

Oregon State University

Y J. J. Young

By Dr. Greg Shepard

When I first spoke to J.J., I was pleasantly surprised. He is from the L.A. area so I guess I expected to hear some street talk slang instead I heard an articulate expression of thought with the inflection of a polished newscaster. J.J. laughed about it, "Hey, I can hang out with anyone. I can switch gears with my speech." J.J. has already graduated from

Oregon State and is now in graduate school as he finishes out his football career with the Beavers of Oregon State. He carries a solid 2.9 GPA and majored in economics. "When it's time to kick back," J.J. continued, "I can. All my friends are black." He wears his race with pride but not arrogance. J.J.'s favorite sports figure is Barry Sanders while his favorite non-sports figure is his mother. The person he would most like to meet is

Walter Payton; while back in history, it would be Malcom X.

J.J. was awarded four letters in track and football. He ran a 10.6 100 meter but only weighed 160 pounds. His most memorable high school experience came during his junior year of football. "We hadn't gone to the playoffs in 25 years and we were 6-1 and it looked like we could go all the way. I'll never forget what happened. It was a shocker. We had to



Photo: Mike Smith



forfeit all of our games for having an ineligible player. It made it hard because he was only a special teams player not a star.”

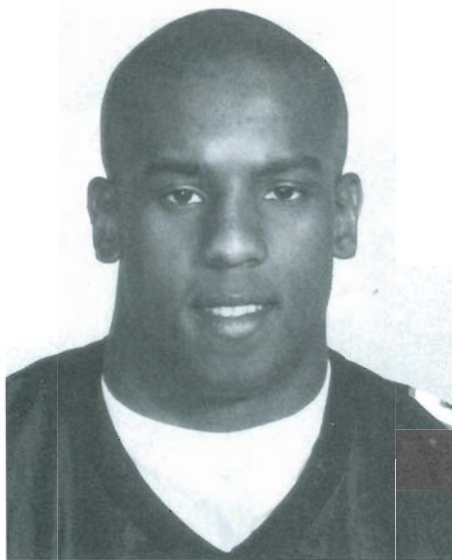
According to J.J. South Pasadena High School had a good lifting program under head football coach, Fred Cuccia. However, J.J. did not get serious until his junior year. He Benched 225 and Parallel Squatted 300 pounds. J.J. was only timed twice on the forty and that was on grass. He blazed to a 4.5 time.

As a senior, J.J. was named first team All-Rio Hondo League as a running back and was their Offensive Back of the Year. He was also first team All-San Gabriel Valley. With his speed, playing ability and a 3.1 GPA, J.J. got a few offers but remember he was only 160 pounds. It was really between Iowa State and Oregon State. “I chose Oregon State because of the Pac-10 conference, it was on the coast and I just wanted to play against the teams who had turned me down.”

J.J. red-shirted his first year and was named offensive scout ten Player of the Year in 1990. “I really worked hard that year,” remembered J.J. “I made some good gains in strength and size.” His weight climbed to 180 pounds and he Benched 290, Squatted 335 and Cleaned 221.

J.J. caught the eye of the new OSU coaching staff under Jerry Pettibone during the 1991 winter conditioning program. He squatted 400 pounds and tied the OSU record for the forty which he ran in 4.48 seconds. J.J. was inserted as the No. 1 right halfback at the start of spring drills. Coach Pettibone remembered, “He was a very pleasant surprise and J.J. established himself as a real quality player.”

It looked like everything was coming up roses for J.J., then he experienced a tragedy. His father died during the week of the UCLA game. Next, he suffered a knee sprain



which forced him to miss eight days. When J.J. finally came back, he had to wear a knee brace which slowed him down some. He gained 169 yards on 64 carries, an average of 2.4 yards per carry and was the fifth leading rusher on the team. “The death of my father turned out to motivate me,” said J.J. “One of my high school teachers talked to me and motivated me towards school. I examined my life. You never know when it’s going to be your turn.”

J.J. again worked very hard to make things happen during the winter conditioning program to prepare for the 1992 season. He had to work on getting his right knee back to 100 percent. His Bench was 300, Squat 425 and Clean 265 pounds but what was even more impressive was that J.J. established a new 40-yard time at 4.37 seconds! However, as prepared as he was, a potentially great season was still not to be. J.J. suffered a stress fracture of his left leg which caused him to miss 50 days of practice. For the season, J.J. rushed for only 69 yards on 13 carries.

