



Idaho State Champs!

Fruitland High School

Teamwork was the key
to this great season



Photos by Larry Hurle

Action photos by
Rick Milton Photography



Nate Bake holds for
Bridgette Teunissen



Hip Flexor Stretch

Fruitland High School loves its football. Making the varsity squad on this 3A team is a respected accomplishment, and the families and fans from the community are always bursting with pride when they pack the bleachers on Friday nights. Fruitland has a lot to be proud of – the Grizzlies have made the playoffs four of the past five years. At the start of the 2006 season they had dreams of winning back the state title they'd last earned in 1993. But the odds of that happening were against them.

Going into the 2006 season, head football coach Bruce Schlaich was con-

cerned about his players' lack of experience. "We had two starters who didn't come out for the team and only eight returning senior lettermen, so I filled in the gaps with kids from our undefeated junior varsity group," says Schlaich. "On the positive side, these kids were very determined; and when we started our 7 a.m. summer workouts in June, we had a weightroom packed with kids who wanted to work hard."

As the summer rolled on and the Grizzlies got into football shape, Schlaich decided the most appropriate motto for his team would be *Omnes Ad Unum*, a Latin phrase that translates

into "All Together As One!" "Because there were no superstars on the team, I felt that if we were going to get it done this year on the field, it would be through a strong team effort. That's the way the whole season played out, and that's why I think this team is so unique."

The biggest concern for Schlaich was on offense, as there were only three returning players with varsity experience with the team. And to make matters worse, their starting quarterback broke his leg in the first league game and was out for the season. "Based on these facts, I figured we would be



Coach Bruce Schlaich



Kole Olinger

struggling this year. In our first game we traveled to Sun Valley to play Wood River School, and it was obvious in the first half that our players lacked experience. But they pulled it together in the second half, and we ended up winning that game 24-10."

The season continued to shape up better than expected, but the team had a setback when they faced La Grande High School from Oregon. The Grizzlies lost 22-20. "La Grande was

ranked number three in Oregon at the time," says Schlaich. "After the shakeup from losing that game, our team refocused; and in our next game, against McCall, we ended up winning 55-12. From then on we just kept getting a little bit better and a little bit stronger, and we finished the regular season 7-1."

In the playoffs, the Grizzlies easily won their first two games with scores of 50-0 and 44-16, but then they faced an undefeated Timberlake team, which

was the number-one-ranked team in the state and was averaging 48 points a game. No worries – the Grizzlies answered with a 28-6 victory, earning them the honor of facing the Buhl High School Indians on November 16 for the state championship.

The game started off badly for Fruitland, as the Indians scored on their first series of the game; and at the half the score was tied 14-14 after a long stretch of what Schlaich described as



Fruitland Principal Garry Swindell





Brant Schlaich spots Brian Walton



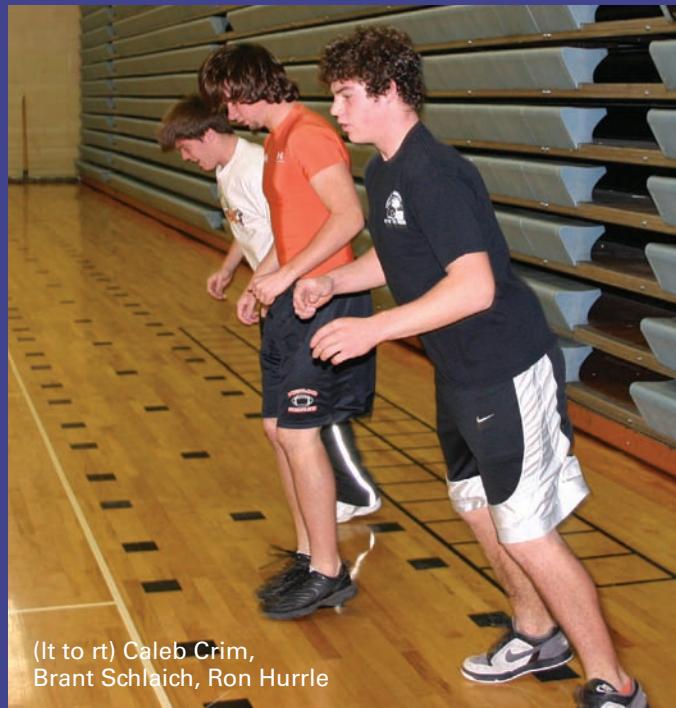
Caleb Crim



Caleb Crim spots
Jesse Aguilar



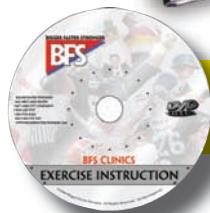
Ron Hurrel spots Will Wright



(L to rt) Caleb Crim,
Brant Schlaich, Ron Hurrel

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