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DAVE AND HIS DAIRY...THE CULLING OF THE HERD

When it comes to good management of a dairy farm, I yield to those who have actually done it. When it comes to BYU basketball, I also yield to Dave Rose and his dairy herd management style.

Make no mistake about it, like a good dairy man; Dave Rose just finished culling his herd

In the dairy business, you can't afford to keep cows that aren't producing. That's why good dairy farm managers keep extensive daily records of each of their cows. They know how much milk they are producing and the butter fat content of that milk by individual cow.

When a cow quits producing, it is off to the hamburger factory

Mastitis and Misses

Dairy farmers can't afford to keep cows that have mastitis and Dave Rose can't afford to keep intact a guard line that misses wide open shots.

As they say in academia, publish or perish.

As they say in the West Coast Conference and in NCAA post season play, get a guard line and be a contender, not a pretender.

At BYU and every other NCAA D-1 program, by NCAA mandate, you only have 13 basketball stalls in the barn that you can feed with an athletic scholarship. You can keep others in the herd without scholarship, but they have to fend and feed for themselves.

BYU and Rose found a couple of stall openings this spring by not renewing the scholarship of Nick Martineau and by taking Damarcus Harrison off the milking line...not because of mastitis, but because of missionary service.

We all knew it

Dave Rose knew it. We knew it and so did you. BYU didn't have a guard line good enough to get to the top of the WCC last season.

Now, not only does Dave Rose "Got Milk", he also now has "Got a Guard line" good enough to win and compete for a championship in the WCC and beyond.

The addition of returned missionary Tyler Haws, incoming freshman Cory Calvert and juco transfer Raul Delgado, will now give Rose what he just didn't have last year. He will have two proven outside shooters and defenders and an incoming freshman who was the 5A player of the year in Colorado last season.

Calvert originally was going to serve an LDS mission before enrolling in school, but after mulling and culling, Rose asked Calvert to come and play a year at BYU before embarking on his missionary service.

Calvert's coming strengthens our previous paragraph: Dave Rose knew it. We knew it and so did you. BYU didn't have a guard line good enough to get to the top of the WCC last season.

Dairy farmers have Holsteins and now Dave Rose has options.

Insurance

He also has some insurance.

Rose and his staff also signed and added 6-8 forward Agustin Ambrosino, an Argentinean from Salt Lake Community College.

It may turn out that Ambrosino is a fabulous player, but for now and until he proves he is fabulous, in my opinion, he is mostly insurance.

With the graduation of Noah Hartsock and Charles Abouo, Rose lost "Got Milk" players he could go to.

He still has Chris Collinsworth and Stephen Rogers coming back, but not only are they not go-to players, Rose isn't sure if they have got knees that will allow them to even see the court again.

Ambrosino is protection and insurance.

If neither Rogers nor Collinsworth can get their knees back, they will cull themselves from BYU's basketball and bovine herd.

Rogers has just one year remaining and will be gone for the program. Collinsworth may get at least another year of eligibility if the NCAA grants him an injury hardship waiver. That would leave him with two more years to play.

Even if the NCAA comes through, but Collinsworth's knee never responds to full health, look for BYU to be allowed by the NCAA to use his basketball scholarship for another player while still keeping Collinsworth on a non-basketball grant-in-aid.

Here's hoping that both Collinsworth and Rogers can get their knee issues behind them. Dave Rose

will need them next year.

Haws a Serious Upgrade

While Ambrosino is an unknown at this level of play, Tyler Haws certainly isn't.

He proved as a freshman that he can play. He should pick up where he left off after returning from two years on an LDS mission in the Philippines.

Nothing against Brock Zylstra. He was a gritty, give-it-all-he-had kind of player for Dave Rose last season.

But if you don't think Tyler Haws will be a serious upgrade for next season, you have probably spent too much time in the barn sniffing the ancillary aromas that come with the dairy business.

In the dairy business and in basketball, you need to produce cream if you want to rise to the top. Last year, BYU's guard line was not only non-fat, they were a non factor.

That should change dramatically this coming season.

CAN MITT ROMNEY TAKE IT TO THE HOOP?

I like to keep my politics and preferences private, but my platform is simple. Term limits for all elected officials from the national scene all the way down through the state and local levels.

I am not bright enough to know if a Mormon can make it to the White House. Heck, I don't even know if Jabari Parker, another Mormon, will even make it to Provo.

I hope for the best in both cases, but what I do know is that a Mormon has already said he is coming to Provo and is not getting the same type of media attention that Parker is.

There is no dispute that Parker is probably the best player in the country and BYU is still in the hunt for his services. The chances are still slim, but they still exist.

While Parker is slim, Nick Emery is a slam dunk. The 6-2 guard is picking up on the AAU scene this spring right where he left off last summer.

He is now the focus of the national recruiting scene by writers and scouts. His latest outing last weekend in Philadelphia with his AAU team, the Utah Reign, was spectacular. He made national recruiting headlines with his play.

Utah Reign is basically the roster of Lone Peak HS. T.J. Haws, another BYU commit also played, but was hampered by an ankle injury.

Emery is the real deal and already drawing "Jimmer" comparisons by national writers. Parker would be great, but as they say, BYU already has a bird in hand that could be better than Parker in the recruiting bush.

FANNING THE FOOTBALL FLAMES

Football and the First Amendment?...By now most of you have heard of Michael Wadsworth. He is a missionary serving in England who wants to enroll at BYU and play football for the Cougars this fall.

It's a simple story except for the fact that he played football for the University of Hawaii as a freshman before leaving on an LDS mission.

He told Hawaii that he was transferring to Provo. Hawaii wanted him to stay because he was actually a very productive player as a frosh for the Rainbow Warriors. They relented to his wish for a transfer and were willing to release him to any school, except BYU.

