

MOJO MAGIC



Head Coach John Wilkins is now Permian's Athletic Director. Record includes most wins by any school in America in the last six years.

I often get asked the question "which state plays the best football" or "tell me about football in Texas." Since we travel to every state and do so many BFS clinics, this is a natural question. I'm not going to answer the first question because I know there are some amazing high school programs in a number of states. In a future article, I hope to write about John Moronto at Massilon High School in Ohio. I did a clinic for John last summer. The tradition and program at Massilon is truly legendary. Valdosta High School in Georgia is equally as impressive. The list could go to perhaps ten to twenty schools but this article will deal with the incredible record established at Permian High School in Odessa, Texas.

Certainly Texas can lay claim to the best high school football in America and Permian High School can lay claim to being the best of the best. Anyway, Odessa, Texas is football crazy. Everyone has played at one level or another and they want their sons to play. Permian High School has not had a losing season for 22 years. They've only lost 7 games in 8 years and only lost 3 games in the 1980's! This includes playoff games. Permian has the most wins by any school in the last six years. Permian has had four 10-0 records in regular season play in the 1980's.

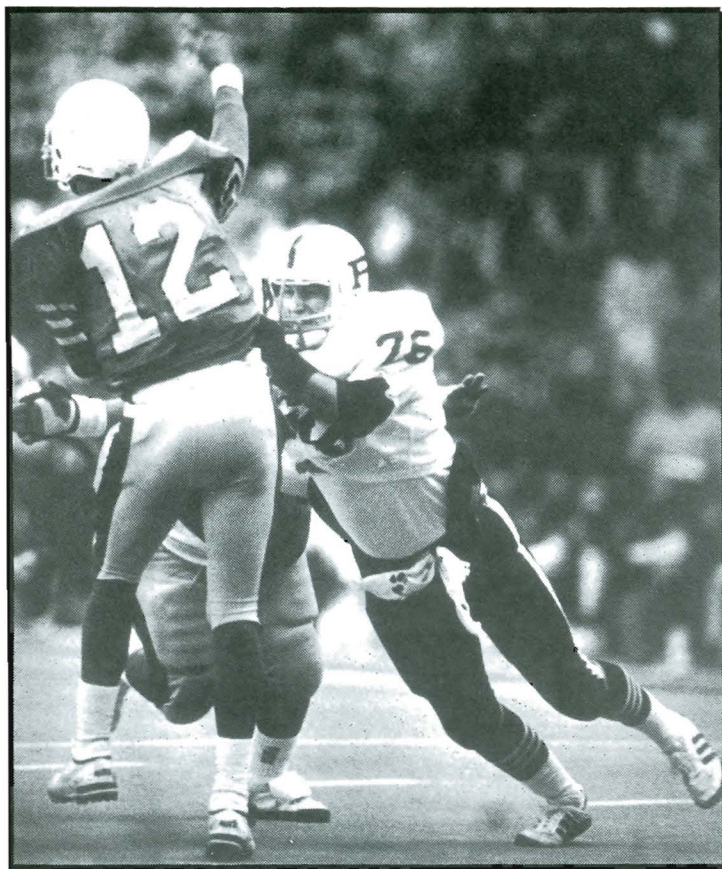
The Conference they play in is so tough, they call it the "Little Southwest Conference." It is an amazing feat to go undefeated in one year, let alone four. What is their secret? Is it big, strong and gifted athletes? The word around Texas is: It's "MOJO MAGIC."

The word "MOJO" is printed in big letters on the front of the school. Permian is known as the "MOJO PANTHERS" throughout Texas. Strength Coach and Varsity Assistant Coach Bucky Jones states, "No one really knows the exact origin of MOJO but most people believe it started about 25 years ago. Permian was in a very critical situation and someone yelled that we needed "More Juice." The crowd picked up on that and started to chant "More Juice" over and over again. After a while it started to sound like "MOJO." Anyway it worked and Permian won and ever since then the crowd will use that to get us going."

"How do you mean, Bucky?" I asked. His eyes squinted a bit and he answered, "Our Stadium holds 19,100 people but when we play a big game 22,000 will come. When we have a real big game like Midland-Lee the last two years in playoff games we had to play in Lubbock at Texas Tech Stadium in order to accommodate 35,000 people. Now when you get all those people to start hollering that slow chant of "MOJO" it sort of makes the hair stand up on your head."

"It must be an awesome sound," I said agreeing with Coach Jones, "but what's this about playing in Lubbock; that's over 100 miles away." He laughed. "You see, we've got to play in a Stadium that will hold all our fans. They're

MOJO MAGIC AT PERMIAN



#76 Never ever give up! Go get 'em!

willing to come that far, besides in Texas we get to split the gate receipts."

I turned to Head Football Coach John Wilkins, "What about "MOJO MAGIC?" He now laughed. "There is no set explanation. It's a rallying cry. It's tradition. I think the word "MOJO" also has some magic connotation but I'm not sure. Anyway, MOJO is a psychological thing and it probably works more on our opponents through intimidation than it does to help us. We don't really talk about it but everybody knows it's there. We've won a lot of games late in the game but we do work extremely hard at playing intense on every down especially in the 4th quarter. If people want to believe "MOJO MAGIC" did it, that's OK with me."

