

HB Arnett's



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Is BYU's Loss of Market Share a Trend or Temporary Dip?

With the college basketball season coming to a close tonight, we have heard much about teams getting selected to participate in the NCAA tournament by passing the eyeball test. I have no concrete statistical or empirical evidence to back up my opinion that BYU sports is losing its market share in the state of Utah other than my own eyeball test.

Here is my admittedly anecdotal eyeball evidence to back up my claim that BYU has been losing its market share of college sports fans in Utah. A sellout at LaVell Edwards Stadium is now the exception not the norm of a few years ago.

BYU is downsizing its seating in the Marriott Center for basketball. If you can't sell a seat, then discount it. BYU has tried that with \$3 and even \$1 tickets for basketball. They still don't sell out. The next step apparently after discounting seats is to discard them.

Based on attendance figures at the football stadium and basketball arena only, I don't know how you can pretend that BYU's market share of the college sports market in Utah hasn't decreased. Yeah. I know about television and the impact it has on live attendance, but don't let any facts mess with my assertions that BYU market share is dwindling in sports in Utah. If you want facts, then here's one: Utah sells more fan apparel than BYU.

How's that for empirical data. And if you want anecdotal data, I have it on good authority that more patrons of pubs, taverns and bars in the Beehive state are dressed in Utah t-shirts than BYU t-shirts.

If you disagree that BYU is losing its market share of sports fans, you can use television and radio ratings to defend your stance. You can cite BYUtv to allege that the Cougars' market share has gone global. Throw in the ESPN deal if you want.

To each his or her own. I still maintain that BYU sports market share as it impacts me, at the stadium or arena, on the sidewalk, in the mall, in my neighborhood and at Church is smaller than it used to be.

I found this piece on Market Share at www.quickmba.com/marketing/market-share/. I have taken just two snippets from this short essay on Market Share as it relates, in my opinion, to BYU sports. I have added or altered these snippets to make my point. You will find my additions and comments in italics.

Ticket Sales figures do not necessarily indicate how a firm is performing relative to its competitors. Rather, changes in sales simply may reflect changes in the market size or changes in economic conditions *or demographics, such as how the percentage of LDS population in Utah as compared to the total population in the state is decreasing.*

Ways to Increase Market Share

- **Product** - the product attributes can be changed to provide more value to the customer, for example, by improving product quality. ***Putting a better product on the field and court in basketball and football will do wonders for recovering market share.***
- **Price** - if the price elasticity of demand is elastic (that is, > 1), a decrease in price will increase sales revenue. This tactic may not succeed if competitors are willing and able to meet any price cuts. ***Or have a better product on the field and on the court such as Utah currently has.***

I'm sure BYU has some very good marketing people working on recovering their market share when it comes to sports. But you don't need a MBA in marketing to figure this out. Here's a clue to maintaining or reclaiming your market share. Beat Utah in football more than 3 times in the last 10 meetings. In case you forgot the Utes have now beaten BYU in football the last four times the teams lined up against each other. To me, that simply shouts loss of market share.

In basketball, winning isn't a problem. The problem is beating somebody when it means something. The win over Gonzaga was fantastic, but very infrequent. Winning a couple of games in the NCAA tournament would work wonders for recovering market share.

I've said it time and time again in this newsletter. Winning solves all issues. That includes the current ones with a declining market share. Especially as it relates to football and consistently losing to Utah.

NFL Does Matter to Some **BYU Left Wanting for Warner**

Troy Warner, a 4-star LDS recruit and younger brother of current BYU football player, Fred Warner, announced last week that he was committing to Oregon. The 6-foot-0, 185-pound prospect out of Mission Hills High School (California) committed to the Ducks on Friday morning over offers from Arizona, BYU, Cal, Notre Dame, Stanford, UCLA, Utah and others.

He cited Oregon's record of producing NFL caliber defensive backs as the primary reason for his decision. Here is what he had to say in a recent *Oregon Live* article written by Andrew Nemec.

Nemec stated that Warner said Oregon separated itself from the pack, in part, because of defensive back coach John Neal's ability to develop NFL-caliber defensive backs. Neal, of course, is a long time Duck defensive back coach and a former defensive back for BYU under LaVell Edwards.

