

The Son Also Rises



By Bob Evancho

Bart Hull hasn't seen his father in two years. There is no bitterness in his voice when he talks about his dad, former hockey great Bobby Hull, but the disappointment is evident just the same.

"I don't know," Hull says with a shrug when asked if his father has followed his football career at Boise State. "He's in Chicago . . . got some farming businesses."

With this issue of *FOCUS* devoted to the family, Hull — BSU's starting fullback, son of a hockey Hall of Famer, and brother of two professional athletes — seemed like a natural to profile in the sports section.

But for all intents and purposes, Harry Robinson, a Vancouver, British Columbia, insurance executive has been Hull's father for the past several years. Hull's parents divorced when he was 9, and Robinson is married to Hull's mother, Joanne.

"He was there throughout my formative years," says Hull of Robinson. "He and my mom have supported me in whatever I've done. . . . Harry is a great guy and we do everything together so I don't feel too much resentment."

Yes . . . but. While Bart Hull excelled in high school football, basketball and track, Bobby Hull was 2,000 miles away. It's the same story now with the younger Hull in college. Any anger felt? Any disappointment harbored?

"Actually, during certain periods I do," he says. "He could have been in touch a lot more. Really, the only times he would see us in Vancouver was when the company would pay [for his trip]. It bothers me every once in a while."

After the divorce, Bobby Hull would occasionally travel to Vancouver and see his children. "He would take us to dinner and I'd go visit him at his hotel," Bart Hull recalls. "But [the visits] have tailed off since. . . . I've talked to him on the phone a little bit."

Blond and muscular like his famous father, Bart Hull quit playing organized hockey in the eighth grade. "My last years of hockey weren't too much fun," Bart Hull recalls. "One coach said I was too nonchalant, that I didn't take it serious enough."

Even though Hull was always among the biggest, fastest and most explosive players on the ice, it seemed he was expected to do more. He was Bobby Hull's son, after all. "It was never actually said [by the coaches], but it was implied a lot," Bart Hull says. "But the players were my friends, they didn't care."

His three older brothers, all of whom played hockey, weren't as fortunate. "They pretty much went through hell," Bart Hull says. "Especially Bob Jr., who also had to live with the name. Blake also had it tough, I think that's why he decided to become a golf pro."

Of the Hull brothers, only Brett, who now plays for the NHL's St. Louis Blues, reached the professional hockey ranks.

Bart Hull, 19 and a redshirt freshman, has no regrets about his decision to concentrate on football.

Having earned 12 varsity letters and several all-star honors for his football exploits for Vancouver College High, it's no wonder he received contacts from schools such as Washington, Hawaii, Wisconsin, Pitt and Oregon. As a running back he ran for 1,342 yards and 14 touchdowns his senior year, accumulating more than 5,000 yards rushing during his high school career. And although he's 5-foot-11, 215 pounds, Hull can also execute an impressive dunk with a basketball. With his leaping ability and 10.9 speed in the 100-meter dash, he also once considered training for the decathlon.

The son also rises. □



As opposed to his hockey-playing father, Hull has tackled football. Chuck Scheer photos