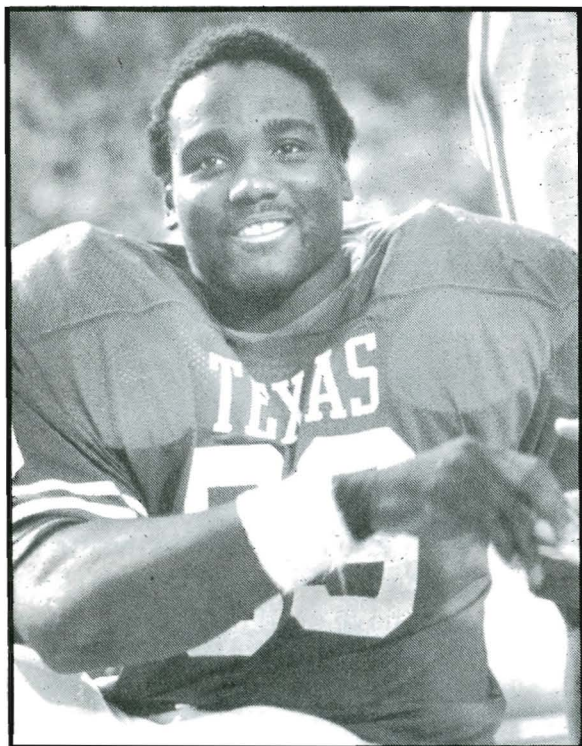
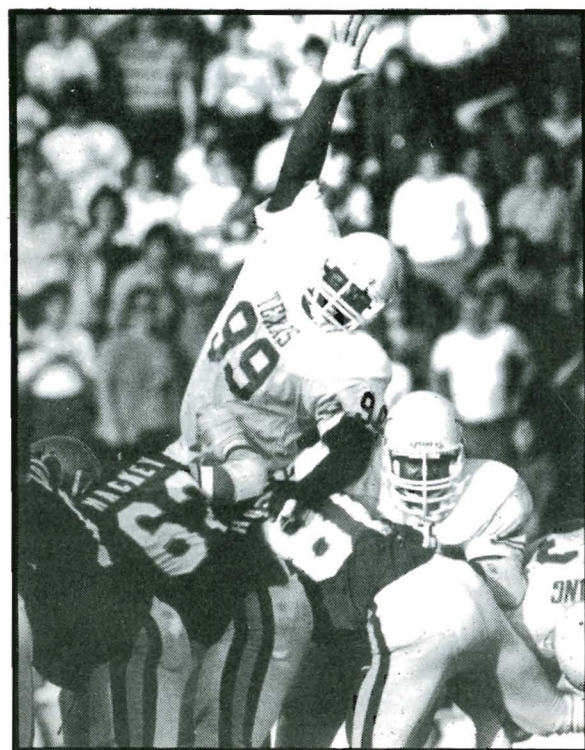


TONY DEGRATE

By
Greg Shepard



Lombardi Trophy Winner: Tony DeGrate



Tony DeGrate is one of the most outstanding people in football today. He has outstanding credentials. Tony was the 1984 Lombardi Trophy Winner. The Lombardi Trophy is awarded to the best defensive lineman in college football. He is an All-American in every respect! Tony DeGrate has kept his life in proper perspective.

Dana LeDuc the strength coach at the University of Texas has the highest praise for Tony. "He is a good hard worker, who has developed his talents," states Coach LeDuc. "Tony is gifted but he's worked awfully hard also. As for leadership qualities, I can tell you that he commands a lot of respect in his own quiet way," LeDuc continued. "Tony DeGrate is the thickest athlete I've ever seen. He has phenomenal layers of thickness and could have squatted 800 pounds but we don't push it and normally keep it around 650 pounds."

Such high praise coming from Dana LeDuc is impressive. Coach LeDuc, in his prime at the University of Texas, was a world class shotputter. During his competition he had opportunities to see the world's best weight men in track and of course Coach LeDuc has seen many great athletes during his 8 year tenure at the University of Texas. Therefore, when Dana LeDuc says Tony DeGrate is the thickest athlete he's seen: I listen! Tony DeGrate must be something special.

Coach LeDuc also states that Tony DeGrate is one of the most outstanding men he's been around. He takes his weight training seriously. He takes his education seriously and takes the spiritual side of life seriously. Tony DeGrate reciprocates that feeling towards Coach LeDuc as Tony made sure his strength coach was one of the two men with him at the Lombardi Trophy Awards Banquet.

Mike Parker, Tony's defensive line coach, was the other man invited to be with him. Coach Parker shouts his praises "Tony DeGrate is the most physical player ever at Texas." Now, when you consider all the great players that have come through the University of Texas that's really saying something.

Tony relates this about his high school career. "I wasn't a big name in high school. I was benched several times and a lot of people said I wouldn't make it. Even after I was headed for the University of Texas, people said I'd be back soon pumping gas. However, I always set my goals high and always keep striving. I tried to let negative things people said turn into something positive. When somebody says I can't do something, that makes me all the more determined to succeed. I've got two rules: never settle for second best and never become complacent. I'm very hard on myself. A lot of my attitude has been developed through inspiration and example from Coach LeDuc and Coach Parker.

You can see from Tony's Progression Chart that the only thing he really worked on in high school was the bench press. He barely got more than his body weight. He

went to Snyder High School, a 4-A school in Snyder, Texas. In December of 1984, Coach Greg Shepard did a Bigger Faster Stronger clinic at Snyder. Football Coach Dennis Tomlin, a new coach, remarked "I'll guarantee you, we don't have anyone like Tony DeGrate now. We need to have a strength program. From now on, we will have to develop greatness."