"Coach Wilkins, can you give me ten reasons which might help the MOJO mystique along?" I asked next. "Well Greg, first of all, we've got GOOD PLAYERS. We develop them from an early age by starting flag football in the 2nd grade. Regular football is started in the fourth grade."

"Second, we have tremendous COMMUNITY SUPPORT. Last Fall, television pre-empted the American League playoffs to show our game. All the stations bid for it and ABC won. We had an extremely high rating with some 150,000 local people tuned in."

"Third, we try hard to develop a SPECIAL FEELING towards ourselves, our families and towards each other."

"Fourth, we stress HARD WORK by both players and



Agility and Lifting go hand-in-hand in the spacious MOJO Panther Conditioning Building.



Coach Bucky Jones spotting a player on the Incline Press.

coaches."

"Fifth, we stress QUICKNESS. It's our number one thing."

"Sixth, we've got to do OTHER THINGS because we are small."

"Seventh, DISCIPLINE IS THE FOUNDATION OF SUCCESS. Our program is strict. Building character is important. If a player is in this game for glory or a scholarship, he's in it for the wrong reason."

"Eighth, we treat our players FIRST CLASS and we expect the same in return."

"Ninth, we work on the WHOLE PERSON. We want good grades, a good attitude and a good person. We expect a lot from our kids. We coach 'em how to handle the press, their teachers and other people."

"Tenth, our JUNIOR HIGH PROGRAM is tops. We have six coaches at each of our three junior highs. Naturally, I have the say on everything in grades 7 through 12."

Now the reader of this article might scoff a little at reason number Six when Coach Wilkins claims his teams are small. I was really surprised but it was incredible. When I observed them lifting and running forties I asked Coach Jones, "Where's the Varsity?" I thought I was looking at the Junior Varsity Team. Coach Jones winced a little as he responded, "You're looking at the Varsity! Our kids know they have to play over their heads to win because of their lack of size. Most of our linemen weigh around 165 pounds.

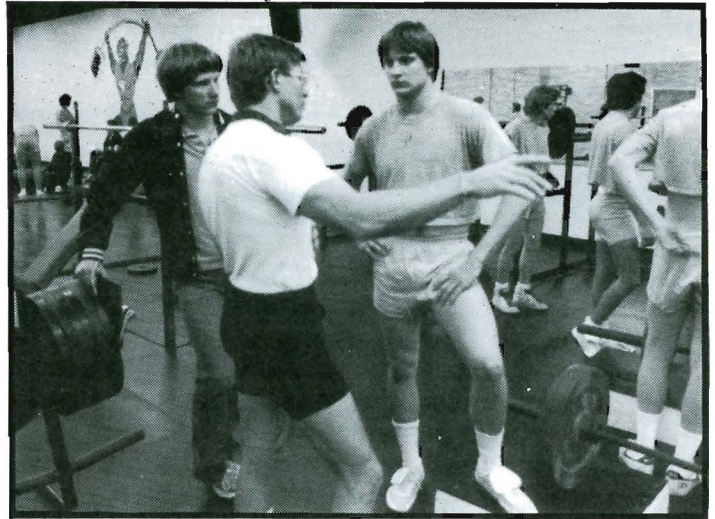
HIGH SCHOOL ODESSA, TEXAS



Greg Anderson, #11, All-State Wide Receiver caught 144 passes for 2118 yards and 25 touchdowns as a 2-year starter.

We played Highland Park last season and their line averaged 265 pounds. Eleven of their kids received Division I Football Scholarships. Heck, Greg, we're lucky to have one per year. Right now we only have a total of four guys playing at the Division I level and only two more playing Junior College ball. In fact Greg, why are you here? We are not big or even strong. Surely, we don't really belong in your journal."

"Coach Jones," I encouraged, "We believe in the concept of becoming Bigger Faster and Stronger not only physically but mentally and spiritually as well. I believe that your



Strength Coach and Assistant Football Coach, Bucky Jones instructing one of Permian's "Big Tackles."



The word "MOJO" on the front of the High School. "It's a community and school thing!"

athletes are giants in the mental and spirit department. I want to know about that and share what I find with our readers."

Coach Jones seemed somewhat relieved and went on, "Greg, take a look at this last season's Class 5-A All-State Football Team." Permian had four players selected to the first team! At close look, it was humorous. Greg Anderson, Wide Receiver: 5-11, 160. Jerry LeClair, Defensive End: 5-10, 160. Danny Servance, Linebacker: 6-2, 190. Robert Williams, 6-0, 170. It was humorous because all the other linemen, tight ends and linebackers averaged 6-4 in height and 235 pounds."

I then asked Coach Jones to tell me about Permian High School. He stated, "We have 2,300 students in the top three grades and we've had our weight room since 1982. Our Agility Coach is Larry Currie and our Squat Coach is Myron Schneider. We stress character and agility. We feel we're behind on strength compared to a lot of schools but we're trying hard to catch up. As far as football, we run the old Wing T and throw about 15 times per game. Our program

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consists of 55 juniors and seniors and 80 sophomores. Coach Wilkins has been our Head Coach the last fourteen years."

