

A DREAM FULFILLED



FIRTH H.S. IDAHO STATE CHAMPS!

By Mitch Buck
Head Football Coach

The summer of 1985 was very exciting for me because it was the beginning of my first job as Head Football Coach. It was at Firth High School in Eastern Idaho. In 1968, Firth finished the season 6-2-1 which was the last time they won the league title. Firth's only unbeaten teams were in 1925; 7-0-1, and 1964; 8-0-0.

I wanted to do a great job and had high expectations. We advertised our summer weight program and I envisioned players flocking to the weight room to lift. After one week, the players stopped coming. This lack of commitment disappointed me. Motivating the team was a constant struggle and frustration set in. The athletes seemed very apathetic towards weight lifting and acted as if it was a burden and non-profitable. I found a Bigger Faster Stronger magazine in the coach's office and it was exceptional. The articles not only motivated me and kept me on a positive track, but the players loved reading them. They helped in establishing dreams and gave direction in how to obtain them.

That first season ended up being quite difficult. We began the season with 33 players and ended up with 21. We only had 2 players not miss any practices. Our record at 2-7 was indicative of our commitment. In those seven losses we were outscored 342-37. I never dreamed I would coach a team that would lose games 63

to 12, 53 to 6, 48 to 0. Losing became easy, yet even in those losses I felt we were fractions away from being successful. I really began to understand that football is "A game of inches."

During the 1985-86 school year, we emphasized commitment in the weight room. We didn't have a weight lifting class so we lifted in the morning and after school. At our school, most athletes play three sports, so the off season was in the summer. The basketball coach worked with me in promoting weight training and our commitment was better but a long way from what we needed. Our power lifting meet helped as did a clinic we had with Jason Buck (now a Defensive Lineman for the Cincinnati Bengals). Two young men put forth a great effort through the summer. The progress they made helped the teams attitude and they became two of the top players in our conference. Even though our record, at 2-7, had not improved, we had fantastic growth. We lost four games by seven points or less and could have very easily have been 6-3.

Slowly, we began to see more commitment. Mr. Tucker, our principal, gave us a weight training class during the 1986-87 school year. Our younger athletes lifted throughout the year but we still had a difficult time getting the older ones to lift consistently. The team made some great progress, but I knew we could do

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better. Through the summer, we had more players lifting than any previous summer. It lead to a 6-3 season, Firth's best since 1968. We beat our arch-rivals, Shelley, for the first time in 19 years. The season was very emotional and what I think coaching is all about. Not only were we faster, stronger, and more aggressive, but we had become significantly more committed to improvement because of our weight training. That state playoff berth still eluded us though.

The end of the '87 season was the beginning of a great experience. We began to really believe. The players talked about a state championship. We dreamed of it and we began to work like we really wanted it to happen. We had a lift-a-thon and used the money to buy football pants and a tackling sled. We posted our goals in the weight room. One of which was to be "The most physical A-3 team in Idaho."

We opened the '88 season against our rivals Shelley High School. They are a classification bigger than us, and twice our size. That combined with the fact that we beat them the previous year and have never beat them two years in a row made it a very exciting and emotional experience. We loved preparing for the game, but playing it was even more enjoyable. The first series set the precedence for the whole season. On the kick-off, we tackled their return man just inside their ten yard line. On the first play from scrimmage, we got great penetration, caused a fumble and recovered it. Two plays later we were ahead 6-0. We never trailed in a game all season from there on.

Another one of our goals was to be "Better in November than we are in September." We became witnesses that success breeds confidence and confidence breeds success. Our offense kept improving with time and our defense kept getting more physical with each game.

We won the conference by defeating perennial powerhouse Sugar Salem 18-6. The fact we hadn't beat them since 1973 made it especially satisfying. We went into the playoffs having outscored our opponents 306-62 and only giving up two scores in the first half.

In the playoffs, we dominated our first opponent outscoring them 35-0. The semi-final game was our toughest test as we held off a comeback with a 75-yard 4th quarter touchdown drive in a 28-20 win. The state championship game was a rematch with Sugar and a final glorious colmination of our efforts. We won 30-0 and controlled every phase of the game. We had finally fulfilled all our dreams and achieved our ultimate goal.

Our J.V. team finished 9-1. In th last two years, our Varsity and J.V. teams are 18-3 and 15-3 respectively. We did not have one player miss a game due to a football injury.

We had eight players make the All-State team. One was the "Player-of-the-Year", another was the "Lineman-of-the-Year." We had eight players make All-Area and

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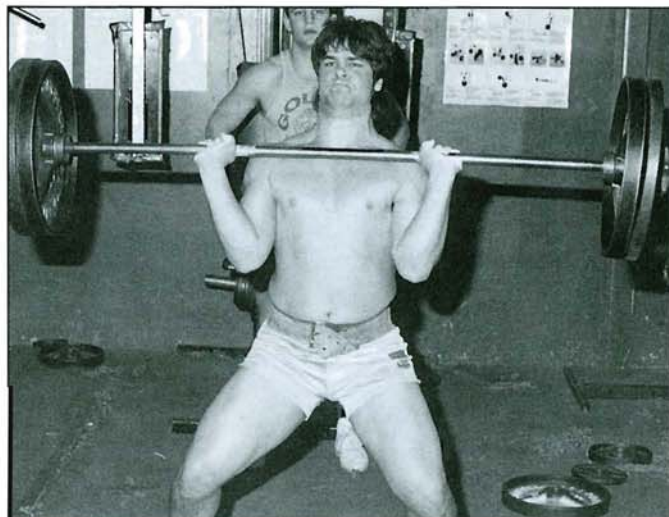


