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# *Tradition* **NEVER GRADUATES**

Augusta Christian High School's football team finally wins the big one

**A**ugusta Christian High School is a small school with big team spirit. But it took a long time for that spirit to claim fame on the football field. In the 16 years between 1977 and 1993 the football teams managed only 50 wins, and in three of those seasons they suffered the indignity of losing every single game. But you can't keep a good

school down for long. In 1994 head football coach Steve Price made the decision to adopt the BFS program, and in the next seven years he earned more wins for the school than any other coach had in the school's history. It was also becoming more common to see the school's graduates go on to play Division I ball. And because the program was unified

throughout the entire athletic department, success stories were becoming abundant in many other sports at this school in Martinez, Georgia. But for the football team, something was still missing.

Maybe they should have been used to being patient. After all, Augusta Christian was founded in 1958 and took



until 1976 before fielding its first athletic team. But the unaccustomed taste of victory under Coach Price in the '90s had made the Lions hungry for more: What they wanted most of all was a state championship. They came close in 1998 when they won 11 games and made the state finals, but that was one honor that Coach Price could not put into the school's now-packed trophy case. In 2002 Price moved on, leaving that challenge to his successor, Bruce Lane.

Coach Lane continued producing great football teams at Augusta Christian, and the 2005 season was turning out to be one of the best ever. The Lions would play in the state championship game at South Carolina State University against Porter-Gaud High School from Charleston, South Carolina. Says Lane of his team's opponents, "They were a well-coached team with some talented skill players, including two running backs who accounted for over 2,000 yards."

Lane describes the State Championships as a series of "opportunities and missed opportunities," with Augusta turning several early turnovers into points, giving them a 10-0 lead at halftime. "But it was in the fourth quarter we really started running the football and taking control of the game. We felt that what we had done in the weightroom paid big dividends because we were still fresh and strong at the end of the ballgame." The final score: 24-7.

## Reloading, not Rebuilding

When Lane took over the Lions' football program, he was more than fine with continuing with the BFS program, having used it for 20 years in the other schools where he'd coached. "This is the only school that had been using the BFS program before I came," says Lane, who has sponsored two BFS clinics. "At all the other schools, I had to implement the program. The workout program at Augusta High School was in good shape." Keith Walton continues to lead the strength program just as he did under Coach Price, although Lane helps with the running, plyometrics and agility training.

What Lane believes sets the BFS program apart from many other programs is its emphasis on developing all aspects of conditioning. "I feel like a major part of our success with BFS is that it's a total body workout – it's not just being concerned with what you can bench press." Lane adds that his staff is committed to the program, and that four of his assistants are BFS certified.

If there's one unique aspect of Lane's workout, it's his emphasis on having his athletes challenge each other off the field, an idea that was reinforced during his recent visit to USC with head strength coach Chris Carlisle. Says Lane, "We try to get our kids to compete in the weightroom, not to wait until Friday night to get competitive." Lane says one example of instilling competitiveness is having the athletes race against each other in the Dot Drill, with the loser having to do five extra push-ups.

Another important element in the Lions' strategy for athletic success







Head Football Coach Bruce Lane celebrates another touchdown



is the “Lions’ Challenge.” Says Lane, “Basically we ask our kids to make 18 workouts during the summer. We call that level ‘Lion.’ The second level is called ‘Super Lion’ and is achieved with 21 workouts. The highest level, which is reached with 24 workouts, is called ‘Dog Soldier.’” With each level reached comes a tangible reward, such as earning a T-shirt when an athlete achieves the Lion level. Lane says he opens the weightroom from 7:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and he’s had greater participation in the summer program at Augusta than at any other school where he has coached.

As for the X’s and O’s of the game, Lane said he made some gradual changes in the offensive philosophy used at the school, and he notes that the transitions were easy to implement because he had such a strong nucleus of assistant coaches. The result was consistent success from the beginning. “This is one of the things we’re really proud of: Until the last four years we’d never had back-to-back winning seasons, and because of the players’ and assistant coaches’ hard work, we’ve been able to put four winning seasons together consecutively, cumulating in the state championships.”

### Beyond the Game

How many hours does Lane put into his job? Lane just laughs. “To the casual observer, they see Friday night at 7:30.



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*When our 2006 Lion Team takes the field this season, I'm confident our players will step up and meet the challenge.*

—BRUCE LANE

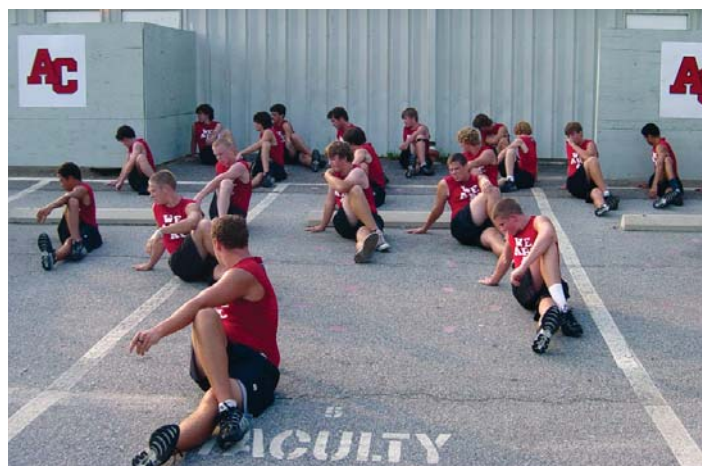
They don't understand how much work goes into preparing for just one football game." And why does he do it? "I believe what we do, working with young people, is a ministry – something that God has called upon us to do."

For 22 years Coach Lane chased that 2005 state championship. "I've been fortunate to coach at five very good schools full of very fine athletes and coaches. When I got out of college and first started in this profession, I was wide-eyed and had all these goals, and one was winning a state championship. I still have goals, but my main perspective is that I want to give these kids more than just the knowledge of how to play football. We want them to succeed in life."

The 2006 version of Lion football will be without 12 players from the 2005 squad, but that doesn't concern Lane. "We've adopted the philosophy that 'Tradition never graduates.' The names and faces of our players may change, but the results will be the same and the memories will last an eternity. When our 2006 Lion Team takes the field this season, I'm confident our players will step up and meet the challenge." **BFS**



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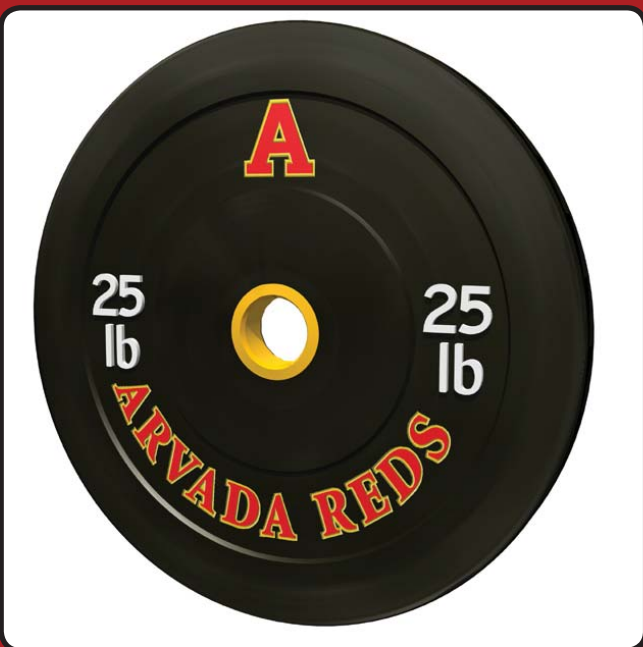
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