

HB Arnett's



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Sometimes a Half Court is Better than a Full Court

BYU markets its basketball program emphasizing the up tempo style of basketball that the Cougars play. Dave Rose recruits to that style of play.

Why not? How can you argue with the success that the *first good shot* philosophy has produced since Rose took over the BYU basketball program eight years ago?

It is exciting and BYU has become a national brand by playing up tempo. Actually, that probably isn't exactly true. BYU has been good, but not a legitimate brand nationally until Jimmer Fredette became his own brand and BYU coat tailed on his back.

Inside post play is good, but the primary ingredient for Rose's up tempo style is based on having decent three-point shooting.

It is also based on getting the ball out on missed shots from opponents and running the floor often and hard.

Again, I don't argue with the success of this approach.

What I will argue, however, is that as good as Dave Rose has been, he could be better.

This year is a perfect example. Almost all of BYU's losses this season have come at the hands of teams that took away BYU's desire to run and early offense options.

Forced

They forced the Cougars to play more half court basketball than they wanted or are capable of playing.

The last two games, a win over Utah State and a loss to Saint Mary's illustrate the point.

There are games in which when forced to play a half court game by opponents, BYU needs to have a better offensive arsenal than throwing the ball inside to Brandon Davies, letting him hold the ball until he is double or triple teamed and go to the hoop while everybody else stands around.

The other option appears to be Matt Carlino dribbling until the shot clock is close to expiring and then firing up a three pointer or putting his head down and heading to the basket.

When those options work, so does BYU's half court offense.

To be clear, BYU's half court offense is just fine as long as they have a guy like Fredette that could almost always bail you out with individual skill and shooting.

This team doesn't have that kind of guy.

It is just my opinion, but until BYU has some sort of alternate half court option that they can count on when needed, Dave Rose will never go to the next level as an elite coach.

First Open Shot

And just having an offense to go to does no good unless you can recognize there are times when you need to shelve the up tempo first open shot option and take some time off the clock late in the games.

BYU lost to San Francisco because they wouldn't manage the clock with a lead. Instead it was the Dons not missing from long distance and BYU missing all too often early in the shot clock. That gave San Francisco more scoring opportunities late in the game.

Utah State made its late game charge because despite taking away the Cougars' run game, BYU still couldn't wait to force up early shots.

If it ain't broke don't fix it pretty well describes the last eight years of BYU's offense under Rose. But there is a reason all cars carry a spare tire and a jack.

Sometimes you have to fix a flat offense when road conditions and opponents have taken away your primary offensive plans.

Of course, BYU's half court offense would be just fine as it is if Rose had some long distance shooters he could count and bank on.

That hasn't been a luxury for the last two seasons.

I also can't complain about BYU's low post game when they are forced to use it. Okay, I do have a complaint.

I stumbled upon the Colorado State vs. New Mexico game on the tube Saturday. BYU could learn some things about a low post game from these two teams.

It wasn't a case of the Lobos and Rams having big time talent inside in the post. They were playing and playing well with what I would call big white stiffs inside. I know that may be an offensive description to some, but I also believe most basketball fans know what I am talking about.

Again, just to be crystal clear, I am not advocating a return to Roger Reid basketball. He was an absolute master of the half court game, but never had enough recruited talent to take it to the next level.

Close to Basket

With Roger Reid's half court offense, he could always get the ball down low to his post players, most of whom were nondescript and minimal talent type players. When the ball went into the post, it was usually caught three feet or closer to the basket.

With the current BYU half court offense, the ball goes to the post, but it is almost always ten feet or more from the basket when Brandon Davies gets the ball.

I am a Dave Rose honk and homer. He has done wonders with BYU basketball. But if he is going to continue to do wonders with his teams using the Paul Westhead at Loyola Marymount offensive scheme, he is going to have to find some three point shooters.

To go to the next level as a coach, he also will eventually have to adapt and come up with a half court option to use when teams take away his offensive strengths. Watching a few Roger Reid films would be a good place to start. Other than that, start praying that he finds another Jimmer Fredette or close facsimile.

GENEALOGY AND GENES

In all the years I have been doing this newsletter thing, I have had many inquire as to the talent of recruits. But I have never have had so many inquiries about the genealogy of a

recruit as I have had with the recent announcement of Jake Toolson committing to play basketball for BYU.

I can give you his basketball stat line as a junior in high school and now thanks to an email from his father, I can also give you his family line. Here it is.

HB,

Another comment. I see a lot of confusion on the web with who Jake is related to. Just in case you aren't sure of the relationships, here they are:

- My first cousin is Andy Toolson. My dad and his dad are brothers.*
- Jake's older brother, Connor Toolson, is on a mission in Nicaragua. He played a lot of hoops in high school but is not a D1 prospect.*
- Andy's second son, Conner Toolson, is a nice player playing for LP in Alpine. (Jake's 2nd cousin?)*
(When my son Connor was born, Andy was playing in Europe and didn't know that we named our son Connor when his second son was born and named Conner.)
- Jake is first cousins with Ryan Toolson of UVU fame. Ryan is my older brother Mike's son.*
- Jake is first cousins with Austin Ainge. Austin is the son of my sister Michelle Toolson Ainge.*
- Danny Ainge is Jake's uncle. Danny married my sister Michelle in 1979 upon the completion of his sophomore basketball season and before heading off for the baseball season.*

Make sense?

And I thought only Polynesians were related to everybody.

Why not BYU?

FINANCIALLY, WE SHOULD ALL BE GONZAGA FANS

When it comes to basketball teams making money for themselves and their leagues, the NCAA tournament is still the cash cow for most conferences.

