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Aloha...

Who or What You Know and BYU Football

I spoke in Church yesterday in a young single adult ward.

The kid that spoke before me was a charismatic Polynesian young guy. He started his talk by saying very loudly, Aloha. The entire congregation responded back with another enthusiastic and elongated Aloha.

He made an instant connection and then proceeded to deliver a very well prepared talk.

I took notice. So when I stood up I thought I would follow suit. I started by saying very loudly and enthusiastically, Hey, What up Dude? Silence. No response. And the talk went downhill from there.

It kind of reminded me of BYU football recruiting and coaching. It used to be what you knew about football and coaching mattered the most. Now it is who you know and how you relate to recruits you are trying to entice to enroll at your school.

Seems to me we have been using the “What up dude” approach delivered by older non charismatic coaches. Now we have a younger and apparently more charismatic group using the Aloha method. It remains to be seen if it will work for the long haul, but in the

first few weeks since Kalani Sitake was hired, the connection to Polynesians and other recruits seems to have taken a nice foothold.

Sometimes who you know doesn't work. I know Gary Herbert, the Governor of Utah. We used to be in the same stake. I spoke once in his home ward and after the meeting was over, he came up to the podium and shook my hand and said, "Nice talk, HB." I said thanks and asked him if that meant I wouldn't have to pay any more state income tax. He said, "It wasn't that good of a talk."

Right now, it looks like we are seeing some nice recruiting that may payoff sooner than later. Whether or not the recruiting is good enough to get out of paying taxes and finally beating more "big boy" teams still is to be determined.

One month after the announcement of Kalani Sitake as the new BYU head football coach, we do know that Sitake has been able to convince several prospects that weren't considering BYU to at least make official visits to campus. With such a late start, it is unlikely that he will sign a boatload of those recruits, but he will sign some.

And the fact that this late in the recruiting process he can get these guys to just take a sniff of BYU is impressive.

Here are guys that didn't have offers from BYU a month ago, but now do. We listed them last week, but here they are again with some new names and new offers.

Sione Finau...5-10, 170, wide out, slot back and kick and punt returner out of Kearns HS in Utah. He committed to Oregon State in November, but now has an offer from Sitake and BYU. He would be BYU's version of Britain Covey. [Watch here](#), #20 to see why I think that way. [Click here](#) for a nice article on him committing to Oregon State. BYU has offered and he will trip to Provo this month.

Fua Pututau...6-3, 230, linebacker, Cottonwood HS, UT. Was looking primarily at Utah, Colorado and Oregon State, but now has BYU pushing for a late January visit to Provo. His video is impressive and if Sitake is making a big push, his ability also should impress. [Click here](#), #2 to watch.

Wayne Kirby...6-3, 305 defensive tackle, Highland HS, ID. If that name sounds familiar, it should. He committed to Bronco and BYU early last fall and then said he was no longer committed in October. BYU is still pursuing and he will make visits to Utah, Washington State and BYU this month.

Chris Wilcox...6-3, 175 DB, Roosevelt HS, Corona, CA. Originally offered by Ed Lamb at SUU, Lamb has now offered him at BYU. [Click here](#) to see video.

You can also add this guy. **Alema Pilimai**, 6-4, 210, LB from Tustin HS in California. He is a Utah commit, but BYU is now in the picture. [Click here](#) to see video.

This guy below, if Sitake can land him, would be the BYU's first year coach's big Aloha from the Pulpit.

Leki Fotu...6-6, 265, DL, Herriman HS, UT. He committed to Utah last September and since then USC has been all over him.

His team won the 5A state championship in November. After he committed to Utah., the *Salt Lake Tribune* had a nice write-up on Fotu. The article was published on September 19, 2015 and was well written by Kyle Goon, the Utah beat writer for the Tribune.

Utah football: Utes get commitment from Herriman DE Leki Fotu

Utah received a verbal commitment Saturday from Herriman defensive end Alexander "Leki" Fotu, the third in-state commitment in Utah's 2016 rapidly filling 2016 class.

In his first year at Herriman after transferring from California's San Leandro High, Fotu already has quite a journey.

His family hails from Tonga, moving before his birth to the Bay Area so his older siblings — Joe is a defensive lineman at Illinois, and Anthony is a defensive lineman at Arizona — could get an education.

But the family was shaken by two tragedies in a one-month span in 2006: Fotu's 3 1/2-year-old sister died after an accidental fall, and his diabetic father succumbed to a stroke weeks later.

"We thought it was the end of the world for us," said Fotu's mother, Toakase.

Football became "therapy" for her four boys, she said. "They managed their anger and the sadness with sports."

Rugby is a family tradition, and Toakase also wanted her boys to learn to learn about Tonga's national sport. Fotu protested that he was a football player. But he was a natural. Within a year, he was a high school All-American.

He caught the attention of the London Wasps (since relocated to Coventry), who invited Fotu to spend the summer of 2013 training with their academy.

He loved London, he loved rugby, and he came back with a slight accent and an affection for tea.

But his football coaches and teammates didn't take kindly to his time away, Toakase said. Some stopped talking to him, and others called him "the All-American kid."

"Everybody changed their attitude toward him."

