

HB Arnett's
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BYU 41 UNI 17

WOULD THREE MORE TOUCHDOWNS MAKE IT BETTER?

We are puzzled.

BYU blitzes Northern Iowa 41-17 and you would think the Cougars were just drubbed by Utah and lost out on a league championship.

We read the papers and it says BYU struggles and needs to improve big time if they hope beat anybody else.

We go to a couple of chat rooms and people are wondering how the Cougars can be ranked.

We just don't get it.

We watched the game and it was never in doubt. UNI had 14 points gifted wrapped for them and they had no clue how to stop the BYU offense in general and Dennis Pitta in particular.

Would 62-17 make everyone feel better?

The Panthers can thank some sloppy ball security and four fumbles for thinking they had a chance when it was 27-17 in the third quarter.

Fumbles are fickle. Four fumbles lost in a game is very rare.

Those same fumbles cost BYU an additional 28 points.

The Cougars were cruising at 27-3 at halftime and were picking up where they left off in the third quarter. They had driven the ball to the UNI 21 yard line when Wayne Latu coughed it up. That was one touchdown left on the table.

Backside Bumble

In the same quarter, Hall was sacked from the backside while in the Cougars end zone and the ball was on the ground and recovered by the Panthers for seven points.

Again BYU was driving and at the UNI 29 yard line when J.J. DiLuigi put the ball on the turf. That's another touchdown squandered in the third quarter.

BYU again drove to the 4 yard line and had a sure score when Max Hall muffed the snap and fumbled away another seven points.

This game could have easily been 62-10 if not for BYU fumbling the ball five times and losing four of those miscues.

Fumbles are fixable. Fumbling 5 times is an anomaly.

What wasn't unusual was Dennis Pitta having a 213-yard receiving day. The junior tight end was unstoppable. He had 11 catches on the day and could have had more. When he wasn't making catches, he was downfield waving his hands indicating that he was still open.

If Pitta was having a big day, that also indicated that Max Hall was on fire. He finished with 486 yards passing and two touchdowns while completing 34-of-41 passing attempts. Hall also had a one-yard qb sneak for a score in the fourth quarter.

Two Tosses

Hall's two scoring tosses were a 27-yard connection to Michael Reed and a 19-yard pitch and catch to Harvey Unga. Both scores were in the first quarter.

Unga scored again in the second quarter on a 2-yard run and again on a 1-yard run.

For the game, Unga had a total of 64 yards rushing on 18 carries. The Cougars had 77 total yards of rushing, that when combined with Hall's 486 yards passing, gave BYU a 563-yard offensive outing.

Defensively, the Cougars were decent enough to hold UNI to 10 points. The other seven points were given up by the BYU offense when Hall fumbled in the endzone on a sack.

UNI finished with 362 yards of total offense, but 145 of those yards came on two plays. The first was a 69 yard option keep by UNI's qb and was the result of a missed assignment by a BYU defender. The Panthers also scored in the third quarter after a BYU fumble when they employed a double reverse pass that caught the Cougars napping and went for a 76-yard touchdown.

Tune Up

This was a very good tune up game for Bronco Mendenhall and his crew.

He now gets to preach ball security to his troops and point out all the mistakes the Cougars made. That will be enough to get the team's attention. On the other hand, with all the turnovers in this game, it was still a blowout. That should emphasize that this is a very good offensive football team.

One thing that Bronco won't point out, so we will have to, is that BYU is woefully thin at running back.

Fui Vakapuna was held out of the game because he was late qualifying academically.

We better hope Harvey Unga doesn't go down with an injury that will keep him out of any big games.

We reiterate what we said a few issues ago. Seta Pouhaha not qualifying academically and coming in as a freshman, really hurts the Cougars at running back.

Here's another stat that doesn't show up in the box score, but is huge.

Justin Sorensen, the new freshman kicker from Bingham HS in Salt Lake, kicked off from the 30-yard line seven times. All those kicks either found the end zone or were out of the end zone.

Only two of those kickoffs were returned. One went for 18 yards and the other for 24 yards.

In the battle of field position, Sorensen has already earned his scholarship.

HUSKIES AT HOME WILL HOLD SERVE

On paper, BYU should handle Washington this Saturday.

The game will not be played on paper, however, but in Seattle.

BYU has never beat UW in Seattle and has never beaten any non-conference team on the road during the Bronco Mendenhall regime.

As a matter of fact, betting against BYU on the road against non-league foes, is almost a sure winner.

Since 2000 BYU has a 4-14 mark against non conference teams and have lost nine straight road games and 12 of its last 13 against non-league teams.

They have lost when they were underdogs and they have lost when they are favorites.

