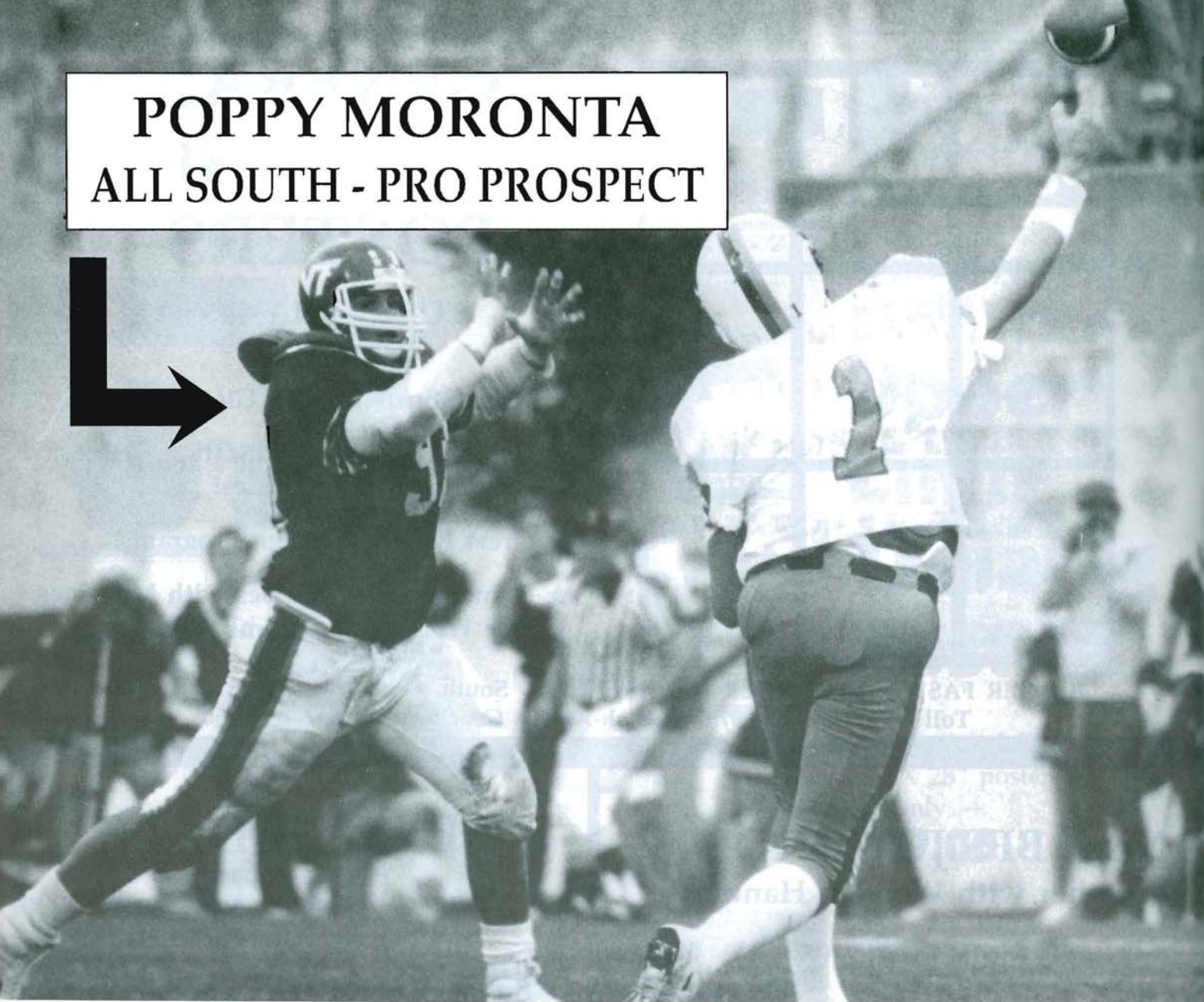


POPPY MORONTA

ALL SOUTH - PRO PROSPECT



On April 3, 1989, TIME magazine featured an alarming report on how athletes and especially minority athletes operate in our nation's colleges. Much of the blame for failure to graduate or to gain a meaningful college experience was placed on the institutions themselves and upon the collegiate coaches. Athletes were misused, abused and misguided. When all was said and done, athletes gave their colleges notoriety and gate receipts while they, in return, received no degree and no future. Nothing but memories.

But I also say, "What about the self-responsibility of the athlete?" Surely a man must realize he must come to grips with himself. You can't hold a man's hand forever. A man must go to class, do the assignments and assume some responsibility for graduating. If a man has an academic weakness, then it should be his responsibility to seek help and bolster that weakness. Hey, life isn't easy. It wasn't meant to be.

You can't grow as a person when it's always easy. As far as I'm concerned, we're placed on this earth to progress and when we do, by our own hard efforts, we feel good. We have confidence. We have self-esteem, pride, and character. We actually have the ability to help others and be of service to our fellow man.

