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I'm Back – January 4, 2018

I Am Advancing in Age and Degrees

My wife and I returned about six weeks ago from our LDS Mission to Michigan where we spent 18 months as CES missionaries teaching at the Michigan State University Institute. Upon returning, it took 4 weeks to find a place to live and 2 weeks waiting to cross State street at 800 North in Orem. (Yeah, the traffic in Utah County really is that bad.)

A lot of our students at the institute were pursuing Masters and Doctorate degrees. I was so inspired, I also go my PhD. Instead of Doctor of Philosophy, My PhD stands for ***Pharmaceutically Helped Daily***. I now take pills for diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. And, after watching BYU football this past season, I am also now taking anti-depressants.

In a few more years, I should also secure my **DeaD** degree. I think they only award that degree posthumously. So, between my PhD and DeaD degrees, I should still have a few years left.

My dilemma is determining what to do with those years. My options are as follows: 1. Move to Columbia or Costa Rica, where the cost of living is low, and the lifestyle is high. My wife *really* likes that idea. She hopes me, and my second wife, are very happy there. 2. Throw out a challenge to Orrin

Hatch to see who gets our DeaD degree first. 3. Join the Senior PRCA (Rodeo) circuit. I feel qualified because pre-mission, I spent 35 years knee deep in dispensing BYU bull biscuits. 4. Crank up Cougar Sportsline again.

The following is a trial run to see if I should crank Cougar Sportsline back up, or just sit home in Costa Rica being cranky. If my vote counts, *Cranky in Costa Rica* has a nice ring to it.

Blame It on the 13th Article of Faith

“We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men....If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.”

If you have a daughter looking for a husband or a son looking for a wife or a great education, the criteria listed above is an ideal pattern to pursue

If you are P5 football or basketball coach, prospective players that fit that description, need not apply. To resurrect the old coaching axiom, coaches want their players to be mean, lean and a fighting machine.

I call it thuggery.

BYU football and basketball simply doesn't have enough “thugs” on their rosters to compete with the P5's of the world or make any post season noise.

This is not to say that thugs have never appeared on a BYU roster, but when they do, their life expectancy due to the honor code and 13th article of faith is short lived.

That is about as blunt as I can get. You don't need a real PhD to know that teams that are nationally competitive have players who are usually 13th Article of Faith challenged.

You can be chaste, virtuous, benevolent and also run a 4.4 forty or have a 40-inch vertical and be an NFL or NBA prospect, but you would be in the .005 percentile of college football and basketball prospects.

It's not about coaching or recruiting. Coaches come and go, like they just did at BYU. It won't make a difference or at least a major difference.

Players

It's about players. BYU's model just won't and can't compete in the "thuggery" world of college football and basketball.

The two major sports at BYU and at all other universities are controlled by money. It is just my opinion, but the machinations for money is based on mean and lean athletic thugs and coaches who are more interested in a future professional paycheck than any praiseworthy character traits.

If you are a BYU fan, you won't like what it has spelled for football and basketball. We will get an occasional professional prospect, and when we do we stretch the boundaries of adoration for that athlete.

It has become a numbers game and BYU just will never get enough "big time" players to make a dent on the national scene. Again, it is not coaching, it players.

The good news is that this dismal forecast doesn't hold true with the Olympic sports at BYU and especially with the women's athletic programs.

Will BYU ever compete at the top of the heap in football and basketball? Not unless the caliber of players athletically makes a giant leap forward. Thuggery and theology are not compatible in the same sentence except in extremely rare situations.

You don't have to be a PhD to figure this out. You just have to watch college football and basketball on tv. It is there for all, including BYU fans, to see.

It's players period. BYU just doesn't have enough with enough talent to compete at the highest level in football and basketball.

Next Season

The next preseason in football and basketball when the media starts telling us how improved BYU is and how good they will be, just remember the 13th

Article of Faith and what you just saw in the College football playoffs. The two can't exist together. Especially at BYU.

On a football level, even Ty Detmer couldn't turn Big Sky caliber quarterbacks into Big Time players. Unless there is an influx of quarterbacks other than what was on display last season, Aaron Roderick, the new quarterback coach, will be no different. It is about talented players. It is not about coaching.

Ty Detmer and BYU's offense went 9-4 in 2016 and 4-9 in 2017. What was the difference? Detmer had Taysom Hill and Jamaal Williams, two NFL caliber players in 2016 and they were the offense. He had only Big Sky caliber receivers, running backs and quarterbacks in 2017.

If you have them, great. If you don't, just wait until next year.

I'm all in on new offensive coordinator Jeff Grimes. His resume is impressive. Even more impressive is the NFL caliber players he had at his disposal in compiling his resume.

He had Cam Newton at Auburn. He had Leonard Fournette at LSU, to just name a few. They won't be following him to BYU.

He, along with Aaron Roderick and the rest of the new offensive staff are about to find out that coaching technique, mental toughness and all the other adjectives that are featured in their resumes are good, but NFL caliber players are better.

Rock and a hard place

Texas A&M prides itself on their 12th man. Utah and Whittingham love "the next man up" mantra. Both are nice and catchy phrases, but only when you have NFL talent on the field and on the bench ready to play.

BYU one ups Texas A&M with its 13th Article of Faith, which sounds much better than the much maligned "Honor Code" mantra, but they are the same thing.

In big time football, you can't have your cake and (honor) code and eat it too. Something has to give. When it comes to the matchup of honor code versus BYU football, Cougar football is definitely a 3 touchdown underdog.

As a long-time follower and fan of BYU football and basketball, I see the future as borderline bleak. Division I football and basketball are currently just Triple A farm teams for the NFL and NBA. Like their professional counterparts, at the AAA level (college) it is still about money.

Because the money is so big, we are now at the point that almost anything goes, except at BYU. If you don't believe this, you haven't followed the basketball payouts that were exposed recently. And you haven't followed football, all you have to do is follow the money and where it flows to see what is happening.

I'll be on a couch in Colombia watching soccer before this ever happens, but I don't think it is unimaginable that BYU would drop football before they drop the 13th Article of Faith.

Meanwhile, a more pressing matter for me is the newsletter. I'm no Tom Brady, who thinks he has another 10 years of football left in him. I don't want to publish until the day I die. As a matter of fact, I don't want to publish the letter at all.

That said, I do want to adhere to the "honest" part of the 13th Article of Faith. Here are our options. I have a record of your subscription status and I will gladly refund your money if you provide me a current mailing address.

The other option is this: I could see myself starting up again in August and the start of a new football season. I also see publishing bi-weekly (twice a month) instead of weekly as doable for an old man like me. You will notice that there is no option for subscribing or renewing subscriptions. Let me know your thoughts and what works best for you. But hurry. Costa Rica and Colombia are calling. I can be reached at hbarnett@fiber.net.