

HB Arnett's
COUGAR SPORTSLINE

801 372 0819

hbarnett@fiber.net and hbarnett@xmission.com

PO Box 50424 Provo, Utah 84605

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TOO MANY TURNOVERS AND TOO MUCH TEXAS TECH LEADS TO 48-24 LOSS TO UTAH

Nobody wants to blame Max Hall for the 48-24 loss to Utah last Saturday.

After all, Hall was the designated driver that accounted for 10 wins last year, ten wins this year and will be the same driver next season giving the Cougars another ride, hopefully to a 10 or more win season.

Nobody feels comfortable biting the hand that has fed it for the last two years and will keep putting bread on the table next season.

While 10 is a very good number when it comes to games won during a year, 6 is a very bad number when it comes to one game and turnovers.

That is how many times Hall gave Utah the ball and essentially the game.

Four of those six miscues were just window dressing. The first two were what really mattered.

With the clock winding down in the first half and BYU trailing 20-17, Hall threw his first pick of the game. Utah capitalized on a short field and led at the intermission 27-17.

BYU rallied in the third quarter with a nice drive to cut the lead to 27-24. The Cougars looked like they were headed for their first lead of the game when Hall fumbled the ball. Utah made it costly with another quick score.

It was then 34-24 and the game was over. BYU kept trying to force the issue with its passing game and Hall kept forcing the ball into coverage. That led to an additional 4 more interceptions.

Hall finished with 21-of-41 for 205 yards and five picks.

Despite Hall's worst performance as a Cougar, Austin Collie was able to maintain his high level of play. The junior receiver had 10 catches for 104 yards.

Hall Had Help In Less Than Heroic Night

Turnovers killed BYU in this showdown game with the Utes. Texas Tech also had a hand in the debacle.

That is where Robert Anae came from before becoming the offensive coordinator at BYU four years ago.

While both BYU and Texas Tech have won plenty of games the last few seasons, in our opinion, it seems like both schools are more interested in showcasing their passing games and offenses than doing what it takes to win critical games.

Big numbers and stats are nice, but there are certain games where running the ball and the clock are

more conducive to winning a football game than trying to lead the nation in passing.

That was the case against Utah.

In golf parlance, BYU was more interested in driving the ball for show, but showed no patience or penchant for putting and pounding the ball down the throat of the Utah defense. That tactic could have easily given the Cougars a win over the Utes.

All good golfers can drive the ball exceptionally long. Those golfers that are cashing the checks, however, do so with their short games and putting.

Unga and Brown Now Famous

Harvey Unga now joins Curtis Brown in an exclusive BYU running back club. You may remember Brown. In 2004 against UNLV in Provo, Brown averaged 12.75 yards per carry against the Rebels. He was unstoppable.

With those numbers, the perplexing question still remains why he only carried the ball 8 times in that game while John Beck was throwing it 68 times? UNLV beat BYU 24-20.

We don't mean to re-open an old sore and score, but Utah did it for us last week.

Like Brown against UNLV, Unga was also unstoppable against the Utes. He rushed for 116 yards on just 15 carries. Fui Vakapuna had 36 yards on 4 carries. As a team, BYU rushed for 214 yards against the Utes.

Utah defensive coaches are known for making adjustments during games, but against BYU's potent running attack last Saturday, they didn't have to.

BYU's play calling did it for them.

One of the tried and true maxims of football at any level is that championship teams can run the ball.

You run it and keep running it until the other team finds a way to stop it.

You especially run the ball and keep the clock moving when you need to keep a flawed defense off the field as much as possible.

BYU's defense is obviously flawed. They needed help from an offense that, in our opinion, was too selfish or too foolish to give it.

Personality, Not Plays

Utah is a very good team. They are not the best football team in the conference. TCU is. Yes, the Utes defeated the Frogs this season, but the New York Giants also lost to the Cleveland Browns and nobody thinks they are better than New York.

That said, the Utes have some good coaches.

They can watch film and game plan.

That wasn't necessary against BYU. Instead of watching film, all they had to do was observe BYU coaches.