The word give up is not in J.J.’s vocabulary. He again went to work in the weight room and regained his former strength and speed. This time it was different. It is hard to imagine, so says the Beaver Press

Guide, a running back having a better season than J.J. had in 1993. He rushed for 955 yards to lead the team in rushing, plus he led OSU in all-purpose running (1,216 yards) and scoring with 54 points. J.J.’s favorite play ever was when he tackled the Oregon punter behind the line of scrimmage to help win the game. J.J. also scored the winning touchdown in that game. He wound up averaging 7.0 yards per carry, third highest in the nation. J.J. returned 11 kickoffs for 229 yards for an average of 20.8 per game. Perhaps, more significant, was the emergence of respectability for



Photo: Steve Smith

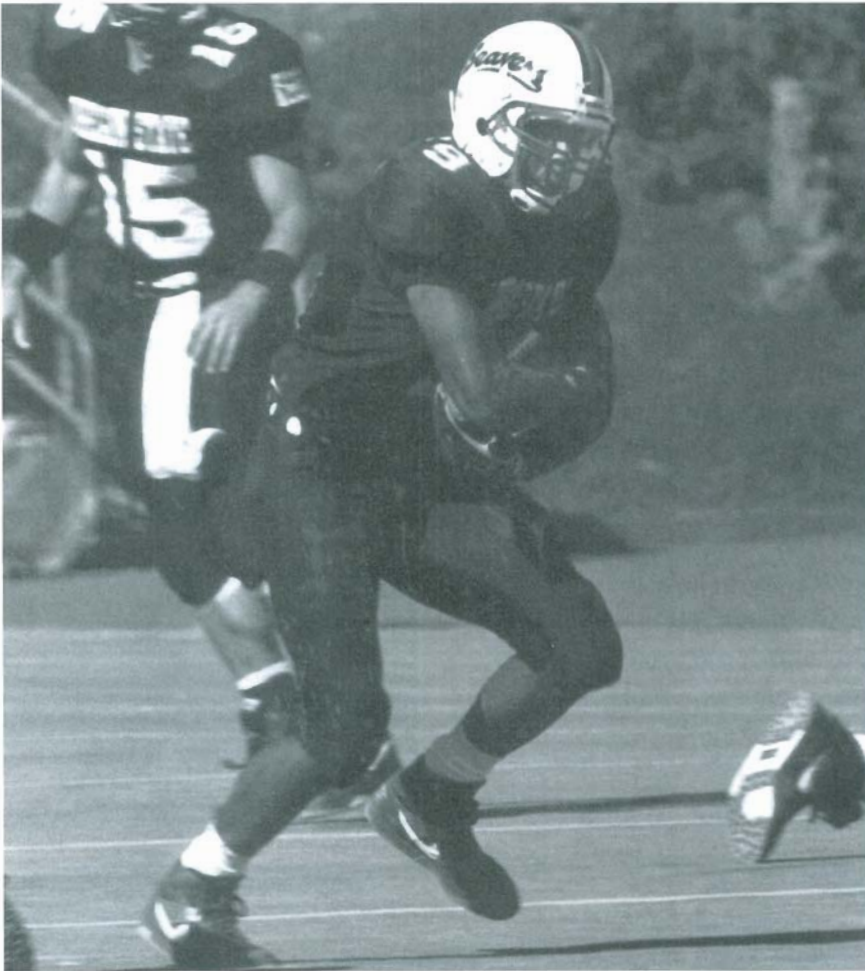


Photo: Mike Shields

Oregon State football. You have to go clear back to 1971 to find a team with more victories. All in all it was a banner year with J.J. being named as an honorable mention All-American by the Football News and a Pac-10 Player of the Week. J.J. beamed, "It was good to finally come into my own and great to see the Beavers come on. It was the

first year that I finally got to play without an injury. I knew, if I could stay that way, I'd do well and have fun."

As J.J. prepared for the 1994 season, his Bench climbed to 320 pounds, his Squat soared to 475 and his Clean jumped to 285 pounds. J.J. now stood 5-10 192 pounds with only 4-5% bodyfat. After 7 games

this season, J.J. had rushed for 646 yards in 100 carries for an average of 6.5 yards per carry.