Maybe it is a good omen for the Cougars that there is no opening line out of Las Vegas as of early Monday morning.

There is no line because the Vegas oddsmakers list Max Hall as questionable.

Hall did take a good lick against UNI and had his bell rung and was excused early from post-game interviews when he wasn't feeling well, but we expect him to be ready and play.

Once the Vegas boys come to the same conclusion, we expect them to list the Cougars as a 3-4 point favorite.

That may seem like a slim margin based on the 44-10 shellacking that Washington took last week against Oregon and based on the inordinate number of freshmen the Huskies are playing, but remember, the game will be in Seattle, not Provo.

BYU will be facing the most athletic quarterback they have faced in years. Jake Locker is a playmaker and will put pressure on the BYU defense to contain him.

He is a very ordinary passer, but BYU defensive history says that they have trouble with mobile playmaking quarterbacks.

We can guarantee that Dennis Pitta will not have another 200-plus yard game against the Huskies.

UW will do what it takes to make sure of that. That means that the Cougars will have to move the ball on the ground and get the wideouts the ball.

On paper, we like BYU in this spot. In Seattle, we don't.

We call it Washington 24 BYU 20.

NEITHER RAIN, SLEET OR SNOW...

With Ricks College football gone the way of \$1.89 gas, Snow College in Ephraim is now the new feeder school and placement center for BYU.

The two latest to matriculate from Snow this past spring have both turned out to be contributors.

Coleby Clawson distinguished himself and earned more playing time with his knockout (literally) performance against Northern Iowa generally and NIU quarterback Patrick Grace specifically.

The 6-3, 220 pound transfer was neck and neck with Vic So'oto at outside linebacker coming out of fall camp. Even Bronco Mendenhall singled out the juco transfer for his play last Saturday.

So'oto will have to pick it up if he expects to hold off Clawson.

While So'oto is making the adjustment from tight end to linebacker, Clawson has made the adjustment from defensive end at Snow to linebacker for BYU.

While at Snow, Clawson was the WSFL defensive player of the year last season. Clawson prepped at North Sanpete HS and is from Wales in Sanpete County.

Tough Times

His toughness that was exhibited against NIU, also lent some credence to the old adage we have heard for years about Sanpete County.

The way it has been told to us is that a father was giving his son some advice on picking a wife. He told him that he should try and marry a girl from Sanpete County, because no matter how tough times get, she has already seen worse.

We don't know if that same adage is reciprocal and applies to girls looking for husbands, but based on Clawson's play Saturday, if BYU was looking for a tough linebacker, the apparently found him in Sanpete County.

Andrew Rich also transferred from Snow to BYU last spring. He didn't receive a scholarship, but is now the third safety on the current depth chart.

He turned down scholarship offers from Cal and Boise State to walk on in Provo and should be next in line to receive a grant in aid.

Rich, a 6-3, 205 pounder, was an all WSFL first team defensive selection last year as a freshman. As a sophomore, he has three years of eligibility remaining for BYU. Clawson is a junior and has this season and next to play before his eligibility clock expires.

Trio

There is currently a trio of players on the Snow Roster this year that have BYU connections. Atem Bol is a 6-2, 200 pound wide receiver from Texas that signed with the Cougars last February. He didn't qualify academically and BYU placed him at Snow.

Star Lotulelei is a 6-3, 280 pound defensive lineman that signed with BYU in 2006 out of Bingham HS, but also didn't qualify academically. He didn't enroll anywhere last year and is now taking up football again with the Badgers.

Sam Doman also was a scholarship quarterback with the Cougars two years ago. He transferred to Oregon as a walkon, and has now transferred back to Snow where he will be a tight end as soon as he recovers from a leg injury.

While there was a lot of talk about Mantangi Tonga, the talented former defensive lineman from BYU, surfacing at Snow this season, he is not on the roster.

Tonga had a huge upside but ran into some legal problems after his freshman year in 2006 and was booted from the team and school.

His playing problem is that his eligibility clock is still ticking.

Football Food Chain

Snow isn't alone in serving as a feeder program to other schools. BYU is currently feeding Southern Utah with players. The SUU roster currently lists three former Cougars.

Cade Cooper, a quarterback, transferred to BYU from Snow College, was injured, made a pit stop at Oregon and is now in Cedar City.

Tico Pringle, a cornerback, has almost the same travel itinerary. He came to BYU from Snow, bypassed Oregon and went directly to SUU.

Levi Mack transferred to BYU from Eastern Arizona JC, and after a year, is playing for the Thunderbirds.

