

HB Arnett's



801 372 - 0819

hbarnett@fiber.net

1391 West 800 South – Orem, Utah 84058

Vol. 35, Issue 5 –August 25, 2014

[Click Here To Order Or Renew Your Subscriptions](#)

Huskies Hoping for Upset

BYU FAVORED BY 16 ½ IN SEASON OPENER

Despite having to travel across two time zones and missing at least two key offensive players and with a history of not playing well on the east coast, BYU is still considered a hefty road favorite over Connecticut.

In the season opener for both teams, BYU and UConn will face each other this Friday evening with kickoff set for 5:00 pm MDT. The game will be televised live on ESPN.

The Cougars will be without the services of their best running back and probably their fastest wide receiver in this contest. Jamaal Williams and Devon Blackmon will both miss the game because of suspensions handed out by Bronco Mendenhall.

There will probably also be a few suspensions announced on the defensive side also. These will be announced sometime before kickoff and could be announced as early as today with the official depth chart is released by BYU.

I expect one defensive lineman and two defensive backs to miss the game. I won't name names until BYU officially makes the announcement.

UConn is entering the game with a new coach in Bob Diaco, the former defensive coordinator at Notre Dame. He named Anthony PoinDEXter as the Huskies' new defensive coordinator. PoinDEXter was on the defensive staff of Virginia last season.

Both Beat BYU

That means that both Diaco and PoinDEXter defenses defeated the Cougars last season. Both coaches are well aware of the fact that they will have to find a way to slow down or stop Taysom Hill if they expect to win this game.

With a year under his belt and with an improved offensive line and a revamped receiving crew that is extremely talented, slowing down the BYU offense is a huge task for the Huskies.

I don't expect UConn to run the ball with any consistent success, but they will throw it and have an NFL quality receiver in Jeremy Davis, a 6-3, 215 pound playmaker. All he did last season was rack up 71 catches for 1085 yards.

He has a returning starting quarterback in Casey Cochran, who will be a redshirt sophomore and won the starting position late last season for Connecticut. With Cochran at the controls, UConn won their final three games of the season to finish 3-9 on the year.

BYU will be leaving a day earlier than normal to travel back east. The Cougars are set to depart this Wednesday and then will return right after the game to get ready for the pivotal game of the season; a matchup with Texas in Austin 8 days later.

While travel is never easy, this is a game that should suit the Cougars needs of working out the kinks on both sides of the ball and working off the one game suspensions so all hands are on deck for the Texas contest and season that will follow.

Defensively, this team should be good, but when that will happen is still up in the air. The Cougars are talented, but unproven in some key spots. This game should help solve those issues.

Offensively, it is still all about Taysom Hill. If he has a good game, BYU will romp. If he has an ordinary game, both running and passing, this game will be interesting, but not a threat to BYU's big goals for the year.

Two touchdowns plus, seems about right in this season opener and tune-up contest. This team, in my opinion, is more than right. I am calling it BYU 41 UConn 17.

Small, But Noticeable Bronco Blemish

I'm sure I'm probably the only guy to notice, but despite Bronco Mendenhall's many accomplishments as BYU head football coach, there is, in my opinion, one major blemish on his coaching complexion at BYU.

After nine years at the helm, he has yet never recruited a starting quarterback for BYU. Let's look at the list. John Beck was the first starting QB for Mendenhall. Beck was recruited by Gary Crowton.

After Beck came Max Hall. A very good college quarterback, but he transferred to BYU on his own accord from ASU.

Bronco looked like he scored a quarterback winner with Jake Heaps, but not really. Heaps lost his job to...you guessed it, another transfer Riley Nelson.

There used to be some who thought if Heaps had better coaching at BYU, he could have lived up to his potential. Heaps couldn't earn the starting nod at BYU and transferred to Kansas. He couldn't hang on to the job there. Now, at his last stop at Miami, he has been given his third back seat after being beat out by a true freshman.

Riley Nelson may have been a Mendenhall favorite for his "grit and guts", but he was not a Mendenhall recruit. It was Nelson that recruited BYU after an LDS mission and playing his freshman season at Utah State.

Ditto for Taysom

Ditto for BYU's current starter, Taysom Hill. He sought out the Cougars after an LDS mission and signing with Stanford out of high school.

And the quarterback transfer saga continues. Trent Hosick is playing at Northeastern Oklahoma, a junior college, this year before coming to Provo to play for Mendenhall next season. He also sought out BYU after not seeing playing time at Missouri.

The two most recent high school quarterback recruits for Mendenhall have also gone the transfer route, but in reverse. Alex Kuresa signed with BYU, but is now starting at Snow College. Billy Green left BYU after one season and is likely to be the starter at Weber State this season.

On paper, it looks like it has been a decade of quarterback recruiting that is more pimped than premier for BYU under Mendenhall.

There may be some Cougar Clearasil on the horizon, however. Mendenhall did sign Tanner Mangum a few years back. He showed in high school that he was one of the premier passers in the country before signing with BYU.

He also showed in a brief spring football cameo appearance that he could also throw the ball at the Division I level.

Mangum is due to be back for next season. He is currently serving an LDS mission in Antofagasta Chile.

Interesting Competition

Depending on whether Hill is back for BYU next season or trying to win a job and earn a paycheck in the NFL, it looks like the competition for the next BYU quarterback under Mendenhall's watch will come down to a battle between Hosick and Mangum.

If BYU is looking for a polished passer, Mangum will be the guy. If the Cougars still want to emphasize the read option offense, then the competition between Hosick and Mangum should prove very, very interesting.

