

Leeanthony Jenkins



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Alaska State Champs: South Anchorage High



Devon Anderson

How a cool city built
a hot football team in
record time



SOUTH ANCHORAGE HIGH SCHOOL

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South Anchorage High School has been in existence for only three years, but it has already won a state football championship. That's saying a lot, but you don't know the half of it: the team went *undefeated* the entire year.

John Lewis has been the head football coach of this division 4A school in South Anchorage, Alaska, since it first opened. The teams play eight regular season games; then they need to win three more to take home the big prize. The final game of the year, which the South Anchorage Wolverines won in the 2006 season, was played against the heavily favored Knights of Colony High from the city of Palmer.

"Colony had been picked to win the state championship this year, and they were ranked higher than us in the Max Prep throughout the entire year," says Lewis. "They were a much larger team – their offensive line averaged about 6-feet-2 and 260 pounds. Our offensive line averaged six feet and 195 pounds. Colony also had the number-one defense in the state, giving up only six points a game."

But the Wolverines were fast.

"We ran an offense that nobody else runs here, the flash sweep, which consists of a lot of speed as well as timing," says Lewis. The game started with the Wolverines scoring first,





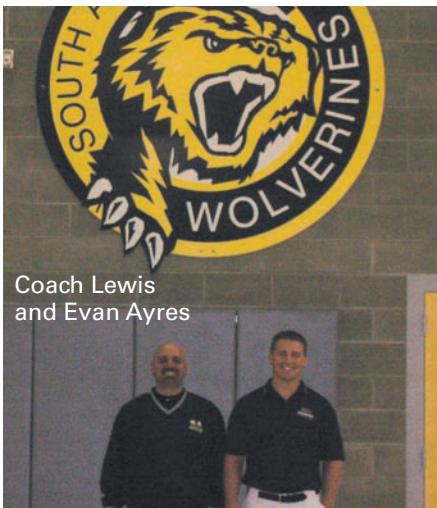
and at the half they'd increased their lead to 13-0. After halftime the Knights came back and scored 16 unanswered points within seven minutes, making the score 16-13. Then the tide turned in the fourth quarter when middle linebacker Devon Anderson blocked a punt that led to another Wolverine march for a touchdown. The Knights answered by driving down to the South Anchorage four-yard line before an interception stopped that drive. Then South Anchorage drove down again and

scored once more for a final score of 26-16.

The Wolverines' victory in this game and throughout the season surprised everyone, says Lewis, because being a new school, they'd had to create everything from the ground up and weren't expected to find their mojo this early. In fact, when Lewis got his first team together, his players had no field and no weightroom, and they held

many of their team meetings in the library. That first year they did manage to win two games, but they also sustained 36 injuries. "Our guys just were not physically prepared," offers Lewis.

The next year they had a weightroom to train in, but the room's machines were designed primarily for personal fitness classes. The following April the school held a BFS clinic with Evan Ayres, but it was difficult to implement because they didn't have the proper equipment. They followed the



weight training program as best they could, focusing on the Tuesday and Thursday speed and plyo program. The results were encouraging: the football team managed to improve to a winning record of 6-4, losing in the semifinal games by just seven points. They also had zero injuries.

The third year they brought out Coach Ayres for another clinic, this time in January, and they tweaked their training program to emphasize more speed with exercises such as glute-ham

raises and straight-leg deadlifts. Says Lewis, "Now things have improved and we've finally been able to fully implement the BFS program, which I believe has helped us achieve the results we did."

Coach Lewis says that one lesson other coaches could take from the Wolverines' rapid rise to the state championships is that it is a fable to think you can have speed only if you are born with it. "I know you can *create* speed," says Lewis. "Our team was

so much faster than other teams. Our offensive averaged 128 yards more than the second-best offensive team and scored an average of 46 points a game. Defensively we weren't as big as everybody else, but we had three players who became all-tournament defensive players in the playoffs who had never played the game before high school. We know from experience that the BFS program is the way to get not just stronger but faster."

And that's saying a lot! **BFS**

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