

HB Arnett's
COUGAR SPORTSLINE

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Attn: This issue you are receiving would normally be mailed next Monday. I am sending it early because I will be out of town for a few days of golf and visiting family. The next issue will be sent on our normal publishing schedule of February 18.

Thanks,

hb

PUNCTUATION MARK FOR BYU FOOTBALL RECRUITING

BYU football recruiting is a never ending story, but occasionally, you can find a place to put a punctuation mark in a paragraph detailing the pursuit of players.

BYU and Bronco Mendenhall did just that when they announced with an exclamation point 21 new football signees that inked letters of intent with the Cougars.

It is a class that, in our opinion, will keep BYU at the forefront of the Mountain West Conference and also keep the Cougars on the periphery of the BCS big boys.

Until BYU can find more players with more speed, it will remain that way.

Recruiting Recap

*Star Power...*For a coach who repeatedly says that he doesn't read newspapers or listen to media reports about his team and recruiting, Bronco Mendenhall always seems to have a nice power point presentation to refute what is being said in the media and on the web.

This time it was a defense of BYU's lack of "recruiting stars" assigned to Cougar signees.

*Speaking of Stars, It Is What It Is...*It is just our opinion, but Mendenhall's anti-star rhetoric concerning recruiting may have been related to the fact that almost all of the LDS recruits with the most recruiting stars, did not sign with the Cougars.

You can always come up with an excuse why they didn't sign, but once again, if a kid is considered big-time in the recruiting world, he is much more likely to sign with a BCS school. Empirically, you just

can't refute the evidence of the last decade and longer.

With all due respect to Bronco and his disdain for stars, here is where the big-name and well-starred LDS recruits signed:

Uona Kavienga, LB, Leuzinger HS, Ca...USC
Kevin Prince, QB, Crespi HS, Ca...UCLA
Hamani Stevens, OL, Hemet HS, Ca...Oregon
Max Tuiti-Mariner, OL, Corona HS, Ca...Colorado
Simi Kuli, DL, El Camino JC, Ca...Oregon State
Lyn Katoa, LB, Cottonwood HS, Ut...Colorado
David Kruger, DL, Timpanogas HS, Ut...Utah

Bronco's logic of not needing recruits with lots of stars to win is commendable and well documented with BYU's 22-2 record of the last two seasons. How can you argue with that?

How about with the fact that 16 of those 22 wins came against teams in the MWC that have recruits that have even less stars than BYU has. Two more of those 22 wins came against Utah State and Eastern Washington. They can't even spell "star" at those schools.

Win 16 of 22 games in a BCS league and you have something to talk about. Heck, win 11 of 22 games against a BCS conference schedule and we are all for the power point presentation.

If the criterion in recruiting is winning the MWC, BYU should be ecstatic.

If the goal is to be competitive outside of the MWC, however, and win at least 50% of your games against teams from BCS conferences, then, in our opinion, stars and speed really do matter in recruiting.

We were hoping that Mitt Romney would win the Republican nomination for President. His power point presentations were stunning and spectacular in the MWC states of Utah, Colorado, Wyoming and Montana. Unfortunately, the race was decided by BCS states like Florida, Illinois, New York and California.

Delegates and defeats in football don't lie. Despite what we wish would happen, Romney and BYU football are still not yet beyond being provincial powerhouses.

We want to believe that BYU can compete against the BCS big boys. But like a political campaign, you can spin it all you want, but without the numbers, you have nothing.

In the last 10 seasons, BYU is 12-20 against teams from BCS conferences. Of those teams the Cougars have faced, with the exception of USC, none have been upper tier teams in their leagues when the game was played. Remember, BYU gets the fourth and fifth place BCS teams in their bowl games

In the last three years under Mendenhall, BYU is 3-6 against BCS teams.

We like the direction of BYU football and love the job Mendenhall is doing, but so far, the recruiting spin still doesn't match the actual BCS defeats count.

Again, in our opinion, BYU had a spectacular recruiting class for what they are; an upper tier, non-BCS school.

We like winning the MWC and this class will keep the Cougars doing just that.

But BYU still needs more high quality athletes if they are going to compete consistently with BCS conferences.

Despite the power point presentations, the tell tale sign for us that BYU is not one of the big boys yet is that they are touting a kicker as their top get. And in case you forgot, BYU's best player and quarterback last season was recycled from ASU, a BCS conference school.

Mendenhall may not need more recruiting stars on his list, but he will need more athletes with better skills and more speed to be a consistent national player. The record against BCS schools doesn't lie.