Fotu sat out last season, perhaps explaining why, at the time of his commitment, he wasn't rated by recruiting services.

The family moved to Herriman in March to give Fotu a chance to earn a college football scholarship.

Other family members thought they were crazy, Toakase said. They went four months without work. But she and Fotu's stepdad are now employed, and Fotu has his scholarship offer.

Fotu, who stands 6-foot-6, 260 pounds, committed sometime within the last couple weeks, she said. [Click Here](#) to see video.

Below is a photo of Sitake and Ed Lamb taken during their in home visit with Fotu. The photo is from a twitter account of a relative of Fotu.



Aloha Also Appropriate for BYU Basketball

Aloha in the Hawaiian language means affection, peace, compassion, and mercy. Since the middle of the 19th century, it also has come to be used as an English greeting to say goodbye and hello.

BYU said hello to their potential first ever WCC basketball championship last Thursday night when they upset Gonzaga in Spokane 69-68. It was goodbye to that same potential league hardware, two days later when they were whipped by Portland 84-81 on the same road trip.

I'm not sure what the Hawaiian translation for Jekyll and Hyde is, but a close proximity for this road trip would probably be Collinsworth, as in Kyle. He was very good in

limited minutes because of first half foul trouble against Gonzaga. He led all BYU scorers with 20 points and was especially clutch late in the game.

Against Portland, he wasn't so good. He was just 4-17 from the field including 0-2 from beyond the arc. He had plenty of help in being bad. Nick Emery was just 4-11. Chase Fischer led BYU with 22 points. Kyle Davis had 20.

With the road split, BYU is now 4-2 in WCC play and trails both Gonzaga and Saint Mary's by one game in the loss column. After this week's two game road stint against LMU and Pepperdine, it is highly likely that the Cougars will lose to the Waves and beat LMU. That would put the Cougars at 5-3 and in fourth place, ½ game behind Pepperdine who should sweep the BYU/San Diego series in Malibu. The Waves are currently 4-3 in conference action.

So how do we explain the loss to Portland? On paper, BYU has more talent. In the stands, there were just as many Cougar fans as there were Pilot people. The officiating was not great, but it wasn't great for either team.

In my opinion, that pretty much narrows it down to motivation, or lack of, preparation, or coaching, or lack of. By the way, according to my basketball dictionary, motivation and preparation are subsets of coaching.

I'm all for upsets and aberrations, but if you peruse BYU's record since joining the WCC in basketball, they seem to always shoot themselves in the foot by losing to lower tier teams in the league. That is not an aberration but a pattern.

Hey it's basketball. Even Duke and Kentucky and Gonzaga lose, but they don't lose to Portland, San Francisco (in most years) Pacific and San Diego.

So that proves that BYU is no Duke, Kentucky and Gonzaga. But what does it prove about coaching at BYU. Is it good, bad or mediocre?

I don't know. But I would be willing to bet that if you gave Randy Bennett of St. Mary's this team, he would have to be admitted to the hospital with heart palpitations because of over excitement.

Okay, I'm not anti-Dave Rose. He is a functional coach with high-end public relations skills. He has good talent and usually does. True or not, the perception, at least mine, is that he seems to be from the Norm Ellenberger, Smokey Gaines and Guy Lewis coaching tree of roll the ball out and see what happens.

I still remember decades ago when Ellenberger was at New Mexico and playing BYU in Provo. The game was extremely tight in the final seconds. He called a timeout and you could hear him coaching in the huddle. His instructions to his troops was, "Get me a hoop. Somebody get me a hoop."

The bottom line for me is that Dave Rose has put together some nice LDS talent. It will get even better next year with the addition of Eric Mika, Peyton Dastrup, TJ Haws and Yoeli Childs and Elijah Bryant.

The issue is will it ever be enough talent? As BYU fans we always seem to be waiting until the cupboard is loaded. Up tempo is good, or at least entertaining, but to win big games in post season and evidently against the WCC in a chase for a championship BYU's tempo either needs some much better talent or maybe a little bit of better coaching. And it doesn't have to come from Rose. That is why BYU cuts three paychecks every two weeks to Rose's assistants.

I hope I'm wrong. I'm hoping that finally the talent of "the next year" will someday trump all else and BYU can get a league title on its resume and more than a one and done in post season play. I just don't think it will happen this season.

Click Here...

Technology is great. So his choice. Here's your clicking choice, courtesy of the Cougars, to read about other BYU sports and their results from last week.

[BYU Football Coaching Staff](#)

[BYU Women's Basketball](#)

[BYU Men's Volleyball](#)

[BYU Track and Field](#)

[Click here](#) to hear a 52 second talk that was much better than the one I gave in Church yesterday

Television Timetable

BYU vs. Loyola Marymount (M Basketball)

Thursday, January 21 at Los Angeles

Tipoff: 8:00 pm MST

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. Loyola Marymount (W Basketball)

Thursday, January 21 at Provo

Tipoff: 6:00 pm MST

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. Pepperdine (M Basketball)

Saturday, January 23, at Malibu

Tipoff: 6:00 pm MST

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. Pepperdine (W Basketball)

Saturday, January 23 at Provo

Tipoff: 2:00 pm MST

TV:) BYUtv