

ONE FOOT SHORT BUT WALKING TALL

**The Story of
Randy Ver Steeg**
by
Kurt Mattison
Midwest BFS Rep

If you ever had the opportunity to see Coach Shepard's movie "TOM," about the phenomenal young man from Colorado who, despite playing with the absence of his right arm, set state records and won countless honors and championships as a high school athlete and student, you were certainly inspired. And if you haven't seen it, you should! (See page 8 of this Journal for more details.)

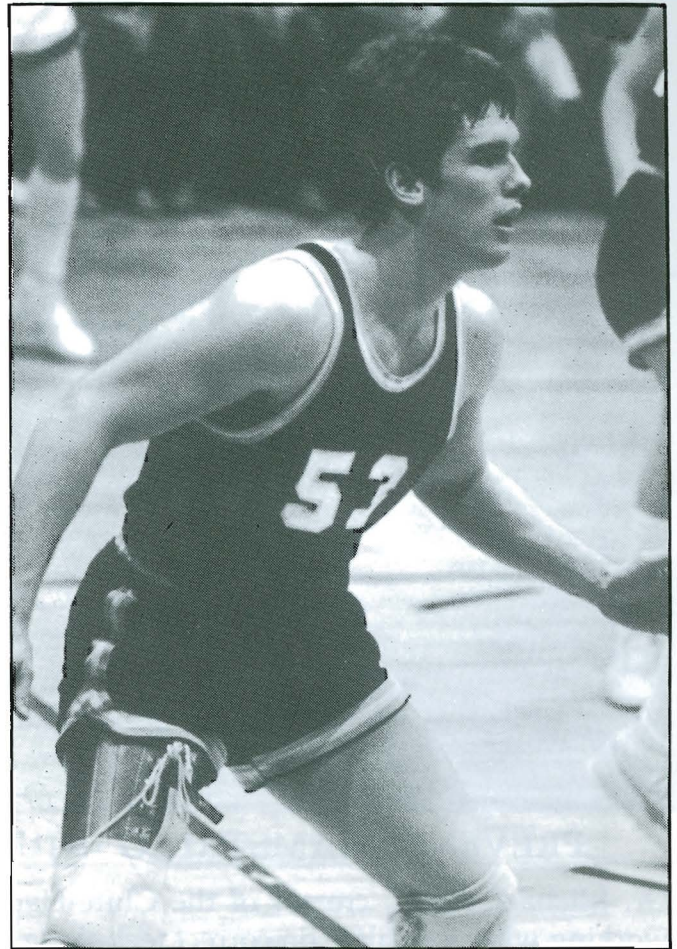
Last October I drove to Hancock, Minnesota and watched another young man play football who is in many ways much like Tom. He's a three sport athlete who will earn 14 varsity letters by this June in football, basketball, and baseball. And, like Tom, he is a fine student, earning a B average in school. And, like Tom, he is a friendly, humble person who has earned the admiration and respect of those who know him, and those who've played against him.

But in a couple of significant ways Randy Ver Steeg of Minnesota is quite different than Tom Southall of Colorado. Unlike Tom, Randy has two hands and arms. And, unlike Tom, Randy has only one entire leg and foot. You see, when Randy was 3 years old, he slipped under a lawn mower and lost his right foot and part of his lower leg. He has since learned to walk, run, and jump as well as most athletes.

For the first few years, Randy was inhibited by his stump, and often left his prosthesis on at night when he stayed at a friend's house. He often avoided going swimming with friends because he would have to change legs. "The first reaction for many people," Randy comments, "is to check it out, but I've gotten used to it. I think people around here have grown not to even notice it."

Randy and his parents, Edgar and Sheryl Ver Steeg, went through many agonizing trips to Minneapolis surgeons who had to decide when to remove new bone and to fit him with new legs. Not surprisingly, Mr. and Mrs. Ver Steeg were apprehensive about Randy's desire to participate in athletics, as many of his relatives and friends had done.

Randy got involved in baseball in grade school, and it has remained his first love in sports. "I think baseball is my favorite sport, because I enjoy pitching and hitting," he told me. He moved from first base to pitcher in fifth grade, and has been on the mound ever since. His coach, Dave Schoeck, explains the move: "Randy was a logical choice as our pitcher because he was rangy, a fierce competitor, and wouldn't have to cover a lot of ground."