When an LDS athlete that is BCS quality comes along, you consistently have to sign your share of that group. If you don't, you are consistently going to continue losing to the BCS schools that land

them.

We are all for BYU going 12-0 next year. They should be favored on paper in all MWC games next season. They should have a legitimate chance against two lower tier teams from the Pac 10 in UCLA and Washington. They can handle Utah State and Northern Iowa.

That would make us happy, but it wouldn't prove us wrong.

Show us a minimum of a .500 record against BCS teams over the next five years utilizing BYU's recruiting classes and we will let any and all Cougar fans pummel us with a power point presentation for as long as they want.

Recruiting Fluff and Stuff

*Missionaries...*Five of the 21 recently signed recruits intend to serve LDS missions before enrolling in school. They are: Austin Holt, Jake Murphy, Kevan Bills, Michael Yeck and Spencer Hadley.

*Readin' Writin' and You Do the 'Rithmetic...*Twenty percent of this class still has to clear some academic hurdles before being allowed to enroll in school. Those who still have academic work to complete or tests to take and pass include: O'Neill Chambers, Seta Pohahau, Atem Bol and Bernard Afutiti.

*Speaking of Afutiti...*He was the surprise recruit of the class. BYU went after him years ago out of high school, but he had academic issues then. He signed at San Jose State, but couldn't matriculate there either. There is no question that he is a talented player, but history has shown that there is a question on his achieving academic eligibility.

*Quarterbacks...*BYU did offer Kevin Prince, but he said no and then tore his knee and didn't play this past season. He signed at UCLA and will go on an LDS mission before enrolling at Westwood.

BYU did not sign a qb this year. They have lost Jason Munns and James Lark to LDS missions, but still have Max Hall and Brenden Gaskins returning.

Stephen Covey will be the No. 3 qb on the depth chart this spring. He has returned from his mission and will play where we thought he had the most ability. This kid is a playmaker.

He returned from his mission with some health issues, but reports we get indicate that he has resolved those issues. He will be a redshirt freshman.

*Early Start For Next Year...*BYU already has four commitments for their next recruiting class. Bronco Mendenhall has offered Adam Timo, 6-1, 175, RB; Craig Bills, 6-2, 200, DB; Jray Galea'i, 6-0, 170, DB and Terry Alletto, 6-3, 260, OL. All will be seniors this fall and said they will sign with BYU.

These prospects were offered last spring and summer.

If Bronco wants to accelerate the recruiting clock even more, it would make Tevita Ofahengaue absolutely relevant.

In case you forgot, Ofahengaue was a tight end with BYU who was the last player taken in the 2001 draft. Consequently, he gained the customary nickname of Mr. Irrelevant.

While he was playing for BYU he was married and had four children.

Which brings us back again to offering early scholarships. We don't know if this guy is on the BYU early recruiting radar screen, but we are willing to bet that he will be.

Check out some video highlights of Ofen Hague's oldest kid, Tre. He was a freshman at Lehi High School in Utah this past fall.

You can see the video by clicking here. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ceyQTXWsBu0>

Here are the official BYU bios of the most recent recruiting class:

~~Bernard Afutiti, Defensive Line, 6-0, 260, Mt. San Antonio College, Fontana, CA~~

~~Helped lead Mt. SAC to a 10-3 record during the 2007 season, including a 4-0 mark in the Mission Conference ... advanced to the championship game of the California State junior college championships before losing to San Francisco City ... defeated Bakersfield in the Southern California junior college championships, 47-42 ... ranked fourth on the Mounties' roster with 41.5 tackles on the season, including a team-leading 22 tackles for a combined loss of 91 yards ... credited with 8 sacks and had five QB hurries ... earned JUCO All America honors ... named team MVP ... received Defensive Player of the Year honors ... named the California State Defensive Player of the Year ... a four year letter winner at Kaiser HS in Fontana, Calif., graduating in 2005 ... received scholarship offers out of high school from Michigan, Oregon State, Utah and USC ... earned All-CIF honors as a senior, junior and sophomore ... named the Division 8 MVP ... named the Coca Cola and Old Spice Player of the Year ... a four year all league recipient ... married to Crystal Purecell ... has a two-year-old son, Zak ... recruited by San Jose State, Washington, Washington State, Oregon and Oregon State.~~

~~Michael Alisa, Linebacker/Running Back, 6-2, 220, Timpview High School, Provo, UT~~ Earned Deseret Morning News 4A Second Team All State honors ... earned All Utah Valley honors ... helped lead Timpview to a 13-0 record on the season to claim the Utah 4-A State Championships, including a 50-7 victory over Pine View in the championship game ... a member of the 2006 Utah 4-A State Championship team ... credited with four interceptions and three sacks ... scored six touchdowns as a running back for the T-birds ... recruited by Boise State, California, Oklahoma, UNLV, Utah and Washington State.