Regardless, the kid is enrolling at BYU and paying his own way and will walk on to play football for a year this fall.

Hawaii is using the Riley Nelson NCAA rule to keep him from getting a scholarship from BYU. The Nelson rule came about at the bequest of Utah State a few years ago when Nelson transferred from Logan to Provo.

After Utah State apparently complained to the NCAA when quarterback Riley Nelson transferred from USU to BYU after his church mission, the NCAA enacted a rule that restricts missionaries who want to change schools.

Here's rule 13.1.1.3.2.1, Exception, Official Religious Mission:

"An institution shall not contact a student-athlete who has begun service on an official religious mission without obtaining permission from the institution from which the student-athlete withdrew prior to beginning his or her mission if the student-athlete signed a National Letter of Intent (NLI) and attended the institution (with which he or she signed the NLI) as a full-time student. If such a student-athlete has completed his or her official religious mission and does not enroll full time in a collegiate institution within one calendar year of completion of the mission, an institution may contact the student-athlete without obtaining permission from the first institution." (Adopted: 1/17/09 effective 8/1/09, Revised: 4/2/10).

Much has been written locally about this story. Here is what we would like to see happen. Wadsworth's family reportedly has deep pockets. Paying tuition at BYU is not a big deal.

I am not a lawyer, but wonder if evoking the first amendment of the constitution wouldn't be grounds for litigation against the NCAA and Hawaii?

It's a reach, but if a kid wants to play football for the only college team sponsored by his religious institution, is his right of religious freedom being blocked?

After all, BYU and Bronco Mendenhall claim that their program is different and provides spiritual nourishment for players, especially for Mormon players, that no other program can provide. If a member of the LDS faith wants to religiously participate in such activities sponsored by his religion that no other football program can purportedly offer, are his religious freedoms being curtailed or impinged?

Deep pockets and a game attorney would make for an interesting scenario and may make the Riley Nelson rule go away.

Or at least it would make for a nice episode of Matlock or Law and Order.

DEARTH OF BYU DEFENSIVE LINEMAN IN NFL CONTINUES...One of the raps on BYU football that opposing coaches use against the Cougars in recruiting is that BYU can't produce NFL defensive linemen.

It's been years since the Cougars have had a defensive lineman selected in the NFL draft. We were sure that this year would be different with Hebron Fangupo, the transfer from USC.

Most services had him projected as a lower rounds draft pick. It didn't happen. Fangupo and Matt Reynolds, an offensive lineman, were BYU's best chances in the NFL draft. Neither was selected. Nobody else from BYU was either.

Fangupo signed as a free agent with the Houston Texans and Reynolds signed as a free agent with the Carolina Panthers.

Two other Cougars signed as free agents. McKay Jacobson signed with the Philadelphia Eagles and Terence Brown signed with the Miami Dolphins.

Jacobson was a receiver and Brown an offensive lineman.

BYU's next chance at a defensive lineman being selected in the NFL draft will be next year. Ezekial "Ziggy" Ansah, will likely be only a spot player for BYU this season. He will be used as an outside linebacker and a defensive end, primarily in pass rush situations.

He has an NFL build and NFL athletic ability. Some team should be willing to take a chance on him despite his lack of playing experience.

BCS Access without a C is just BS...The power brokers of college football concluded their meetings last week after discussing ways to improve post season football.

They have done away with the automatic qualifying for certain leagues. There will more than likely be a four team playoff system after bowl games that will decide the national championship.

It all sounds good, but the selection process for the teams that will participate in the playoff is still in the hands of the original power brokers.

In reality, it is still our opinion that nothing changes. The money will still be managed by the big boys of the SEC, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac 12 and ACC.

They aren't going to share that money with the other leagues and independents such as BYU.

As long as computers are in the mix, we maintain that they will be programmed to favor strength of schedule. That means that the SEC will always be at the top of the heap. Those that control the money and TV contracts, control the selection process.

That fact that BYU, as an independent, didn't have a seat at these meetings isn't a good thing. You could argue that they were represented by Notre Dame, the ultimate independent, but Notre Dame is still more interested in their own situation more than BYU's.

BYU, at the very least will have to go undefeated to even be in the post season playoff talk. Strength of schedule or lack thereof will always be a millstone around the Cougars neck.

That doesn't make BYU football less entertaining or less compelling, it is just a fact of life in the current pecking order of college football.

Spring Sports

Volleyball...BYU volleyball is done. The Cougars closed out their season without reaching their goal of another national championship. They didn't even garner an invite to the Final Four of the sport.

The Cougars finished their season with a 24-7 record and had a chance to make a Final Four appearance but that chance went away with a four set loss to Stanford last week in the MPSF semi finals in Los Angeles.

Baseball...Baseball is a game of percentages. Over the long run, you can count on those percentages. For BYU baseball, the percentages indicate one thing.

The Cougars are a mediocre baseball program.

After 12 plus years at the helm of BYU baseball, Vance Law is currently 393-338, which is a .537 winning percentage.

This season the Cougars are 18-17 and 7-5 in WCC play.

There are a lot of variables in baseball, but when it comes to coaching, this we do know. Gary Pullins was let go by BYU as its baseball coach 12 years ago because administrators thought a coaching change would make the program more productive.

Pullins was let go with a 23 year record of 913-462-6 for a .663 winning percentage.

Again, baseball is a game of percentages and the percentages have not improved, but gone down since Pullins was replaced by Law.

We know all about a cold-weather program and we know all about pitching or lack of it consistently at BYU.

There are a lot of variables to debate, but percentages, especially win-loss percentages are black and white.

At BYU baseball, they are also not currently good.