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Cougars 6 Aggies 3

BYU'S BASEBALL LINE SCORE SAYS IT ALL ABOUT WIN

Major League Baseball takes center stage in October with wild card, playoff and World Series games.

BYU football got a jumpstart on October by taking a page from the nation's pastime last Friday while beating Utah State 6-3 in Provo. The Cougars are now 4-2 on the year while USU also falls to 4-2.

Here's a look at the BYU line score in this particular game.

For the Cougars it was 6 runs on 1 too many hits on Taysom Hill, who suffered a probable season ending knee injury on the Cougars final running play of the game.

BYU also committed 6 egregious errors; 3 in the kicking game and at least 3 in coaching miscues, including the costly decision to run Hill, when taking a knee to end the game

seemed to be the prudent move. (You can read more on my take on the timing of injuries below.)

While the Cougar offense was stinky at its worst and sketchy at its best against the Aggies, fortunately for BYU baseball/football fans, Bronco Mendenhall had the ace of the staff, the Cougar defense, on the mound to secure and preserve this October win.

Good Pitching beats Good Hitting

In baseball, good pitching will beat good hitting almost every time. In BYU football this season, it's the spectacular ERA (Exciting, Reliable and Awesomeness) of the Cougar defense that is winning games this year.

More importantly, there is no kicking game in the BYU bullpen to rely on when the game is on the line and no help and too many gaffes and gaps offensively to give the defense an opportunity to take an occasional game off.

This season Bronco has to rely on his ace in every outing. There simply isn't any reliable offensive help on that side of the ball this season.

Shutouts are just not easy to come by in baseball unless you have a pitching prodigy on the mound. In football, shutouts from the end zone are even rarer, unless you have a spectacular defense.

The BYU defense can speak for itself and they have not only spoke, but shouted that they are spectacular. It is now 13 straight quarters that Bronco and his boys have not allowed a touchdown to be scored on them.

Based on the defensive play of the Cougars this year, Bronco Mendenhall is to the BYU defense as Buck Showalter is to the Baltimore Orioles.

Both coaches have taken basically no name rosters of players and made them big-time winners in baseball and defense at BYU.

Showalter, in my opinion, should be manager of the year in the American League. Bronco Mendenhall should be defensive coordinator of the year college football.

Despite losing two starting linemen to season ending injuries in Ian Dulan and Eathyn Manumaleuna, the Cougars just keep shutting down opposing offenses.

Against the Aggies, the BYU defense allowed a very good USU offense to rush for just 41 yards. They contained a very elusive and good scrambling quarterback in Chucky Keeton to just 23 yards on 10 carries.

Dynasty and Dysfunction

While Bronco has proven that he can be a defensive dynasty maker, he has a long way to go as a head coach on the offensive and kicking game sides of the BYU ball.

While dynasty is appropriate in describing what Mendenhall has done on defense this year, dysfunctional is more descriptive of what he has allowed to happen offensively and in the current kicking situation this season.

That dysfunction in offense and kicking is, in my opinion, a lack of evaluation skills. On offense he has promoted a coach who has high character, charisma, charm and great recruiting skills and elevated him to offensive coordinator without any proven track record of being able to coordinate an offense.

Brandon Doman is BYU head coaching material. He has what the institution and school is looking for in a guy to represent both to the world. He just doesn't appear to have any real offensive coordinator skills. Unless he shows dramatic improvement in that area, the career path to BYU head football coach that seemed so sure, may derail the ride to the top to replace Mendenhall when he says he has had enough.

To return to the baseball analogies, if Bronco on defense is the Buck Showalter of this season, Brandon Doman may well be the Bobby Valentine of the BYU offense.

Valentine's Day and Doman

Valentine was sacked by the Boston Red Sox last week after a disastrous season beset by injuries, chaos in the clubhouse and managerial mayhem on the bench.

Doman has had injuries to Michael Alisa and Riley Nelson. He has also had chaos and confusion as to what he wants the BYU offense to be. You can also throw in the mayhem of an unstable offensive line.

Since taking over as offensive coordinator, Doman has had three starting quarterback. All three haven't worked out. Jake Heaps is now gone to Kansas. Riley Nelson and Taysom Hill have been and now are injured because they are forced to take a beating to run the current BYU offense.