It was really evident that a strength program was desperately needed in Snyder. They decided to set a team goal of breaking 16,000 personal records before next football season after their BFS clinic. The BFS set-rep system was instituted and at this writing the team has averaged 1000 broken records a week. Progress is monitored by a United Fund Thermometer. As it's turning out, their goal should have been 25,000 records.

Tony DeGrate states that weight training has definitely enhanced his ability. "When I got here I wasn't that strong" recalls DeGrate. Coach LeDuc remembers "When Tony first got here he was not projected to be a great player. Without his willingness to work hard in the weight room, Tony DeGrate would not be near the player he is today. "Tony was only an Honorable Mention All-State player in high school." Tony responds by stating, "I had a dismal senior season. In fact, I was more known in baseball. As a pitcher I was clocked at 96 MPH." *Editor's Note: Can you imagine a 6-3, 255 lb. pitcher throwing a baseball 96 MPH; I think I'd get out of the way!*

Tony is a Commercial Art Major and maintains a 2.6 G.P.A. Tony will graduate and feels very strongly about his painting. He has had offers to go to Europe to continue his art career. Tony loves to work with oil, pastel and color prisma. However, Tony plans on exploring a pro football career and paint in the off-season. Then after football, he can pursue a full time art career.

I asked Tony about one set of 8-12 reps and what if your pro strength coach had you do it. Tony responded diplomatically, "I've got a philosophy that the team comes before me so I would do it. I would follow orders. I'd try to talk to the coach in private so maybe we could compromise and say maybe we could do it this way.

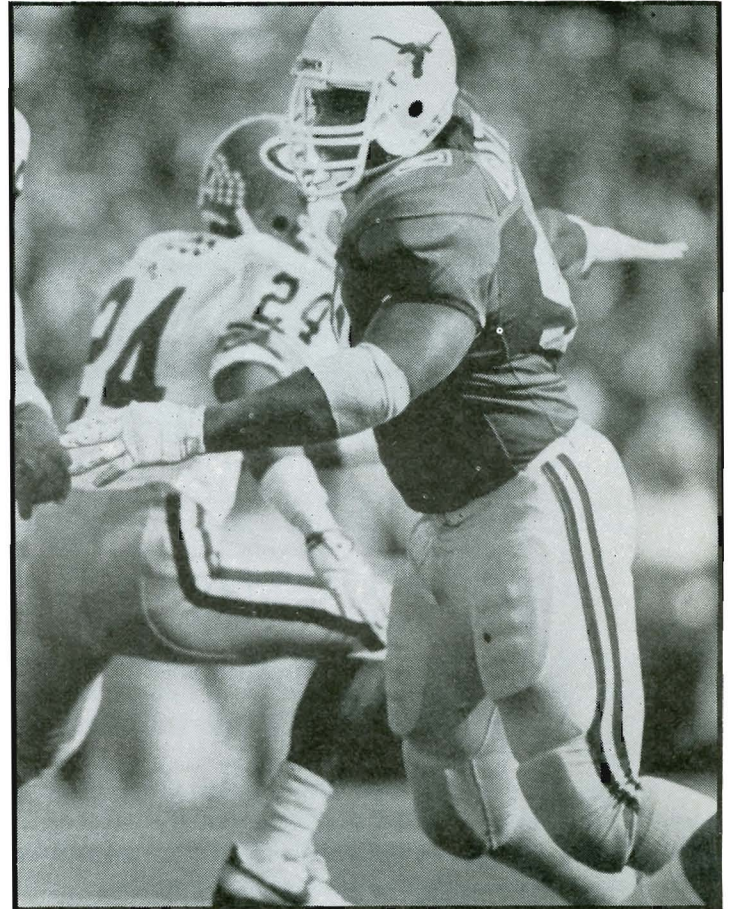
What about Nautilus, Tony? "For me, at my defensive tackle position, I can't rate it very high. I don't pay much attention to that system," responded DeGrate. "With my program I feel very confident about my strength. I feel I can handle anyone one on one. I don't think I'll ever feel that I have enough strength. I've got to keep pushing forward," DeGrate concluded.

Tony DeGrate does keep things in proper perspective. "I've never done drugs. I don't misuse my body and I never will. I'm really choosy about my friends. I'd rather be called a square than be on drugs. I think a lot of kids are misled and look at the short term. I don't use steroids. I believe hard work is a lot better way to go and I'd never recommend steroids. I really don't know about uppers or speed. I guess some players take them but as for me I believe a real competitor doesn't need a pill to get up."

And then, Tony DeGrate became even more serious. "I'd like to talk about the importance of God in my life. The most important things in my life are: My God, my family, my education and my career. In that order. I know a lot of young athletes will read this article and so I'd urge

them to get a proper perspective of life. Get to know your spiritual self and develop a personal relationship with God."

We wish to thank Tony DeGrate for being the special individual that he is and the inspiration he has been and thank Coach Dana LeDuc for his leadership in all that he does at the University of Texas. If any athletes would like to attend a summer strength camp at the University of Texas, contact Coach LeDuc. He's been holding a camp for 8 years. Good Luck!



Tony DeGrate: "The most physical player ever at the University of Texas."

TONY DEGRATE PROGRESSION CHART

YR	HT	WT	V.J.	S.L.J.	BENCH	SQUAT	CLEAN	INCLINE
Sr.	6-3	285	28"	8-9½	400	600	300	355
Jr.	6-3	270	27½	8-7	370	550	285	340
Soph.	6-3	265	26½	8-9	345	500	280	315
Fr.	6-3	250	25	8-2	295	475	260	250
12th	6-3	255	X	X	280	X	X	X
11th	6-2½	240	X	X	250	X	X	X
10th	6-2	235	X	X	230	X	X	X
9th	6-1	220	X	X	X	X	X	X

Tony's increased strength enabled him to jump higher and farther with more explosive power at a greater bodyweight!!