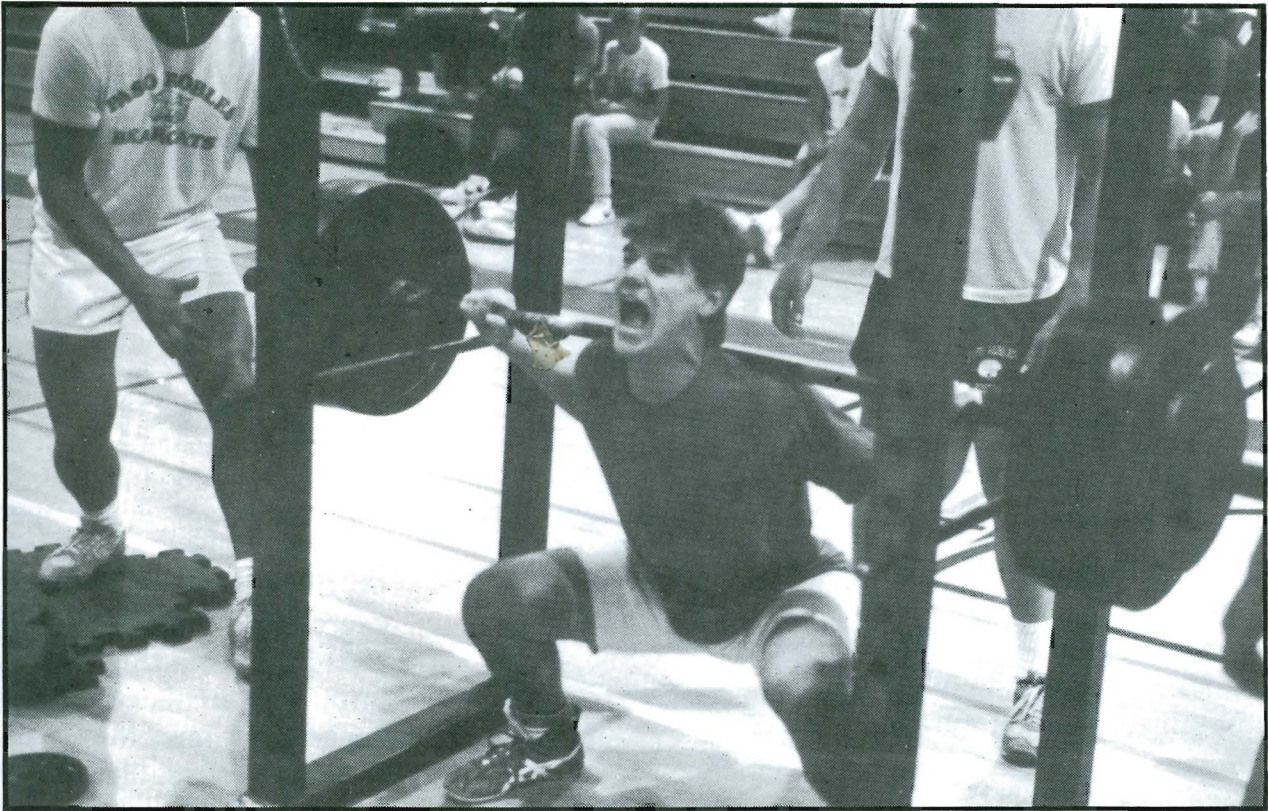


# INNER STRENGTH

Paso Robles  
High School



The Intensity and Dedication of the Football Players at Paso Robles High School helped them overcome a much greater obstacle than a Championship.