"Coach Jones, what is your number one priority?"

"Quickness is of super importance and mental toughness is what is stressed mostly. I'd have to say the actual lifting is down the list on our priorities. However, we do the Squat, Bench, Incline and Clean. We teach Form Running and test the Vertical Jump. For quickness we do a 30-second Dummy Jump and a 20-yard Shuttle Run. We stretch before and after workouts. Defensively we have a 4-3 front so all the things we do, utilize our speed and quickness."

Permian High School has Tim O'Connell, a full-time trainer. The four Varsity Assistant Coaches are Larry Curry, Mike Belew, Bucky Jones and Ken Herring. The Assistant Coaches make a little over \$30,000 per year. The Head Coach makes over \$40,000 while the Junior High Coaches make over \$23,000 per year.

I asked Coach Wilkins about his new job as Athletic Director and the new Head Football Coach. He said, "I'm enjoying being Athletic Director. It was a different Spring and missing Spring practice and all. I know come Fall, I'll miss the comraderie of my fellow coaches and players but I'm happy. As far as the new Coach, we selected Gary Gaines. He was an assistant with me before he got a Head job at another school. We didn't want the system to change because of our success. All our assistants are remaining and so for our situation, Coach Gaines was our man. The transition was and is smooth."

In the weight room I talked with Joey Lee who was a sophomore at the time. He now is just starting his junior year. Joey has typical Permian size: 5-6½ and 130 pounds. He has been lifting since the 7th grade and had just benched 140 pounds. "Joey," I asked, "What about burnout? Do you ever get tired of it?" "No sir," came the reply, "I still love it!" Joey plays Quarterback and could very well be a starter his senior year. I further asked, "Joey, what's it take to be a winner?" He answered the question with great aplomb and poise as he said, "I'd say listen to your coaches and work hard, very hard. No matter how much it hurts you keep going, you just got to keep going!"

I turned to Patrick Wilson, a 6-0, 175 pound Linebacker who is blazing fast and could be Permian's best football player this Fall. I asked Patrick a question which required a yes or no answer. Patrick replied, "Yes sir." I asked Patrick why he said, "Yes sir." "Because we're supposed to I guess, I've never thought about it," came the reply. "Well, what if you don't?" I challenged. I was very surprised at this answer as Patrick responded, "I don't know, nothing I guess."

I then thought about Coach Wilkins' ten reasons for winning. It was readily apparent they were not just words but there was something very special about Permian. I got the feeling that if I asked Patrick how come Permian wins all the time, he would say, "Because we're supposed to." But Patrick, what if you don't, he'd say, "I don't know,

I've never thought about it." Confidence had been unabashedly internalized to the upper limit.

Finally, I asked Coach Wilkins if he had any advice for a young coach. He thought and sagely suggested, "There is no substitute for working hard and for spending time at what you want to accomplish. You've got to utilize your talents and be positive. Work with your players and convince them good things happen to good people. Do all your work and then 'GO GET 'EM!'"

We wish to thank Coach Wilkins, Coach Jones, the players and the rest of the Permian Staff for helping us more fully understand the meaning of becoming Bigger Faster and Stronger with the mental and spiritual side of life and coaching. May the magic of MOJO be with us all.

REACTION TIME

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hand to cover the quarter. The winner is obviously who covers the quarter first. This contest is reacting to an auditory stimulus.

The second contest will be to react to a visual stimulus. This is set up the same way. The coach or 3rd party will now place their hand suspended 6 to 12 inches over the quarter. The coach will say "Ready" then pause before moving his hand in a quick burst. The athletes will concentrate on the hand and when it moves they'll try to cover the quarter first. You can have a little fun by trying to draw them "Offsides" by saying "Go." If they attempt to cover the quarter on "Go" instead of waiting for your hand to move, you of course, must penalize the guilty athlete. The penalty is that the thumb must be placed an additional five inches away from the quarter. This represents a five-yard offside penalty.

I'll guarantee you, if this is done in the cafeteria, you'll have a big crowd around you in no time. Everyone will want to try it. There will be a lot of smiles, joking and laughing. It'll be a good time. It is a great way to recruit more athletes into your program. This drill takes no effort, sweat or previous experience. It is very non-threatening. It is a way to heap some praise on an individual that may need it.

Finally, for evaluation purposes, you may observe an athlete in a different way after the drill. What if a second team athlete who has average strength and speed kills everybody in this reaction drill? You may want to give him a better look on the field. Another very important evaluation purpose is to see if a difference exists between a visual and auditory stimulus. It is very possible to be very good at one and poor at the other. In other words, if you have an athlete killing everybody on a visual stimulus but gets beat on the auditory stimulus and he is playing offense you should consider him very strongly for defense and switch him.

In my next article, I will illustrate some fun yet informative reaction contests for backs. It will be extremely interesting. If you are ever at a BFS Clinic, feel welcome to challenge me. It's great fun for me for I seem to have the uncanny ability to beat anyone who gets in my way.