"I got real close with Coach Neal," Warner said. "It was big, because I knew that being under (Neal's) wings I would have the necessary tools to learn from him, knowing that he would help me get to the next level."

On the other side of the recruiting ledger, the Cougars did land a football commit closer to home last week. That would be Solofa Funa. He is 6-1, 220 and preps at Spanish Fork HS. He played for the Dons last season as a junior after transferring from Servite HS in Orange County. He is LDS.

Here is BYU's current crop of 2016 football commits to date:

Solofa Funa, 6-1, 220, LB, Spanish Fork HS, UT
Aleva Hifo, 5-11, 180, DB, Heritage HS, CA
Garett Bolles, 6-6, 290, OL, Snow College, UT
Jaren Hall, 6-1, 185, QB, Maple Mountain HS, UT
Skyler Southam, 6-1, 180, K, Wasatch HS, UT
Hirkley Latu, 6-3, 200, DB, Kahuku HS, HI

Names Noticed

You know the big names like Taysom Hill, Mitch Mathews and Bronson Kaufusi. Here are some other names that made strides and impressions on BYU football coaches this spring. This group improved their stock and stature for the fall and will make likely make

fans and coaches take notice and find themselves a spot or moving up on the two deep depth chart.

Phillip Amone, 5-11, 232, LB, Bronco likes this guy and says so. That is a high endorsement.

Devon Blackmon, 6-1, 185, WR, Looks like his playmaking ability is finally coming to the forefront.

Trey Dye, 5-9, 175, WR, Looks more confident and in charge of his natural athletic ability. Still small so his role will be limited, but look for BYU to try and get the ball in his hands this fall.

Travis Frey, 6-2, 190, WR, Could be the sleeper of the spring. Unknown until now. Could make the two deep rotation for wide outs.

Eric Takenaka, 5-10, 200, DB, Bronco gushes about this guy. When Bronco gushes, guys play. So will Takenaka.

Basketball Briefs

As expected, Mark Pope, the four-year assistant basketball coach at BYU, was named the head coach at Utah Valley University last week. That means Dave Rose will be looking for a new assistant to join his staff.

Rose lost a coach, but he gains a new recruit in Steven Beo, a 6-3 scorer from Richland, Wa. The guard fits Rose mold of backcourt players known for scoring. He averaged 26.9 point per game last season as a junior. He was shown recruiting interest from Boise State, Gonzaga, WSU and Washington.

Beo was in Orem in December playing in a tournament and I watched him perform. The BYU athletic department may want to budget for more basketballs in two years, because with Beo, Nick Emery, the return of TJ Haws and hopefully the signing of Frank Jackson, I can guarantee that their won't be enough basketballs to go around.

Spring Sports

Mike Littlewood, the BYU baseball coach, still holds tight to the goal that his Cougars will qualify for the four team league championship at the end of the regular season.

He will have to get much better and more consistent pitching if that is to happen. The Cougars are now 6-6 in WCC play and 4 of those wins have come against Gonzaga and Portland, two teams with worse records than BYU. It should be noted, however, that the other two wins came against Pepperdine, an upper echelon team in the league.

Now the Cougars will have to face the better part of teams beginning with a three game series this weekend against Loyola Marymount in Los Angeles. The Lions are currently 8-4 in conference play and tied for second place with San Francisco.

Kolton Mahoney, had 15 strikeouts last week in his outing against Portland in Provo. That almost wasn't enough for the win as BYU had to come back for a 3-2 win in the late stages of the game.

The Cougars are still a long way off from being consistently competitive in the WCC and especially on the national collegiate baseball scene.

In softball, the BYU women opened WCC play on the road last week by sweeping St. Mary's 7-3, 32 and 8-5. BYU is now 25-8 on the year. They will host Pacific in Provo this Friday and Saturday in another three game set.

TELEVISION TIMETABLE

BYU vs. Pacific (Softball)

Friday, April 10 at Provo

First Pitch: 5 pm MDT

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. Pacific (Softball)

Friday, April 10 at Provo

First Pitch: 7 pm MDT

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. Pacific (Softball)

Saturday, April 11 at Provo

First Pitch: 1 pm MDT

TV: BYUtv