Randy's power and intensity make him an "Enforcer" on the court!



Randy settles into one of his 300 strike out pitches that has earned him Conference MVP honors 2 years in a row!

ONE FOOT SHORT BUT WALKING TALL: Randy Ver Steeg

Continued from Page 35

And a wise move it was. Randy's varsity pitching debut as a seventh grader was a one-hit shut-out! He has been named All-Conference every year since eighth grade, and was chosen Conference MVP the past two seasons. From the mound he has over 100 strikeouts the past two seasons, averaging 1 base on balls per seven innings! Prior to this spring Randy has over 40 wins, 300 strikeouts, and 6 no-hitters. He has also displayed great power at the plate, where he has batted over .300.

Randy has also dominated the basketball court, where he has earned 4 letters and started since his freshman season. During his sophomore and junior years, the Hancock High School Owls were 36-9. Last season he led his conference with a 54% fieldgoal percentage and averaged 8 points and 8 rebounds per game. Coach Schoeck describes Randy's impact on the court, "Randy's role is that of the enforcer." After watching him play football, I can assure you I would not want to cover him on the basketball court without full pads! Randy mentions the only real problem of being one foot short is the sores he gets as a result of the sweating and chafing of the artificial leg on his stub. Because of the constant jumping, stopping, and cutting, basketball seasons have been the most painful to endure.

Randy has also had to overcome "normal" athletic injuries and surgery. In his freshman and sophomore seasons, he centered his school's nine-man football teams that were 7-1 and 6-2. He was also a defensive end, and was named All-Conference Honorable Mention as a sophomore.

In August, 1984, Randy's football season was only ten minutes long. A dislocated knee-cap on his short leg required surgery that forced him out of uniform, but not out of football. Coach Dennis Courneya told of his continued value to the team, "He never missed a practice or a game that entire season. His moral support was a big boost to the team."

His senior season was a remarkable one. As a co-captain and standout at center and defensive end at 6'2" and 185, he led his team to a Conference Championship and a 10-1 record, and just missed a birth in the final 8 state playoff. He was a shoe-in for All-Conference honors, something he missed out on as a junior.

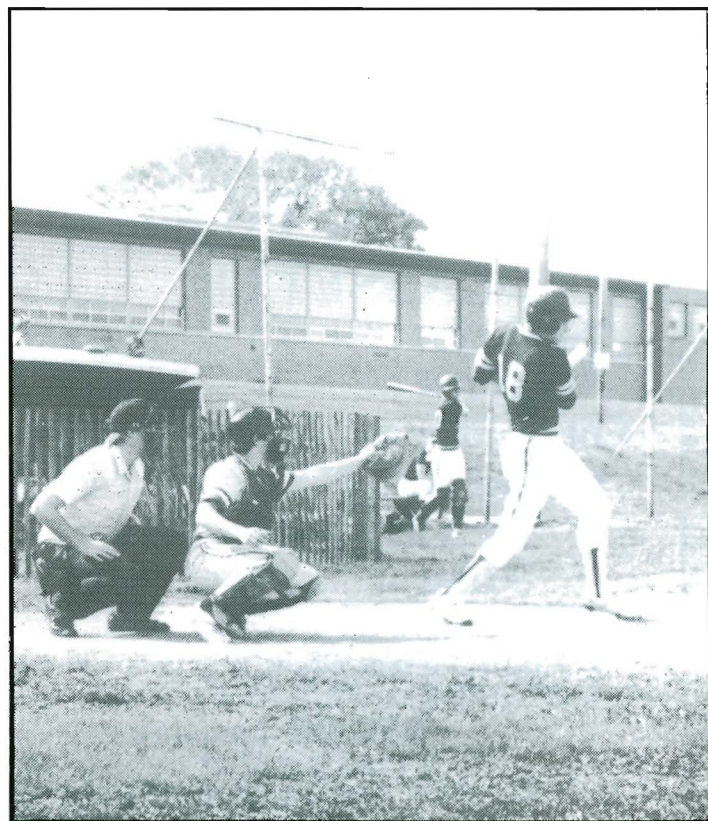
When I watched him play that night in October, I was amazed at how fast he was on his feet. He moved like a player would with a sore ankle or knee, maybe a step slower than he might be, but his pursuit and second effort were relentless! Randy says that regular strength training, mostly at home, has been a big factor in his performance. I shudder to imagine how devastating he'll be with a year of the BFS Set-Rep Program into his body, which Coach Courneya expects to implement this year.

