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Vol. 28, Issue 38 May 5, 2008

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PLAISTED SHOULD HAVE LAST LAUGH

By now you should know that BYU juniors Trent Plaisted and Lee Cummond have submitted their names for early entry into the upcoming NBA draft.

Neither have hired an agent and have until June 16 do withdraw from consideration from the draft and return to college for their final year of eligibility.

Plaisted made his his early-entry intentions first and Cummond followed a few weeks later.

Here is what Chad Ford of *ESPN* said about the BYU early entries in this year's draft:

"Cummond is an excellent shooter and an all around good player, but he's dreaming if he thinks he's going to be able to crack the first round. Cummond is a possible late second round pick. More likely, he goes undrafted."

"Plaisted has the size and athleticism to succeed in the NBA, but he still battles inconsistency - he had a promising freshman season, a disappointing sophomore season and an up-and-down junior season. Right now, he's on the first-round bubble, but with strong workouts he could be a mid-to-late first-round pick."

We have been a little puzzled by the reaction from BYU basketball fans and followers about the decision by both players, especially Plaisted.

He has taken heat and hits from many who castigate him for even thinking he can land on an NBA roster and heaven forbid, draw a professional paycheck.

Almost everybody who is a BYU fan is a scout and doesn't mind sharing their evaluation of the 6-11, 245 pound lefthander. The consensus rap on Plaisted is that he can't shoot, has no face up offensive game, and can't shoot free throws.

We don't claim to be a scout and we couldn't care less about Plaisted and his free throw shooting.

We can read, however, and just spent a few hours going over current NBA rosters, and came away convinced that while Plaisted may not be a first round draft pick, we would be surprised if he is not on an NBA roster next year. If he isn't, he should still be under contract to an NBA team and playing in the D league.

Let's start with provincial professionals first.

Here are some names that we found on current NBA rosters. These are guys that Plaisted has competed against in MWC play and fared well when matched up with them.

Before we get into the Mountain West Conference, Lance Allred, a 6-11, 250 pound post player, is

currently on the Cleveland Cavalier roster and still playing in the NBA playoffs.

Allred started at Utah, but finished up his college career at Weber State.

There are three front court players from the Mountain West Conference that Plaisted has already played against and held his own when facing them in game action.

They include Louis Amundson, the 6-9, 225 pounder from UNLV. Amundson and his Philadelphia Sixers were just eliminated from the playoffs by the Detroit Pistons. He averaged just 2.5 points per game and 2.5 rebounds in the playoffs, but his paycheck was a much higher number.

Joel Anthony, a 6-9, 230 pound rookie for the Miami Heat, played three times against Plaisted two seasons ago when he was at UNLV. He averaged 3.5 points and 3.9 rebounds this past season as a rookie for the Heat.

In the three head-to-head match ups between Anthony and Plaisted during the 2006-2007 season, here is how the stats shook out between the two:

Game 1...Plaisted, 13 points, 9 rebounds - Anthony, 2 points, 3 rebounds.

Game 2...Plaisted, 11 points, 9 rebounds - Anthony, 12 points, 5 rebounds.

Game 3...Plaisted, 7 points, 3 rebounds - Anthony, 6 points, 3 rebounds.

Anthony was not selected in last year's draft, but made the Miami roster as a free agent. He made \$427,000 this past season.

During the same 2006-07 season when Plaisted was a sophomore and Jason Smith was a junior at CSU, here are how the two head-to-head match ups came out. Smith was a first round pick last year by the Philadelphia 76ers. As a first round pick, Smith earned \$1,028,200 last year and has a two-year guaranteed contract.

Game 1...Plaisted, 27 points, 4 rebounds - Smith, 16 points, 6 rebounds

Game 2...Plaisted,, 8 points, 2 rebounds - Smith, 20 points, 11 rebounds.

Yep, Plaisted is crazy to try and pursue the NBA money when he already has a college degree and can come back to BYU and get a few hundred dollars in scholarship stipend per month to try and support himself and a wife.

Give an example of any other recent BYU graduate that even has a chance to sniff \$400,000 plus per year just out of college.

