

HB Arnett's
COUGAR SPORTSLINE

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Indecent Exposure

IT'S BETTER TO BE EXPOSED NOW THAN IN A BCS BOWL GAME

The popular BYU football slogan of Tradition, Spirit, Honor was amended in Amon Carter Stadium last night by TCU's 32-7 beating of the Cougars.

To be more accurate, that slogan now reads, Tradition, Spirit, Honor, but no Speed.

As Don King, the boxing impresario, said a few months ago while describing Jose Canseco while promoting the Canseco-Vai Sihakema exhibition bout, "You can't cook with cold grease."

Canseco and the Cougars are in the same frying pan smothered in congealed Crisco.

Canseco couldn't get out of the first round against Sihakema and BYU couldn't get out of the first quarter against TCU.

The match was over for Canseco before it even started and the game for the Cougars was over when BYU stepped off the bus.

You can try and rationalize the TCU thumping of BYU by saying the Cougars were unprepared, out coached, under motivated and off their game, but the disparity in team speed was alarming, obvious and disastrous.

As disappointing as the defeat was for BYU, every loss has a few rays of sunshine.

Sun Shine

There certainly isn't enough sun to warrant any tanning lotion, but TCU did save the Cougars from being exposed and embarrassed on a bigger and brighter BCS stage.

Had BYU somehow been able to run the table and get into one of the BCS games, they would have run into a team from the SEC or Big 12 with similar, if not better, speed with which they were indecently exposed by TCU.

Can you say Hawaii vs. Georgia?

This defeat for BYU was devastating on and off the field for the Cougars.

On the field it was obvious. BYU is not a legitimate top-ten team and not even a top-two team in the Mountain West Conference.

Off the field, it strengthens the current BCS system of exclusion and gives credence to the theory that the have not's can't compete with the upper echelon of the have's of BCS conferences.

The loss also validates those BCS computers. They almost all had BYU with a dismal strength of schedule rating, and the loss to the first good team BYU faced, made those computers look extremely accurate.

Bubble Burst

While the BCS bubble was burst for BYU, it isn't as bleak as we make it sound.

The loss to TCU is what happens in football. It is inevitable.

It happens in the NFL where teams like the New York Giants get whipped by Cleveland.

It happens to the big boys of the BCS where teams like Georgia and Florida lose to Alabama and Mississippi.

If you want some real solace, buddy up to Ohio State. BYU now knows how the Buckeyes feel when, after running the table in the Big Ten, they find themselves overrated and overmatched against the speed of the SEC in a BCS beating.

Give BYU some credit. What they did the last two years in league play was outstanding. You can't discount the 18-0 run in MWC competition.

The Cougars were their worst enemy during that streak. The more they won and the bigger the streak became, the more league teams circled their calendars and wagons in an effort to bust that streak. The Horned Frogs had been working on this contest since last January.

Teams like New Mexico and TCU both showed new wrinkles in their offenses to try and catch the Cougars off guard. BYU got the best effort of both teams.

Final Factor

Despite that, it was obvious that speed from TCU and lack of speed from BYU was the culminating factor in the outcome of this game.

That speed was obvious on both sides of the ball.

Max Hall was under constant pressure from the TCU pass rush. He was sacked six times and fumbled the ball away on two of those sacks.

The TCU defensive speed was especially evident against the right side of the BYU offensive line. David Oswald was beaten all night by the speed rush of Jerry Hughes. He had four of the six sacks.

Hall completed just 22 of 42 passes with the two picks. He totaled 274 yards in the air and provided BYU with its only score of the game on a two-yard scamper up the middle in the third quarter when the game was already out of reach.

Despite the speed of TCU, the only guy that produced at his normal clip for the Cougars was Austin Collie. The junior receiver had six catches for 116 yards.

BYU could only muster 23 yards rushing against the Frogs. Harvey Unga has 53 yards on the ground, but with the sacks of Hall, that brought the yards rushing net to almost nothing.

