

HB Arnett's

COUGAR SPORTSLINE

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BASKETBALL BRIEFS

LATE-GAME LEAD...BYU was unable to hold on to a late-game lead against Utah in Salt Lake City last week. The Cougars lost 94-88 in overtime to the Utes.

The Cougars couldn't contain Luke Nevill, the 7-2 center for the Utes. He scorched BYU with 32 points.

Lee Cummard led the Cougars with 23 points and Jimmer Fredette added 21 in the loss.

BYU rebounded from the loss with a blowout of Wyoming in Provo, four days later.

The Cougars ran away from the Pokes with an easy 84-60 win.

Fredette led all scorers with a career high 28 points. He was on fire from the field hitting on 11-of-13 shots, including 4-of-6 from beyond the arc. BYU is now 16-5 overall and 4-3 in conference action.

The Cougars are sitting in second place in the league standings and tied with New Mexico and TCU.

UNLV, San Diego State and Utah are all tied for first place with 5-2 records.

SCORER AND SCHOLAR...You can't be a scorer unless you are at least a semi-scholar. There are plenty of extremely talented athletes who never get to show their wares in college because they don't have the academics to get into school and allow it to happen.

That usually means junior college is the next step from high school.

Brandon Davies, a recent BYU basketball signee, certainly has the skills, now he reportedly just has to concentrate on scholarship to make sure that he can showcase those skills at the next level at BYU. Academics have been a concern for many schools involved in the recruiting process for Davies.

By BYU signing Davies, it would seem to indicate that they think he will be fine and able to enroll next fall.

Hopefully that is true because the Cougars can use the 6-11 post man and his skills on the low block.

We don't know if it is a red flag or a red herring, but a week ago, Davies did not play in a game against Tooele. Provo HS won easily without him.

He didn't miss the game because he was injured.

He did suit up for the next contest against Springville and erupted for a game high 26 points against the Red Devils.

TITLE HOPES...If BYU hopes to secure an outright title or piece of it, they will have to win at least six of the final eight games of the conference season.

Assuming a win over Air Force on Tuesday night of this week, BYU will finish the first go around of

conference play with a 5-3 record.

They will have to be 6-2 or better for the second half of the league season.

BYU should be able to protect its home court with games against Air Force, Colorado State, New Mexico and Utah.

The remaining four road games include contests at UNLV, San Diego State, TCU and Wyoming.

The odds are against the Cougars winning in Las Vegas and San Diego. That makes the games at Fort Worth and Laramie must win contests if the Cougars hope to have a chance at the league crown.

OK, NOW WE SEE

Now we see.

While BYU was reeling off early season wins and looking like an NCAA tournament team, we still wondered why Dave Rose didn't redshirt Noah Hartsock.

The 6-9 freshman was literally just weeks off an LDS mission and really not in any shape physically to be able to play Division I basketball when the season started in November.

After watching Hartsock hold his own against national-caliber front court players in AAU games during the summer before starting his senior season at Bartlesville HS in Oklahoma, we could see that he could play and play well.

We just didn't expect him to play weeks after a mission and were sure that he would redshirt after enrolling as a freshman.

In our opinion, playing Hartsock, when he wasn't ready physically, was just wasting a year of eligibility.

To make matters worse, even after burning a year in the early games, Hartsock really couldn't play himself into shape when he sprained an ankle and missed almost a month of action.

Now after 20-plus games, we can finally understand and see what Rose saw.

Knew Better

What the BYU head coach knew better than anyone is that his post play was poor and he would need something or someone to help him reel in Jonathan Tavernari.

Hartsock played 21 minutes in the BYU win over Wyoming this past weekend in Provo.

He scored 11 points on 4-of-5 shooting, was 3-of-5 from the line, pulled down 4 rebounds and tallied one assist, one block and one steal.

Those are nice numbers, but more importantly, he showed the 15-foot jumper and the nice up-and-under low-post move that made him a scoring machine in high school and on the AAU national circuit.

One game doesn't make Hartsock a hero or a star, but it finally did unveil what Rose has known all along. With Hartsock, he actually will have an inside scorer he can count on.

If Utah State can currently stand 21-1 with front court players Gary Wilkinson and Tai Wesley, both of whom BYU passed on when it came to recruiting, Hartsock, finally may be showing one of the reasons that BYU did pass on both Aggie scorers.

What Hartsock brings to the table for Rose and his coaching decisions during the stretch run of this season is a true four man.

Forced

Jonathan Tavernari has been forced into that role. The Brazilian certainly has been an integral part of BYU's successful season with his overall play and spectacular, but streaky, shooting skills.

