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Vol. 34, Issue 33 –March 17, 2014

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UO Rematch

I Was Wrong...Cougars Waltzing to Wisconsin

I'd rather be right than wrong. It's a mantra that has served me well...except in marriage. When it comes to matrimony the mantra mellows to, "I'd rather be happy than right". Being happy rather than right also describes my reaction to BYU's invite to the NCAA Tournament.

I didn't expect the Cougars to get an NCAA invite. And after watching the video above, I doubt I was alone in that sentiment. Never has being so wrong felt so right Yeah, I know it sounds like lyrics from a country music song. Maybe it's time for another Cougar Basketball video with Tyler Haws lip syncing to this [country NCAA dancing song](#).

In case your television was on the fritz, your internet connection down and your smart phone dead, here is what you missed.

The BYU Cougars, coached by Dave Rose, were selected as a 10 seed in the West Region of the NCAA Basketball tournament. They will face 7 seed Oregon in Milwaukee, Thursday, March 20. The game is set for a 1:10 pm MDT (approximately) tip and will be broadcast on truTV. All games in the 2014 NCAA Tournament will be televised on CBS, TNT, TBS and truTV. All games will also be available online at mmod.ncaa.com.

A win over the Ducks and the Cougars would face the winner of No. 2 seed Wisconsin vs. No. 15 seed American U on Saturday, March 22. If the Cougars get to the sweet sixteen, they would then head to Anaheim, Calif. and the Honda Center.

The downside to being wrong about BYU making the tournament is that it cost me time. I was so convinced that the Cougars wouldn't get an invite that I had already written about how this BYU basketball team couldn't defend the three, had no half court offense and were horrible shooting from beyond the arc and from the free throw line.

I blamed most of it on Dave Rose. It's his team and as Harry Truman said "the buck stops here". Barely beating San Francisco and getting mauled early by Gonzaga in the WCC tournament had my juices flowing and BYU certainly headed to the NIT.

Dang the NCAA selection committee. They ruined one of my better newsletters when they called BYU's name.

Now I have to revert and rewrite and go all [Tammy Wynette](#) as she sings about how I, and maybe you, should be considering the job Rose did this season.

Rose doesn't need Tammy Wynette to sing for him. He can stand on his own with his record at BYU. Here it is courtesy of BYU: This is the ninth-straight season BYU has played in the postseason and the seventh time the Cougars have reached the NCAA Tournament under head coach Dave Rose.

This will be BYU's 28th NCAA Tournament appearance and seventh in the past eight years (2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2014). The Cougars have a 15-30 record in the NCAA tournament dating back to their first appearance in the tournament in 1950.

Rose has guided the Cougars to wins in their last three NCAA tournament appearances. In 2010, BYU won its first NCAA tournament game since 1993 in a 99-92 double-

overtime thriller against Florida. The next season, led by National Player of the Year Jimmer Fredette, the Cougars reached the Sweet 16. In 2012, BYU defeated Iona in the First Four in Dayton, Ohio, as the Cougars overcame a 25-point deficit to record the biggest comeback in NCAA tournament history.

In 2013-14, BYU earned its highest finish in its three seasons in the West Coast Conference with a 23-11 overall record and 13-5 in conference. The Cougars finished second in the regular season and also the conference tournament behind Gonzaga, the No 8 seed in the West Region. WCC Player of the Year Tyler Haws led the WCC and is sixth in the nation in scoring with 24.3 points per game. Haws and Kyle Collinsworth earned All-WCC and WCC All-Tournament honors.

While many pundits, including me, had BYU sending out SOS signals in hopes of securing a tournament bid, it was actually BYU's SOS (Strength of Schedule) that secured the bid and nailed down a 10 seed.

Rose was right in opting to play a tougher than usual non-conference schedule this year. It was what earned the invitation. All of those tough contests, except for Iowa State, were either on the road or on a neutral site.

IT WALKS LIKE A DUCK BUT WILL IT RUN LIKE A DUCK?

It's no secret that opposing WCC basketball coaches figured out how to shut down BYU offensively as the league schedule unfolded.

Don't let BYU get into its open court running game. Drop 4 guys back after every shot goes up and force BYU to play a half court game and offense.

That strategy exposed the Cougars as a beatable team.

Now we get to see what Dana Altman, Oregon's coach, will opt to do against BYU this Thursday. In Eugene in December Altman decided to let the Cougars run and play how they like to play.

It was a game BYU lost in overtime, but also a game they should have won. Oregon also has the athletes to get into a track meet with the Cougars, but don't be surprised if the Ducks go with a much more deliberate offensive attack offensively.

