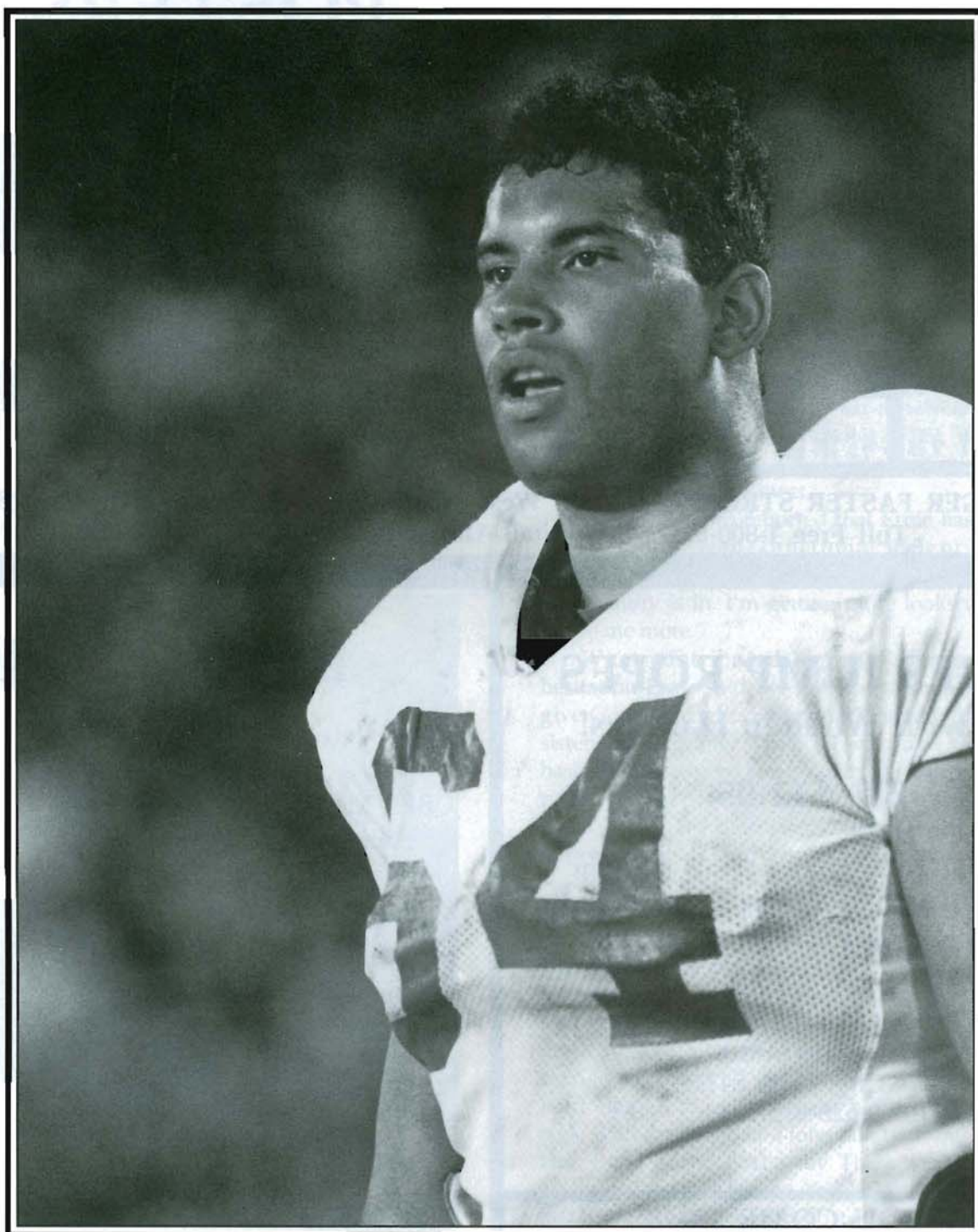


# MOHAMMED ELENOWIBI



**OUTLAND TROPHY WINNER**  
**BYU OG 6-5 290**



# MOUNT MOHAMMED

## BYU'S OUTLAND TROPHY WINNER

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Mohammed "Moe" Elewonibi from Brigham Young University is this year's Outland Trophy winner. He becomes the first offensive lineman to win the award since Nebraska's Dean Steinkuler in 1983.

