

HB Arnett's

COUGAR SPORTSLINE

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WE LIKE OREGON STATE IN A MARATHON, BUT WILL TAKE BYU IN THE SAM BOYD STADIUM SPRINT

Oregon State will have the best quarterback, running back and wide receivers on the field in Tuesday's Maaco Bowl Las Vegas matchup with BYU.

The only place where BYU will have a clear edge in talent offensively is with Dennis Pitta at tight end.

The offensive lines, in our opinion, are a push.

Defensively, neither team is anything special.

The longer these two teams stay on the field together; we believe the Beavers' offensive advantages would become quite clear.

Fortunately, this is not baseball and a seven-game World Series. It will be just four quarters and anything can happen in that short of matchup.

While we think OSU is a better offensive team, they are not head and shoulders above BYU's offense.

That is why one or two big plays offensively by either team and one or two blown plays by either defense will determine which team takes home the hardware.

We expect both teams to move the ball at will in the air. We expect Oregon State to have more success on the ground.

What we don't know is which team will make or not make the three or four plays that will determine the winner.

If the Cougars don't turn the ball over, we join all BYU honks and homers worldwide in picking the Cougars in this sprint to the finish line. We see it BYU 35 Oregon State 31.

COUGARS LOOK GOOD IN LAST OUTING

How can you not roll out the positive adjectives in describing BYU's 91-34 mauling of Eastern Washington last week?

The Cougars played spectacularly. They made shots, defended well and looked like a team that should contend for another MWC title and even get a first-round NCAA win.

As they like to say, however, on the NCAA selection committee, teams are evaluated on not just one game, but an entire body of work during the season.

BYU's body is looking quite buff with its current 10-1 record, but in our opinion, there is still one area of BYU's basketball body that still needs a little more definition.

Can the Cougar's contain good post players?

They didn't against Fresno State when the inside game for the Bulldogs abused BYU for 51 points. The Cougars won because they had more offensive firepower than FSU, but a definite chink that still needs checked out showed itself in that game.

BYU had a decent defensive outing in the post against Tai Wesley at Utah State in the Cougars only loss, but for this club to be really good, it will depend on how they defend in the post.

This trip to Las Vegas will be a good test.

The Cougars get Nevada on Tuesday and will face a prolific front court scorer in sophomore Luke Babbitt. At 6-9, he is the Wolfpack's leading scorer at 19.1 points per game.

When BYU makes outside shots from their outstanding guard tandem of Jimmer Fredette and Jackson Emery, they are almost unbeatable. Throw in the new mid-ranges games of Tyler Haws and Noah Hartsock, and this team is an even bigger threat. If Jonathan Tavernari finds his range again, this could be a scary good offensive team.

That said, the players in the post for BYU will have to prove that they can defend other good post players. Another pop quiz is on tap for Tuesday against Nevada and Babbitt.

YOU CAN NOW DECK THE COUGAR ATHLETIC HALLS WITH NOT ONLY HOLLY, BUT HEISMANS

If the excitement over BYU's football recruiting eventually turns out to be validated on the football field, then Bronco Mendenhall and his staff got an early start on Christmas gifts last week.

Four big-time and nationally noted high school prospects signed scholarship agreements with BYU and will be enrolled in school at Provo in January.

We still look for at least one or two more junior college prospects to also end up in the program in January. BYU is still in need of a juco safety and juco middle linebacker.

Meanwhile, back to the holly and hype and tinsel talk of Cougar fans everywhere.

Jake Heaps, Ross Apo, Kyle Van Noy and Joshua Quezada are good enough to get many Cougar football fans believing in Santa Claus again. The original BCS (Big Chubby Santa) has delivered the goods this year for Cougar fans everywhere.

Call the Carpenters and tell them to start humming their old hit; *"We've Only Just Begun"*. Then tell them to bring their hammers and get started on expanding the trophy case so BYU will be ready to deck its athletic halls not only with holly but with more Heismans.

We love recruiting hype and we love Santa, but we also are aware of bah humbug and an occasional Ben Olson. Sometimes Santa is on sabbatical and sometimes can't-miss recruits do miss.

Regardless, it's time to revel in what BYU just reeled in.

Here are the official releases of three of the four early signees that will be in school in January.