At this point in his offensive coordinator career, it seems to me that BYU's offense has been designed to accommodate the skills Doman had as a player and not to accommodate the skills of the current crop of BYU quarterbacks. Maybe Doman still fantasizes about the offense he ran with Gary Crowton and wants to be ready to go if called upon again to run it.

Sense and Savvy

You can have great leadership and life skills, plus grit, determination and resolve, all of which Doman possesses, but he has not yet proven that he has the sense and savvy to be a successful offensive coordinator at BYU.

Too bad his career path didn't get some seasoning at Air Force, Navy or Georgia Tech where option football is a way of life.

The option read is not how BYU made a name and living on offense for the last 4 decades.

BYU has a stable of quarterbacks that can throw the ball down field. This season they also have a premier tailback in Jamaal Williams that guys like Doug Scovil, Mike Holmgren, Ted Tollner, Norm Chow and Robert Anae would have killed for.

What BYU doesn't have is an offense this year. Maybe it will get better. Hopefully it will get better.

Assuming Bronco can see through the grit and grime currently clouding his head coaching window and obscuring his vision of no kicking game and a poor offense, the earliest he can correct it is after the season.

Mid-Season Management Moves

Fans like to bring up that Mendenhall fired Jaime Hill as defensive coordinator in the middle of a season due to the ineffectiveness of the defense.

He did it because he had an immediate viable replacement: Himself.

There is nobody on the current offensive staff with which Mendenhall can make the same move.

He is sold on Doman, like Riley Nelson, because both are high character, charismatic and full of grit and determination. That will work with an option offense in Colorado Springs and Annapolis, but it won't work in Provo.

The irony as I see it is that other than the glorified scrimmage with Hawaii, BYU has scored just two touchdowns with Taysom Hill since he took over from Riley Nelson.

Both of those touchdowns didn't come through option football and quarterback draws. They came by accident when Doman had no other option (no pun intended) than to turn Hill loose to throw the ball down the field.

The score against Boise State came with the clock winding down late in the game and with no other option than throwing the ball. It worked.

Last week against the Aggies, with just a half a minute remaining in the first half, Doman unleashed the offense to go aerial and over the top. It resulted in a touchdown.

That's how BYU rolls and always rolled offensively. Now with a tailback that is legit, they should be rolling over teams. Instead, we just look roiled and confused.

New BYU Football Letterhead

Roiled, confused and wide right is also how the kicking situation looks. Like the offense, it can't resolve itself this season.

It will take a form letter from Bronco Mendenhall sent to every LDS Mission President, Bishop and Branch President in Mexico, Central and South America.

It should read something like this:

Dear Brethren,

As the BYU football program, we want to do our part to support the LDS Perpetual Education Fund. We will gladly pay for the college education of any young man who has a proven skill of consistently kicking a ball of any shape or form at least 35 yards in the air between two posts that are 19 feet 1 inch apart.

As you can see by our new letterhead, we are desperate. **BYU Fútbol** is not a typo.

The world is our campus and somewhere in this world there has to be an LDS kicker that can put the ball through the goal posts

English is not required if the candidate is good enough to put English on the ball of his choice while kicking.

We will tutor the young man in English. We just don't have any clue when it comes to teaching or tutoring kickers.

I don't know how to say grit in Spanish, but we are way beyond that point now.

Your immediate attention to this matter is appreciated.

Regards,

Bronco Mendenhall
Head Fútbol Coach
Brigham Young University

Conference and Charity

It might be because I am aging and deteriorating right on schedule. Or it might be my softer side which is always exacerbated on LDS Conference weekend.

Consequently, I am not as upset at the knee injury suffered by Taysom Hill as most BYU football fans seem to be.

While it is apparent that BYU coaches have made some major mistakes on the sideline and on the practice fields this season, I hope they can grow from them.

I also do not specifically blame them for the late game injury to Taysom Hill.

As former Colorado Buffs head coach Dan Hawkins once said in a media meltdown, "It's Division I football."

Season ending injuries happen randomly. They occur early and late in games and in between. They are part of the process. Hill's could have just as easily happened on his second carry of the first quarter.