It wasn't hard to figure out that BYU wants to pass the ball. Take that part of the game away and Cougar offensive coaches still want to throw the ball regardless of results.

Utah had BYU's offensive personality and play calling pegged to a tee.

We don't ever like to use the word stupid, so we will opt for stubborn instead. BYU coaches were just too stubborn to force the Utes to account for and adjust to BYU's ground game.

Utah coaches were smart enough to recognize that stubbornness and capitalize on it.

Money Maker

It was a few weeks ago that we said that the most interesting matchup of the game would be Matt Reynolds, BYU's freshman offensive tackle, against Utah's super sophomore defensive end Paul Kruger.

Reynolds, in our opinion, acquitted himself extremely well against Kruger.

Both players, barring serious injuries, will be cashing NFL paychecks very soon.

With the Utah win, BYU coaches and administrators are not happy, but administrators are less unhappy than coaches.

That is because with Utah's win, Boise State and the WAC are now shut out of a BCS bowl game.

The Utes are a lock and that means that BYU and every other MWC team can count on a \$500,000 bonus payday.

Speaking of bonuses, a big payday is also why Cougar administrators are still pushing for the game with Oklahoma in Dallas next year.

They want the money and substantial paycheck.

Utah State takes a public relations beating for scheduling "money" games that they can't win.

If the Oklahoma game does happen, BYU will just be more adept at disguising its "money" game.

NOW WHAT?

Sure there will be a bowl invite, most likely to the Las Vegas or Poinsettia, but where does BYU go from here in their program?

Chuck Long, Rocky Long and Joe Glenn would love to be asked that question.

All three MWC coaches will be gone next season. Long resigned at New Mexico while Glenn and Long were terminated at Wyoming and San Diego State.

The coaching questions for BYU are not about personnel. Nobody is going to be fired.

Nobody is going to be wooed by any other school. Despite the nice records of the last three seasons, there isn't a coach on the staff that will be pursued heavily by any other program.

If there were any coaching geniuses on this staff, other schools would be beating down the door. They aren't.

The only change in coaching that we think would be good for BYU is for Bronco Mendenhall to give up his defensive coaching responsibilities.

Again, in our opinion, if he gives up his defensive responsibility, he won't be missed.

He needs to devote more time to observation and correction to the overall program and not be so involved in the defensive side of the ball.

With more time, he might be able to look at his own offense and see what the tendencies and trends are and tell his offensive subordinates to run the ball when needed.

After four years at the helm, Mendenhall as a defensive coach has run its course. After four years, he should be able to have enough confidence to make needed adjustments on offense when called for.

As a defensive coach that has seen his own unit struggle, it would seem hard to point out flaws in an offense that for the most part has outperformed the defense.

With no involvement directly in either side of the ball, Mendenhall could have more credibility in making suggestions and adjustments where they are needed.

In case you forgot, Robert Anae was not Mendenhall's hire. Anae was hired by BYU administrators before they even had a head coach in place. That, in and of itself, was bizarre.

In our opinion, it is time for Mendenhall to be more hands on with the offense. Giving up his daily role on defense would allow for that to happen.

FLUFF AND STUFF

SCHEDULING...Bronco Mendenhall recently stated on his weekly radio show that he doesn't want to schedule any future games with teams from the Pac 10 conference until that league adjusts its offici-

ating mandates that only allow Pac 10 referees to work Pac 10 home games.

In a recent issue that talked about future schedules, we forgot to mention that BYU has a home and home schedule set with Hawaii to be played in Provo in 2012 and in Honolulu in 2013.

JUCO RECRUITING...Mendenhall has also said recently that the Cougars will now be looking for a juco cornerback and running back for the coming year.

The cornerback we can understand, but a juco running back may indicate that the Cougars might be expecting Harvey Unga to declare early for the NFL draft.

We think that if Unga can get assurances that he would go in the fourth round or earlier, he would take the step to the next level.