Hosick seems to be the perfect fit for the current BYU offense because he was recruited and highly touted to run a similar offense at Missouri. That means he is a threat running the ball.

For those who have been clamoring for BYU offensive coaches to give the reigns to current backup Christian Stewart because he is perceived to be a better passer than Hill, then your dreams can come true with Mangum.

This kid can throw the ball. The question is not his talent, but can BYU offensive coaches adapt their offense to make room for his special skill set. To reiterate, it should be very, very interesting.

Solves Everything

It's Time to Win and Win Big

Years ago in the late stages of my father's life when he was struggling with Parkinson's disease and prostate cancer, friends and family would come to visit with him and almost always ask the same question, "How are you feeling Howard?"

And he always answered the same way. "Thanks for asking. My body is deteriorating right on schedule, but there's nothing wrong with me that a good resurrection can't fix."

It may appear that the Cougar football program is deteriorating right on schedule with BYU not part of a P5 conference. Throw in the new added expenses it will cost the Cougars to try and keep up with the Jones of the P5 leagues and things may appear bleak.

Throw in the constant concerns about Honor Code violations and stiffer academic requirements for players participating in the sports programs at BYU and it could be perceived by some that Cougar programs are fighting a constant uphill battle to stay even with the upper echelon of college athletics

When it comes to BYU football, there is nothing wrong with the Cougar program that winning and winning often can't fix.

The winning I'm talking about is not back-to-back 8-5 seasons. It's not about the occasional 10-2 season.

As a BYU football fan, my hope is centered in finally winning games and plenty of them and winning games against big time competitors.

As always when it comes to BYU football, winning solves all issues.

Bronco Mendenhall is now in his 10th year as the head coach at BYU. In my opinion, he has proven to be at times, naïve, quirky, too quotable (not in a good way) eccentric and eclectic along the way of his first 9 seasons.

He likes to tout his record at BYU and brag about his winning percentages as a coach.

All of that is nice and neat. Mendenhall has done a nice job. Now its time for him to step to the plate and solve all of BYU football's current issues by producing his best season ever.

If he is to do it, this is the season tailor made for him to accomplish that axiom of Al Davis of Oakland Raiders fame; "Just win baby."

It's proven that Mendenhall is an outstanding defensive coach. He has now given more of his time and attention to the offensive side of BYU football's program.

If Mendenhall wants to advance to the LaVell level of coaching at BYU, he doesn't have to resurrect the BYU offenses of old, but he does have to start being accused of RUTS (Running up the score).

Defense wins games and championships, but offense sells tickets and sells the national media and P5 league leaders that BYU belongs.

No offense (pun intended) to BYU football in general and Mendenhall in particular, but if BYU can't get at least 11 wins this season with the offense and schedule they have, then they really don't belong with the big boys.

This is the year that winning and winning big begins to solve everything, including eventual inclusion in a P5 conference.

Football Fluff

BYU and Washington have signed a home and home agreement to face each other in football in 2018 and 2019. The game in Seattle will take place September 29, 2018 with the return date in Provo set for September 21, 2019.

In June I wrote that BYU had two home and home games set against P5 schools. UCLA was announced earlier and now this is the second series to which I referred.

Bronco Mendenhall announced the selection of captains for this coming season. Taysom Hill and Paul Lasike will represent the offensive side of the ball while Craig Bills and Remington Peck will captain the defense for the Cougars.

Harvey Unga's team tenure with the Jacksonville Jaguars was short. After a week with the NFL team, he was cut from the roster. Also cut was Cody Hoffman, the free agent signee with the Washington Redskins.

While I'm high on this BYU football team and expect a big season, the Las Vegas odds makers don't hold the same opinion as mine.

They have BYU at 300-1 to win the national title. Florida State is a 4-1 favorite to win it all. Here are the national title odds for some of the teams on BYU's current schedule. Texas: 66-1; Boise State: 300-1; UCF: 500-1.

TV Timetable

BYU vs. Connecticut

Friday, August 29 at East Hartford

Kickoff: 5:00 PM MDT

TV: ESPN

BYU vs. Texas

Saturday, September 6 at Austin

Kickoff: 5:30 pm MDT

TV: Fox Sports 1

BYU vs. Houston

Thursday, September 11 at Provo

Kickoff: 7:00 pm MDT

TV: ESPN

Little League World Series Observations

This has nothing to do with BYU athletics, but it's my newsletter so I am going to write it anyway.

I watched some of the LLWS games this past week. I enjoyed the games, but was mesmerized by the size and physical maturity of some of the 12-year old players on the teams.

Watching these kids gave me Callexico flashbacks.

I grew up in Blythe, California, out in the desert on the Colorado River and Arizona-California border. We were isolated so in order to participate in high school sports we

had to travel a lot of miles to play teams from Yuma, Indio, Palm Springs, El Centro, Brawley and Calexico.

The Calexico Bulldogs were on the US side of the Mexican border with Mexicali, a city of over a million people just a few blocks away.

As freshmen and sophomores, Calexico used to constantly pound us in football and basketball. After getting drubbed by the Calexico freshmen and sophomore teams, we would come out of the locker room and head for our bus.

I could barely even spell puberty and it was probably just my perception, but it seemed to me that the Calexico players came out of their locker room and instead of heading to their bus, they would go up into the stands to get their wives and kids and then head home.

By the time we were juniors and seniors, the physical tide had turned and the games between the two schools were much more competitive.

Some of the 12-year olds I observed in the LLWS, caused me to have Calexico flashbacks.