~~Kevan Bills, Linebacker, 6-3, 225, Timpview High School, Provo, UT~~ Maintains a 4.0 grade point average ... Salt Lake Tribune 4A First Team All State selection ... earned Deseret Morning News 4A First Team All State honors ... earned All Utah Valley honors ... credited with 50 tackles on the season, including 18 stops for a loss ... plans to serve a church mission before enrolling to BYU ... helped lead Timpview to a 13-0 record on the season to claim the Utah 4-A State Championships, including a 50-7 victory over Pine View in the championship game ... a member of the 2006 Utah 4-A State Championship team ... had 50 tackles, including five sacks as a junior ... a three-year letter winner for Timpview ... joins brothers KC and Kelly who both played at BYU ... recruited by Colorado, California and Oregon.

~~Atem Bol, Wide Receiver, 6-2, 200, L.D. Bell High School, Hurst, TX~~ Born in the northern African country of Sudan ... named to the Dallas Morning News Top 100 list ... moved to the United States when he was 11 years old ... credited with 22 receptions for 242 yards ... led the 7-5A division with eight touchdown receptions during the season ... under head coach Gary Olive, helped lead the Blue Raiders to the playoffs with a 6-5 overall record, including a 4-3 mark in district play ... recruited by Baylor, SMU, Tulsa, Missouri, and Kansas.

~~Jerry Bruner, Running Back/Linebacker, 6-2, 225, Evergreen High School, Vancouver, WA~~ Helped lead the Plainsmen, under head coach Tom Smythe, to an 8-2 overall record, including a mark of 5-0 in the 4A Greater St. Helens league standings ... as a senior, named defensive player of the year in the Greater Saint Helens League ... selected as a first team all league linebacker and second team running back ... rushed for over 800 yards and had 11 touchdowns as a junior, despite playing only six games due to injury ... recruited by Washington, Washington State, Oregon and Oregon State.

~~O'Neill Chambers, Wide Receiver, 6-3, 208, Harmony High School, Harmony, FL~~

~~Credited with 39 receptions for 965 yards ... totaled ten touchdowns as a senior, including four touchdown receptions, three touchdowns on special teams and three touchdowns coming on the defensive side of the ball ... named First Team All Central Florida as a wide receiver ... played for former Cougar standout Tyler Anderson at Harmony HS ... recruited by Florida, South Carolina, Mississippi State, Georgia, Clemson, Purdue and Texas Tech.~~

~~Cameron Comer, Defensive Back, 6-1, 185, Springville High School, Springville, UT~~

~~A three-year starter at Springville HS ... earned Deseret Morning News All Utah Valley honorable mention honors ... team captain ... ranked as the 39th best prospect on the Scout.com Northwest Hot 100 ... recruited~~

by Arizona State, Illinois, Oregon, Oregon State and Washington State.

Spencer Hadley, Linebacker, 6-2, 220, Connell High School, Connell, WA—Maintains a 3.95 grade-point average ... a 1A SCAC East second team receiver ... a 1A SCAC East first team defensive back ... earned 1A SCAC East first team honors on special teams ... an all-area first team receiver ... an all-area first team defensive back ... an all-area first team kick returner ... an Associated Press 1A first team offensive and unanimous defensive selection ... a four-year letter winner, helping the Eagles to a combined 47-7 record during his four years ... also a four-year letter winner in track and basketball ... one of only four players in Connell High School history to score over 1,000 points during his career in basketball ... totaled 2,713 yards receiving during his career ... had 60 carries for 606 yards as a senior, including nine touchdowns ... credited with 34 receptions for 541 yards and 11 touchdowns ... plans to serve a church mission before enrolling to BYU ... under head coach Wayne Riner, helped lead the Eagles to a 13-1 record and a trip to the 1A State Championship game as a senior ... listed as one of the top defensive recruits in the western United States ... raised on a dairy farm and lists working cattle as a special skill ... one of seven children ... a member of the National Honor Society ... served as a student body officer ... recruited by Boise State and Oregon State.