"I was amazed I won it," said Elewonibi. Amazing is one of the great understatements of the decade once you go back to the beginning. Ralph Zobell, BYU Sports Information Director explains. "Moe was born in Lagos, Nigeria, amidst a revolution between his native Ibo clan and the rival Yoruba. Nigeria is located on the west side of Africa, halfway between Alex Haley's Gambia and South Africa. The tropical, jungled, now independent Nigeria is bigger than Texas.

"Over 20 times in the 11 years Moe lived in Nigeria he made the 11-hour trip from the capital, Lagos to Ikeja to visit his polygamist grandmother, who was the last of 13 wives. Those trips were made in a little Austin-Martin sports car or a landrover. In the early years the road stopped a mile short of Moe's grandmother's hut and they would hike in for the reunion.

"Moe's "grandma ma," as he calls her, is nearly 100-years-old. Neither she or Moe's father have ever seen the Cougar grid star play football. In fact, Moe hasn't seen his grandma ma since he fled Nigeria in 1977. And he's only seen his father three times since Moe and his brother Michael moved to Canada.

"That move to Canada was a separation by Moe's Canadian mother and Nigerian father. His dad first met his mom when he was training in British Columbia with the Nigerian Navy. Because of this military background, Moe was in the upper echelon of Nigerian society. Moe's flawless English is the result of tutoring in a Lebanese Community School. His father owns a factory which sells bread to a Russian company in Nigeria.

"This Nigerian way of life came to an abrupt end in the fall of 1977 when his parents' marriage soured.

"Moe and his brother last saw Nigerian soil when they boarded an airplane destined for what appeared to be a routine vacation in England. Absent from the flight were his mom and dad. The flight plans changed in the Ivory Coast, and the brothers were bound for New York City. From New York, the next stop was Victoria Island where his mom's brother harbored them.

"I got to sit out school until Christmas," said Moe, who was soon joined by his mom. "I remember just sitting inside my apartment, watching late TV and then looking outside to see a white carpet. My brother and I went out

*Story continued on next page*

## What They're Saying

"Talk about a physical specimen, Mohammed is something. His best foot is in front of him. His potential is unlimited. I enjoyed watching him play. He's a great prospect who will be an outstanding pro some day." — **John Ralston, former NFL head coach and current pro scout for Seattle Seahawks**

"Moe's as good of a lineman as we've ever had here." — **BYU Coach Lavell Edwards**

"I've followed Mohammed's career ever since he was in junior college. He was the best community college offensive lineman in the country. I knew at that time he had the potential to be the best pass blocking lineman at BYU. With the coaching he got at BYU, he now is undoubtedly the best pass protector in college today." — **Washington State Coach Mike Price**

"You'll not find many like Moe, he's a once-in-a-lifetime player. He's a gem in the rough. He's as good as many of the great linemen I've coached. Moe has a great sense of balance. He picks up the unexpected and is a very intelligent player. He could play any of the five line positions." — **BYU Offensive Coordinator and Line Coach Roger French**

"He (Moe) is the senior and the leader on our line. He has a great confidence about him. He's incredible. He's got great mobility. Seldom will you see him miss a block. He's a good athlete. When he hits people, they feel it." — **BYU Quarterback Ty Detmer**

"I don't see all of the great college players but I see a lot of them and he's as good as any offensive lineman I've seen in five years. We probably won't be drafting high enough to get him. I'll be surprised if he lasts past the top 10 selections." — **Cincinnati Bengals Scout Frank Uible**

"Moe has developed in all areas tremendously and matured greatly. I'm very happy for him. He's made many positive steps. Moe has overcome much adversity.