J.J. feels it is important to work hard with the weights during the season. "Right now for me, in-season training is not to gain but to keep my strength," said J.J. "You get so nicked and bruised that it's hard to make gains but I sure don't want to lose strength so I keep lifting hard. If I were a high school coach, I'd have my players Squat and Clean for sure as well as speed train. I like to do a lot of reps on my Squat."

Rob Oviatt, the OSU strength coach, has done his job well. He is in his 13th year of strength coaching, having been at five Division I Universities throughout the country. Coach Oviatt oversees the Stewart Weight Room, one of the finest facilities in the nation. It boasts of 5,000 square feet and overlooks the Parker Football Stadium. It is one of the few college weight rooms built exclusively for football players. Students come to OSU from every state in the nation and more than 100 countries worldwide. Among University graduates is Dr. Linus Pauling, the only person to earn two unshared Nobel Prizes. Oregon State University revels in quiet excellence but with J.J. Young and the Pettibone legacy things may not be so quiet for long.

J.J. had a refreshingly unique answer on what it takes to be successful. "I don't know. I'm not there yet. I've got a lot to learn yet. I'm just going to stay dedicated and work hard. I'm only 22 years old and there are so many things ahead of me that I'm not even prepared for." J.J.'s quote reminds me of another saying: Half of being smart is knowing what you're dumb at. He wants to own his own business someday after he gets his Masters in

The 1994 season is my 29th year in coaching and I have had the opportunity to see some of the best running backs that have played college football in those years—Joe Washington, Greg Pruitt, Billy Sims—guys that have won the Heisman Trophy and were legitimate first-team All-Americans. I think J.J. Young is in that category. He has outstanding speed, he has the explosiveness to be able to hit the home run every time he touches the football. J.J. can also catch the football and he is also an outstanding blocker. He has the ability to make a big play as a running back or on kickoff returns. J.J. is a very consistent player and he plays well every time out. I think those qualities lend me to feel he is a legitimate All-American candidate.

**JERRY PETTIBONE
HEAD FOOTBALL COACH
OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY**



J.J. Young will be sorely missed by all of us who have worked with him both as an athlete and as a person. I've always firmly believed that you cannot help an athlete who does not first want to help himself. J.J. has never set personal limits and has always wanted to get better. As a coach, you are always evaluating attitude on a daily basis, and most especially during the tough times. J.J. tragically lost his father early in his career at OSU, a setback that would obviously affect anyone. Through it all, he persevered and never let up in his drive to be a better player. He has been a leader in our weight room and someone who I could always trust.

ROB OVIATT
STRENGTH COACH
OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

Business Administration. Is there much doubt? J.J. will be successful!

J.J. has a vision of his future and drugs and alcohol are not in that future. "They won't take me where I want to go. Those things destroy your inner confidence. Those that get involved with drugs or alcohol are the people that will be broken down at the end. You have got to understand you are bigger than any group when it comes to peer pressure that can confront you.

"I never did drugs in high school or college. Now, I am into my future being in grad school. I never drink during the season. You just take care of business.

J.J. never really had to combat gangs like some other places in the L.A. area. "I chose to stay completely away from them," said J.J. shaking his head. "I refuse to asso-