Austin Holt, Tight End, 6-6, 230, Bingham High School, South Jordan, UT—A Salt Lake Tribune 5A First Team All State selection ... earned Deseret Morning News 5A First Team All State honors ... under head coach Dave Peek, helped lead the Miners to an 11-2 record, including a trip to the championship game ... finished with a perfect 5-0 record and a first place finish in the Region 3 standings ... a member of the 2006 5A State Championship team that went 14-0 ... led the Miners with 29 receptions for 490 receiving yards and six touchdowns as a senior ... averaged 37.7 yards receiving per game ... a U.S. Army All American ... ranks as one of the top high school tight end prospects in the country ... plans to serve a church mission before enrolling to BYU ... recruited by Florida, Stanford, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, Oregon and UCLA.

Solomone Kafu, Defensive Line, 6-5, 315, Rio Linda High School, Rio Linda, CA—Earned first team all-city and second team all-conference honors as a senior ... a Sacramento Bee second team All Metro selection ... credited with 50 tackles in 2007, including 35 solo tackles and 15 assisted tackles ... averaged 4.5 yards per game ... had two sacks on the season and was credited with two fumble recoveries ... recruited by UC Davis, Sacramento State, Weber State, and Utah State.

Jake Murphy, Wide Receiver, 6-5, 215, American Fork High School, American Fork, UT—A Salt Lake Tribune 5A First Team All State selection ... earned Deseret Morning News 5A First Team All State honors ... an All Utah Valley selection ... credited with 13 touchdown receptions as a senior ... had a team-leading 41 receptions ... totaled three receptions for 88 yards in American Fork's win over Hunter in the 5A semifinals ... defensively had three interceptions, including two returned for touchdowns ... totaled 30 receptions for 530 yards and eight TD's as a junior at American Fork HS ... plans to serve a church mission before enrolling to BYU ... son of future Major League Baseball Hall of Famer Dale Murphy ... recruited by Arizona State, California, Oregon, Stanford, USC and Utah State

Garett Nicholson, Defensive Back, 5-10, 180, West High School, Salt Lake City, UT—A Salt Lake Tribune 4A First Team All State selection ... helped lead West HS to the state playoffs, playing both offense and defense and as a kick returner ... rushed for 1,071 yards and 10 touchdowns as a senior ... clocked at 10.85 in the 100 meters ... father, Trey, played at Oregon State ... recruited by California, Colorado, Louisville and Utah.

Seta Pohahau, Running Back, 5-11, 205, Aragon High School, San Mateo, CA—Named the Palo Alto Daily News Player of the Year ... selected as Peninsula Athletic League Bay Division Offensive Player of the Year as both a junior and senior ... rushed for 1,927 yards, scoring 21 touchdowns as a senior ... credited with 23 tackles for loss, including 11 sacks ... totaled two interceptions and two blocked field goals ... a three-year varsity player for coach Steve Sell ... totaled approximately 4,000 career rushing yards at Aragon ... recruited by Arizona, California, Colorado, Oregon and Utah.

Iona Pritchard, Linebacker, 6-0, 220, Bingham High School, South Jordan, UT—A Deseret Morning News

~~5A First-Team All-State selection ... credited with 88 tackles and six QB hurries as a senior ... totaled 72 tackles as a junior, including 21 solos ... under head coach Dave Peck, helped lead the Miners to an 11-2 record, including a trip to the championship game ... finished with a perfect 5-0 record and a first place finish in the Region 3 standings ... a member of the 2006 5A State Championship team that went 14-0 ... recruited by Boise State, Oregon, UNLV, California, Oregon State and Stanford.~~

~~**Daniel Sorensen, Defensive Back, 6-2, 195, Colton High School, Colton, CA** Earned first-team all-conference honors on both offense and defense as a senior ... had 17 punts on the season, averaging 47.8 yards per punt to earn first-team all-league honors as a punter as well ... helped lead the Yellow Jackets to an 8-4 record and a trip to the state semifinals ... credited with 87 tackles, including 62 solo tackles ... credited with a team-leading 23 pass deflections and four QB hurries ... tied for the team lead with five interceptions ... totaled 82 tackles and seven interceptions in 2006 ... earned first-team all-league honors and second-team all-state honors as a junior ... cousin of future BYU teammate Justin Sorensen ... recruited by Boston College, Washington, Arizona State, Duke, Nebraska, Ole Miss, USC, UCLA and Colorado.~~