The back up plan for Plaisted isn't bad either. If the NBA doesn't want him, he will be "forced" to work for a couple of hundred thousand dollars in Europe next year.

How could he be so dumb to forego his senior season at BYU?

In defense of those dissing Plaisted for trying to cash an NBA paycheck, we agree that he will never be a Kevinn Garnett, Pau Gasol, or Tim Duncan, but he could very well become another Duane Jones, Steven Hunter, Jeff Foster, Paul Davis, James Augustine or Spencer Hawes.

All of the aforementioned players are post men currently playing in the NBA. Look them up on the NBA.com website and the possibility of Plaisted playing in the NBA next year becomes much more probable than most think.

More NBA and BYU Comparisons

The Lopez twins (Brook and Robin) are both projected to be taken in the upcoming NBA draft. Here is what ESPN's Chris Ford had to say about them. Both are early entries coming out of Stanford.

"Brook Lopez has the physical tools and offensive abilities to be an excellent NBA player. He has

great size, length and above average athleticism. He's an effective scorer in the paint and can stretch the defense away from the basket. Right now he projects as the top center in the draft and a potential Top 5 pick."

"Robin Lopez is more athletic and has a better motor than his brother. He's an active rebounder and excellent shot-blocker. He lacks any real polish on the offensive end of the floor, but he has improved in that area this season. Right now teams see him as a defensive stopper in the Anderson Varejao mold. He's probably a late first to early second-round pick."

Chad Ford of ESPN hasn't seen Noah Hartsock, the 6-9 incoming freshman who will be enrolling after serving an LDS mission to Sandy, but we have.

As a matter of fact, we saw him go head to head against the Lopez twins three summers ago in Las Vegas. Thanks to an assortment of up-and-under moves, fade away jumpers and strong drop steps to the basket, Hartsock dropped 27 points on the Lopez twins and their EBO AAU team from Fresno. Hartsock also was able to drift out to the three point line and also knock down shots.

EBO eventually wore down Hartsock's Oklahoma Stars AAU team, but we saw enough to predict that Hartsock will be a front court scoring machine for the Cougars.

Just when that happens will be decided by how soon he can get in shape and learn to play defense.

We still have Hartsock as the surprise sleeper for Dave Rose next season, with or without Plaisted and Cumnard.

BYU BASKETBALL NOT BIG TIME YET

It has nothing to do with wins and losses and everything to do with planes.

BYU made a step forward in competition with the basketball big boys last season when they chartered planes for several road trips instead of flying commercially.

That was nice, but not enough to match how the big name coaches get around during this spring evaluation period.

Last month during the weekend of April 18-20, BYU had some of their top tier prospects playing in AAU tournaments at three different venues.

Tyler Haws, Nate Austin and C.J. Wilcox were at the Nike Sponsored Kingwood Classic in Houston. They were all on the Salt Lake Metro Team.

Jeremy Olsen, the 6-10 post player from Atlanta, was in Fayetteville, Arkansas with his Worldwide Renegades team for the Real Deal on the Hill Tourney.

Brandon Davies and Kyle Collinsworth were also playing that same weekend at Littleton, Colorado in the Double Pump Spring Classic. Those two Provo HS stars were on the roster of the Utah Pump 'n Run.

BYU and Utah are both going head to head for Haws and Olsen and both head coaches were at games in both locations. We aren't sure how they made the trips between venues, but we can assume it wasn't the same way coaches like Rick Pitino, Roy Williams and Bill Self were traveling.

Those big-name coaches were hopping back and forth on private planes.

Bloated or Bare Bones?

We don't know why, but we find our entertainment in different places. We were looking at the BYU athletic department web site recently and hit staff directory.

We were amazed how many names there were listed as working for the athletic department and in what capacities they are employed.

After discounting the coaching staffs and administrators of each BYU sponsored sport, we still came up with 81 jobs listed in the athletic department.

We thought that seemed a little bloated, but it appears that it may be more bare bones than bloated.

We randomly looked up the athletic staff directory of the Texas Longhorns and were amazed.

