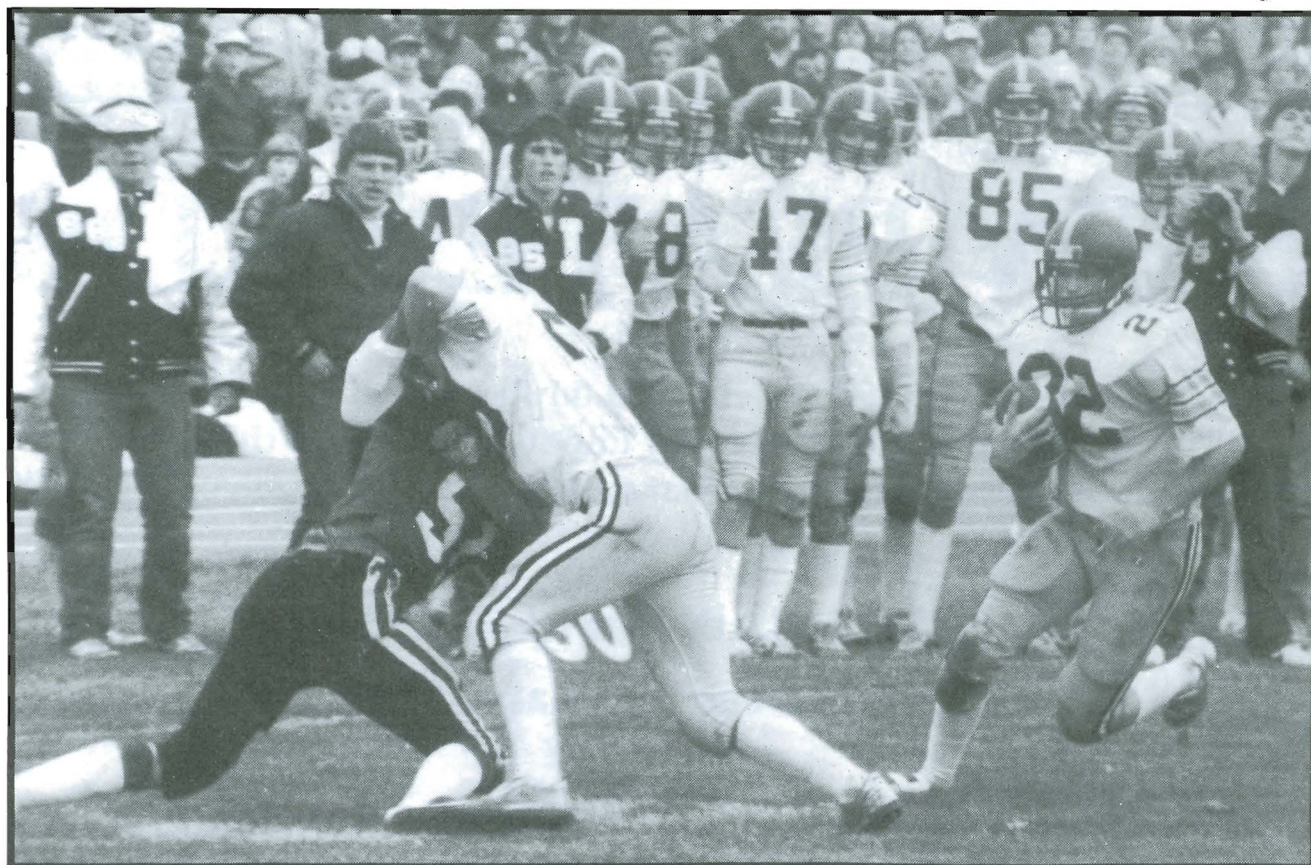


Coach Shepard helping Coach Buckley at a BFS Clinic last Spring.

Last spring, Bob Robotham, vice president of BFS, and I arrived in the beautiful resort community of Minoqua, Wisconsin. We were there to present a BFS clinic. Head football Coach Jay Buckley threw out the welcome mat and that night we discussed his program and his special needs. Boy, was he excited! The next morning, as we drove to his Lakeland Union High School, I couldn't help but notice the many beautiful lakes which inundated the picturesque landscape. To me it was stunning. The facilities were especially nice for a 3-A school with an enrollment of 815 students. I remember the athletes were ready to go on time and anxious to get started and learn. Several other schools were also represented with coaches and athletes.

