

HB Arnett's ***COUGAR SPORTSLINE***

801 372 0819

hbarnett@fiber.net and hbarnett@xmission.com

1391 West 800 South – Orem, Utah 84058

Vol. 30, Issue 19 – December 14, 2009

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BYU Beats ASU and FSU

COUGARS CONTINUE TO WIN

BYU is now 8-1 on the season as the result of two more wins last week.

The Cougars defeated Arizona State in Provo 81-68 and then followed that up with a 72-67 road win against Fresno State.

It is now apparent that opponents are focusing on stopping Jimmer Fredette.

He has been well scouted and defenses know where he likes to go with the ball and when.

The days of easy drives to the basket and open and uncontested jumpers for Fredette are a thing of the past.

Against ASU, Fredette was just 1-of-13 from the floor and frustrated by the Sun Devil defense. He ended with 10 points on the night.

It was more of the same later in the week in the first half against Fresno State. The Bulldogs had Fredette contained in the first twenty minutes of action.

That changed dramatically in the second half when the junior guard exploded for 18 points. He finished the night with 24 for the game.

Fredette Formula

At the start of the season, it looked like the formula for beating BYU was to take away Fredette and Tavernari.

ASU and Fresno have shown the blue print for defending Fredette, but we look for him to adjust and still maintain his status as the Cougars biggest scoring threat.

Tavernari's outside shot, however is on the verge of being listed on the endangered species list.

The senior forward from Brazil now finds himself coming off the bench as a reserve and likely will stay in that status until his shot makes a comeback or his shot selection also improves.

The surprise of the season for us has been Tyler Haws.

We are not surprised by his talent, but by the consistency of his game this early in his career.

He has a great mid-range game and has proven that he can rebound and is not afraid to take shots when the games are being contested.

Noah Hartsock has also become a contributor to the Cougar cause now that he has replaced Tavernari as a starter.

Hartsock also has a nice mid-range jumper that teams will now have to defend. He is also a much better rebounder than we thought he would be.

Better Team

In our opinion, BYU is a better team now than they were a year ago.

That fact that Dave Rose can sit down Taverari for extended minutes on the bench and the fact that he can pull Fredette from the lineup when his shot is missing in action, which it was against ASU, says this team has some serious depth and firepower on the bench.

It was Jackson Emery who couldn't find his outside shot against Fresno. Rose put him on the pine.

The BYU coaching staff now has legitimate options to use when one of their top contributors is having an off night.

In seasons past, Rose has always trimmed his court time to a 7 or 8 man rotation just as Mountain West Conference play begins.

It looks like that rotation can legitimately be at 10 players this season.

BYU is getting quality minutes from Charles Abouo, Brandon Davies, Michael Loyd, Jr. and Lamont Morgan, Jr.

Add Tavernari as the tenth guy coming off the bench and this is as deep as we have seen a BYU team in many, many years.

Cupcake Feast

The Cougars will feast on a couple of cupcakes this week in Wagner on Thursday and Eastern Washington on Saturday. Both games are part of a Las Vegas tournament that will conclude the following week.

Once BYU gets to Vegas, they will face Nevada on Tuesday and then either Tulsa or Nebraska on Wednesday.

All four games will be shown live on BYUTV.

PROVIDE PROTECTION AND YOUR TEAM WILL WIN THE GAME

This Las Vegas Bowl game is not hard to figure out.

The winner will have the best offensive line.

The team that comes out on top will be the team that can protect its quarterback.

Oregon State has a better running game than BYU and we look for Jacquizz Rodgers to rack up plenty of yards on the ground for the Beavers.

That won't matter. The team that can throw the ball effectively and often will come out on top.

This game will be a battle of Sean Canfield and Max Hall.

Both quarterbacks have to be effective and efficient if they expect their respective clubs to win.

To be effective, it will require pass protection.

When push comes to shove, this game will be determined by which offensive line can give their quarterback time to throw.

Oregon State opened as a 1.5 point favorite and with a week to go before kickoff is now a 2.5 point favorite.