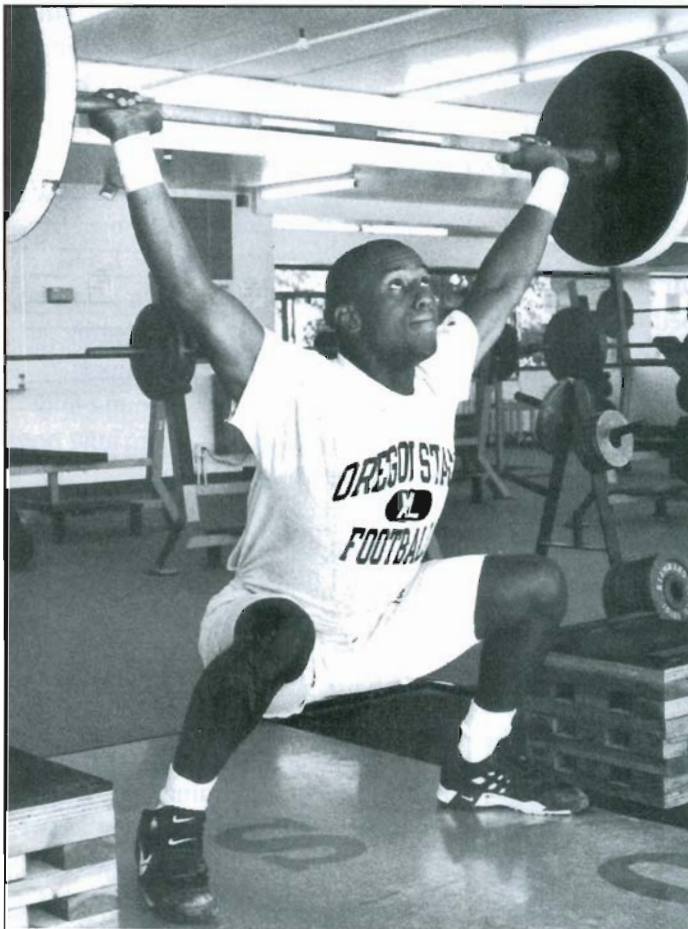
ciate with anyone remotely close to a gang. I wanted to be around my friends but I wanted them headed in the right direction too. My friends were mostly football players."

J.J. believes the most important things in life revolve around family, God and education. "I always want to be a credit to my family and get my education. I always thank the Lord for what I have and talk to Him everyday."

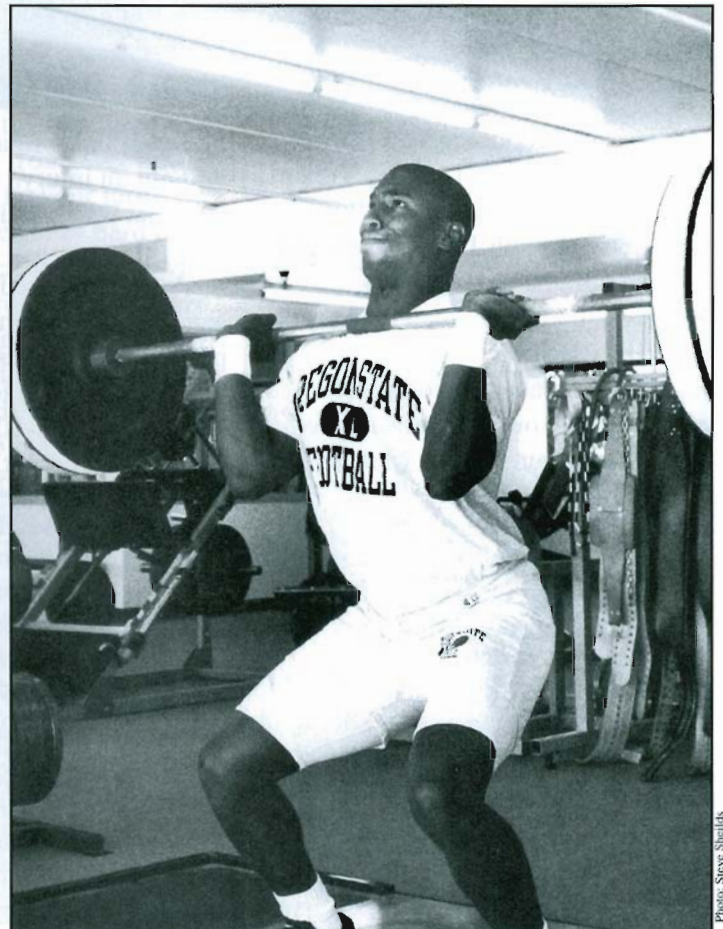
We thank Coach Oviatt for all his help on J.J.'s article and thank J.J. himself for sharing his victories over adversities and his Upper Limit rules for success.....□

FLASH UPDATE

At this writing J.J. has rushed for 646 yards and 8 TD's . He also has 806 all purpose yards. The Beavers are 2 - 5 with victories over Wyoming and U.C.L.A.



J.J. Young Doing The Snatch Squat



J.J. Doing The Power Clean