*Editor's Note: Adversity comes in many forms. Our ability to deal with adversity measures our character. Athletics offer a unique opportunity to test these abilities in overcoming adversity. When we overcome these adversities in athletics, it should prepare us well for tests in the real world. Sometimes these tests, however, can be very painful and many times we wonder why things happen as they do. The important lesson we as coaches must teach is that with a loss, set-back or with a grievous situation such as suffered by a team of gallant men at Paso Robles; we must go on. We must think of how we might do things differently to accomplish life's progression in a better way. Then, inevitably, we must press on, having faith, and simply continue in the noble cause of being the best we can be.*

By

**Kelly Moore**

Head Football Coach  
Paso Robles High School  
Paso Robles, California

There has been many outstanding success stories written in the BFS magazine. The players and coaches at Paso Robles High School have a different type of success story to tell. It does pertain to football, however, it goes far beyond the realm of the game. It reaches into life and real life experiences.

Two years ago I took over the head coaching job at Paso Robles. I knew in my heart that I was a good coach. The coaching staff had figured we would realistically end the season with a five and five win, loss record. What we did not plan on was our six foot one inch, one hundred ninety pound, cannon armed quarterback, to get hurt the first play of our first game. We ended up 1-9.

The senior class for the 1985 football season had won one game in each of the previous three years. They were used to losing. We knew we had to break the cycle or get into another profession. The staff installed a five point program.

Step Number One was to try and open their eyes as to the opportunity they had to change the losing attitude that the athletes and the school had become accustomed. In December each of the potential varsity athletes met individually with me. The reason was to fill out and discuss goals and objectives for the team and themselves.

Step Two was strength gains. We were pitifully weak. In January I called Bob Rowbotham for help. We set up a date for a clinic. Little did we know what gains were going to be made after the clinic. It was incredible. Every kid attended the clinic. I thank God we made it mandatory.

Step Number Three was the blending of our Junior class 3-27 for their football experience, and the sophomore class,

Continued on Page 37



# INNER STRENGTH AT PASO ROBLES



Chris Gallegos (on the right) was killed instantly. Mark Brown (on the left) was given a 20% chance of living.

## WHAT DO YOU DO?

who had lost but one game. There was tremendous resentment between the two classes. We told the kids that just like in a family, there was going to be conflicts and resolutions. When Spring ball started, the athletes were told they were going to war. Everytime the coaching staff had the chance, we put Sophomores vs Juniors. They were told that before they could fight in the trenches with each other, against our opponents, they had to war on each other. It came to pass. I mean it was WWII!!! However, after Spring ball, a feeling of unity and commitment swept up our team. The light was beginning to shine at the end of the tunnel.

Step Four was to make our athletes pay a severe price. They had to pay so dearly that in the heat of battle they would not throw in the towel. For three months, June, July, and August, our kids worked from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Friday. The program was broken up into four, 45 minute segments. Two weight lifting segments, one football segment and one conditioning segment. We started with 70 varsity athletes. After one week we had 34. We did not cut anybody. It was simply that for 36 kids the commitment was too much. After that first week, thirty-two out of the thirty-four athletes did not miss more than three days for the next fifty workouts. They paid an incredible price during that ten weeks.

Step Number Five was the actual game preparation. No matter what we had done to make our athletes believe, they still had to prove it. Our first game was an away game. I believe that helped. The kids did not have to perform under more pressure than they had already been feeling. Seventy miles out of town our bus had a flat tire. The kids started to press the panic button. We talked about how we could use the situation to our advantage and then went to sleep until another bus could get there. When we finally entered the stadium, the announcer was telling the crowd that it was uncertain why we were not present. They did not know whether we had been in an accident or what?

It had been five years since Paso Robles had beaten that team. We won 40-6. Mark Brown had scored four times. Two of them were punt returns. The athletes, coaches and community went crazy. The wave was swelling fast. The next week the team we played had beaten us for four previous years. We won 26-12. Mark Brown scored three times. After that game we all knew the corner had been turned. The wave was cresting.

