

HB Arnett's

COUGAR SPORTSLINE

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Seminoles Shellac Cougars 54-28

FLORIDA STATE AND BYU BOTH ADD TO THEIR CEMETERIES

The Florida State Seminoles have one of college football's great traditions. Their 54-28 thumping of BYU last Saturday in LaVell Edwards Stadium added to that tradition.

In games which the Seminoles deem the outcome significant and important, they take a piece of sod from the field of the defeated team and plant it in their "Sod Cemetery" located near their football facilities in Tallahassee.

A piece of BYU's new grass field now has a celebrated resting place on FSU's campus.

Not to be outdone in football funerals, the Cougars also added another embarrassing epitaph in the BYU Boot Hill of Blowouts.

Every time the Cougars and their fans start thinking they are one of college football's elite programs, they bomb out and add another tombstone in their Boot Hill of Blowouts.

If you haven't visited lately, besides the newest plot being dug for the Florida State fiasco, here are some of the other markers from this decade that are planted firmly in the turf and in reality.

2008 - TCU 32 BYU 7, Utah 48 BYU 24

2007 - Tulsa 55 BYU 47 (not a blowout, but a defensive disaster)

2003 - CSU 58 BYU 13, Boise State 50 BYU 12

2001 - Hawaii 72 BYU 45

More mature markers from the '90s include:

1993 - UCLA 68 BYU 14

1990 - Texas A&M 65 BYU 14

BYU is a very good football program. They just aren't an elite program.

Like BYU, elite teams all lose football games. Last week USC lost to Washington. BYU defeated Oklahoma in Dallas a few weeks back.

Elite teams lose, but they don't get blown out of the water when those losses take place.

BYU is a good team and a good program, but their Boot Hill of Blowouts, is too full to be considered one of college football's elite programs.

Get Over It

While blowouts are bummers, they usually are quickly forgotten, unless guys like us continue to dig them up.

Rehashing blowouts proves our point. They are extremely painful for a week, but the disappointment dissipates as soon as the next win comes around.

That will also happen with the Florida State loss. In two weeks, it will be old news. BYU is still a good team and well thought of nationally.

The fact that BYU is still in the national rankings in both polls says the Cougars are considered a very good team. They are No. 19 in the AP poll and No. 20 in the Coaches poll.

They are just not an elite program.

Will BYU ever reach that elite status? Bronco Mendenhall thinks so.

In one of the ironies of the past week, Mendenhall was in Salt Lake City a few days before the FSU-BYU matchup telling the Cougar Club that a national championship was the goal and that in his opinion, it could be achieved with the current model and players recruited within that model that is currently in place in the Cougar football program.

The message was warmly received.

Model

The model is certainly fine, but a look at BYU's Boot Hill of Bombs would indicate that the players certainly need an upgrade on the defensive side of the ball.

BYU is an equal opportunity employer when it comes to blowouts. Dick Felt, Ken Schmidt, Bronco Mendenhall and now Jaime Hill have all been bludgeoned by offensive blowouts while serving as defensive coordinators.

It isn't about the defensive scheme or coaches. It is about players.

Good football teams and programs require a two-car garage. BYU has almost always had a top-of-the-line offensive automobile parked in their garage. Defensively, they continue to drive a car that at its best is serviceable, and at its worst, mostly leaks a lot of oil in games against good and elite teams.

That is why we still maintain that BYU's best football team was not the 1984 National Championship squad, but the 14-1 1996 Cotton Bowl team.

They were very, very good on both sides of the ball.

BYU fans like to talk and gloat about the Cougar offense.

When it comes to recruiting talk, most of it centers on offensive players, especially quarterback, receivers and running backs.

Everybody can name the two latest and greatest offensive commits for this coming BYU recruiting class. If you need a hint, how about Jake Heaps and Ross Apo?

Now name the defensive commits that you think will make an impact.

Offense will get you a ticket to the ball and national rankings, but by itself, it won't get you into a BCS game.

SPEAKING OF BCS

The earliest chance BYU will have for a BCS appearance will now be in 2011.

Even if the Cougars don't lose again this season, an 11-1 record won't get them an invite because of the 54-24 blowout to Florida State that will be on the resume.

If the Cougars were a member of a BCS conference, there is a slight possibility that the blowout would be forgotten, but as a non-BCS outsider, it will be something that can't be overcome.