Back Eight

Defensively, the BYU line actually played well. It was the back eight that was exposed for its lack of speed and athleticism against TCU.

Bronco Mendenhall actually may not have meant to be, but he was actually very prophetic before the TCU game when he was asked how he would describe the BYU defense if he was an opposing offensive coordinator.

Mendenhall said that BYU's defense was average, but able to manage point production from opponents well.

Against the Frogs, average was being generous against the speed and open field abilities of TCU's playmakers.

The combination of TCU's offensive speed in the open field and BYU's lack of speed in its back eight was not a pretty sight to watch.

The Cougars gave up 410 yards of offense to TCU, but also gave up 11/16 third down conversions by the Frogs. BYU could never consistently get off the field.

You can't be too critical of a coaching staff that is now 28-5 over the last two and a half years, but occasionally there are still a few puzzlers.

Biggest

The biggest for us is still why BYU tries to run the ball wide on defenses with speed.

The strength of the BYU ground game is size and strength. Running the ball between the tackles and right at speed would seem to be a better option than trying to outflank that speed.

Oops. There is that nasty word speed again.

TCU had it and BYU didn't. Speed should show itself again soon as BYU speedily drops down at least 10 spots in the national rankings and TCU speedily leaps over the Cougars in the same polls.

Even more disheartening will be the first BCS standings that are released on Sunday. You can look for both Utah and TCU to be firmly in front of the Cougars.

BYU BAILOUT JUST AROUND THE CORNER

BYU went bust with its sub-prime performance in Fort Worth last Thursday, but a bailout is just around the corner.

The Cougars need an instant infusion of confidence and should get it against UNLV Saturday, Oct. 25 in LaVell Edwards Stadium

Depending on how the Rebels fare against Air Force in their latest MWC outing in Las Vegas, UNLV should come to Provo with a 0-3 MWC record and a 3-4 mark overall.

They won't come, however, without some weapons.

They have a quarter back in Omar Clayton that can run and get outside. BYU has had its share of problems with mobile quarterbacks that can run.

Frank Summer will test the BYU front seven by pounding the ball up the middle. Think of Rodney Ferguson of New Mexico, only better.

We look for a much better defensive performance from BYU next week.

What we don't know is if we can expect a better offensive performance.

Based on the lack-luster trend of the last three games against Utah State, New Mexico and TCU, there could be reason for worry.

We certainly expect a motivated BYU offense against UNLV.

When you get spanked as hard as the Cougars were against a TCU team that didn't spare the rod, BYU will either go to its room and whimper or get after it against the Rebels.

We expect the latter.

BYU is a scripted offense. If a play isn't on Robert Anae's script for the game, it doesn't get called.

That isn't bad, but it would be nice to see a few more plays added to the script that opposing teams haven't all seen for the last two years.

BYU's BCS dreams have gone up in smoke, but this is still a must win contest for the Cougars if they want to end the year with double digit wins.

After this game, BYU only has one more home game remaining with San Diego State.

They have three more road games left.

Everybody knows about the Utah showdown on Nov. 22 and are well aware of the Air Force match up in Colorado Springs.

Most of us had been taking the Colorado State contest in Fort Collins for granted and for a gimme

win.

The Rams are playing much better and took TCU to the wire a week ago before falling 13-7.

BYU is already bowl eligible with 6 wins on the books, but if they hope to make another trip to Las Vegas, they will have to take care of the team from that same city.

That is how we see it happening. We call it BYU 38 UNLV 17.

BYU NOW A BEFORE CHRISTMAS TEAM

Okay, you can go ahead and cancel those reservations for Miami, New Orleans or Tempe.

BYU isn't going to a BCS bowl.

Now it's time for reality.

BYU will be a before Christmas bowl team again.

Here are the Cougars' options for post season play.

The Mountain West Conference has bowl agreements with four games. They include, the Las Vegas Bowl, New Mexico Bowl, Poinsettia Bowl and Armed Forces Bowl.

