

# *Taking It* to the Next *Level at* **SOUTH HILLS** *High School*



*“Good is the enemy of the best” is the philosophy that wins games for this football powerhouse*

It's been said that the more things change, the more they remain the same. Interesting idea, but one that the South Hills High School football team hasn't been able to test – things don't change much for this team in West Covina, California. But in their case, that's not a bad thing: In over three decades the Huskies have changed coaches only four times, and their tradi-

tion of winning remains intact.

The first Huskies football team took the field in 1964 under the direction of Farley Day. The team had a notable beginning with a 15-11-1 record and earned a league title during Day's three years with the Huskies. Day was succeeded by Coach Jim Jones in 1967.

Jones continued racking up successes with an impressive 67-31-4 record

and several championships, including a 1974 squad that earned the number-one ranking in the state and a number-two ranking in the country. One of the most memorable players on that team was Milt McColl, who went on to win a Super Bowl ring when he joined the 49ers.

From 1977 to 1991, the Huskies, led by former assistant coach Jack Nemzek, won seven league titles. Nemzek's record of 107-55-4 earned him the distinction of being the winningest coach in South Hills history. This set the stage for Steve Bogan in 1992, who was determined to continue the winning legacy of Huskies football.

Bogan's first season at South Hills was a struggle as the team finished 4-6,



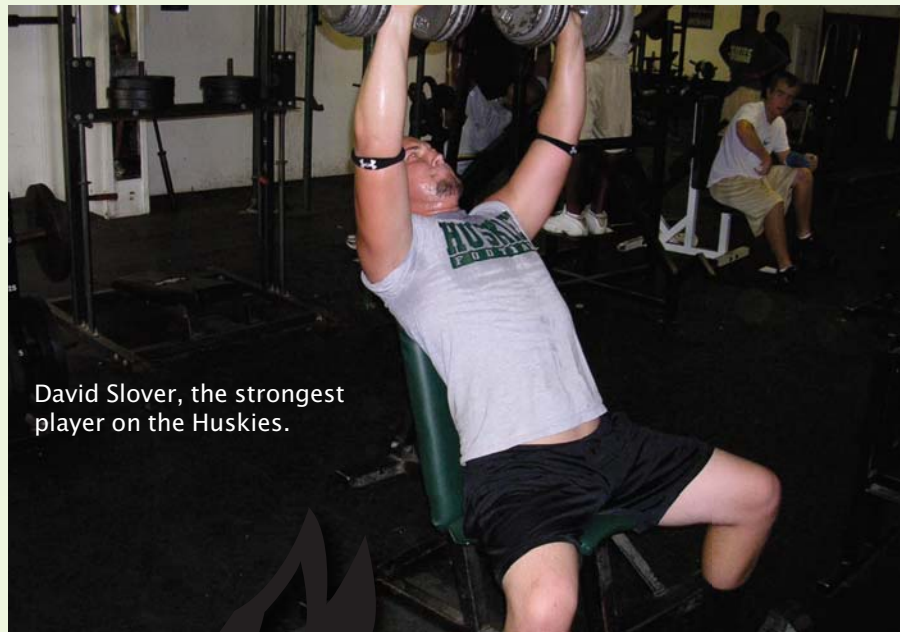
but he rebounded and since then has never had a losing season. The 1995 team featured Matt Rogers, who went on to play for the University of Washington and become an American Idol finalist, and the 1996 team went undefeated in the regular season. But it's in his results over the past seven years since implementing the BFS program where Bogan has really left his mark on the football program.

### The BFS Years

South Hills High School began a connection with BFS in 1998 when former assistant coach Rob Fitzgerald convinced Coach Bogan that he needed to take his program to the next level with BFS. This led to a clinic with Dr. Greg Shepard, now the founder/CEO of BFS, and implementation of the program that year. The improvements were immediate and significant.