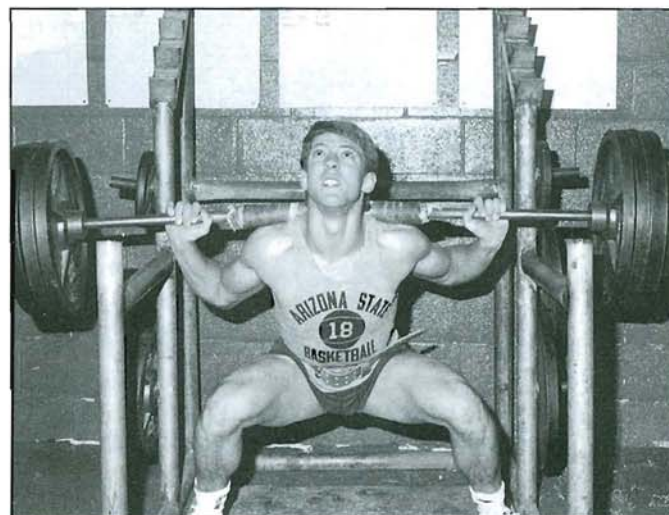
Photo by Garth Harker

Jon Beasley 5-9, 190 OG - DT
Squat: 420 Bench: 260 Clean: 280



Photo by Jim Haggard

Ben McClure All-State QB, A-3 Player-of-the-Year
997 yards Rushing, 1103 yards Passing, 31 TD's
Squat: 395 Bench: 210 Clean: 205



Blaine Jolley 5-11, 175
All-State Linebacker
Squat: 400 Bench: 250 Clean: 230

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Photo by Lyle Lindsey

#56 Brian Poole 6-2, 240, A-3 Lineman-of-the-Year Squat: 400 Bench: 305 Clean: 235



Photo by Jim Haggard

Lyle Dye #58, 6-0, 160, All-State Nose Guard

thirteen make All Conference. Our team received the team scholastic award in Idaho for having a 3.07 G.P.A. We also had six players receive the Individual Scholastic Award for having better than 3.75 G.P.A. What does that leave for '89? I can't say for sure but this I do know: We will be stronger!

Our BFS congratulations to Firth High School for being persistent and having the guts to fulfill the dream.

**DREAM
WORK
ACHIEVE**



Photo by Jim Haggard

Brian Mecham 1147 yards Rushing, All-State Running Back
Squat: 410 Bench: 250 Clean: 245

FIRTH HIGH SCHOOL STATS

PATHWAY TO A DREAM FULFILLED

| | pts. scored | pts. given up | rushing yds. | opp. yds. rushing | passing yds. | opp. yds. passing | turnovers turnovers | turnovers we caused | record |
|------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------|
| 1985 | 93 | 356 | 561 | * | 1238 | * | * | 12 | 2-7 |
| 1986 | 113 | 214 | 1525 | * | 431 | * | * | 9 | 2-7 |
| 1987 | 199 | 120 | 2125 | 1103 | 608 | 604 | 17 | 30 | 6-3 |
| 1988 | 399 | 82 | 1305 | 972 | 1160 | 1055 | 20 | 54 | 12-0 |
| | | | | | | | | | 22-17 |

* We did not keep statistics on the opponents in these categories

BENCH

1985 1986 1987 1988

| | | | | |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 300-325 | | | | ... |
| 275-299 | | | | .. |
| 250-274 |  |  | . | ..... |
| 225-249 |  | .... | .... | .. |
| 200-244 |  | . | ... | ..... |
| 175-199 | ..... | ..... | ..... | .. |
| 150-174 | ..... | ..... | ... | . |
| 126-174 | .. | . | | |
| Win-Loss | 2-7 | 2-7 | 6-3 | 12-0 |

SQUAT

1985 1986 1987 1988

| | | | | |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 425-450 | | | | . |
| 400-424 | .. |  |  | ..... |
| 375-399 |  | .. | . | ..... |
| 350-374 | | | . | |
| 325-349 |  | .. | ..... | ..... |
| 300-324 | ... | ..... | ..... | . |
| 275-299 | ..... | ..... | ..... |  |
| 250-274 | ..... | ..... | ..... | . |
| Win-Loss | 2-7 | 2-7 | 6-3 | 12-0 |

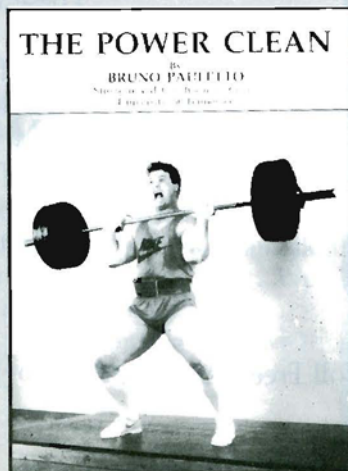
CLEAN

1985 1986 1987 1988

| | | | | |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 275-300 | | | | . |
| 250-274 |  |  |  | .... |
| 225-249 |  | .. | .. | .... |
| 200-224 |  | .. | .... | ..... |
| 175-199 | ..... | .... | ..... | .. |
| 150-174 | ..... | ..... | .... | . |
| 125-149 | ..... | ..... | . |  |
| Win-Loss Record | | | | |

* represents the players for each starting position and weight lifted on bench, squat, and clean: vs. season records.

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