Jake Heaps

Ranked the No. 1 quarterback in the nation by Scout.com, Heaps led Skyline High School in Sammamish, WA to three state championships while posting a 40-2 record as a three-year starter. With excellent arm strength and accuracy, Heaps amassed 9,994 yards passing and completed 63 percent of his passes while connecting for 114 touchdowns with only 18 interceptions in his career. He totaled 144 scores overall during his prep stint at Skyline.

A proven winner, Heaps threw for 254 yards and four touchdowns while rushing for another score in leading Skyline to a 45-21 victory in this year's 4-A title contest against Ferris HS. The 6-2, 205 pound signal caller led Skyline to a 12-2 record in 2009 while totaling 45 touchdowns and only seven interceptions. He helped Skyline to a perfect 28-0 record during his sophomore and junior seasons.

The 2009 Washington Football Player of the Year, Heaps garnered numerous MVP all-state acco-

lades over his standout career. Named a US Army All-American, he will play in the US Army All-American Bowl to be played live on NBC on Jan. 9.

Heaps and Ross Apo committed to the Cougars last June. He had scholarship offers from Cal, Florida State, LSU, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Washington.

Ross Apo

A product of the Oakridge School in Arlington, Texas, Apo averaged an amazing 19.1 yards per catch over his three-year prep career while totaling nearly 2,000 receiver yards. At 6-foot-3, 190 pounds, Apo is an excellent red zone target because of his height and leaping ability (37-inch vertical). He made 22 touchdown receptions over his career, including 21 scoring grabs over the past two seasons.

Apo averaged 22.5 yards on 36 receptions as a senior in 2009 while totaling 810 yards and 10 touchdowns. As a junior he hauled in 37 passes for 764 yards for a 20.6 yards-per-catch average with 11 touchdown receptions. He also recorded 27 catches for 331 yards and one touchdown as a sophomore.

An explosive athlete with long arms to go along with his tall frame, Apo is a large target over the middle and covers a lot of ground quickly with his long stride. He joins Heaps among the 90 players nationwide to be named a US Army High School all-American and has accepted an invitation to play in the US Army All-American Bowl on Jan. 9 at the Alamodome.

He originally committed to Texas before changing his mind and saying yes to BYU. Other schools that offered him included Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma State, Texas and Tulsa.

Kyle Van Noy

A 6-4, 210 pound linebacker out of Reno, Nev., Van Noy was a first-team all-state selection and rated the No. 11 weakside linebacker in the nation last year by Scout.com. Van Noy originally signed with BYU last February, but did not enroll because of some personal problems that have since been resolved.

He was the No. 4 overall prospect from the state of Nevada by Rivals.com at the conclusion of the 2008 season. Playing linebacker and receiver, he helped lead McQueen High School to a perfect 14-0 record and the 2008 4A state title.

As a senior in 2008, Van Noy caught 35 passes for 731 yards and 18 touchdowns and rushed the ball 10 times for 121 yards. Defensively, he had 79 tackles (55 solos), 10 tackles for loss, six forced fumbles, four fumble recoveries, 14 sacks and one interception for a score.

As a junior in 2007 he had 69 tackles, 24 tackles for loss, seven sacks, seven fumbles caused and two interceptions while totaling 805 yards receiving and 13 touchdowns on offense. Van Noy was an all-conference and all-area selection as a sophomore and was also an all-league performer in track (4x100, 4x200 and 4x400).

He was recruited by and had offers from ASU, Boise State, Cal, Colorado and UCLA.

Joshua Quezada

BYU has not yet released an official announcement on Quezada, but here is our take.

Another in a long line of BYU power backs, Quezada, at 5-11, 210 pounds rushed for 2114 yards and 26 touchdowns this season while leading his La Habra High School (Calif.) to a CIF Section championships. As a junior, he rushed for 1,680 yards and scored 21 touchdowns.

He had offers from BYU, Utah, Washington, Hawaii, San Diego State, Stanford and Fresno State.

MORE MIDYEARS

BYU will have plenty of other players enrolling in school for the first time and re-enrolling in school in January after LDS missionary service.

Here are most of them that we have identified. Also included are their bios from BYU after their original signing announcement. We will start with those that will enroll for the first time in January and rank them according to our evaluations of them as impact players

Devin Mahina, 6-6, 225, TE, Upland HS, CA...Credited with 19 receptions for 373 yard, averaging 19.6 yards per receptions...had four touchdowns during his senior season...had a season-high 151 yards receiving in Upland's 40-23 win over Claremont...defensively, credited with 36 tackles, including 21 solos and 15 assisted takedowns...averaged 4.0 tackles per game...credited with six sacks on the season...also credited with a blocked field goal and a blocked punt...credited with two safeties...an All-CIF performer...recruited by Colorado, Oregon and UCLA.

