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Big growth for Buffs big man

By David Ubben
ESPN.com

When Nate Solder came to Colorado, he could hang clean about 250 pounds.

"My goal for freshman year was to get somewhere around 300," said the Buffaloes left tackle.

Heading into his senior year, Solder can hang clean a ripe 470 pounds, 45 more than any of his teammates. His power clean -- lifting a bar from the floor versus snapping it from a dead lift in the hang clean -- also leads at 415 pounds. Both are sure to grow with another season between him and the NFL.

He's tall -- 6-foot-8. He's lean -- 6.5 percent body fat and 305 pounds. He's quick -- with a 4.88 40-time and he can jump 32 inches.

There's little argument that Solder is the resident "workout warrior" in the Colorado program.

"Someone else gave me the title, but all my goal has ever been is to do what the coaches tell me to do," he said.

Solder credits -- who else -- [his strength and conditioning coach Jeff Pitman](#) for his staggering progress throughout his career. During the heaviest lifting periods, Pitman had his players doing hang and power clean twice a week, constantly adding weight instead of repetitions.

"Every other one of my lifts is about the same as everyone else, my cleans just became noticeably higher in the last two years," Solder said. "I think it has a lot to do with just natural ability. Some guys will be better on bench and some guys on clean."

It should come naturally to Colorado's soon-to-be three-year starter protecting the quarterback's blind side at left tackle. He'll be the best lineman -- and player -- for the Buffs and help pave the way for running back Rodney Stewart, too.

"You've got to be explosive [on the field], and a big part of being able to clean is being explosive -- using your hips and exploding," Solder said. "It comes in on run blocking when you're moving a guy off the ball, and it comes in on pass blocking when you're trying to stop a guy from bull rushing you."

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