Ian Dulan's season ending injury happened in fall camp. Eathyn Manumaleuna's happened in the Boise State game. Michael Alisa suffered a broken arm on the first series of the first quarter against Hawaii. Should BYU have waited until late in the game to let him carry the ball in hopes of preventing that injury?

Would BYU fans feel better if Jamaal Williams had carried the ball instead of Hill? Would an injury to the best tailback BYU has had in a decade plus been more palatable?

Again, here is the Hawkins' holler; "It's Division I football." Injuries happen in the first quarter, fourth quarter and on the last play of the game.

If you don't want players to get hurt, then drop football and stick with intramural flag football. And even then, there is no guarantee against injuries. It's Division I football and injuries are part of the game.

NFL MONEY METER RUNNING

If this BYU football season was a taxi ride, then the meter is running for two BYU defensive players.

While Ziggy Ansah and Kyle Van Noy are both very actively involved on the Cougar defensive front line, an NFL Taxi is waiting with its meter running to take these two BYU athletes to big paychecks.

Each down Van Noy and Ansah play during the remainder of the season and each play they make, increases where they will be drafted and how much NFL cash they will come away with in NFL signing bonuses.

This especially applies to Ansah, who is blooming late on the scout radar for NFL teams. Physically, he is probably one of the most gifted athletes ever to play football at BYU.

But Ziggy had zero football experience when arriving in Provo from Ghana to run track for the Cougars. Some NFL team will be willing to fork over some big bucks to bet on Ansah's considerable athletic ability and new found love for the game of football.

This Headline and New LDS Missionary Guidelines are Both Set at 18 pts and 18 Years

Last week Jabari Parker announced that he had narrowed his college choice list to five schools. BYU was one of the final five schools the talented LDS basketball prospect from Chicago is still considering.

Making the top five gave BYU a 20 percent chance of landing the basketball services of Parker. The other four schools still in the hunt are Duke, Michigan State, Stanford and Florida. The early signing period in basketball begins November 7 and runs through November 14.

If a prospect doesn't sign then, he will have to wait until the spring signing period in April.

Yesterday, in my opinion, BYU's 20 percent chance jumped to at least 50 percent with the announcement by the LDS Church that male missionaries my now begin serving at 18.

The choice for Parker has always been reported as not only a choice of which school to attend, but when to go to the NBA and if and when to serve an LDS mission.

The mission choice just was made easier, in my opinion. Now Parker, who is NBA bound regardless of where he signs and even if he serves an LDS mission, now can leave right after high school, serve two years, come back and play one season and then head to the NBA.

That would make him 21 years old. It would also give him some valuable maturity and life lessons and a chance to find a wife.

In my mind, finding a wife before heading to the NBA is essential for a guy like Parker to survive the lecherous lifestyle of that league. Again, that is strictly my opinion, but one that I think is valid.

All five schools on Parker's latest list will say all the right things about a mission, but again, in my opinion, only BYU will mean it when they say they have no problem with him serving before playing collegiately.

It certainly will be interesting to see how and when it all plays out with Parker.

Meanwhile, early exit age for missions should not have serious repercussions for Dave Rose immediately.

Already, of the five players he has committed to sign next month, Jakob Hartsock, Braiden Shaw and Nick Emery all had originally planned to serve before enrolling in school.

They just get to do it now sooner than they had expected in most cases.

It will be interesting to see what Eric Mika decides. Our bet is that he now goes right of high school.

Luke Worthington, the fifth committed player for Rose, has already indicated that an LDS mission is not in his plans and that he will play four straight years for the Cougars.

Other than Parker, BYU's recruiting plans for this year are done.

It isn't as simple for Bronco Mendenhall and football.

He and his staff already have several commits that planned on serving missions before enrolling. Now they have to call all the other high school prospects that are committed to see what their plans are.

Mendenhall and BYU will surely encourage those commits to leave early if that is their desire, but if they do go, it means that there will be additional scholarships open up for this coming February.

That may sound good but BYU was basically done recruiting. Now they will have to start again and will be late in getting into other kids.

This could get tricky to handle.

Again, we will wait and see how it all shakes out.