Aveni Leung Wai, 6-1, 220, LB, Aiea, HI, Grossmont JC, CA...All-Foothill Conference first-team line-backer...helped lead the Griffins to the California junior college state championship as a freshman...prepped at Aiea HS in Oahu...Served an LDS mission in New York. Is currently enrolled in school.

Marcus Matthews, 6-4, 200, WR Beaverton, Southridge HS...An all-state second-team selection. helped lead the Skyhawks to the state title game...credited with over 50 receptions as a senior and scored seven touchdowns...had 47 catches for 690 yards and seven touchdowns as a junior. Was recruited by Cal, Oklahoma State, Oregon, Oregon State, Washington, Utah and Washington State. Served mission in Sweden.

Famika Anae, 6-5, 260, OL, Timpview HS, Provo, UT...Son of offensive coordinator Robert Anae. Recruited by UNLV and Hawaii. Served mission in McAllen, Texas.

Players That Will Re-Enroll at BYU in January

We rank these returning missionaries in order of impact based on our opinion and evaluation.

Eathyn Manumaleuna, 6-2, 270 DL, Timpview HS, Provo, UT...Served in Oklahoma. UCLA is trying to convince him to sign with the Bruins and join his cousin, another defensive tackle UCLA is currently recruiting. The new NCAA rule will more than likely keep Manumaleuna at BYU because he would not only have to sit out a year if he transfers, but lose a year of eligibility also.

He will add some much need talent at defensive tackle for next season.

Tyler Beck, 6-1, 210, LB, Vista Murrieta HS, Calif...Served in Houston. Saw special teams and spot action as a freshman. A little small, but has a big motor and will compete for playing time.

Austen Jorgensen, 6-3, 210, LB, North Sanpete HS, UT...earned all-state honors first three years of high school. Did not play senior season because of broken leg...As junior led state with 14 sacks, 12 tackles for a loss and 115 total tackles. Recruited by Stanford, Boise State, ASU and Utah.

James Lark, 6-3, 205, Pine View HS, St. George, UT...Redshirted as a freshman and then left for LDS mission to Russia. We expect him to be third on the qb depth chart when spring drills roll around in March. We see it Riley Nelson, Jake Heaps and Lark to start the spring.

THE FUTURES MARKET

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

Kyle Collinsworth, 6-6 guard/wing, Provo HS...The BYU signee is starting to heat up his game. This past week Collinsworth scored 22 in a 56-39 win over Salem Hills and then added 16 more points in Provo's 38-32 win over Spanish Fork.

Nick Emery, 6-0 freshman guard, Lone Peak HS...Just one game for Lone Peak HS this week - a 41-31 win over Juan Diego. Emery scored 10 points. This week will be busy as LP heads to St. George for the Great 8 tourney and will play three games in three days.

Anson Winder, 6-3, guard, Bishop Gorman HS...The recent BYU signee finally got busy as his Gaels played multiple games. Winder scored 14 in a 66-41 win over Spring Valley. He followed that up with 25 points in a 74-66 win over LaVerne Lutheran and came back with 18 against North Torrance in a 109-69 win. He finished his week with 16 points against Bishop McNamara of Maryland in a 61-54 win.

Jabari Parker, 6-5, wing, Simeon HS, Chicago...In a matchup of No. 1 ranked Whitney Young HS vs. No. 2 ranked Simeon, Parker scored 8 points and grabbed 4 rebounds as Young beat Simeon 62-55. Parker is the highly touted freshman that already has numerous Division I scholarship offers, including one from BYU. He is LDS.

DeMarcus Harrison, 6-4, guard, Christ School, Arden, North Carolina...This past week Harrison scored 11 against Asheville Christian Academy and had 12 points and 7 rebounds versus Greenville HS.

TELEVISION TIMETABLE

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

TV: BYUTV

BYU vs. Arizona

Monday, Dec 28 at Tucson

Tipoff: 7:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: Fox College Sports (FCN)

BYU vs. Eastern New Mexico

Saturday, Jan 2 at Provo

Tipoff: 7:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: none

BYU vs. UNLV

Wednesday, Jan 6 at Provo

Tipoff: 8:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: The Mtn