Coach Schoeck anticipates Randy's future, "I'm sure colleges could use his talents in athletics, but his inspiration to others is of greatest value."

Congratulations to Randy, his coaches, and parents. Randy Ver Steeg may be one foot short, but he has obviously learned to WALK TALL. No doubt Tom Southall would agree with that!



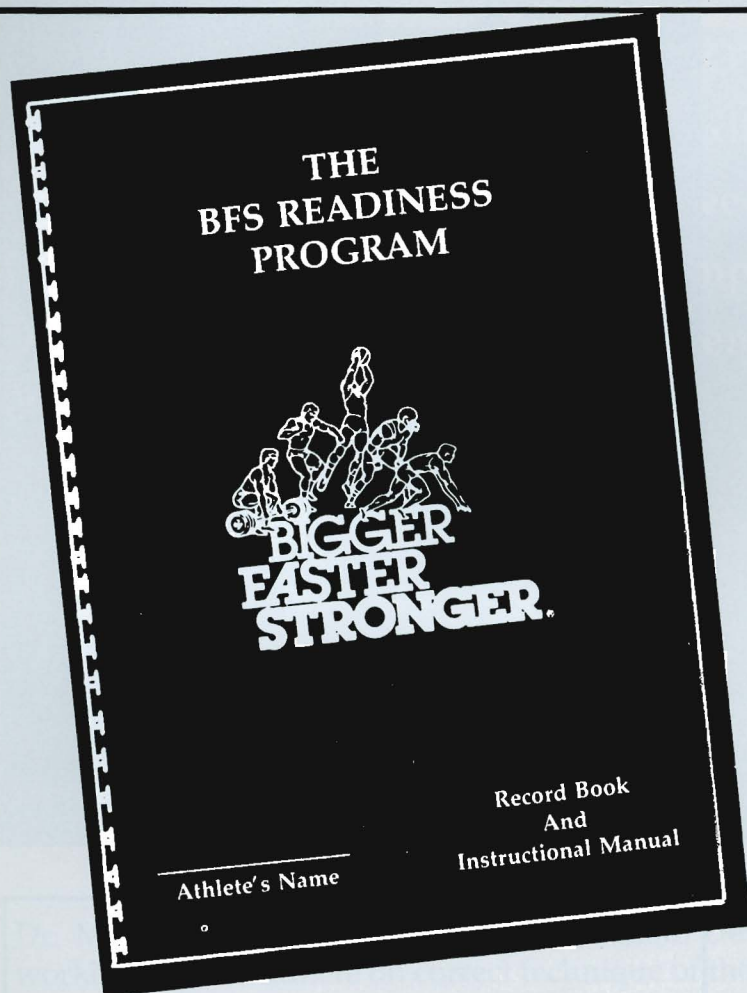
Randy seems to have forgotten that having only one leg is supposed to affect his speed and jumping ability!



Randy hits, throws, runs and jumps. Nothing stops him from his goals.

READINESS PROGRAM

RECORD BOOK AND VIDEO



EACH ATHLETE SHOULD HAVE ONE

ALSO ON VIDEO CASSETTE

See Jimmy, a 13 year old,
(pictured on page 12) and
Coach Shepard go completely
through the BFS Readiness
Program.

VHS BETA 3/4

COST: \$89.00 Purchase Fee
\$30.00 Rental Fee

or only \$49.00 if you purchase any other
BFS Cassette Program on Page 8

ORDER TODAY!!

COST:

One: \$4.00

2-9: \$3.00 Each

10-25: \$2.50 Each

Over 25: \$2.25 Each

- ★ For All Athletes
Beginning in 7th Grade
- ★ Easy To Understand!
- ★ Great for P.E. Classes!
- ★ Motivational!
- ★ Lay The Groundwork
Now For Great Things
To Come!
- ★ Fast and Fun!
- ★ Develops Great
Technique

Call or write:

BIGGER FASTER STRONGER
P.O. Box 20612

Salt Lake City, Utah 84120

Call Toll Free: 1-800-628-9737

Utah-Alaska-Hawaii Coaches Call:
1-801-969-9935