That first year the Huskies finished with an 11-2 record and made it to the semifinals of the CIF-SS playoffs. In 2000 they won the CIF Championships, their first since 1974, and then earned an additional

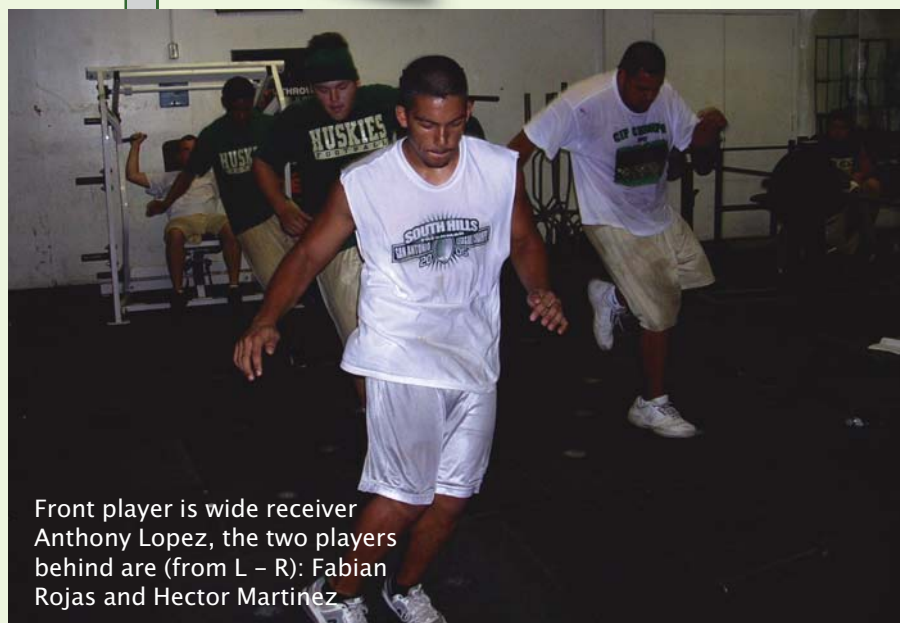
ACTION PHOTOS COURTESY LAVERNE WILLISON, SAN GABRIEL VALLEY TRIBUNE



David Slover, the strongest player on the Huskies.



The BFS program has been a big part of the Huskies' recent success. In addition to the regular aspects of the program, such as the dot drill and the power clean and push presses are performed.



Front player is wide receiver Anthony Lopez, the two players behind are (from L – R): Fabian Rojas and Hector Martinez

four CIF titles. Their regular season play is also impressive: Their league record over the last four years is 15-1.

Head strength coach James Escarcega, who has been with South Hills since 2004, says that what attracted him to the BFS program was that it was simple and flexible. "BFS is not a body-building program. It's a program to develop athletes, and my job as a strength coach is to develop our players to become athletes. The first question we ask every year about our football team is 'Who are the best 11 athletes that we can put on the field?' When spring ball comes around I want to present to our coaching staff players who can move, have great feet, have great strength and are fast and explosive. Yes, I've learned a few tips from college coaches on how to improve speed, but BFS is our base program."

One unique aspect of South Hills High School's program is their emphasis on the football combine. In March and May of every year the Huskies, along with teams from other schools, participate in combine testing sponsored by outside organizations. "We start up our off-season conditioning program in January, so the March combine is great for our players because they know right away what they need to improve on." And it works.

"Our players come out of that second combine feeling so good about themselves that it creates a great atmosphere, so when we get back into the weightroom we continue to get better and better; and when spring football comes we're ready to go. They know they've worked hard; now we can take the work ethic from the weightroom, put it onto the practice field, and have great practices before we start our summer program."