Oregon State Will Be a New Defensive Challenge for BYU

BYU's defense has been spectacular this season. They have stifled any and all comers and competition.

Now we will see how they fare against No. 10 ranked Oregon State and an offense that features a very good passing game and a future NFL quarterback.

Sean Mannion is a prototypical NFL prospect. He is a 6-5, 212 pound sophomore who can throw it to a talented group of receivers.

He stuttered a little last week in OSU's 19-6 win over Washington State in Corvallis when he threw 3 interceptions and was sacked three times. He completed 25 of 42 passes for 270 yards and a touchdown.

If BYU can get to him with pressure, the BYU defense could win another game for Bronco Mendenhall. BYU is currently established as a 2 ½ point favorite by Las Vegas odds makers.

We should expect Riley Nelson to return to action against the Beavers...and just in time, now that Taysom Hill appears done for the year.

If Nelson can just manage the game and not give away cheap turnovers and touchdowns, the BYU defense should be stout enough again to give the Cougars their fifth win of the season.

We call it BYU 24 OSU 21 (Please don't ask where we came up with the field goal for BYU in this prediction. It is kind of like the latest national unemployment numbers. If those numbers can just magically go down then we can expect the BYU kicking game to somehow magically get good.)

Last Week's review and results...Here is a look at a review and results from BYU's 2012 football opponents. We are now going to start including San Diego State because if they get to 6 wins, they will face BYU in the Poinsettia Bowl.

Washington State lost 19-6 to Oregon State in Corvallis last week. They get Cal in Pullman this week. WSU is currently 2-4 on they year...**Weber State** is still winless after another loss (45-23) to Cal Poly last week in Ogden. The 0-6 Wildcats are at Sacramento State this week...**Utah** is 2-3 after a 38-28 thumping at the hands of USC in Salt Lake. UCLA should be an easier task. The Utes will get the Bruins in the Rose Bowl this week...**Boise State** is now 4-1 on the year after beating Southern Miss in Hattiesburg last week 40-14. Next up for the Broncos at home is Fresno State...**Hawaii** is now 1-4 after another serious thumping. This time it was a 52-14 pounding by San Diego State in San Diego. New Mexico is on tap next for the Warriors in Honolulu...Utah State is now 4-2 with the loss to BYU. The Aggies stay on the road with a matchup with San Jose State in California this coming Saturday...**Oregon State** is still undefeated at 4-0 after a 19-6 win over Washington State in Oregon. BYU will be the next test for the Beavers quest for perfection. The game is on the road in Provo...**Notre Dame** is 5-0 after embarrassing Miami 41-3 at Soldier Field in Chicago. Stanford will now be the next opponent for the Irish at South Bend this week...**Georgia Tech** is now 2-4 and 1-3 in league play after falling to Clemson 47-31 on the road last week. This week should be a breather for the Yellow Jackets who get Boston College in Atlanta. The BC Eagles have only one win all season and lost to Army last week...**Idaho** notched their first win of the season last week, a 26-18 win over New Mexico State in Moscow. At 1-5, the Vandals

now head to the Lone Star State to take on Texas State this week...**San Jose State** is 4-1 on the year and coming off a bye last week. They start WAC play this week hosting Utah State...**New Mexico State** is just 1-5 after falling 26-18 to Idaho. This week they get a bye before heading to Logan to face the Aggies in two weeks...**San Diego State** is now 3-3 after drilling hapless Hawaii in San Diego 52-14. Now they get semi-hapless Colorado State (1-5) in San Diego. That should give the Aztecs 4 win with two more needed to face BYU in the Poinsettia Bowl in December.

Television Timetable

BYU vs. Oregon State

Saturday, Oct 13 at Provo

Kickoff: 1:30 pm Mountain Time

TV: ABC (Split Regional)

BYU vs. Notre Dame

Saturday, Oct 20 at South Bend

Kickoff: 1:30 Mountain Time

TV: NBC

BYU vs. Georgia Tech

Saturday, Oct 27 at Atlanta

Kickoff: TBA

TV: TBA

BYU vs. Idaho

Saturday, Nov 10 at Provo

Kickoff: TBA

TV: Most likely BYUtv