Neither team is going to beat the other with their quarterbacks running or scrambling. Both Sean Canfield of OSU and Max Hall of BYU are pocket passers who have to see the field.

Not Great Defenses

Neither quarterback will be facing a great defense. As a matter of fact, in our opinion, both the Oregon State and BYU defenses are pretty average to very ordinary.

That should make for some big offensive numbers, but only if both teams can figure out ways to keep their quarterbacks from taking hits and sacks.

Here are the numbers that we think will foretell the outcome of this game.

For the season, Max Hall was sacked 21 times. The BYU defense sacked opposing quarterbacks 26 times.

On the Oregon State side of the ledger, Sean Canfield was sacked 29 times while the OSU defense could only manage 15 sacks on the year.

If BYU's offensive line can keep Max Hall on his feet, we like the Cougars in this game.

ALL ABOUT QB'S

Since we think this bowl game matchup will be all about quarterbacks, we made an early and quick internet perusal of projections for quarterbacks and their rankings for the upcoming NFL draft.

Neither Max Hall nor Sean Canfield are currently considered to be potential high draft choices. We couldn't find any site that lists either Hall or Canfield in their top ten of quarterbacks as NFL draftees.

Almost all of the sites had Jimmy Clausen as the top rated NFL qb draft pick.

Clausen, of course, has declared that he will be leaving Notre Dame with one year of eligibility remaining to enter the NFL draft.

Speaking of Clausen, as good as he is and as much money as he will likely make in the NFL, he was pretty ordinary as a freshman at Notre Dame.

In case you forgot, Clausen, who had a brilliant prep career at Oak Christian HS in California, never lost a game as a high school quarterback.

Touted

He was touted as the No. 1 rated recruiting prospect coming out of the prep ranks.

Clausen, as good as he was in high school, and as good as he will likely be in the NFL, could only manage a 3-9 record as a freshman starting quarterback at Notre Dame.

Winning football and true freshmen quarterback starters are not very compatible.

Matt Barkley was supposed to be the next great quarterback legend at USC. He was handed the job as the Trojan signal caller. He lit it up early, but as is almost always the case, true freshmen quarterbacks do not make for national caliber teams.

With Barkley as the starter, USC finished with a 5-4 Pac 10 record and at 8-4 on the season. It was the worst finish for Pete Carroll since he took over as the head coach at USC.

Tate Forcier, was a big-time national caliber quarterback recruit coming out of the San Diego area last year.

He inked with Michigan and was heralded as the answer to Rich Rodriguez's Wolverine woes.

Forcier had some nice moments and started early and often for Michigan.

1-7

With a starting freshman qb, the Wolverines finished 1-7 in the Big Ten and 5-7 overall.

We bring this up because of all the Jake Heaps euphoria going around.

Heaps is the outstanding high school quarterback from Skyline HS in Seattle who just captured his third consecutive state championship for the Trojans.

He is ranked as one of the top qb prospect coming out of the prep ranks this year.

He gave BYU a verbal commitment last summer. He will be enrolling in school in January and participating in spring practice in March.

He should be a great quarterback for the Cougars...given time.

If he wins the starting quarterback job as a true freshman, which many BYU fans think is a foregone conclusion, BYU will struggle offensively next season.

That isn't a rap on Heaps, whom we think is an outstanding talent. It is simply a fact of life that if a major college football program is starting a true freshman, they more than likely will struggle offensively during that first year.

Results

Based on the results of big-name schools that have started true freshman quarterbacks, the results are seldom spectacular.

We all want to believe that Heaps will be different, but history says otherwise. Heaps is a great get as a recruit and will be a very good-to-great quarterback at BYU, but it is time to temper the enthusiasm that he will be a miracle worker for the Cougars beginning next season.

BOWL TICKET SALES GOING THROUGH A RAMBO AND ROCKY TIME

Despite matching up with the best football team BYU has faced in its five-year run at the Maaco Bowl Las Vegas, this year's matchup is not a hot ticket.

There are plenty available.