If you want a glimmer of hope for this year, in 2001, Nebraska was 11-0 before being blown out by Colorado in the final regular season Big 12 North division game for both teams. The final was CU 62

Nebraska 36. CU went on to defeat Texas in the Big 12 championship game, but according to the BCS formula in effect that year, Nebraska was still selected to play in the national title game against Miami in the Rose Bowl. The Canes defeated the Huskers 37-14.

Don't expect any BCS bowls next year either. BYU will be breaking in a new quarterback and that never bodes well for the Cougars or BCS hopes.

HOLY TOLEDO, HE WAS RIGHT!

After BYU whipped Tulane, Bob Toledo, head coach of the Green Wave, said that BYU was very good, but that his team made the Cougars look better than they actually were.

It sounded like sour grapes then, but actually sounds about right now.

Bobby Bowden, the coach of Florida State, had no comment on BYU after his Seminoles put a 54-28 beating on the Cougars, but we do.

We will use the Toledo take. BYU is not as bad as Florida State made them look.

That doesn't sound very credible after watching FSU gash and gore the BYU front seven with 313 yards of rushing.

It happens sometimes to even good teams. Dallas rushed for over 250 yards this past week against a good New York Giants defense.

BYU couldn't get off the field against FSU's ground game.

The Seminoles ran 77 offensive plays, of which 49 were runs. They completed 22-of-28 passes for another 199 yards.

What killed the Cougars is what has always been their Achilles heel defensively.

Mobile Quarterbacks

They can't defend mobile quarterbacks.

We saw it last year with Jake Locker at Washington. We saw it this week with Christian Ponder of FSU.

Ponder isn't as elusive or talented as Locker with his feet, but he was good enough to keep drives alive by taking off out of the pocket and converting critical third downs.

The good news is that BYU won't see another mobile qb this year. Oops, we forgot Diondre Borel of Utah State, Andy Dalton of TCU and Terrance Cain of Utah.

Watching Ponder play reaffirms our opinion that despite the hype about Jake Heaps and the return from missions by James Lark and Jason Munns, Riley Nelson will be the starting quarterback for the Cougars next season.

He also is no Jake Locker and he has no special speed, but he is elusive and can make plays with his feet when a play breaks down or a pass attempt is not there.

We saw how that worked out for Ponder and FSU.

Nelson is also not in the same league with his legs as Steve Young, but again, a mobile qb who can make just enough plays with his feet presents major problems for opposing defenses. Just ask Jaime Hill about last week.

New Dimension

Nelson will give that dimension to the offense. None of the other candidates have shown us yet that they have that ability. They can all throw it extremely well, but Nelson has that extra dimension to his game.

Our early assessment is that Nelson could be another Brandon Doman, who is the current BYU qb coach. Doman was not a spectacular passer, but he was a great playmaker.

Despite the defensive deficiencies, BYU had a chance to still win this game if they had been able to hold serve offensively.

Moving the ball wasn't a problem for the Cougars, hanging on to it was.

BYU had five turnovers. Max Hall threw three interceptions and O'Neill Chambers fumbled once along with Jan Jorgensen, who coughed it up on a kickoff return.

This game also showed why Harvey Unga is still the premier running back in the BYU stable.

Bryan Kariya and J.J. DiLuigi have both had some nice performances in the first two games, but they are not at the same level of Unga.

All he did was rush for 97 yards on 10 carries, before tweaking his lingering hamstring injury again.

CATCHING UP ON COLORADO STATE AND OTHER FUTURE OPPONENTS

Now seems like a good time to take a look at the remaining teams on BYU's football schedule.

Colorado State will be making an appearance in Provo this weekend. It will mark the start of Mountain West Conference play for both teams.

The Rams are 3-0 on the year with wins against Colorado, Weber State and most recently, Nevada. Weber and Nevada were both played in Fort Collins.

They should have lost the Weber game and it took a big stroke of luck and a quarterback/center bobble to give the Rams the win.

We look for a big bounce back here from BYU and especially the Cougar defense. We call it BYU 42 CSU 17.

Utah State...The Aggies are 0-2 with their latest loss a 38-30 setback to Texas A&M. They have yet to play a home game. The Aggies can move the ball. They had over 500 yards of offense against A&M.

UNLV...The Rebels are 2-1. The loss was to Oregon State. The wins are against Sacramento State and Hawaii. All three games have been in Las Vegas. The road will tell us how good UNLV is.

SDSU...Despite the addition of two tough-guy coaches in new head coach Brady Hoke and defensive coordinator Rocky Long, the Aztecs still look like the Aztecs. They are 1-2 with losses at UCLA and Idaho. The win was at home against Southern Utah.