The clinic was going along very nicely. Coach Buckley was really into the finer points of the clinic. He participated actively in the coaching technique sessions. Then, when it came time towards the end of the clinic to set goals for the upcoming football season, it got quiet. The athletes perceived this to be serious business. And, so it was.

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#22 Corey Parker: BFS All-American Candidate getting a crunching block from All Conference Running Back Rod Stengl on route to a 35 yard TD run in State Semi Final game.

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#22 Corey Parker returning the favor for #29 Rod Stengl on 40 yard TD run. Parker and Stengl raced for 2170 yards for the season!

After a discussion on what THEY wanted to accomplish and what THEY would be willing to do to reach their goal, it was unanimous. From that point on, the Thunderbirds of Lakeland Union High School were dedicated and totally committed to being STATE CHAMPS and 12-0!!

I seemed to sense a little more intensity than the average clinic. The athletes were very polite and well mannered. It was evident that many good things had been taught and great leadership was being displayed. Coach Buckley was in a good situation and I figured he had had a lot to do with it. We had a nice little coaches' party after the clinic and then Bob and I were on our way. Now it was up to Coach Buckley to begin implementing the program.

Improvements came rapidly. Gains in size, strength and speed were recorded daily. The set-rep log books were constantly updated as strength records were being broken daily. Everyday, Coaches asked the athletes about their nutrition points as required at the clinic. Techniques were being worked on by the respective positions. Agility and running programs were also followed. It was clear; confidence and enthusiasm were soaring. It was also very clear this group of athletes were not going to be content to WAIT for something good to happen. They fiercely wanted to MAKE good things happen on their Quest For Greatness.

Then in October, I got a call from an excited Jay Buckley. "Guess what? We're 5-0," exclaimed Coach Buckley. "We've got a tough one this next week. Could you make us a personalized tape so we can play it before the game?" Well, I don't mind admitting I miss coaching football and was delighted to do the tape.

Next Sunday Coach Buckley made my day. "We



#1 QB — Stuart Kirscht, #71 Guard — Jack Richardson, #73 Tackle — Chris Schwartz and #50 Center — Al Gregory all garnered 2nd Team All-Conference Honors to lead a solid team attack!

won!, we're 6-0! We loved the tape. Our kids were actually crying!"

Several weeks later Jay called again, "We are 9-0 and going to the State Playoffs! Could I ask another favor? Could you talk to our players before our playoff game? I've checked with one of my Booster Club people and he can arrange a conference type phone call and you can talk to our entire squad." He didn't have to ask twice, this was a lot of fun!

Since Coach Buckley, his staff and his athletes had never been to a state playoff game, it was going to be a new experience. In fact it was to mark the Thunderbird's first playoff appearance ever. I centered my talk around what to expect at a playoff game. I sensed that everyone was pretty tense so I cracked a joke and tried to relax them. I don't know if I really helped but I was sure glad when Jay called back that night to report a 34-14 victory!

The Lakeland High Thunderbirds went on to win the Semi-Final game and win the 3-A 1983 Wisconsin State Football Championship with 21-0 shutout!! Besides those mentioned in the pictures, Ben Berray — Tackle; Chris Kettner — Def. Tackle; Bill Glaumer — Def. End; Andy Hewett — Linebacker; Brian Arntsen — Linebacker; Paul Sediry — Safety; Jamie Nimsgren — Fullback; Bob Anderson — Guard; Kent Veldhuizen — Tight End and Tom Baumgartner — Receiver, all made post-season recognition. The powerful T-Birds amassed 349 points, while a stingy defense held their 12 opponents to only 110 points and less than 3 yards per play!

Congratulations to Coach Jay Buckley, the football staff, the school and most of all, to the athletes of Lakeland Union High School on having the courage of sticking with your goals on a daily basis in your Quest For Greatness.