Poppy Moronta went through this progression. That's the reason I like Poppy's story so much. He could easily have been another statistic. Another drop-out. Another I-told-you-so minority failure. But, Poppy overcame the odds. He took on the responsibility for his success and placed it equally upon his own shoulders. Poppy now knows, really knows, one of the greatest lessons of life.

Horatio "Poppy" Moronta grew up in the Manhattan borough of New York City. He was a street kid. Drugs were a big part of his life. Poppy was asked every day from age eight to take drugs. He said "No" for years but when he was 14 he finally said "Yes." Poppy

VIRGINIA TECH

STRONGMAN

quietly revealed, "My dad found out and punished me. He wouldn't speak to me for two weeks. It really hurt me because I'm really close to my dad. I also hurt my mother. I made a decision. I've stayed clean since then. I like to be in control of my mind and body."

Poppy is kind of a catchy name so I was interested as to how the nickname came about. It was started by his dad in his early years. Horatio was kind of hard to say so his dad would call him "Poppy," which in Spanish is an affectionate name for "son." The name stuck through high school and college.

Poppy's father has been in the military for many years and moving from one school to another came often. Poppy attended Fort Knox High School from grades nine through eleven and then transferred to Pemberton Township High School in New Jersey. He played Nose Tackle at Pemberton but did not start lifting until after graduation. Poppy chose Virginia Tech because of their friendly campus.

That summer before entering Virginia Tech, Poppy began weight training. After a year and a half, Poppy was declared academically ineligible. Poppy stated, "I fell just a little short. I took the wrong classes."

Poppy was at a pivotal point in his life. He went home and worked as a KP in the mess hall at his dad's military base. Poppy was all set to become another minority statistical drop-out and begin his life's career as a dishwasher. Poppy didn't like it. Which way would he turn? A life of crime or drug dealing?

Poppy explained, "I learned during that year that your education is the most important thing a man can have. I really wanted to come back to Virginia Tech and get my degree. Now, I'm squared away."

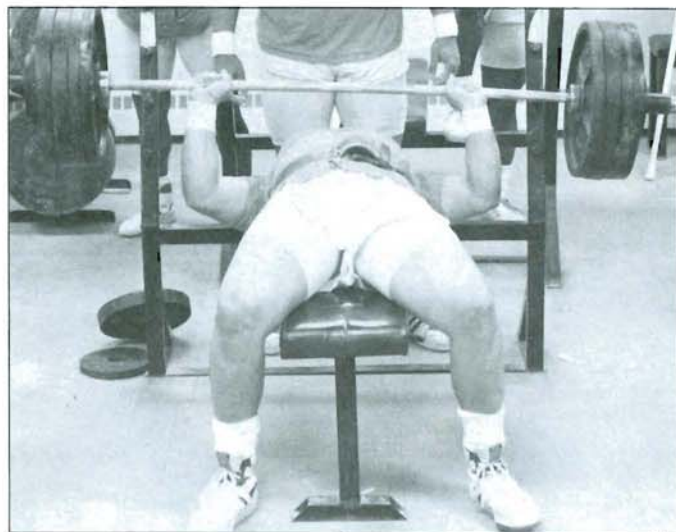
Poppy came back determined to make it happen. He changed his major to Liberal Arts and Science. He analyzed his academic strengths and weaknesses. Poppy is now on line to graduate in his fifth year.

I asked Poppy what the most important things in life were to him. He said, "First, is your education and second, never cheat yourself. The way you do that is always give 100%."

Poppy's basic weight training and conditioning philosophy is this: "Give every ounce of effort you have in the weight room. Do what you have to do. Don't sit around and shoot the bull. As far as steroids, I've never been on them or asked to take them. I've never seen anybody inject themselves. I've been blessed with a lot of natural strength so I've never had the desire."

Poppy attends a bible study class and maintains, "I think it's important to have a religious background."

Continued on next page



Poppy Benches 440 pounds!



Poppy has Front Squatted 440 and Hang Cleaned 375 pounds!



Poppy Parallel Squats 700 pounds!

Photos By Don Gresh



HORACIO "POPPY" MORONTA

PROGRESS CHART

	FR.	SO.	JR.
BENCH	375	420	440
FRONT SQUAT	400	440	X
PARALLEL SQUAT	X	X	700
CLEAN	310	340	375
PUSH PRESS	330	350	460
WEIGHT	258	262	275
40 YARD DASH	5.02	4.99	4.97

YOUR SUCCESS IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

The complete man was beginning to emerge. I asked Poppy what he'd like to do after Virginia Tech and graduation. Spontaneously he responded, "I'd like to coach, maybe, at the college level." Maybe the complete man has already emerged.

