



Lake Travis High School



Fruitland High School

# CHAMPION'S CHOICE

## TWO CONTRASTING PROGRAMS EACH RELY ON SAMSON EQUIPMENT TO BUILD CHAMPION ATHLETES

On the surface, it wouldn't appear that Fruitland High School in rural Idaho and Lake Travis High School in Austin, Texas have much in common in terms of strength and conditioning.

Lake Travis is a large suburban school with a Texas-sized budget to support their football program. It's home to the largest high school weight room in the country, where well over 100 athletes can train at one time. In contrast, until two years ago Fruitland's strength training facility had two squat racks, two bench press stations and a set of dumbbells. Period.

Look a little deeper, however, and you'll find important similarities. First, both schools are in communities where football is king – a big factor in bringing their communities together in support of the teams and their needs. Second, in 2006 each school had their weight room facilities completely renovated by Samson Equipment. And, since then, each school's football team has captured their State Championship.

For Head Coach Jeff Dicus, who compiled a 42-15 record over five years at Lake Travis before leaving the school recently to assume head coaching responsibilities at Duncanville High School

outside Dallas, winning the Texas 4A Division 2 Championship in 2007 was the culmination of a rebuilding program that included a massive weight room renovation two years ago. "We had a weight room that was about 3,000 square feet with a lot of cheap equipment that needed to be refurbished and repaired or just replaced," recalled Dicus. "As our program grew, we knew we had completely outgrown the facility. We had to split the workouts into morning and afternoon sessions and, even with that, it was still too congested from a safety standpoint. There were things, such as Olympic lifting, that we were unable to accomplish."

Even though Fruitland is a much smaller school, they were also challenged by the limitations of their weight room. Head Coach Bruce Schlaich, who's Grizzlies won the Idaho 3A Championship in 2006 and returned to the title game last season, remembers how difficult it was to effectively train players in their old facility. "We were in a much smaller room," he said. "We were so limited in space and equipment that we had to run two separate shifts for the team during the summer training period."



*"Samson Equipment is bulletproof. It's heavy gauge steel, it doesn't shift around and it can take a beating."*

- Bruce Schlaich, Fruitland HS

SCHLAICH: ©LARRY HURLEY/INDEPENDENT ENTERPRISE

### "SAMSON EQUIPMENT DELIVERS, BAR NONE, THE BEST EQUIPMENT AND THE BEST SERVICE ON THE MARKET TODAY." - JEFF DICUS

Both schools found an answer after the 2005 season, when funds became available to renovate and upgrade their facilities. While Samson Equipment is the link between the two programs, their stories were dramatically different.

#### BIGGER IS BETTER

At Lake Travis, as in most of Texas, bigger is better. "Not only were we in need of a new weight room, but the entire field-house and locker room complex needed to be replaced," according to Dicus. "As part of a bond issue that passed, we were given funds for new equipment and the space we needed to do the things we wanted to do." The massive new 9,000+ square foot weight room would require a significant equipment purchase – equipment that, it was hoped, would help produce champion players. "We wanted to put the finest in there and we knew Samson was the best," said Dicus. "We felt their professionalism would help us make this a top-notch facility. It has."

Coach Dicus flew to Samson headquarters in Las Cruces, New Mexico and spent two days reviewing equipment and layout options with Samson founder Dave Schroeder and his sons Scott and Brian. "We went over the layout, piece by piece, and determined exactly where everything was going to be," he recalled. "They were a huge, huge help and I applaud everything that the family did for us out there."

The delivery and installation of the equipment took two full days. According to Dicus, the effort and the investment paid off. "The new facility allowed us to do the things that we wanted to do - safer. It allowed us to go to one morning workout and no afternoon workout because we could get all the kids in there at one time. We had up to 180 kids in there three days a week. When you can get that number of kids together, the camaraderie that existed with them working together was, I think, a big factor in our football team coming together. It definitely contributed to us winning the state championship."

Summing up his opinion about Samson, Dicus added his ringing endorsement. "Samson Equipment delivers, bar none, the best equipment and the best service on the market today. Having been involved in coaching, they understand what coaches need. They've got pride in their equipment and everything they do."

#### A PRO GIVES BACK

When the Fruitland School District decided to fund construction of a new weight room in 2006 to replace their tiny and inadequate facility, finding the additional money for equipment was not an issue.

GROSS: ©KENT SMITH



Carolina Panther and Fruitland alumnus Jordan Gross gave back to his high school.

Carolina Panther offensive tackle Jordan Gross is a big guy with a big heart. After playing for Fruitland in the 1990's, Gross went on to star at Utah and was the 8th overall pick in the 2003 NFL draft. When the opportunity arose to give back to his high school, Gross stepped up. "Jordan had said that if he were to ever sign an NFL contract, he'd like to help update our weight room," according to Fruitland Head Coach Bruce Schlaich. "So when the district decided to do some renovations, Jordan was right there to outfit it."

For Gross, the choice of Samson Equipment was automatic. "Scott Schroeder and all the guys make quality products that really work in any weight room – from high school to the NFL," he commented. Schlaich and Gross worked together with Samson to plan Fruitland's new facility. "Jordan and I spoke about the direction we

wanted to go with the power racks and the other equipment," said Schlaich. "After we gave them the dimensions of the room, Samson laid it out for us and gave us a diagram of what they had in mind. From beginning to end, it was a real good working relationship between Jordan, Samson and us." Jordan Gross agrees. "Samson equipment was very helpful in listening to what we wanted to get done at my alma mater. They were energetic and provided great service and products."

For Fruitland, the new facility was a major upgrade that has become a focal point of activity at the school. "We've got five power racks, a pillar, other equipment including a glute/ham machine, a full set of dumbbells and benches with custom embroidery," according to Coach Schlaich, who also supervises strength and conditioning programs for other athletes at the school. "The weight room is probably used more than any other classroom in this school, simply because of the number of team athletes, other students and members of the community who use it as well. With the new equipment being so appealing, we saw a real increase in activity and, in general, the players were getting in better shape."

As with any program, success on the field is the ultimate payoff. For Coach Schlaich, that means that, thanks to Samson Equipment and Jordan Gross, they could celebrate on the field the last two seasons. "It has certainly contributed to our 2006 State Championship and getting back to the title game last season," he said.

Two very different programs with very different needs and budgets. Yet each experienced a very satisfying purchasing experience with Samson Equipment and got products that lead, at least in part, to a championship season. Can Samson Equipment guarantee a state championship with each purchase? No, but they can assure that every customer, large or small, will get the absolute highest quality products and world-class customer service. ▲