BYU has delivered for the bowl game with ticket sales the last four years. There will be a decent BYU crowd, but the fervor for seats is currently not as great as it has been in the past.

It might be economy related, but we think it is Rambo and Rocky related.

You can only watch so many Sylvester Stallone Rocky and Rambo sequels before your interest and fervor starts to wane.

BYU and the Las Vegas Bowl is suffering from over exposure to Cougar fans.

Don't expect Oregon State to be gobbling up tickets either.

They are having a hard time rebounding from what they had hoped to be a Rose Bowl trip to Pasadena.

The loss to Oregon took a toll on OSU fans enthusiasm.

There is another week for tickets to be sold and moved, but the fact that Oregon State is now encouraging its fans to simply support OSU athletics and buy a ticket so it can be donated to various Las Vegas charities and local Las Vegas servicemen and women, is code for "it is doubtful that we will sell our allotment of tickets".

BYU's initial announcement of ticket sales said that you could request tickets as a Cougar Club member or season ticket holder, but that sales were subject to availability.

You can go to the BYU ticket website today and it states that all ticket purchases are now guaranteed.

That is code for the demand is not as high as it has been the past four years.

If you like to compare prices, you can get a ticket for the game from BYU and the cost is \$65 a seat, which includes all fees. The same kind of ticket from Oregon State will cost you \$50, but you also will be charged a \$35 handling fee.

THE FUTURES MARKET

Listed below is how BYU's most recent signees and future prospects fared during the last week.

Kyle Collinsworth, 6-6 guard/wing, Provo HS...Just one game this week for the 6-6 BYU signee. Provo HS drubbed Logan HS 79-46 in Provo. Collinsworth scored 17 points.

Nick Emery, 6-0 freshman guard, Lone Peak HS...We have been listing the ninth grader as 6-3. According to the Lone Peak Roster, Emery is 6-1. While there may be some discrepancy as to his height, there is none as to his status as a scorer.

This past week, Lone Peak was finally back in action with two games. The Knights defeated Viewmont 61-44 on Wednesday and then in the first road game of the season beat a good Lehi team 52-50.

Emery scored 17 in the win over Viewmont and then exploded for 26 points against Lehi.

This kid is the real deal. There probably haven't been two big-time LDS prospects on the horizon in the same class in a couple of decades. The other is Jabari Parker of Simeon HS in Chicago.

Anson Winder, 6-3, guard, Bishop Gorman HS...The Gaels kicked off their season with a 88-63 loss to Findlay Prep, a team loaded with D-1 players. No box score was found, but Winder did garner a mention in local reports on the game for a nice slam dunk he registered against Findlay.

Jabari Parker, 6-5, wing, Simeon HS, Chicago...Simeon HS defeated East St. Louis HS 59-44 last Saturday in the Midwest Shootout. Couldn't find a box score, but newspaper reports indicated that only one Simeon play was in double figures and it wasn't the freshman Parker.

DeMarcus Harrison, 6-4, guard, Christ School, Arden, North Carolina...Scored 16 in Christ School's 70-35 win over Asheville School last Friday.

TELEVISION TIMETABLE

BYU vs. Wagner

Thursday, Dec 17 at Provo

Tipoff: 7:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: BYUTV

BYU vs. Eastern Washington

Saturday, Dec 19 at Provo

Tipoff: 7:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: BYUTV

BYU vs. Oregon State (Las Vegas Bowl)

Tuesday, Dec 22 at Las Vegas

Kickoff: 6:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: ESPN

BYU vs. Nevada (HoopTV Las Vegas Classic)

Tuesday, Dec 22 at Las Vegas (Orleans Arena)

Tipoff: 1:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: BYUTV

(Game was originally set for 8:30 pm start, but moved to 1:00 pm start to accommodate BYU's Las Vegas Bowl appearance. Cougar fans can now see both games)

BYU vs. Nebraska or Tulsa (HoopTV Las Vegas Classic)

Wednesday, Dec 23 at Las Vegas (Orleans Arena)

Tipoff: TBA