NAMES AND GAMES

Michigan Muss and Fuss...We watched Utah's 25-23 win over Michigan last Saturday. We were impressed with the way the Utes moved the ball offensively with their spread offense.

Then reality set in.

We remembered that this was Michigan, the same team that couldn't stop the spread offense of Appalachian State last season and was absolutely humiliated by the spread attack of Oregon a year ago.

Utah looked good, but so has every other spread offense that faces the Wolverines.

Our advice to Ute fans is to take a deep breath. You have a very good football team, but in a few more weeks, that win will be diminished by how many more teams beat up on Michigan this year.

We remember when BYU won the national championship in 1984 by defeating Bo Schembechler and Michigan in the Holiday Bowl 24-17.

Most national pundits discredited the Cougars because the Wolverines were only a 6-5 team coming into the bowl game.

We expect the Ute's big win to suffer the same fate and fade. Michigan will be lucky to be 6-6 this season.

Apparently we aren't the only ones to think this way. Michigan will host Miami of Ohio this Saturday and the oddsmakers have only made the Wolverines a 14-point favorite.

This is a Miami team that lost at home last week 34-13 to Vanderbilt.

Please Manti, Make It Okay

It is no secret that BYU is trying to bust the BCS and get a bowl bid from the big boys who control college football.

It is a nice goal, and if it happens, it will be laudable and lucrative.

While BYU strives to bust through the BCS ceiling, there is another barrier to be burst, that, in our opinion, is even more important and urgent.

Bronco Mendenhall and company need to somehow convince "top tier" Polynesian recruits that it is okay to come and play for BYU.

Who knows, maybe breaking the BCS barrier will lead to the popping of the LDS Polynesian ceiling in recruiting.

While the Cougars have more than their share of very good LDS Polynesian players on the roster who have contributed to the success of the BYU football program, they have not had any success in landing the elite LDS Polynesian prospects when it comes to recruiting.

It started decades ago with Mosi Tatupu opting for USC instead of BYU. It has continued through the years. In the beauty pageant of recruiting, when BYU is up against the elite of college football, the Cougars are always crowned Miss Congeniality.

You know the list. We will just remind you of some of the most recent names.

J.T. Mapu...Tennessee

Duce Lutui...USC

Sione Fua...Stanford

Stanley Havili...USC

Uona Kavienga...USC

We are not naive. BYU isn't the only school losing top prospects to USC and the Pac 10, but BYU is the only school losing top-tier LDS prospects to USC.

Right now, USC is the cool choice. They are hip and they are very, very good.

Somebody, somewhere, has to make it okay for these top LDS Polynesian recruits to play for BYU.

The next hope will be Manti Teo, the LDS linebacker from Hawaii.

BYU wants him in the worst way. So does USC.

Busting the BCS would be a good thing. Hopefully, it will also help break through the current recruiting roof that has kept the Cougars from landing the LDS Polynesian top dogs.

Please Manti, make it okay.

BASKETBALL BRIEFS

BYU has definitely improved its athleticism for this year. In fall informal workouts, Charles Abouo, the new incoming freshman, certainly meets the athlete test.

The return of Jackson Emery from his LDS mission also will increase the athletic ability of this BYU team.

Chris Miles is not nearly as athletic as Emery and Abouo, but he is much improved from last season.

Noah Hartsock just showed up, but has been home from his LDS mission for two months. He spent those two months at home in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

He will play because he can score. He will not be in shape, but he will score. When this guy gets a

year under his belt, watch out.

Speaking of watching out, BYU coaches were watching as two of their top targets this recruiting season were on visits this past weekend to other schools.

Tyler Haws was at Stanford and Brandon Davies was visiting Cal.

Both are on BYU's priority list with Haws at the top. Davies will still have some academic work to do before he can make it to Division I, but that isn't stopping top programs from going after him.

TELEVISION TIMETABLE

BYU vs. Washington

Saturday, Sep 6 at Seattle

Kickoff: 1:00 PM Mountain Time

TV: Fox Sports Northwest, Utah, West, Pacific, Arizona, Detroit, Midwest, North, Ohio, Pittsburgh, Rocky Mountain, Southwest and Sport South

BYU vs. UCLA

Saturday, Sep 13 at Provo

Kickoff: 1:30 PM Mountain Time

TV: Versus

BYU vs. Wyoming

Saturday, Sep 20 at Provo

Kickoff: 1:00 PM Mountain Time

TV: Mtn

BYU vs. Utah State

Friday, Oct 3 at Logan

Kickoff: TBA

TV: TBA

BYU vs. New Mexico

Saturday, Oct 11 at Provo

Kickoff: 4:00 PM Mountain Time

TV: Mtn