Moe has had challenges but he's bright and articulate. On trips he'll read an 800 page novel. Moe has a great attitude. He just wanted it. Moe also has leadership qualities. The other linemen rally behind him.

Moe's got unbelievable balance and a tremendous base of support.

**Chuck Stiggins**  
BYU Strength and Conditioning Coach



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*BYU Strength Coach Chuck Stiggins spotting Moe Elenowibi.*

and made a huge snowman."

Moe attended high school in Victoria which offered only soccer, basketball and rugby. Amazing! Moe did not play high school football. As a 6-3 220 pound center, Moe averaged about 10 rebounds and 20 points per game and only lost two games in his senior year.

However, Moe had a "dismal" 2.3 GPA in high school and had no interest in college. The next two years were spent floundering from his main job as a bouncer to a lumberjack, seafood cook and a tractor driver. Moe stated, I didn't like it. I didn't have enough money to pay my bills." His father asked him what he was doing with his life. Moe couldn't answer.

Then a friend, Dave Mossman, who plays strong safety for the University of Hawaii advised Moe to attend Snow Junior College in a little town in Utah.

Can you imagine it? This huge athletic guy just shows up. "Dave talked me into going there," explained Moe, "but I really wanted to play soccer and not football. The coaches talked me into giving it a try and what the heck, there's no bright lights in Ephraim, Utah, and that's why I went out

for football."

So, here's this 6-5 270 pound guy out for football that no one has ever even heard of, that didn't even know how to put a thigh pad in his pants.

Coach Kieth Uperesa of Snow College was most influential. "He taught me a good work ethic and my offensive line techniques," said Moe thankfully. It was at Snow Junior College in March of 1986 that Moe began lifting weights.

"There's nothing else to do," explained Moe, "besides, it was a lot of fun. My max on the Bench was 235 at first, then it went to 315 in four months. I was really happy." To date, Moe's best Bench has been 415, with a Power Clean of 320 and Squat of 650. BYU Strength and Conditioning Coach, Chuck Stiggins reports that Moe ran a 40 yard dash in 4.83 last spring when Moe weighed 305 pounds.

In his first year of football, Moe earned honorable mention All-America honors. In the next year, he was rated as one of the top six linemen in the junior college ranks. After recruiting trips to Texas A & M and Purdue, Moe chose BYU. Moe reasoned, "Pass blocking is my specialty. I



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thought about the Pros and felt BYU could teach me better."

During spring football at BYU in his first year there, Moe dislocated his shoulder on the posterior side which is very rare. It took a long time to heal. He was sent to Atlanta for specialized surgery. Coach Stiggins began the rehabilitation process by doing Bench Presses with a broomstick. Moe still does a lot of dumbbell work in different positions.

Moe is just two semesters away from graduation and carries a solid 2.7 GPA in marketing. He'd like to go back to Canada and have his own business, that is after his pro football options are completed. Moe also hopes to go back and see his family in Nigeria when he gets the time and money.

When asked about the most important aspect of life, Moe without hesitation replied, "Family and commitment." Moe talked about his younger brother who is 6-0 and 185 and just completed his last season at Snow Junior College. Then Moe declared, "But he's not going to BYU because we're loaded with receivers."

Moe also advised, "When you decide what you want, don't go after it halfway. Go for it, one hundred percent, all out."

Moe has gone to a lot of high schools to help kids say "NO" to drugs and alcohol. Moe states, "I realize I'm a role model. Anyway it's stupid not only for yourself but also for your example to kids. I try to maintain a good image. I try to live by the ten commandments."

We thank BYU and Chuck Stiggins for making this article possible. We thank Mohammed Elewonibi for his amazing upper limit example and wish him the best.

"When you decide what you want, don't go after it halfway. Go for it, one hundred percent, all out."

*Mohammed Elenowibi*



*Moe has done Leg Presses with 1250 pounds!*



*Mohammed Elenowibi flanked by Chuck Stiggins (L) BYU Strength Coach and Greg Shepard, BFS President.*