Dedicated weight training — and plenty of Lebanese food — have helped turn Jamel Agemy into Broward’s top linebacker.

Jamel Agemy gives South Broward a gourmet’s delight at linebacker

By MARK NEWMAN
Herald Sports Writer

Mary Agemy is the last to be seated at the family dinner table, where gourmands have gathered for a Lebanese feast.

“Try this,” she says proudly, gesturing toward one of her many concoctions, a dish of stuffed zucchini. “It’s the best.”

Her son, a 210-pound linebacker named Jamel, needs no cue. He thrusts his fork at the creation and assists it to his mouth with a slice of pita bread, then washes it down with white wine.

“Do you know how much calories are in this?” asks Steve Horodyski, Jamel’s coach at South Broward who fills his plate with shish kabob. “Now we know how you put on the pounds.”

A gourmand, whose parents immigrated from Lebanon as teenagers, simply smiles. He is a 6-1½, 210-pound, mesomorphic, the result of many Lebanese meals such as this and of a strenuous weight-lifting regimen.

College scouts are the hungry ones now, salivating over Agemy’s 385-pound bench press, 4.6 time in the 40-yard dash and 3.0 grade-point average. Nearly 50 schools sent representatives to South Broward’s spring practices to watch Agemy and talented quarterback Danny McManus.

“Scouts were tripping over each other trying to get to them,” Horodyski said. “Agemy’s got a good balance of everything. Size, spirit, speed, smarts and intensity. The Big Ten had people all over the place looking at him.”

Agemy was named second-team all-Broward last year after making 135 tackles. As if his presence at linebacker wasn’t enough, now there is this news for the opposition: He is South Broward’s first-string fullback.

“He’s probably the best football player in the county. He’s got size and he loves the game.”

South Plantation Coach Nunnie Robinson

Although I grew up outside of Detroit, I’ve always wanted to be a Dolphin,” Agemy said. “But I’m taking everything one day at a time. I just hope I get a good college education somewhere first.”

Agemy still holds firmly to his Moslem beliefs. He wears around his neck a small, gold book of Koran that was given to him by his mother.

“Jamel always wants to be the last one out of the locker room before games, so he has time to pray,” Horodyski said. “He’s very sensitive.”

Despite Arab-Israeli tensions overseas and his religious beliefs, Agemy maintains a friendship with Jewish teammate Steve Rock. “We train together and hang around together, and we don’t think anything about our backgrounds,” Agemy said.

“Not long ago, I went to a bar mitzvah for Bobo’s (Rock’s) brother. A rabbi came up to me and said, ‘Are you Islamic?’”

Agemy answered, “Yes.”

“If only they could share the same friendships in the Middle East,” the rabbi said.

Agemy and Rock — along with McManus — are two reasons the Bulldogs should fare much better than last year’s 3-7 record. Agemy and Rock, a lineman, train together with weights regularly to strengthen muscles they hope will put a grip on the district title.

“If we’re going to win games,” said Agemy, back at the dinner table, “our defense is the key. I think we’ll be strong there.

“But I’m excited about playing fullback. I’m ready to eat up some linemen for a change.”

In the meantime, pass the hummus.