When Tavernari is hot, he is white hot. When he isn't, his shot selection is sometimes less than spectacular.

Hot or cold, with the ball in Tavernari's hand, you can count on it going up early and often.

For the season, Tavernari is shooting the ball once every 2.1 minutes he is on the floor. In comparison, Lee Cumard is launching a shot for every 2.7 minutes he logs in a game. The other three starters' shots per minute show Jimmer Fredette at a 2.8 clip, Chris Miles at 4.76 and Jackson Emery at a shot for every 4.8 minutes he plays.

In our opinion, the problem Rose has had all season is that he hasn't had anybody or any thing with which to reel in Tavernari when the shots are going up, but not in.

Reel In

If Hartsock can become a consistent contributor at the four spot, then after an early-game heat check on Tavernari and his outside shooting, Rose now has options in reeling in Tavernari and letting him rest on the bench or giving him more line and latitude in launching his three pointers.

That said, we feel sorry for Hartsock.

The last time we praised a young player for his promise was early in the season when we said that James Anderson looked good.

After writing that, he never got off the bench in the next six games.

Hopefully, Hartsock won't follow suit, but can be a factor in the closing six weeks of the season.

IF YOU LIKE BEER, TAKE UP SWIMMING

Based on what we read and heard this past week, it would appear that the BYU Honor Code was made exclusively for the BYU football team.

Bronco Mendenhall has purposefully branded BYU football as a program that is special and different and has proclaimed that his program is the flag bearer of the university. That makes it high profile.

That is why a recent alleged infraction of the honor code by members of the current football team and others who could have joined the team, was spread across newspapers, air waves and internet message boards non-stop last week.

All reports we get is that it involved some drinking of beer.

That certainly is a no-no at BYU and against the honor code.

Coors for Cougars or BYU Bud is unsubstantiated. The brand of beer that was consumed has not been ascertained, but you would be hard pressed to find many Cougar football fans and BYU football haters who don't have a good idea of the names of the players and potential recruits that were allegedly involved in the brewski brouhaha.

Quick, what were the names of the three BYU swimmers who recently ran afoul of the honor code and law when they allegedly borrowed a woman's purse, credit card and car, without her permission.

Unless you are family, friend or a member of the same ward, without going to the internet, you can't remember those names and more importantly, don't care.

Give us the names of the other BYU athletes who have been booted from school or disciplined by the Honor Code from programs other than men's football and basketball.

Recite the names of BYU women athletes who have been booted from BYU.

Didn't think you could.

Profile is the point.

It doesn't get any higher than BYU football.

If you are going to brand yourself as special in your conduct and play on the field, you darn well better be.

The Marines and Mendenhall are both looking for a few good men. The leathernecks' recruiting pool consists of an entire nation. BYU and Bronco have painted themselves into a recruiting corner with its very public profile and job description of a BYU football player.

If you can't take the heat of the honor code when you sign on the dotted line as a player, then stay out of the kitchen and Keystone beer or take up swimming.

The same goes for fans. If you can't take the code and consequences of the overall lesser caliber of talent said code implies and imports for the program, take up swimming and supporting another team.

In marriage and relationships, it is better to be happy than right. When it comes to being a fan of BYU football which includes the honor code, you won't always be happy, but you will always be right.

RECRUITING, FACT OR FICTION?

National letter-of-intent signing day for football is Wednesday, February 4. That is a fact.

BYU will sign 20-plus players to those binding letters. Another fact.

All of those signees will be good to great college football players. That most certainly is fiction.

The cold hard fact of football recruiting for not only BYU, but all colleges, is that schools will be lucky if a third of the class signed, turns out to be contributors to the program.

BYU bases its recruiting around the LDS prospect. That is a definite fact. BYU gets all of the very best LDS prospects is fiction at its finest.

BYU has a hard time luring the top-notch LDS high school football players to come and play in Provo. That has been a fact and was definitely a fact this year.

As a matter of fact, they missed on their last three hopes for top-rated LDS players.

Manti Te'o, the big-time linebacker from Hawaii, turned down the Cougars. Xavier Su'a Filo, the talented and nationally recognized offensive lineman from Timpview HS in Provo, won't be putting his name on BYU's line.

L.T. Filiaga, another LDS linebacker from Bingham HS in Salt Lake, has also told the Cougars no and will be signing with Utah. We also expect Su'a Filo to sign with Utah and look for USC to nap Te'o.

Fact or Fiction?

Here are a couple of other bits of fact or fiction.