TCU...The Frogs look to be the cream of the crop in the MWC. We will know a lot more after they face Clemson in South Carolina this weekend. They are 2-0 with wins on the road at Virginia and at home last week against Texas State. They still run the football and play defense.

Wyoming...The Pokes appear to be a Big Hat with No Cattle team. That will likely improve as new coach Dave Christensen brings more cattle into the program. Wyoming is 1-2 with a win over Weber State and losses to Texas and Colorado.

New Mexico...The Lobos are 0-3 and anyway you cut it a bad team. The losses have been at the hands of Texas A&M, Tulsa and Air Force. New Mexico is averaging only 9 points of offense per game and giving up 40 per game.

Air Force...As usual, the Falcons will be competitive and play hard. They will beat at least one of the MWC big three this season. Currently they are 2-1 with the lone loss on the road at Minnesota. The wins have come against patsies Nicholls State and New Mexico. Another patsy, SDSU is on tap this weekend.

Utah...The winning streak came to an end last week at Oregon. The Utes are 2-1. They will still give BYU and the rest of the league all they want. They have a green, but extremely talented qb. Watch out next season for Terrance Cain.

QUARTERBACK QUEUE

Max Hall...Completed 20-of-31 passes for 306 yards and two touchdowns. Those are almost exactly the same numbers he produced a week ago in a win over Tulane. This time those numbers resulted in a 54-28 loss to Florida State. The Difference? Three interceptions and a BYU front seven that was gashed and gored by the Seminole running game.

Riley Nelson...The Utah State transfer again saw mop-up action, but this time that action came as a result of the other end of the stick. Against Tulane, it was a blowout in favor of BYU. Against FSU, it was a blowout with BYU on the losing end. Nelson threw three passes against the Seminoles and completed all three for 59 yards and a touchdown.

James Lark and Jason Munns...Both are still serving missions. Lark is due back in January and Munns will return in May.

Jake Heaps...Skyline HS suffered its first defeat of the season, a 28-25 defeat at the hands of Oaks Christian HS of California. Heaps reportedly played sick and completed just 13-of-31 passes for 256 yards and a touchdown. He also threw three interceptions. Oaks Christian has two BYU verbal commits on their team in Zac Stout a linebacker and Alani Fua, a defensive end and tight end for his prep school. He had two touchdown receptions in the game.

Tanner Mangum...It wasn't a good day for Mangum, the LDS sophomore from Timberline HS in Boise. His team was swamped 52-7 by Capital HS last Friday.

Alex Kuresa...In a low-scoring affair, Kuresa completed 7-of-10 passes for 62 yards in a 16-6 Mountain Crest win over Bonneville.

BASKETBALL BRIEFS

Kyle Collinsworth is still the top recruiting priority for Dave Rose and his BYU basketball program. They will have some stiff competition for the 6-7 guard from Provo HS.

Rose and BYU have already had an in-home visit with Collinsworth and will have him on campus this weekend for his official recruiting visit.

USC is still pursuing Collinsworth heavily. They like him because they reportedly think he is one of only a handful of players in the nation coming out of high school this year that can play either the 1, 2, or 3 spots.

Collinsworth made his official campus visit to USC on the weekend of Sept. 4-5. His escorts were Jordan Cameron, the former BYU basketball player who is now playing both football and basketball for the Trojans. James Dunleavy also helped host Collinsworth. Dunleavy is the son of LA Clippers coach Mike Dunleavy.

Collinsworth has also unofficially visited Arizona State, Kansas, UNLV, Utah and Stanford, but has eliminated all of those schools and reportedly doesn't feel a need to take an official visit to any of those schools.

Virginia is still in the mix and still working to set up an in-home visit and an official visit. Collinsworth

was the first recruit offered by new Virginia coach Tony Bennett when he took the job at UVA.
Bennett also was recruiting Collinsworth hard when he was at Washington State.

TELEVISION TIMETABLE

BYU vs. Colorado State

Saturday, Sept 26 at Provo

Kickoff: 4:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: The Mtn

BYU vs. Utah State

Friday, Oct 2 at Provo

Kickoff: 7:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: The Mtn

BYU vs. UNLV

Saturday, Oct 10 at Las Vegas

Kickoff: 8:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: The Mtn

BYU vs. San Diego State

Saturday, Oct 17 at San Diego

Kickoff: 4:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: The Mtn

BYU vs. TCU

Saturday, Oct 24 at Provo

Kickoff: 5:30 pm Mountain Time

TV: Versus