Before leaving the Mountain West Conference, BYU was getting regular checks based on not only their own NCAA tourney appearances but also money based on other league members' appearances. The more games you played, the more money you banked.

The payouts were made over a six year period.

When the Cougars left the MWC, the money they earned for themselves in the Mountain West conference stayed with the league and did not land in the Cougar's coffers.

Strictly as a basketball fan, I will be hoping BYU can beat Gonzaga this Thursday night in Provo. I think that would be a long shot at best.

Financially, we should be pulling for the Zags. A loss to BYU would probably be a set back to a potential No. 1 seed for the Bulldogs.

Top seeded teams have a history of making deep runs in the tournament. And remember, the more games you play, regardless of the competition, the more money you make for yourself and fellow conference members.

If you cheer according to where your heart is, Go BYU?

If you are cheering according to where your wallet and balance sheet is, you can bet that the rest of the bottom feeders of the WCC will be cheering for Gonzaga.

For those who say that the WCC is a major step down from the Mountain West, get real. The fact that Gonzaga has a legitimate shot at the national title, gives me hope in the WCC.

If the Zags can do it from the WCC platform, why not BYU someday?

One of the best articles I have read that explains how the money tree from the NCAA tournament works was written last March by Forbes.com writer Chris Smith.

[Click here](#) to see how he explained it.

Ziggy Will Learn how to Play for Pay, but Already Knows How to Pray

BYU football is reaping a public relations bonanza with Ziggy Ansah's appearance and workouts at the ongoing NFL Draft Combine.

His story of going from no football experience three years ago to a potential top ten pick in the upcoming April NFL Draft has almost gone viral.

What makes the story so real is that Ansah has real athletic ability.

If I were a headline writer, my top one would be, "Ziggy...Going, Going Ghana be Rich".

To his credit, Ansah is making himself, his family, BYU and the LDS Church proud.

[Click here](#) to see a video of Ansah facing the national press at the NFL Combine. He mentions praying daily at the 2:22 mark.

BYU's Hope Hangs on WCC Tournament

If BYU hopes to get to the NCAA tournament, they most likely will now have to win three straight games in Las Vegas March 8, 9 and 11.

If the tourney was starting today, based on the current standings, The Cougars would face the Thursday winner of San Francisco/Pepperdine on Friday.

A win would then get them a third chance at Saint Mary's on Saturday. An upset of the Gaels, would put BYU up against Gonzaga, barring a monumental earlier upset tourney loss by the Zags. That game would be played on Monday for an automatic berth in the NCAA tourney.

Having to run the Saint Mary's – Gonzaga gauntlet again, is not good news for this flawed BYU basketball team. The closest thing I can compare it to is having a root canal without Novocain while also being interviewed by an IRS agent conducting an audit.

The possible BYU-Saint Mary's matchup would be World War III. The Gaels are not a lock to get an invite, so they, like BYU, desperately need a win on Saturday against the Cougars.

If BYU can get past SMC, I actually like their chances against the Zags. Gonzaga will have a No. 1 seed locked away if they are playing in the championship game, and like a lot of previous No. 1 seeds, may have a let down knowing that regardless of the outcome, they can't be hurt by a loss.

I'm Not Making This Stuff Up

Years ago, I was a big fan of Bob Dylan and his music. I especially liked his talents on the harmonica.

That interest has been rekindled.

In my ward we have an 80-something, one-legged bachelor who lives in a camper shell atop a pickup parked in an industrial park that is not technically within our ward boundaries.

I sometimes envy him.

Not because he is single and never has to make his bed or because he was the most eclectic home teacher I ever had, but because he can also play the harmonica.

He regularly attends Church, sits in the back of the congregation and discreetly accompanies the hymns with his array of mouth organs.

He is no Bob Dylan, but he has certainly aged more gracefully than Dylan. My harmonica playing home teacher has never broken out with *Subterranean Homesick Blues* during meetings, but I will admit that his accompaniments are an acquired taste in tolerance and Church Hymns.

Except for men's volleyball, tolerance is also currently needed with most of BYU's other spring sports. As Bob Dylan sang, "*A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall*".

In baseball, despite a nice 9-4 upset of No. 2 LSU at Baton Rouge, the Cougars dropped 3 of 4 games this past week. They are now 3-5 on the year.

In softball, it gets worse. The Lady Cougars finished the week 1-4 and are now a very sluggish 5-10 on the season.

In volleyball BYU capped off a very productive week by defeating No. 14 Pacific 3-0 on Friday and them coming back, literally to beat No. 5 Stanford in five sets on Saturday.

Instead of Bob Dylan singing about BYU's spring sports with his "*It's All Over Now, Baby Blue*", a few more wins by baseball and softball and Dylan could easily break out with his "*I feel a Change Comin' On*".

Meanwhile, I am searching EBay for my own camper shell and harmonicas. And if any one knows of a nice parking spot in an industrial park, give me a call.

Television Timetable

BYU vs. Gonzaga (MBB)

Thursday, Feb 28 at Provo

Tipoff: 9:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: ESPN2

BYU vs. Creighton (Baseball)

Saturday, Mar 2 at Provo (Doubleheader)

Start: 1:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: BYUtv (Both Games Televised)

BYU vs. Loyola Marymount (MBB)

Saturday, Mar 2 at Los Angeles

Tipoff: 9:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: ESPNU

BYU vs. Cal Baptist (volleyball)

Friday, Mar 8 at Provo

Start: 7:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. Cal Baptist (volleyball)

Saturday, Mar 9 at Provo

Start: 7:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: BYUtv

