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Cougars 41 Georgia Tech 17

BYU Beats the “Dickens” out of Georgia Tech

Charles Dickens had no idea that he was a gifted sportswriter.

It was 153 years ago that the famous English literary giant described BYU's current football season more accurately than anything that could have been penned by any sportswriter. That includes Grantland Rice, Red Barber, Jim Murray or even current Sports Illustrated writer Rick Reilly.

Dickens dished it out in *A Tale of Two Cities* and told it the way it is with Bronco Mendenhall's current Cougars when he said, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times; it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness; it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity; it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness; it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair; we had everything before us, we had nothing before us; we were all going directly to Heaven, we were all going the other way."

BYU's 41-17 "Dickens" of a defeat of Georgia Tech last Saturday in Atlanta reminded me of just how special many of us thought this season of light would be in August. It also reminded me of just how dark it became because of some coaching incredulity and foolishness.

It was nothing but the best of times for BYU against Georgia Tech. As a matter of fact, things were so good that it reminded me of just how bad BYU was when coaching decisions earlier in the year were the worst we have seen in decades.

Best of Times

Riley Nelson played well for the second week in a row. He had a hiccup and interception early, but overall led the BYU offense to the win. He again missed at least 3 wide open receivers, but as a healthy quarterback was plenty good enough to get the victory and move the Cougars to 5-4 on the season.

He had good numbers. He was 19-28 for 204 yards and 1 touchdown passing the ball. He also had a nice 10-yard touchdown run.

Worst of Times

You just can't dismiss the not hitting open receivers and hitting defensive backs in the hands. Anyway you cut it Nelson's touchdown-to-interception ratio this season is atrocious. It will get better with the remaining cupcake games this season, but Nelson did not have the kind of senior season that other prominent senior BYU quarterbacks have turned in.

Best of Times

What Bronco Mendenhall has done as a defensive coordinator this season is amazing. What he did against Georgia Tech and their prolific ground game is stupefying. Tech had been averaging in the high 300's on the ground this entire season.

BYU's defense held the Yellow Jackets to just 117 yards on the ground. The also denied GT zero third down conversions. Paul Johnson's offense went 0-10 in the game.

The best Georgia Tech drive came as a result of three consecutive BYU personal foul penalties. All the Jackets could manage was a field goal. It was the only points produced by the Tech offense.

Worst of Times

That would have to be the 270 yards put on BYU on the ground the previous week against Notre Dame. Worst became a lot more relative, however, when we saw that ND also put up 200 plus yards on the ground against Oklahoma last Saturday.

Best of Times

Riley Nelson is showing that when healthy BYU can win games and be productive on offense, even with his accuracy liabilities.

Worst of Times

It remains to be told if it was Nelson's stubbornness in wanting to play hurt or Mendenhall's stubbornness in not wanting to disappoint Nelson in his dream, but Dickens nailed it on the two losses to Utah and Boise State as it related to quarterback play when he said, "it was the age of foolishness; it was the epoch of incredulity; it was the season of Darkness; it was the winter of despair; we had everything before us,

Best of Times

Taysom Hill showed that he is a big time Division I quarterback and the future at that position for BYU beginning next season.

Worst of Times

You know the story. It was the Tale of Two Knees. Hill should have taken one, instead he wrecked it.

Best of Times

J.D. Falsev was spectacular last week returning kickoffs. He had three against Georgia Tech for 129 yards and an average of 43 yards per try. It was a major impact on the outcome of the game.

Worst of Times

It took BYU special teams' coaches 6 games to figure out that Falsev was better than Joe Sampson returning kicks.

Best of Times

Jamaal Williams is the real deal. He sealed that deal against Georgia Tech with 4 touchdowns, 107 yards rushing on 28 carries and 39 yards receiving.

Worst of Times

I printed this about Jamaal Williams on Sept 10 after two games into the season when he was averaging about three carries a game

BYU has good running backs, but most of them are not intuitive and instinctive runners. They use power, hard work and grit to gain yardage, but they are not physically tooled to see a crease and get to it and through it.

Unfortunately, most of those instinctive and intuitive backs are at the big BCS schools and in the NFL.