If the Cougars are allowed to run, they will need to rebound the ball well. In the first meeting between the two schools, BYU beat the Ducks on the glass 51-40.

Neither team shot the ball from distance well. BYU was 6-16 beyond the arc and Oregon was 10-32.

BYU gave this game away with a poor late game shooting performance from the free throw line. The Cougars shot just 22-36 from the charity stripe while the Ducks were 24-31.

BYU will be playing this rematch with the “Collinsworth Curse” in full effect. Kyle Collinsworth tore his ACL against Gonzaga and will undergo knee surgery Tuesday. His brother Chris had his BYU career cut short with knee problems. The word for Kyle is that he should be ready to go by the start of this coming season.

Meanwhile, he will be missed against the Ducks and beyond if the Cougars can find a way to generate an opening win in the tournament. Collinsworth’s defense and rebounding will be sorely missed.

The wild card in his absence will be Matt Carlino. He will get the minutes vacated by Collinsworth. If Carlino is on with his outside shot and under control while attacking the basket, BYU has a legitimate shot at winning this game.

Other Post Season Invites for WCC BB Teams

Gonzaga, the regular season and tournament champion from the West Coast Conference, nailed down an NCAA bid and will face Oklahoma State in San Diego on Friday, March 21. The Zags were a No 8 seed. That game is set for an approximate 1:40 PDT tip and can be seen on TNT.

St. Mary’s will face Utah in Moraga in the NIT. That game will be played Tuesday, March 18 and will be televised by ESPN2 beginning at 11:00 pm Eastern time.

San Francisco will host LSU in the NIT. That game will be played Wednesday, March 19. The game tips at 10:00 pm Eastern time and will be televised by ESPNU.

Spring Football

Week two of spring football has come and gone. Taysom Hill is still the best athlete on the team. Jamaal Williams is the best running back and Robertson Daniel is the best defensive back.

That will give you three familiar names to whet your appetite for football, but here are names that are more important: Edward Fusi, Brayden Kearsley, De’Ondre Wesley, Quinn Lawlor, Brian Rawlinson, Kyle Johnson, Tim Duran, Terrance Alletto, Ului Lapuaho, Ryker Mathews, Solomone Kafu, Brock Stringham, Jordan Black and Michael Yeck.

These are the guys that will make or break BYU’s season. They are the players from whom the offensive line will be staffed. If those names sound familiar, except for a

couple of returned missionaries, it is because they are the same guys who underperformed last season on the offensive line.

Right now, there is plenty of optimism that experience will make things better. There is plenty of coach talk about how these guys are progressing and getting better. They are in better shape and stronger than they were last season.

That is wonderful news, but can they play football and protect Taysom Hill?

BYU held their pro day last week and several BYU players went through workouts in hopes of improving their draft status or just getting a free agent sniff down the road.

One of the scouts in attendance was from the New Orleans Saints. He talked about working out. He said that basically all these workouts and the workouts at the NFL combine do is exhibit athletic ability. They don't show if the guy can play football.

That is where BYU is now with its offensive line. They look better athletically, but the real question, which won't be answered until next fall, is this: can they play football? Can they block and can the offense depend on them?

Spring is just an exhibition for these guys. What we need to see is some empirical evidence that they can actually play and produce. Spring football for these guys is like the movie trailer that has all the best highlights included. In the fall we will see the real thing and then we and the coaches can judge for ourselves.

Volleyball Wins, Baseball and Softball Can't

The BYU Men's volleyball team continues its torrid wining pace at home. The latest two victims were UC Irvine and UC San Diego. Both the Anteaters and Tritons were swept in three sets each by the Cougars.

BYU is now 15-4 over all and 15-2 in MPSF play and in first place in the league standings.

Things are nearly as rosy on the baseball and softball sides for BYU. The men's team was swept in a three-game series by San Diego in the opening of the WCC season. It wasn't pretty as the Cougars lost to the Toreros 14-7, 5-1, and 17-8.

The Lady Cougars in softball did not fair much better last week while participating in a tournament in Hawaii. The ladies lost to James Madison twice, both by the score of 3-1. They also lost to Oregon 3-2 and Valparaiso 6-4. The lone win came against Hawaii 3-1.

Television Timetable

Men's Basketball

BYU vs. Oregon

Thursday, March 20 at Milwaukee

Tipoff: 1:10 pm MDT (Approximately

TV: truTV and live stream at mmod.ncaa.com

Women's Basketball

NCAA tournament picks announced Monday, March 17, 2014

7:00 pm Eastern on ESPN...will be extremely surprised if BYU women get an invite. Most likely headed to the NIT.