Regardless, here are two jucos that BYU is now showing interest in:

Deivon Tate, 6-0, 185 pound cornerback from Yuba CC in Marysville, CA. He has three years to play two and prepped at Booker T Washington HS in Miami, FL. Teams besides BYU that are showing interest include Colorado, Kansas State, TCU, San Diego State, NC State, Minnesota and Nebraska.

Randall Toney, 5-10, 205 pound running back from Franklin Dean JC in Massachusetts. Schools recruiting him include BYU, Louisville, Memphis, Boston College, Tulane and Vanderbilt. He prepped at Station Camp HS in Hendersonville, TN where he rushed for 1007 yards as a junior and 1876 yards as a senior.

After high school he spent a year at Fork Union Military Academy in Virginia before playing this season at Dean as a freshman.

During this past season he carried the ball just 44 times for 265 yards and had two touchdowns.

He was an academic qualifier coming out of high school with a 3.4 GPA and a 27 ACT score. That means he can move on to Division I now.

If you haven't heard of the prep school Fork Union, it is the same place where Plaxico Burress, Vinnie Testaverde and Eddie George all made stops before moving on to Michigan State, Miami and Ohio State.

EXTRA LONG PIPELINE...The Cougars have some serious personnel needs on defense, especially at safety and linebacker.

Good programs fill those needs with their recruiting pipeline. In most cases that pipeline usually pays dividends in two years. With BYU and LDS missions, 4 years is a more realistic expectation.

Here is the current pipeline and Mendenhall recruiting classes for defensive backs and linebackers from which any realistic help will have to come. We don't include recruits who have already left the program through graduation and attrition.

2005

Linebackers: Shawn Doman (currently on roster), Terrance Hooks (currently on roster)

Defensive Backs: Stephen Covey (currently on roster), Brandon Howard (currently on roster)

2006

Linebackers: Brandon Ogletree

Defensive Backs: Brandon Bradley (currently on roster) Robbie Buckner, Mike Hague

2007

Linebackers: Tyler Beck, Austin Jorgensen, Aveni Leung Wai

Defensive Backs: Steven Thomas, Gary Nagy, Jordan Pendleton, Brannon Brooks (all currently on roster)

2008

Linebackers: Michael Alisa, Jerry Bruner, Kevan Bills, Spencer Hadley, Iona Pritchard, Daniel Sorensen (LDS missions will preclude most of these players from making an impact for two more years)

Defensive Backs: Shiloah Te'o, Andrew Rich, Garrett Nicholson, Cameron Comer

2009

Linebackers: No current commitments, but BYU still trying on Manti Te'o, Steven Fanua, Kyle Van Noy and L.T. Filiaga

Defensive Backs: BYU has commitments from Trevor Bateman, Craig Bills and Jray Galea'i

BASKETBALL BRIEFS

BYU is currently off to a 5-0 start in basketball.

Briefly, all you need to know is that the backcourt is improved and Lee Cummard is the go-to-guy on this team.

The Cougars have only been challenged in two games so far. That came against Long Beach State and Cal Poly last week.

In both games, Cummard refused to let the Cougars lose. He made clutch shots to save both games.

It didn't hurt that he also lit up the stat sheets. Against Long Beach he scored 36 points and against Cal Poly he had 28.

The Cougars have had a cupcake calendar this past week against North Florida, Rice and Cal Poly.

BYU will face Idaho State on Saturday in the only game of the Thanksgiving week and then return to action the following week against Weber State in Ogden and Utah State in Salt Lake City.

TELEVISION TIMETABLE

BYU vs. Idaho State

Saturday, Nov 29 at Pocatello

Tipoff: 7:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: BYUTV

BYU vs. Weber State

Wednesday, Dec 3 at Ogden

Tipoff: 7:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: KJZZ and BYUTV

BYU vs. Utah State

Saturday, Dec 6 at SLC

Tipoff: 5:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: KJZZ and BYUTV

BYU vs. Boise State

Wednesday, Dec 10 at Provo

Tipoff: 8:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: Mtn

BYU vs. Portland

Saturday, Dec 13 at Provo

Tipoff: 8:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: Mtn