The good news is that BYU may have a back like that in Jamaal Williams. He won't play much until later this season, but there is a reason that he is already averaging 5.2 yards per carry in mop up action. Go back and watch his carries and see if you see gaping holes that he is running through. He sees creases and gets to and through them.

Georgia Tech Broadcasters also saw Williams' ability to see a crease and get to it and through it. They were very complimentary of the freshman running back.

The worst of times moments come when you have to wonder about BYU coaches' abilities to recognize talent and get it on the field.

I am convinced that Williams would still be getting 3-4 carries a game if not for the unfortunate arm break of Michael Alisa. That certainly was the worst of times for Alisa personally. Unfortunately, his best of times as a starting running back may be gone with the emergence of Williams.

Best of Times

Brandon Doman is on a hot streak as an offensive coordinator. Who knows why, but he is now calling some good games. He has been on point beginning with Oregon State, then Notre Dame and now Georgia Tech. Some defensive lapses and interceptions cost two losses in those three games, but Doman is rebounding quite nicely, in my opinion.

Worst of Times

It wasn't too long ago when Nitro, Grit, and quarterback draw were nasty words in a BYU football fan's vocabulary.

Best of Times

Georgia Tech is certainly not Alabama, but after watching BYU destroy a name brand team with a team of its own that looked very talented, I can at least understand the sometime National Championship references thrown out by Bronco Mendenhall.

Worst of Times

The continuing conundrum of player personnel and evaluation decisions and total lack of game management skills in some games, still makes me chuckle when Mendenhall mentions National Championships.

Best of Times

According to a recent piece in *Sports Illustrated*, BYU should have three players selected in this April's NFL draft.

Here is what Tony Pauline said on Oct 27 in his Risers and Sliders article in SI regarding the NFL Draft.

Risers

Ezekiel Ansah/OLB-DE/BYU: Ansah, the former track athlete from Ghana we spoke of in Week 4, is quickly transferring his athleticism onto the football field and is flying up draft boards. He's shown improvement on a weekly basis and stood out during the Cougars' victory over Georgia Tech, leading the team with eight tackles and helping to hold the lethal Yellow Jacket offense to 17 points and 12 first downs. For the season, he's registered 44 tackles -- including 11 tackles for loss -- as well as five pass defenses. Ansah needed assistance on how to properly put on his football equipment when he joined the BYU football team in 2010. There's now talk in the scouting community he could be the surprise pick of Round 1 in April.

Notes

- BYU has been the surprise of the scouting community thus far in 2012. Entering the season with a pair of seniors graded as late-round picks, the Cougars now have three players who are considered top-90 selections. Besides Ezekiel Ansah, the senior defender previously mentioned as a potential first-round pick, junior linebacker Kyle Van Noy presently grades as a second rounder and offensive lineman Braden Brown is receiving third-round consideration.

Worst of Times

BYU had zero. zip, nada, nobody drafted by the NFL last season.

Bowl Game with San Diego State a Done Deal

San Diego State has done its job .Now it's up to BYU to do its part in the deal.

I am referring to the Poinsettia Bowl set for Dec. 20 in San Diego.

The Aztecs of SDSU and Rocky Long made themselves bowl eligible this past Saturday with a 24-13 win at home against UNLV. The Aztecs are now 6-3 on the year with three games remaining against Boise State this Saturday in Boise, Air Force in San Diego and Wyoming in Laramie to close out the regular season.

BYU is already set for a Poinsettia Bowl appearance as long as they can get a sixth win. That shouldn't be that difficult for the Cougars with Idaho, San Jose State and New Mexico still on tap.

The Cougars get a bye week and then face the Vandals of Idaho in Provo on November 10.

The SDSU matchup with BYU is almost a guarantee. Bowl officials want to sell tickets. BYU will do their part and San Diego State should be able to draw as they won't have to travel.

This will be a matchup of former colleagues in Rocky Long and Bronco Mendenhall. The game will have even greater meaning, however, because San Diego fans and followers are still bitter about what they refer to as "replay gate".

They still talk about it on radio shows. It involved a fumble by J.J. DiLuigi of BYU against the Aztecs in Provo two years ago. The problem arose when replay officials didn't call the fumble a fumble and SDSU ending up losing to the Cougars.

