



Winning a state championship is the epitome of just about every high school football program's dreams. The Bears of Belton-Honea Path High School in Honea Path, South Carolina, took their play one step higher with an undefeated season. Fifteen games, fifteen wins – it simply doesn't get better than that.

Leading the Bears to this level of greatness is head football coach Wayne Green, who has been with the school for five years. "I inherited a good coaching staff, and then I was able to hire a couple of coaches," says Green. "The first person I hired was strength coach Russell Blackston. He's the one who actually administers our weight program – he's the architect behind our strength program." In terms of X's and O's, Green says he made little changes in the defense but switched to a different system offensively.

As Good As It Gets: 15-0

Belton-Honea Path High School knows what it takes to win – a lot!

Although the football team is at the top of its game, Green says he's not concerned that some of the players might get complacent. "We graduated 18 starters, so we've got a bunch of young guys, and our senior class from this past football season definitely raised the bar for us as far as expectations go. We had some success in the past, but it wasn't anything like this. Our younger players who were a part of this football team got a taste of it, and they would love the opportunity to taste it again." The fans also like the taste of winning.

"The fans are tremendous here, from the administrators to the teachers to the students," says Green. "This is a small, rural community, but we took about 9,000 people to the state championship game. We also have an excellent booster club. They help us with a fishing tournament, golf tournaments and football concession stands – they do an awful lot of hard work."

New School Football

Green says the biggest difference in high school football since he started coaching 26 years ago is conditioning.

Barry BHP offensive lineman Barry Humphries [71] blocks an opposing lineman from Westside



Photo courtesy Debbie Rogers, Belton and Honea Path News-Chronicle

Running back Mario Glenn outruns Woodruff defenders to pick up a BHP first down.

“Weightlifting wasn’t as important then as it is now, especially in-season lifting. Today weight training is a year-round commitment.” Although Green’s focus is football, he believes it’s important for high school athletes to compete in multiple sports. “We have a lot of three-sport athletes, and we strongly encourage our athletes to be involved in as many sports as possible.”

As a result of the school’s year-round weight training program and emphasis on multi-sports, all sports at Belton-Honea Path High School have benefited. Says Green, “Many of our football players go into wrestling or basketball, and from there into our spring sports. So there’s a lot of competition for our players’ time. The year-round strength program, along with our speed and agility programs, is certainly helping all our sports.”

Blackston says that although he’s tried a lot of other strength and conditioning programs, he’s decided that BFS is best for his situation. “I must have called every coach in America to help me design a program that was best for us, and somebody finally told me to talk with BFS clinician Jim Brown. I talked with him on the phone, after we got beat in the second round of the playoffs 33-0, I think. Then I took the BFS program to Coach Green and said that BFS was what I wanted to do, and we started the program in January at full speed.”

What sets BFS apart? “I’ve done a lot of programs since I’ve been coaching, and the one thing I love about Bigger Faster Stronger is its structure – the kids know exactly what they have to do every day,” says Blackston. He also says he likes the idea of going for as many reps as possible on the last set of every exercise. “This tells you a lot about the kid – what he’s going to do for you on the field. If he fights for that extra rep in the weightroom, he’s going to fight for that extra inch on the playing field.”

Another advantage of the BFS program, says Blackston, is that it’s practical. “There are programs out there that will get you stronger quicker than the BFS program, but the thing that people don’t understand in the high school setting is that we only have our kids for a limited time. You can’t do seven sets of bench presses in a high school setting. You can’t do seven sets of squats. You can do three to five sets. For an offensive lineman in college, I would probably change programs, but for a high school setting there’s nothing anything better than BFS.”

The school has been using the BFS program for only about a year, but Blackston says, “The results have been amazing! We’ve always had a couple of strong kids, but the difference is the strong kids have gotten stronger and those ‘middle of the road’ kids have caught up to where our strong kids



BHP's Barry Humphries squats 600 pounds to win the Region 6 Strength Meet and set a new school record.

were. You're always going to have one or two studs, but now we have 15 or 20 studs on our team." Even better news is that since the school implemented the BFS program, not a single player has missed a game due to injury.

As for lifting stats, Blackston says that since he wants to develop balanced athletes, their awards are based on the total of the bench, squat and power clean. "When we first got into lifting and were giving out T-shirts, we had kids who were striving for the 250 bench shirt or the 275 bench shirt – they could care less about the 250 squat shirt or the 350 squat shirt." The results? "We now have 43 athletes in the 700 club, 10 in the 800 club, 9 in the 900 club, 4 in the 1000 club, 1 in the 1100 club and 1 in the 1300 club."

To keep the team's motivation high, Blackston has posted weightlifting charts on the walls of the weightroom. "Every time there's a max, the results are posted, and we have them ranked by class – it's all part of the BFS computer program. We have them competing against each other, and they're competing against their personal bests every day," says Blackston.

In addition to setting high standards in the weightroom, Coach Green also expects high standards off the field. One part of his character development program is observing the behavior of professional athletes. "We talk about it. When there's a big news story about a professional who's done something they shouldn't have, or a report about somebody who is recognized for doing something good, we talk about it. We also have a session that's called "From the Heart," where we let a coach get up and talk about character traits. I'm proud to say we have a tremendous group of young men who are strong physically, spiritually, and emotionally – and all that translates into a great football team."

“The one thing I love about Bigger Faster Stronger is its structure—the kids know exactly what they have to do every day.”

~Strength Coach Russell Blackston

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Power Clean	5x 145	5x 150	5x 160	5x 170	5x 180	_____
Towel Bench	5x 160	5x 170	5x 180	5x 190	5x 195	_____
Auxiliary Lifts	Last Weight				New Weight	
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