The Las Vegas Bowl gets first choice of qualified MWC teams. The Poinsettia Bowl gets the second pick.

We don't think BYU will be back in Las Vegas for their third consecutive appearance. It will be either Utah or TCU. Yes, we don't expect either the Utes or Frogs to make a BCS appearance this year.

Our best bet for the Cougars would put them in San Diego for the Poinsettia Bowl.

Here is the current MWC Bowl Schedule:

Las Vegas Bowl, Dec. 20 (Las Vegas - First Choice of MWC team vs. 5th place Pac 10 team)

New Mexico Bowl, Dec. 20 (Albuquerque - MWC team vs. WAC team)

Poinsettia Bowl, Dec. 23 (San Diego - Second choice from MWC vs. 7th place Pac 10 team, if qualified)

Armed Forces Bowl, Dec. 31 (Fort Worth - MWC team vs. C-USA team)

The Mountain West Conference announced last week that they have secured another bowl tie-in with the Humanitarian Bowl.

That contract will begin in 2009 and pit the MWC vs. a WAC team.

FLUFF AND STUFF

Missionary Attack...Chris Collinsworth, the 6-9 BYU basketball forward who is currently serving an LDS mission in the Australia Sydney North Mission, along with his companion, David Ferguson, of Great Falls, Mont., were jumped and assaulted by three men as they were walking back to their apartment, according to a statement released by the Church.

Both missionaries were hospitalized. Collinsworth was released after a few hours, but the other missionary remains hospitalized.

Collinsworth will resume his missionary service.

In an official release from BYU basketball coach Dave Rose, he said, "I have had the opportunity to speak with Chris' family about what happened and share my feelings and concerns for the well-being of both Chris and one of his fellow missionaries. It's a very unfortunate situation and my thoughts and prayers are with both families that are dealing with this right now."

He continued, "I know there is some sense of relief that given the nature of the attack no one sus-

tained any life-threatening injuries...Chris is a great young man who is proud to be serving his mission. I'm sure he will rise above this and respond in a positive way as he does with everything else in his life."

BYU 2008-2009 Basketball Schedule

Nov 14, Fri, Long Beach State
Nov 18, Tue, at Pepperdine
Nov 20, Thu, North Florida
Nov 21, Fri, Rice
Nov 22, Sat, Cal Poly
Nov 29, Sat, at Idaho State
Dec 3, Wed, Weber State
Dec 6, Sat, Utah State at SLC
Dec 10, Wed, Boise State - Mtn
Dec 13, Sat, Portland - Mtn
Dec 20, Sat, at Arizona State (Glendale) - FSN
Dec 23, Tue, Western Oregon
Dec 30, Tue, at Tulsa
Jan 3, Sat, Wake Forest - Mtn
Jan 10, Sat, at CSU - Mtn
Jan 13, Tue, TCU - Mtn
Jan 17, Sat, at Albuquerque -Versus
Jan 21, Wed, UNLV - CBS C
Jan 24, Sat, SDSU - Mtn
Jan 27, Tue, at Utah - Mtn
Jan 31, Sat, Wyoming - Mtn
Feb 3, Tue, at Air Force - Mtn
Feb 11, Wed, CSU - Mtn
Feb 14, Sat, at TCU - Mtn
Feb 17, Tue, New Mexico - Mtn
Feb 21, Sat, at UNLV - CBS C
Feb 24, Tue, at SDSU - Mtn
Feb 28, Sat, Utah - CBS C
Mar 4, Wed, at Wyoming - Mtn
Mar 7, Sat, Air Force - Mtn

TELEVISION TIMETABLE

BYU vs. UNLV

Saturday, Oct 25 at Provo
Kickoff: Noon Mountain Time
TV: Mtn

BYU vs. Colorado State

Saturday, Nov 1 at Fort Collins
Kickoff: 4:00 pm Mountain Time
TV: Mtn

BYU vs. San Diego State

Saturday, Nov 8 at Provo
Kickoff: Noon Mountain Time
TV: Mtn