Discounting the coaches and administrators of all the Longhorn athletic programs, we counted 227 other athletic jobs on the UT website.

Texas either had much more to do in its athletic department or they have much more money to spend. The king-size athletic department is probably the result of both more money and more to do.

PICKINGS PLENTY BUT SLOTS SLIM

It won't be recruiting as usual this coming year for Bronco Mendenhall and the BYU football team.

Because of an inordinate number of LDS missionaries returning to the program, the Cougars will likely only have around 15 scholarships to offer this coming year.

They already have some of those offers taken with five verbal commits. They include:

Craig Bills, DB, 6-2, 200, Timpview HS, Provo, Utah

Adam Timo, RB, 6-1, 180, Snow Canyon HS, St. George, Utah

Tui Crichton, OL, 6-4, 280, Timpview HS, Provo, Utah

Jray Galea'i, DB, 6-0, 170, Kahuku HS, Kahuku, Hawaii

Terry Alleto, OL, 6-3, 265, Ponderosa HS, Parker, Colorado

Offers on the Table

Here is a list of most of the other high school prospects that BYU has also offered, but as yet none of these players have committed to the Cougars.

Manti Te'o, LB, 6-2, 225, Punahou HS, Hawaii. This LDS linebacker can name his school. He has offer from BYU but Cougars will have to beat out USC, ND, CU, Stanford and UCLA.

John Martinez, OL, 6-3, 270, Cottonwood HS, Salt Lake City. BYU has offered and he has serious interest from LSU, USC, Miami, Oklahoma State, Utah and Stanford.

Xavier Su'a Filo, OL/DL, 6-5, 270, Timpview HS, Provo, UT. The best prospect in the state. BYU has invited, but will have trouble keeping him in state. LSU, Miami, Tennessee, USC are just a few programs that are interested and have offered.

Kyle Van Noy. LB, 6-4, 200, McQueen HS, Reno, NV. BYU hoping with Nevada, Utah, Boise State, Cal and Colorado all pursuing.

Steven Fanua, LB, 6-1, 210, Milpitas HS, Milpitas, CA. BYU offer on the table. Arizona, Cal, UNLV, Utah and Washington are others after his services.

Josh Nunes, QB, 6-4, 205, Upland HS, Upland, CA. First QB to be offered by BYU. He has been to campus. Others involved include Cal, Colorado, Louisville, Stanford, UCLA.

Brett Thompson, WR, 6-3, 210, Oak Ridge HS, El Dorado Hills, CA. BYU offered as a sophomore. Others include Oregon, UCLA, Washington State, UNLV and Cal.

Richard Wilson, TE, 6-4, 215, Spanish Fork HS, UT. Been to BYU and Cougars have offered. Others in hunt include ASU, Colorado, LSU, Boise State and Utah.

L.T. Filiaga, LB, 6-1, 230, Bingham HS, Riverton, UT. Will be a BYU-Utah battle, but Arizona is also involved.

Latu Heimuli, DL, 6-4, 305, Highland HS, Salt Lake City, UT. A big-time nose tackle. Should be between Utes and Cougars. Both have offered.

2008 BYU FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

Aug 30, SAT, Northern Iowa, Provo, 4:00 pm, Mtn

Sep 6, SAT, Washington, Seattle, TBA, TV=TBA

Sep 13, SAT, UCLA, Provo, 1:30 pm, Versus

Sep 20, SAT, Wyoming, Provo, 1:00 pm, Mtn

Oct 3, FRI, Utah State, Logan, TBA, TV=TBA

Oct 11, SAT, New Mexico, Provo, 4:00 pm, Mtn

Oct 16, THU, TCU, Fort Worth, 7:00 pm, Versus

Oct 25, SAT, UNLV, Provo, 12:00 pm, Mtn

Nov 1, SAT, Colorado State, Fort Collins, 4:00 pm, Mtn

Nov 8, SAT, San Diego State, Provo, 12:00 pm, Mtn

Nov 15, SAT, Air Force, Colorado Springs, 1:30 pm, CBS C (CSTV)

Nov 22, SAT, Utah, Salt Lake City, 4:00 pm, Mtn