

AJAX: The Recruiter's Dream

By Greg Shepard



This 1800 pound Kodiak bear's head was twisted 180 degrees!



Coach Shepard ran for his life and was saved by a U.S.F.L. hopeful!

The most bizarre recruiting effort of all time took place this spring by the U.S.F.L. The new league has money and are willing to spend it to get the best players. For example, \$40 million to QB Steve Young. Heisman Trophy winner Mike Rozier received multi-millions. It is really hard to keep things in perspective.

This spring I did a clinic in Palmer, Alaska, a town just outside Anchorage. My brother, Rob, lives on Kodiak Island, so after the clinic I flew over to see him for awhile. It was my first time there so he was anxious to show me the island.

I remember it well. We went hiking through a mountain pass when it happened. We saw a giant stool. It had to be five feet across and it was still steaming. I've seen cow pies before but this was ridiculous. My brother shouted "It's from a Kodiak and we're going to start running because that stool's fresh."

Now for those of you who don't know, the Kodiak bear is the largest meat eating mammal on earth. It is twice as big as a Grizzly bear. Well I started running behind Rob and laughing "Hey this is crazy." Then all of a sudden I looked back and was struck with fear of such giant proportions that I needed a whole roll of toilet paper. An 1800 pound Kodiak bear was after us.

Rob screamed "Run sideways across this mountain slope, there's a cabin 1/2 mile from here." I'll never know my time but it may have been a world record. We got there just in the nick of time and bolted the door. The Kodiak was real mad and stood on his hind legs while his front paws were tearing shingles off the roof.

We heard a roar off in the distance and the Kodiak stopped his ferocious growling momentarily and left the cabin. Off in the trees, not fifty yards away, a

gigantic struggle took place. We could hardly see what was happening but great bellowing roars echoed throughout the mountains. Trees snapped in half as the struggle continued.

Then a tremendous crack was heard followed by an eerie silence. It was ten minutes before we got up enough courage to go out and investigate. There was the Kodiak laying perfectly still and then came a haunting sight. It's head had been twisted completely backwards. We knew then the tremendous crack we had heard was the Kodiak's powerful neck being broken and horribly twisted. What or who could have done this?

Rob was the first to see the big human-like footprints all around the area. I shuddered. Then we heard a roar on the ridge above. A human-like form covered with dark hair stood looking at us. It had to be 8 feet tall weighing at least 600 pounds. Ajax began to run. Ajax is what I call the thing. I guess from all my years of coaching I was calm under pressure. I took out my stopwatch and timed Ajax. Rob and I paced off 40 yards as he sped into the woods. I am sure Ajax ran a 3.9 Forty. I estimated his bench to be at least 1000 pounds. You may think I'm weird, but my mind works this way after so many years in coaching.

U.S.F.L. scouts are all over the place. We tried to keep our experience quiet but when I got back to Anchorage a U.S.F.L. rep was there waiting. They'd already had a league meeting and if Ajax could be signed a drawing would be held for his playing rights. I was offered one million dollars if I could sign him. I guess the league could use an 8 ft 600 pound guy who can run 3.9 and bench 1000 pounds. Well, I just couldn't let Ajax sign after him saving us and all so we sent them the Kodiak's stool instead.