

HB Arnett's

COUGAR SPORTSLINE

801 372 0819

hbarnett@fiber.net and hbarnett@xmission.com

1391 West 800 South – Orem, Utah 84058

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BYU LOSES GAME, BUT MAKES MONEY

When a team like TCU dominates BYU like it did in the 38-7 shellacking of the Cougars last Saturday night in Provo, it is hard to find enough highlights to talk about.

Here are the best two we could find...Money and Harvey Unga.

Going into the Mountain West Conference showdown between the Horned Frogs and the Cougars, BYU had no chance of making a BCS bowl appearance.

TCU did.

The win over BYU makes it even more possible as TCU leapfrogged Boise State in the BCS rankings this week with its beating of BYU.

That doesn't make BYU football players, coaches or fans feel much better, but it will make the BYU athletic balance sheet look better.

Last year BYU received around \$600,000 dollars for its part of the BCS payout generated by Utah's appearance in the Sugar Bowl.

With it looking likely that TCU is BCS bound, the Cougars can expect another good payday to accompany the painful pounding of the loss.

\$1 Million

In 2004 when Utah went to the Fiesta Bowl, BYU and all other MWC schools received close to \$1 million. Utah of course received much more.

The difference in payout for conference schools has to do with the new BCS payout for non-BCS teams. Now, not just teams from a conference who has a school playing in a BCS bowl get a payout.

Money is also divided among schools of all other non-BCS schools.

There. If you divide \$600,000 by the 65,000 fans who sat through the thrashing delivered by TCU, it should make each person in attendance feel \$9.23 better.

We will have to check to see if you can write it off as a charitable donation.

Except for Harvey Unga and his 122 yards rushing on 21 carries and BYU's only touchdown, what you can't write off is BYU's pathetic performance.

Like a loss in the stock market, this one may be carried over for a few years.

Statement Game

There are statement games. Usually they involve winning. TCU and BYU both made statements

Saturday.

The Frogs said they are the cream of the conference. BYU said they still have defensive problems that haven't been solved and offensive difficulties against good defenses.

A good barometer of the beating delivered by TCU is how many BYU players could be starting for the Frogs?

We didn't see any Cougar defensive player that could make the two-deep for TCU.

Offensively, the TCU system would be a tough fit for Harvey Unga and Dennis Pitta, but TCU coaches are good enough to find a way to make it work.

Max Hall wouldn't fit the TCU system and it is debatable if Andy Dalton, the TCU quarterback, would be a good fit in the BYU offensive system.

We don't think he is too unhappy about that.

Hall completed 18-28 passes for 161 yards and had the one touchdown pass to Unga. He also had one interception.

Dalton completed 13-of-24 passes for 241 yards. Three of those passes went for touchdowns.

How Bad Was It?

How bad was the loss?

It gave us a third highlight.

It was bad enough to finally make the much-maligned new turf at LaVell Edwards Stadium look good.

The field held up better than BYU.

The Cougars will get a week off before facing Wyoming in Laramie on November 7.

They need to lick a few wounds and get ready to play some more real football.

With Wyoming and New Mexico still on the schedule, winning games should happen again, but based on what was shown Saturday, BYU will have to play much better if they hope to win again at home against Air Force and Utah.

TCU POUNDING PUTS PERSPECTIVE INTO PICTURE

When it all comes crashing down like it did last Saturday night against TCU and earlier in September against Florida State, it is easy to take the pessimistic view that BYU football is just another Ponzi scheme.

You know the routine. There are lots of early and consistent returns on investor's money until everybody is fully invested before it always and eventually comes crashing back to earth.

In the last few years, there have been plenty of early returns with payouts against teams like New Mexico, UNLV and most of the other teams in the Mountain West Conference.

There have been just enough wins over BCS teams to keep the investment fever going. Throw in a fantastic, but fluke win over a team like Oklahoma, and even the most prudent investors who have always practiced due diligence, want to know where they can send their checks.

The euphoria always ends and rationality and reality return.

The perceived collapses of Cougar football the last two seasons should have BYU football fans back to reality and the real world of college football.

Frenzy

It was the unrealistic hopes of Cougar fans that set off the frenzy. They all wanted to be fully invested into a program that doesn't, and likely never will for many more years, have the funding, recruiting foundation or coaching to make the consistent big payouts that are expected at the upper levels of

the college football totem pole.

We currently have a coach that is correct in espousing excellence and a quest for perfection, but it has led to unrealistic investment and return expectations.

Excellence and the pursuit of perfection are some of the tenets of the football team's sponsoring institution. It gets fans excited about the prospect for greatness at BYU when it comes to football.

While excellence, execution and a quest for perfection are good, here's another tenet of the sponsoring institution that never gets mentioned when it comes to BYU football and expectations.

Live within your means.

The means of BYU football are good enough to provide some very good seasons and plenty of entertainment with nice double-digit winning seasons, but they are currently not good enough to make an entrance into the elite strata of college football.

Players and Coaches

Money is an important part of the equation, but players and coaches are still the biggest factors.

BYU's recruiting base is still the LDS Church. Even when recruiting goes beyond the LDS athlete, the honor code realistically reels in the scope to a pretty small casting circle.

We have made a living the last 30 years feeding the fervor of recruiting. Hope always springs eternal that the next recruiting class will be the one that solves all problems.