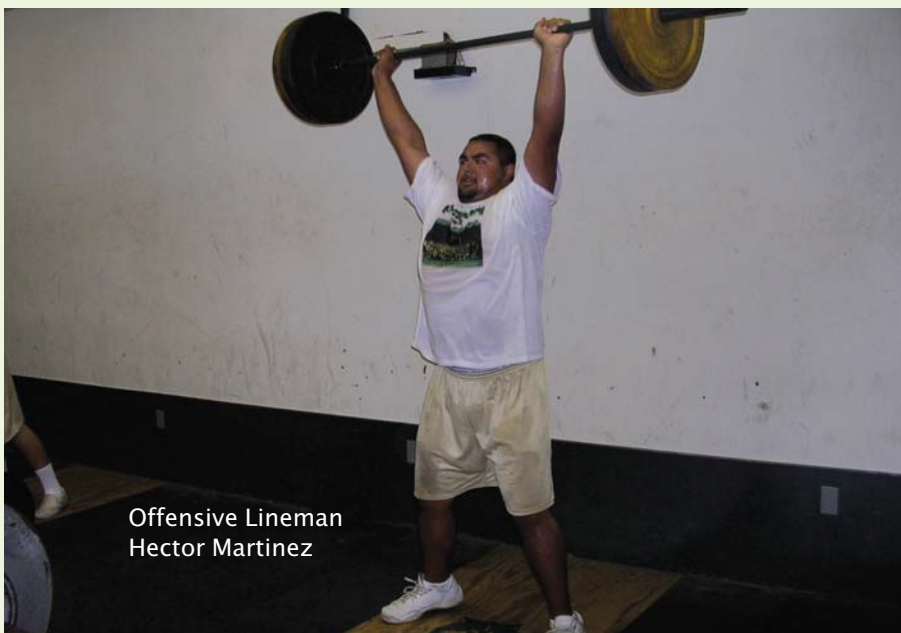


Of all the auxiliary exercises in the BFS program, Escarcega believes two of the best are the glute-ham raise and the straight-leg deadlift. "These exercises are absolute gold! I believe every football program needs to do them to prevent injuries because they increase flexibility and improve speed. The stronger your hamstrings are, the faster you're going to run – that's a scientific fact. I also love the dots for developing foot speed – we teach dots from the very first day."

Asked if he encourages his football players to compete in multiple sports, Escarcega replied, "Absolutely – we want our kids to play other sports. It is our belief, and college coaches have also told us this, that the more sports athletes play, the better off they are when they are being recruited. This means that they are more athletic."

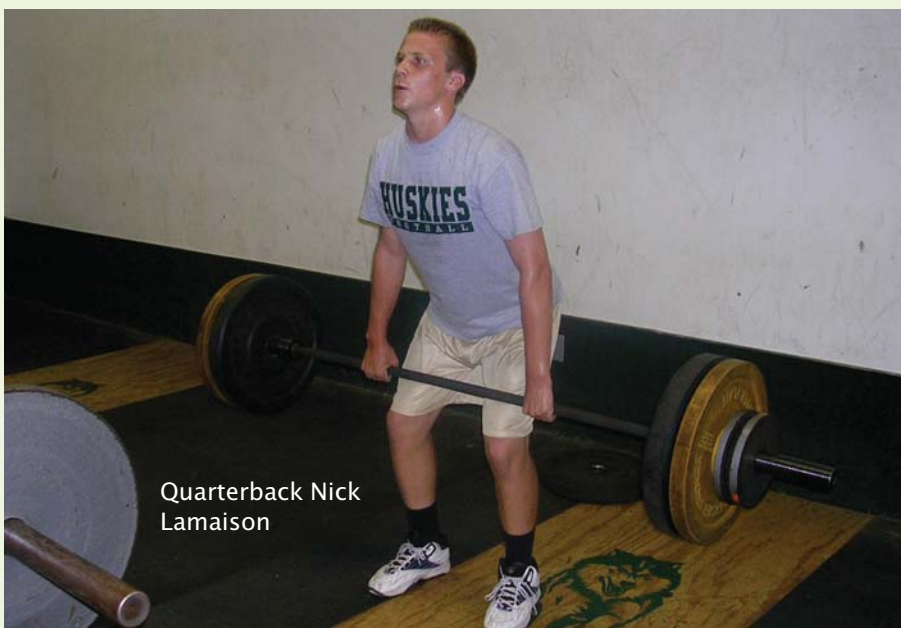
What advice would Escarcega give to other high school strength coaches who want to emulate the Huskies' success? "If you are coaching in the weightroom, you cannot just take roll, put your kids in groups, and sit and read the newspaper. You can't do that. You need to walk around, make certain their technique is good, and create an atmosphere that you care for your kids – that you want them to do well. You have to keep the energy going into the work. If you don't, then you're just going through the motions, and you're not going to get the results that you want."

For the 2006 season, Escarcega says they do not want their athletes to be considered just "good." "Good is the enemy of the best. We don't want to be good, we want to be the best, and that means we must train our athletes to be the best. That is why we wholeheartedly endorse BFS, and we tell anyone who asks us that BFS is one of the main reasons for our continued success." **BFS**



Offensive Lineman  
Hector Martinez

*We don't want to be good, we want to be the best, and that means we must train our athletes to be the best. That is why we wholeheartedly endorse BFS...*



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