The bitterness grew in San Diego because one of the replay officials was a BYU employee.

Ring a bell now? The bells and bitterness in San Diego have never stopped ringing.

The Poinsettia Bowl can probably bank on at least another thousand tickets sold to SDSU fans that just want to boo BYU for what they consider an injustice that proves they have been right to hate BYU for the last two decades.

Rose Needs an Abouo Answer

This basketball season for Dave Rose and BYU isn't hard to figure out.

The leading scorer for the Cougars will be Brandon Davies. He will be followed by Tyler Haws.

Haws will pick up the missing points from Noah Hartsock. Davies will improve on his points per game last year.

Matt Carlino will not score as much, but the overall guard line will. This is a much, much better perimeter shooting team. If Carlino gets out of control like he did during some games last season, BYU has answers to replace him and settle him down.

The unanswered question is where will the points come from to replace Charles Abouo?

The likely answer will be two fold. If Josh Sharp and juco transfer Agostino Ambrosino can come up with 11 points per game between them, then this team will be hard to beat.

Much has been made about the departures of Chris Collinsworth and Stephen Rogers because of injuries.

You can't miss what was already missing last year. Neither was a contributor and counted on last season because of health issues. Both provided a little depth, but neither was going to be a factor this season.

Davies is a force. He will have to be double teamed in the post. That means there will be games when he will be held in check.

Last year, the go to guy was Hartsock. This year, in my opinion, the go to guy will be Tyler Haws.

When BYU needs a basket, look for Haws to get it.

This should be a great year again for BYU basketball, but as good as BYU has been during the last 5 seasons, the best years are just around the corner. As soon as this new missionary system gets established and implemented, look out.

Women Continue Winning Ways

The BYU women's soccer and volleyball teams continue their strong play in WCC action.

In soccer, the women improved their season record to 16-1-1 overall and 5-0-1 in WCC play. That is good for first place in the league standings. BYU finished their regular season home season with a 5-0 shutout of St. Mary's last Saturday afternoon.

BYU will finish the regular season with two road contests at LMU and at No. 18 Pepperdine. BYU is currently ranked No. 5 in the nation and is hoping that their nice record and season will let them host some early round NCAA playoff games in Provo.

In volleyball, the women are currently tied for first place in WCC play with San Diego. Both teams are at 9-2. San Diego is ranked No. 14 and BYU No. 18. BYU is 21-2 overall

The two teams, BYU and San Diego will meet this Wednesday in Provo in a match televised nationally on ESPNU. The match begins at 8 pm Mountain Time.

Television Timetable

BYU vs. Findlay (B-Ball)

Saturday, Nov 3 at Provo

Tipoff: 7:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: BYUtv

BYE (Football)

Saturday, Nov 3

BYU vs. Tennessee State (B-Ball)

Friday, Nov 9 at Provo

Tipoff: 7:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. Idaho (F-Ball)

Saturday, Nov 10 at Provo

Kickoff: 8:15 pm Mountain Time

TV: Most likely BYUtv

BYU vs. Georgia State (B-Ball)

Tuesday, Nov 13 at Provo

Tipoff: 7:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. Florida State (B-Ball)

Friday, Nov 16 at Brooklyn

Tipoff: TBA

TV: truTV

BYU vs. San Jose State (F-Ball)

Saturday, Nov 17 at San Jose

Kickoff: 2:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: ESPNU and ESPN3

BYU vs. Notre Dame or Saint Joseph's (B-Ball)

Saturday, Nov 17 at Brooklyn

Tipoff: TBA

TV: truTV

BYU vs. UT-San Antonio (B-Ball)

Wednesday, Nov 21 at Provo

Tipoff: 7:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. New Mexico State (F-Ball)

Saturday, Nov. 24 at Las Cruces

Kickoff: 1:30 pm Mountain Time

TV:ESPNU and ESPN3

BYU vs. Cal State Northridge (B-Ball)

Saturday, Nov 24 at Provo

Tipoff: 7:00 pm

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. Montana (B-Ball)

Wednesday, Nov 28 at Salt Lake City

Tipoff: 7:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: BYUtv