Saturday morning the coaches met at 8:00 a.m. The kids were to come in at 10:00 a.m. My wife came in at about 8:30 a.m. with some wave crashing news. Mark Brown and Chris Gallegos, both members of the team, had been in an automobile accident. Chris was killed and Mark was in intensive care. The heart of our team was torn out. The game of football somehow seemed to be very meaningless. Mark was given a 20% chance of living. According to the doctors, the reason Mark lives today is the workouts during the summer. Both boys were not wearing seat belts. (BUCKLE UP!!) Chris left us for the big football game in the sky. We buried Chris the next Wednesday. The whole school was rocked. Friday we lost 23-0. The second half of that game we tallied ten first downs to our opponents' two. Our kids have incredible inner strength. We lost the next week also, 23-20. Our fifth game we got back on the track. We won 14-13. However, in that game we lost our leading rusher with a broken collar bone. I was not sure how our kids would handle another setback. We won our sixth game 9-0.

The next week was our first league game. At halftime we led 9-0. With two minutes left our opponent had the ball and the lead by five points. Our kids believed they could win. We held, and with seven seconds left we scored to win. But, it was called back. Our only penalty of the game. We lost 21-16. In our seventh game we faced a team that defeated us the year before 77-6, on their homecoming. Only one running back graduated off their offensive unit. We made them our homecoming, and at halftime we led 7-0. However, we lost the game 21-7. We won the next game 20-6 and lost our last game 20-6.

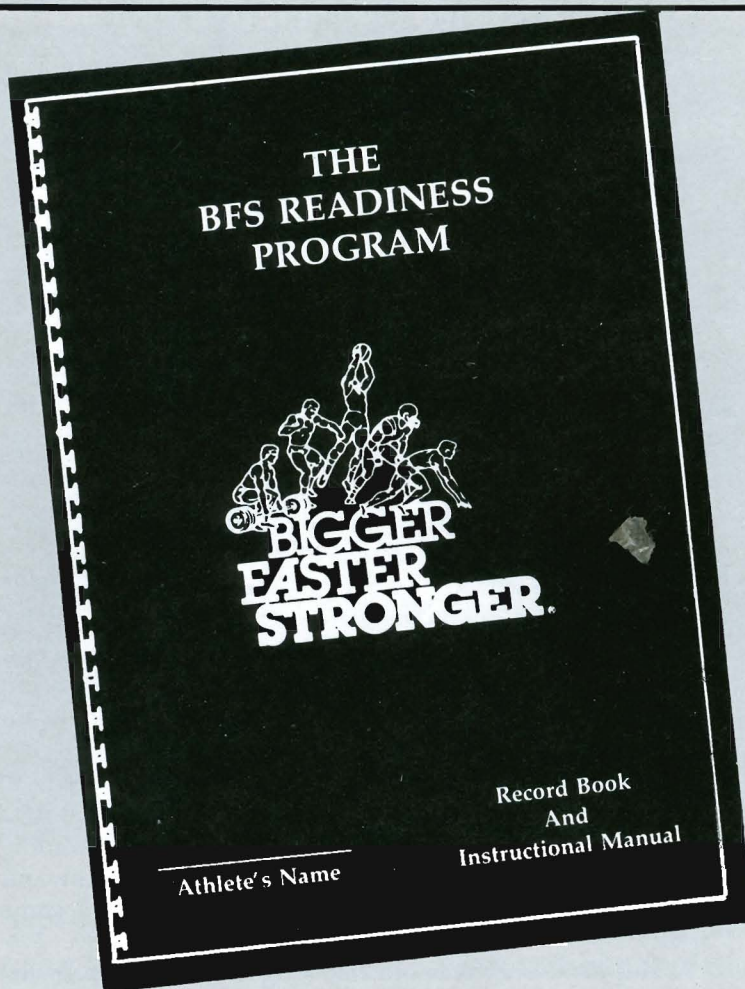
The point to this story is that these young leaders of tomorrow fought a ton of adversity and handed dignity back to our school and themselves. The athletes have already set the championship goal for the 1986 football season. My staff, athletes, and myself would like to thank Bob Rowbotham and BFS for their guidance and inspiration.

We wish to thank Coach Kelley Moore, his staff and the athletes of Paso Robles High School for their perseverance in the face of great adversity. I am sure the lessons, though painful and difficult, will be meaningful and of great worth for a lifetime. Paso Robles produced a unique group of true champions.



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