~~**Justin Sorensen, Kicker, 6-2, 220, Bingham High School, South Jordan, UT** A 2007 Parade All-American ... a 2007 Salt Lake Tribune 5A First-Team All-State selection ... earned Deseret Morning News 2007 5A First-Team All-State honors ... a U.S. Army All-American ... Utah Gatorade Player of the Year ... a two-time all-state and all-region selection ... holds the state high school record for PAT's, FG's (28) and the longest field goal in state history (current BYU record is 56 yards) ... a 62-yarder ... connected on field goals of 59 and 51 yards to help Bingham to a 23-20 win over Alta early in the season ... missed one PAT all season, going 54-for-55 during the year ... credited with 88 kickoffs during the season, recording 81 touchbacks ... had a season-long kickoff of 85 yards ... totaled 30 punts on the season, averaging 41.53 per punt ... totaled 17 punts that landed inside the 20-yard line ... ranked as one of the top high school kickers in the nation ... as a junior, recorded 96 kickoffs with 81 touchbacks ... averaged kickoff was 70 yards.~~

~~**Broek Stringham, Offensive Line, 6-6, 280, Mountain Vista High School, Highlands Ranch, CO** Selected as a member of the Denver Post 2007 All-Colorado offensive team ... twice named the MVHS offensive player of the week during the 2007 season ... a two-time all-conference recipient ... selected to play in the Colorado all-star game ... helped lead the Golden Eagles to an 8-3 record before losing to Bear Creek in the second round of the state playoffs ... recruited by USC, Stanford, Kansas State, Colorado, Colorado State and UNLV.~~

~~**Jesse Taufi, Offensive Line, 6-5, 320, Long Beach City College, Long Beach, CA** Served an LDS Church mission to Fort Lauderdale, Florida ... anchored an offensive unit that averaged 317.8 yards per game ... named to the Rivals.com Junior College Top 100 ... prepped at Long Beach's Carson HS ... earned all-city honors as an offensive lineman at Carson HS ... cousin of current BYU defensive lineman Russell Tialavea ... recruited by USC, Washington and UNLV.~~

~~**Shiloah Te'o, Defensive Back, 5-11, 195, Kahuku High School, Laie, HI** A 2007 Honolulu Star-Bulletin First-Team All-State selection as both a junior and senior ... First-Team All-State selection by The Honolulu Advertiser as both a junior and senior ... named Oahu Interscholastic Association Red-East Division Defensive Player of the Year ... threw game-winning 43-yard TD pass as time expired to help Kahuku win the 2006 state championship ... ranked as the 4th best prospect in the state of Hawaii by Rivals.com ... recruited by Utah, Hawaii and UNLV.~~

~~**Michael Yeek, Offensive Line, 6-7, 260, Keller High School, Keller, TX** Earned 5A All-District 1 honors under head coach Kevin Atkinson ... named to Dallas Morning News Top 100 ... anchored an offensive line that averaged over 300 yards per game ... allowed just two sacks all season ... plans to serve a church mission before enrolling to BYU ... received interest from Oklahoma ... recruited by Kansas State, Utah, Kansas, Missouri, Arizona and New Mexico.~~

BYU ALONE IN FIRST PLACE IN MWC

Thanks to a timely 83-72 win over TCU Wednesday night in the Marriott Center and a UNLV loss to Utah in Salt Lake City the same evening, BYU now finds itself all alone atop the MWC basketball standings with a 7-1 league record.

UNLV slips into a two-way tie for second place with San Diego State. The Aztecs and Rebels both have 6-2 records.

The Cougars, who are 18-5 overall, have now won six consecutive conference games. Their latest victory was accomplished without much scoring from Lee Cummond, who is BYU's leading scorer. He was held to just 4 points and had just 4 shots in the game.

Trent Plaisted led all scorers with 27 points. He was 7-of-9 from the free throw line, which is a marked improvement from his earlier outings at the charity stripe. Jonathan Tavernari added 20 points to the Cougar cause.

The Cougars will not play until next Wednesday when they travel to Colorado State to face the Rams in the second go-round of conference action.

BYU will get Air Force, Utah, Wyoming and UNLV at home during their last eight games and face road games against New Mexico, SDSU, TCU in addition to the upcoming CSU contest in Fort Collins.

TELEVISION TIMETABLE

BYU vs. Colorado State

Wednesday, Feb. 13 at Fort Collins

Tipoff: 7:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: none

BYU vs. UNLV

Saturday, Feb. 16 at Provo

Tipoff: 7:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: CSTV

BYU vs. Utah

Wednesday, Feb. 20 at Provo

Tipoff: 8:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: Mtn

Rebroadcasts

Here is a list of games that will be rebroadcast in the Utah Market only on KBYU:

BYU-Utah: Saturday, Feb. 23, 10:00 pm

BYU-New Mexico: Saturday, Mar. 1, 11:00 pm

BYU-Wyoming: Saturday, Mar 8, 11:30 pm

BYU-TCU: Wednesday, Mar. 12, 10:30 pm