BYU struck out in the recruitment of LDS players. Absolutely fiction.

BYU didn't have a final feast on LDS prospects, but they will do quite nicely living off their football food storage of prospects that committed several months, and in some cases, several years ago.

In recruiting reporting, it is about the latest headline. BYU's latest headlines entail missing on the last three LDS prospects.

That means that the Cougars might have missed dessert, but they certainly didn't miss their meal ticket for the future when they sign early LDS commits like Craig Bills, Adam Timo (he has officially changed his last name to Hine), Richard Wilson, Terry Alletto, and Brett Thompson. These guys could have played in any league in the country. That is a fact.

One part of that recruiting meal has been regurgitated. Riley Nelson signed with Utah State, went on an LDS mission to Spain and BYU is still fighting off Utah State for his signature. Both Bronco Mendenhall and new Utah State coach Gary Anderson made in-home visits to the Nelson family last week in Logan.

As much as fans bagged on Max Hall for his few letdowns in a couple of games, without him, BYU would have only won 5 games at most.

BYU needs good to great quarterbacks. Hall gives them that and Nelson, in our opinion, will be better than Hall. That is a fact.

Mystery

There is always a chance for a mystery recruit or sleeper that will make this class great. Fiction. There

is very little difference between sleepers and walkons.

Utah took BYU to the cleaners in LDS recruiting this year. Fiction, fiction, fiction. Quite frankly, there is very little difference between the two programs and recruiting when it comes to LDS prospects.

Most LDS signees are a dime a dozen. That is not derogatory, but a numbers commentary on the increased volume of LDS prospects. BYU and Utah will get their share.

The Cougars will sign plenty of top rated LDS players. Utah will do the same, the rest of the LDS bunch for both teams are just about the same. It is just a matter of how much beauty is in the eye of the beholders.

Where the Utes have made big inroads and big strides over BYU is with the non-LDS player.

They get much better non LDS prospects with much more speed and athleticism than BYU can attract.

The good news is that the non-LDS recruits that Utah lands are still second and third tier BCS conference recruits. That has always been a fact, still is a fact and always will be a fact unless Utah gets to join one of those BCS conferences.

Here is another fact. BYU has one more commitment to add to their list. Brian Logan, a 5-9, 180 pound juco cornerback from Foothill College in Los Altos, Calif., told Cougar coaches that he would be signing with BYU on Wednesday.

He originally had an offer from San Diego State, but had that offer rescinded when the Aztecs made a coaching change in December.

Here is the latest BYU commitment list:

Terry Alletto, OL, 6-3, 260, Ponderosa HS, CO
Trevor Bateman, DB, 5-11, 180, Palm Desert HS, CA
Craig Bills, DB, 6-2, 205, Timpview HS, UT
Thomas Bryson, DE/LB, 6-3, 215, Layton HS, UT
Tui Crichton, OL, 6-4, 280, Timpview HS, UT
Jray Galea'i, DB, 6-0, 175, Kahuku HS, HI
Anthony Heimuli, RB, 5-11, 225, Mountain View HS, UT
Cody Hoffman, WR, 6-3, 210, Del Norte HS, CA
Brian Logan, DB, 5-9, 180, Foothill CC, CA
Peni Maka'afi, RB, 5-10, 215, Layton HS, UT
Mitch Mathews, WR, 6-5, 195, Southridge HS, OR
Ryan Mulitalo, OL, 6-3, 285, Hunter HS, UT
Riley Nelson, QB, 6-1, 190, transfer from Utah State
Remington Peck, TE/LB, 6-5, 215, Bingham HS, UT
Brett Thompson, WR, 6-3, 210, Oak Ridge HS, CA
Adam Timo (Hine), RB, 6-1, 190, Snow Canyon HS, UT
Fono Vakalahi, OL, 6-4, 320, Bryan HS, TX
Kyle Van Noy, LB, 6-4, 215, McQueen HS, NV
Brad Wilcox, OL, 6-7, 240, North HS, OK
Richard Wilson, TE, 6-3, 225, Spanish Fork HS, UT

TELEVISION TIMETABLE

BYU vs. Air Force

Tuesday, Feb 3 at USAFA

Tipoff: 6:00 pm Mountain time

TV: Mtn

BYU vs. Colorado State

Wednesday, Feb 11 at Provo
Tipoff: 6:00 pm Mountain Time
TV: Mtn

BYU vs. TCU

Saturday, Feb 14 at Fort Worth
Tipoff: 5:30 pm Mountain Time
TV: Mtn