We have featured some of Strength Coach Mike Gentry's athletes before. First at East Carolina University, and now at Virginia Tech. I've always maintained that the primary benefit derived from "sweating blood" in the weight room is not the physical gain but the mental gain. Coach Gentry teaches this lesson well. Just as no one can Bench Press 400 pounds for you, no one can earn a college degree for you. That responsibility lies solely with your ability, your persistence and your willingness to fight through adversity. Poppy learned this and is now a thriving example for us all to look up to.

Many thanks to Coach Gentry and his Upper Limit Coaching abilities. Many thanks to Horatio "Poppy" Moronta for overcoming the odds and coming out on top.

Continued on page 71

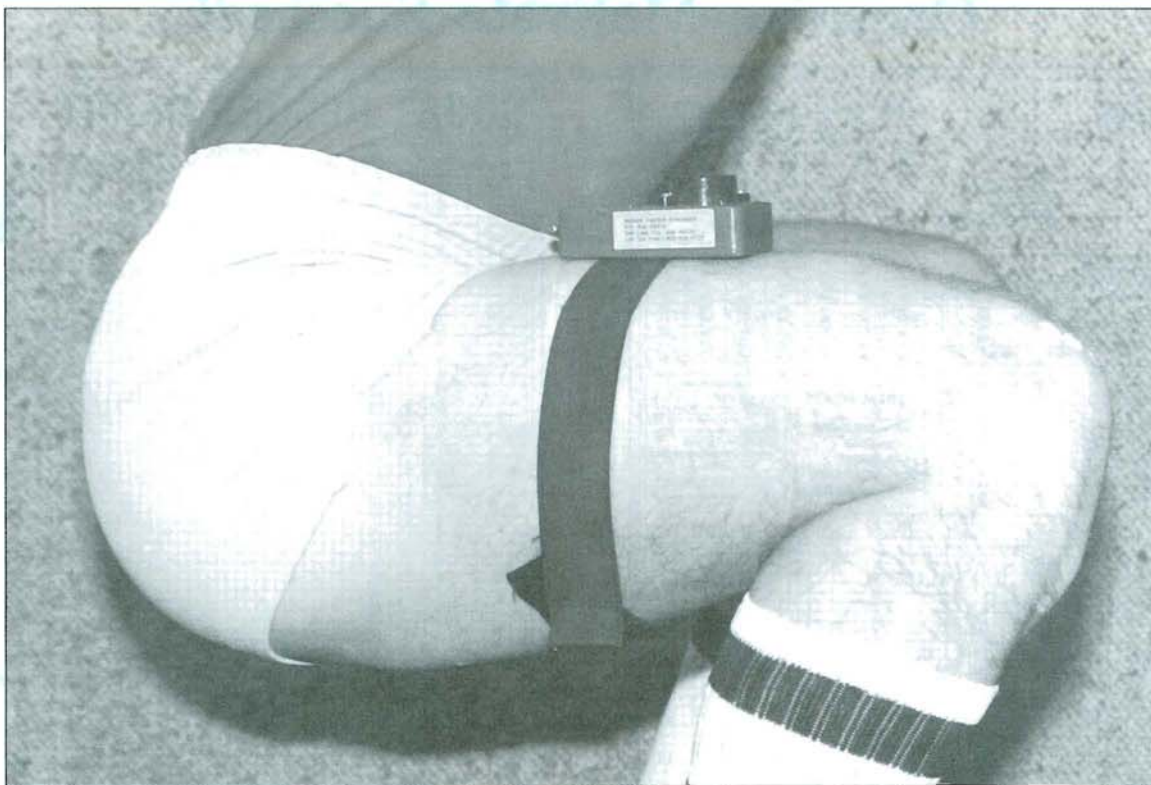
BFS FLEXIBILITY MANUAL COST: Only \$4.95

- ★ A Great Source of Flexibility Information.
- ★ All Flexibility Exercises Are Demonstrated by Coach Rowbotham! Stick Figure Drawings Are Not Used.
- ★ Written for Coaches in an Easy to Understand Style!

To order write:
BIGGER FASTER STRONGER

805 West 2400 South
Salt lake City, Utah 84119
or Call Toll Free 1-800-628-9737

SAFETY SQUAT



IT BEEPS AT PARALLEL

NO MORE GUESSWORK
NO MORE ARGUMENTS
LESS SUPERVISION REQUIRED

When the thigh reaches parallel, the Safety Squat will BEEP! It eliminates all guess work in judging proper depth. Great motivational device and coaching aid!

Some athletes don't go down far enough. They think they are, but they lean forward at the waist. They might even argue. Now, they can't! It will aid in their form. Also for those who go too low, usually by going down too fast, the Safety Squat will BEEP at just the right time.

We highly recommend the Safety Squat! You should try at least one. Then, you'll want to get one or two for each Squat Station!

FITS EASILY AROUND ANY THIGH

Cost: \$45.00 Save: Get Two For Only \$79.00