

TCU'S CHRIS THOMSEN



Chris Thomsen: A Future Oakland A?

By Greg Shepard

On the way home from one of my Texas BFS Clinics, I was reading a Dallas newspaper in the airport. One article caught my eye. The headline read, "Football Player A Big Hit at TCU." It was about Chris Thomsen. He got out of spring football practice at TCU as a senior. He hadn't really played baseball since high school but here he was hitting 11 homeruns in 17 games. One of them went over a 40 foot fence 400 feet from home plate! As I got down to the eight and ninth paragraph, I realized I must follow-up immediately and get the full story for the BFS Journal. You see, Chris credited his football conditioning workouts for his power increase. (he used to be a weak hitter) "If you are in a football program," said Thomsen, "It'll put a lot of strength in you ... it especially gives you lower body strength and hitting is a lot of your hips and strength in your legs."

Chris attended Vernon High School in Vernon, Texas and was a 3.0 student. He was also a 3-sport athlete participating in football, basketball and baseball. In football, Chris was an All-District Tight End for three years. All-Region for two years and in his senior was selected as a top 100 Texas Football College Prospect. He was 6-3 and weighed a strapping 230 pounds without lifting that much. Chris started at forward in basketball and lettered four years in baseball. He was All-District in baseball for three years and hit .456 in his senior year which garnered him District MVP honors.

"I chose TCU because of the good feeling I got being around the school and program," remembers Chris. "It was a

Chris Thomsen has had a lot of bad luck with injuries during his career at TCU but despite all the problems, he has always been a consistent worker in the weightroom. Although his name does not appear on our position record boards, Chris' strength has improved significantly from year to year.

Chris' commitment, work ethic, and quiet confidence has helped him become a successful dual sport athlete.

Kevin Yoxal
TCU Head Strength Coach

hard decision. I went on a football only scholarship and red-shirted my freshman year mostly because of surgery on my shoulder."

It was then Chris began realizing the benefits of weight training. "I enjoyed it," Said Chris, "It also really helped my shoulder come back. After the surgery, I really started to get into the lifting." Chris worked on the standard core lifts: Bench, Squat, Clean and also the Incline.

Coach Yox (Yoxal) really helped me with my speed," praised Chris. "I stretched a lot because my flexibility was poor and did Plyometrics in the off-season; mostly Box Jumps. I first tested out at 5.0 in the forty. Now it's down to 4.75 seconds.

**"Football Workouts Will Put A
Lot Of Strength In You;
Especially Lower Body Strength.
Hitting Power comes From Your
Hips And Legs."**

Chris started playing baseball again after a three year layoff. Coach Jim Wacker gave Chris permission and he quickly became a starter at first base. Coach Wacker was to re-evaluate the situation when the Spring Football starting date came around. It was unbelievable because Chris started hitting homeruns and getting lots of RBI's. Then the day before his evaluation meeting, TCU played N.E. Louisiana in a double header. Chris hit 5 homeruns and had 11 RBI's. He did it all: A solo homerun, a 2-run, a 3-run and a Grand Slam homerun. To top the day off, the other was an inside-the-park homerun. Coach Wacker reluctantly gave permission to miss Spring Football. Chris went on to lead the Southwest Conference in homeruns and RBI's, and was named National Player-of-the-Week for that spectacular effort against N.E. Louisiana.

Chris then began hearing from some pro teams. "It opened up a whole new life," exclaimed Chris. "I had always dreamed about it. So I got really excited about the possibilities. He didn't have to wait long. Chris signed with

GRIDIRON TO DIAMOND

the Oakland Athletics and started his pro career with the Southern Oregon A's in Medford which is Single A ball. Chris' college football career came to an abrupt halt but Oakland will cover his educational expenses.

"God Gives Everyone Talents, So You've Got To Find Out What Yours Is And Then Go For It."

Chris lifts at least twice a week under the Oakland A's strength and conditioning program. "You've got to lift," asserts Chris, "but make sure you lift like an athlete and stretch hard everyday, especially after you lift. For those coaches against lifting, I say that you've got to think of a total program of strength, speed, flexibility, plyometrics and agilities. It's not just doing a bunch of Curls and Benches. Coach Yox is the most dedicated coach I've ever seen in any sport. His program gave me an edge. He always made time for me and pushed me. He's a great example and I owe him a lot."

As far as Chris' education, he plans on going back and finishing his degree in Criminal Justice. Chris is only 21 hours short with a 2.3 G.P.A. Chris has learned valuable lessons, "Don't quit. Things aren't always going to work out. I only started three games in football at TCU last year. Just keep trying to make something happen. That's in anything God gives everyone talents, so you've got to find out what yours is and then go for it."

"Good things will always come, if you don't quit. My strong Christian values taught in my family and my church back in Vernon have helped me keep a proper perspective. For example, drinking has never appealed to me. If you are going to work hard everyday to get better and to win, that will move you forward. Drinking will move you back. Who cares if someone give you heat about drinking. I don't have any respect for people who push you into drinking. They're not trying to help you."

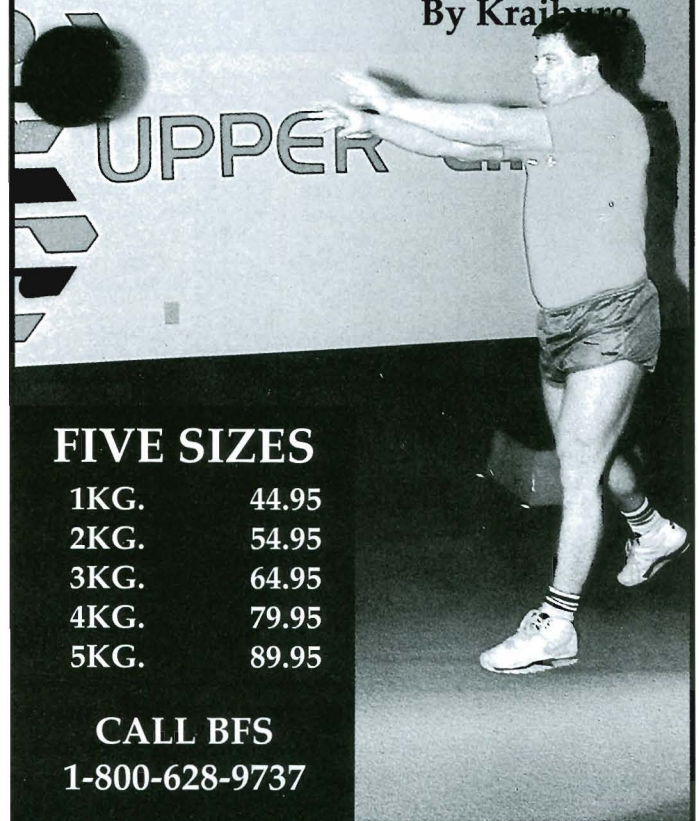
I've been offered drugs in high school and College. I've never touched them. I'm not going to do something that's going to set me back. A pitcher throws a ball 95 MPH at me, that's enough to deal with."

"My mother really helped me. She's the strongest person I know. In any situation, my mom would never give up. She's been a great example to me especially when my folks got divorced when I was 11 years old. I'm very sympathetic to those kids going through a divorce situation but you can't use it as a cop out. Don't let life beat you. It took a lot of prayers to know what to do about my life. So far it's worked day by day."

We'd like to thank Coach Yoxal for making this article possible and showing if you do a total conditioning program, it will help any sport. We especially thank Chris Thomsen for being a great Upper Limit example.

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