To date, it hasn't made BYU an elite program, but we all hang on to the hype and hope. Could this be the recruiting class we have all been waiting for?

Maybe. While there are more LDS athletes from which to recruit that will make BYU a good team and good program. There still aren't enough quality athletes from that pool, however, to take them to the next level. That is our opinion. We hope to be wrong someday when it comes to recruiting. The sooner, the better.

When it comes to coaching, it is still a matter of supply and demand.

The supply of football coaches that can qualify ecclesiastically to be hired at BYU is extremely limited. The supply of qualified coaches who actually are good enough to be in demand by other programs is even smaller.

Out-Coached

We hear all the time that BYU coaches are out-coached, out-schemed, out-prepared etc. Until the LDS coaching pool gets bigger and the pay window opened wider, those assertions and assumptions and at times, realities, will still exist.

If we are going to say that there currently aren't enough good LDS football players to take BYU to the next level, we have no problem also saying that there aren't enough LDS coaches good enough to do the same.

As disappointing as the loss to TCU was last week, in political parlance, BYU football is still better off now than it was four years ago.

Will it be even better in another four years?

We don't know. We hope so, but it will depend on coaches and players.

The only thing we can actually control is our expectations.

They keep preaching from the pulpit that living within our means will make us happier and more content.

As expectations for BYU football come closer to its actual means, when BYU does beat TCU again, it will make it that much exciting and entertaining.

AFTER A TOUGH LOSS WHAT WE NEED IS SOME HOPE

The beauty of recruiting is that there is always hope that the latest recruits will make it better. After a tough loss to TCU, it is time for some much needed hope and hype.

There are plenty of BYU followers that say this newest class of recruits that will sign next February will be the best ever.

This seems like a good week for a booster shot of hope.

Current Cougar Commits

Ross Apo...WR, 6-4, 195, The Oakridge School, TX
Jordan Black, OL 6-7, 235, Alta HS, UT
Algernon Brown, RB, 6-1, 205, Skyline HS, UT
Tayo Fabuluje, OT, 6-5, 255, The Oakridge School, TX
Alani Fua, LB 6-5, 210, Oaks Christian HS, CA
Kori Gaines, DB, 5-9, 170, Grayson HS, GA
Jake Heaps...QB, 6-2, 195, Skyline HS, WA
Hauoli Jamora, DL, 6-2, 230, Kahuku HS, UT
Jordan Johnson, DB, 5-10, 175, Brooks School, MA
Tuni Kanuch...DL, 6-1, 285, Bingham HS, UT
Bronson Kaufusi, DL, 6-6, 225, Timpview HS, UT
Teu Kautai, LB, 6-1, 200, The Oakridge School, TX
Collin Keoshian, LB, 6-2, 225, Santa Clarita Christian, CA
A.J. Moore...RB, 5-10, 190, Murrieta Valley HS, CA
Manu Mulitalo, OL, 6-3, 305, Granger HS, UT
Joey Owens, LB, 6-2, 215, Pleasant Grove HS, UT
Drew Phillips, RB, 6-0, 185, Boaz HS, AL
Graham Rowley, OL, 6-4, 270, Waialua HS, HI
Bryan Sampson, TE, 6-4, 210, Pleasant Grove HS, UT
Kona Schwenke, DL, 6-5, 210, Kahuku HS, HI
Zac Stout...LB, 6-2, 220, Oaks Christian HS, CA
Sae Tautu, LB, 6-3, 215, Lone Peak HS, UT
Travis Tuiloma, DL, 6-3, 290, Washburn Rural HS, KS
Blair Tushaus, OL, 6-2, 270, Notre Dame Prep, AZ

QUARTERBACK QUEUE

Max Hall...The 161 yards passing against TCU were the lowest of Hall's three-year career as a Cougar.

Riley Nelson...With the game out of reach, Nelson got in the fourth quarter for some action. He completed 2-of-5 passes for 26 yards. He also rushed the ball 4 times for 19 yards.

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

Jake Heaps...He threw three touchdown passes in Skyline's 42-7 win over Redmond. The TCU debacle also heightens the hype and hope on Heaps that he is the answer that will finally put BYU into the big time.

Tanner Mangum...When it comes to high school football, the Declaration of Independence does not apply. All teams are not created equally when it comes to surrounding players and coaches. Mangum, the sophomore qb, is better than his record and stats show. He is a definite D-1 prospect that BYU is watching and will recruit. That said, it was another loss for Timberline HS and Mangum last week, a 47-17 defeat by Mountain View. Mangum was 15-of-31 for 141 yards.

Alex Kuresa...The junior threw for 279 yards, completing 15-of-28 with four touchdowns and two interceptions in a 38-17 win over Skyview.

TELEVISION TIMETABLE

BYE...Saturday, October 31

BYU vs. Wyoming

Saturday, Nov 7 at Laramie

Kickoff: Noon Mountain Time

TV: The Mtn

BYU vs. New Mexico

Saturday, Nov 14 at Albuquerque

Kickoff: Noon Mountain Time

TV: The Mtn

BYU vs. Air Force

Saturday, Nov 21 at Provo

Kickoff: 1:30 pm Mountain Time

TV: CBS C

BYU vs. Utah

Saturday, Nov 28 at Provo

Kickoff: 3:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: The Mtn and CBS C