

HB Arnett's



801 372 - 0819

hbarnett@fiber.net

1391 West 800 South – Orem, Utah 84058

Vol. 35, Issue 6 –September 1, 2014

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

Cougars Chew Connecticut

Hill, Huskies, Heisman and Halitosis

It's way too early to start saying that Taysom Hill is a legitimate Heisman Trophy candidate. Even if he played like one in BYU's 35-10 win over Connecticut.

As BYU football fans, we need to temper our expectations for BYU in general and Hill in particular.

Sure, based on his opening game production, Hill had a Heisman hue to him. That is what accounting for all of BYU's points will do for you.

He was the Cougars' leading rusher with 97 yards on just 12 carries. Did I mention that he scored twice on the ground from 7 and 27 yards out? How about passing? Does completing 28 of 36 balls for 308 yards and 3 touchdowns ring any bells? Don't know about the peeling of bells, but the passing of Hill was outstanding. His passing efficiency rating was an off the chart 177.14.

Just a year ago, Hill produced a scrawny and almost scandalous 72.5 passing efficiency rating in the Cougars 19-14 loss to "Yes Virginia, there is a Santa Claus." One year later maybe there is a Ho, Ho, Ho and Heisman in the making.

Way Early

But remember, it's way too early to anoint Hill as even a Heisman Hopeful. Despite his big time numbers against UConn, we need to find something to temper our one game enthusiasm and bring our expectations of Hill back to earth.

How about "Huddle Halitosis" for halting the hero worship? Nobody is perfect and that applies to Hill. If Hill has never had bad breath in the huddle, I'm willing to bet that sometime during fall camp, on the field, plane, or in the locker room, his breath hasn't always been perfect.

There, that makes me feel much better about the guy and helps me reel in the expectations of greatness and gaudy numbers for the rest of the season.

Texas also might be breathing fire and foul breath in anticipation for a rematch against Hill this coming Saturday in Austin.

Heaven help us and our Heisman hopes, however, if Hill delivers another minty fresh breath performance against the Horns.

Over the Top

Admittedly, our praise of Hill after just one early season performance is over the top. That is exactly opposite of what Hill did in the passing game against UConn. The deep throws over the top were few and far between.

In fall camp, it seemed like every throw was long and deep. According to Hill, the Huskies took away the deep ball by dropping eight men in coverage. That left the backs coming out of the backfield to have a field day as Hill dropped balls underneath the deep coverage.

Of Hill's 28 completions, 11 went to backs sneaking out in the flat after first checking to see if they had any blitz blocking assignments. [Click Here](#) to hear Hill tell it like it was in the BYU passing game.

Defense Does what it Does

From my viewpoint, the BYU does what it always does for Bronco Mendenhall. They never look dominant, but they always deliver.

It remains to be seen if the UConn offense is any good and it looks like this Cougar defense may still have a few chinks to shore up, but they delivered the goods and allowed only 10 points.

I'm anxious to see how this team fares against a good rushing team. It also looks at first glance that the middle line backing play is ordinary. There were a lot of tackles produced from this group, namely Zac Stout, in his first start, with 10, but those tackles were almost always down field from the line of scrimmage. A healthy Harvey Langi may be the answer here before the season is over.

We will have a much better idea on this unit and their play next week. The offense that this BYU defense will be better, but the Cougars' corners also return. If there was a really bright spot for the UConn game and the future, BYU's cornerback play with sophomore Michael Davis and redshirt freshman Jordan Preator was surprising good.

That said, the defensive unit came up with 3 turnovers and big stops in the red zone when it counted. We shall see.

What we did see was a very nice opening season win on the road. Hopefully it will be the making of a BYU boilermaker. In drinking circles a first shot of whiskey is followed by a beer chaser. (I had to look that up and not rely on personal experience.)

BYU took the first shot in Connecticut, now hopefully it is on to following with a Texas cerveza chaser in Austin.

LONGHORNS LONGING FOR REVENGE

The Texas Longhorns made a coaching change during the offseason. That change was precipitated by the pounding UT took in Provo last year to the tune of 40-21.

In football, beatings have belated blessings. That is what Texas is banking on. The new coach, Charlie Strong, and his staff and players want to prove that Texas is still Texas.

They have circled this Cougar game for a year. They are tired of Taysom Hill this and that. They have made it their mandate to put Hill in his place and on his butt this Saturday.

If you are looking for incentive, Texas has it.

If you are looking for incentive for BYU, they too have plenty of it. See the piece on Strength of Schedule below to know why BYU also has this game circled.

Normally, BYU wouldn't be able to match up athletically with the speed and size of a team like Texas. The two squads are pretty well matched up for this year's encounter.

QB Play

The key to winning in Austin, for either team, will come down to quarterback play. Taysom Hill or David Ash will determine the victor in this one.

Texas has the athletes defensively and a new scheme to take Hill out of producing big numbers rushing the ball.

That means for BYU to win, Hill and the Cougar passing game will need a big game through the air. BYU and Hill will need another 300-yard passing game if BYU is to win.

The unknown factor for BYU on defense is if the Cougars can stop the Longhorns from racking up big numbers on the ground. If the Cougar defense can keep UT in the same rushing neighborhood that the Horns produced last week against North Texas (164 yards on 40 carries) BYU can win this game if Hill has a decent outing.

BYU opened as a 4 ½ point underdog to Texas in the early line in Las Vegas. The early line play of both teams will eventually determine the winner of this contest. BYU will need to be able to protect Hill in the throw game.

Strong Speaks

After a 38-7 gimme win over North Texas Saturday night, here is what Strong said about BYU.

"I told [his players] enjoy this one, be ready and come back to work tomorrow, and this is a team [BYU] that we are going to face that played well in their opener. And plus they are a team that embarrassed us last season with a quarterback [Taysom Hill] who ran the ball all over our defense. Looking forward to this matchup,"

So am I. This is BYU's season. If the Cougars are to make a magical season happen and if they have any hope at all of sniffing the playoff scenario, they must beat Texas in Austin.

Strong is a defensive minded coach and it showed against NT. The Horns held the Mean Green from Denton to just 94 yards of total offense and 15 yards passing. Texas blitzed 24 of 26 times that NT had the ball early in the contest. Texas had 4 sacks and 4 interceptions in the game.

This is BYU's gold medal dive from the 10 meter platform. A flop here folds the magical season dreams of team and fans. If, as they say in diving circles, BYU can nail it, and enter the water with little to no splash aquatically, they will make a huge splash nationally.

Here's my splash in the face. I call it Texas 27 BYU 21.

Game Glances

Wet Feet Freshmen...Here is a list of freshmen that saw the field against UConn. Tejan Koroma, Ului Lapuaho, Fred Warner, Taki Takitaki, Trey Dye and Jordan Preator. Dye, Warner, Takitaki and Koroma are just months removed from high school.

Who wants a recount now?...Just wondering how many of those preseason pundits calling for Christian Stewart to start over Taysom Hill would like a recount on their vote?

Kicking Suspect...Where's Fred McMurray in the movie Flubber when BYU needs him? Is it just me, but does it seem like decades since the Cougars had a kicker that could even spell end zone, let alone consistently kick the ball into it? BYU needs some serious flubber to fix their kicking game or draft a soccer player, man or woman from the respective BYU teams. Not to kick but head butt the ball on kickoffs. Those head butts would go farther than the current kickoffs. Actually, Bronco and BYU are waiting for Oregon State transfer and freshman Andrew Mikkelsen to get healthy. He supposedly has the biggest and best leg on the team.

There a Manager opening at Taco Bell...After a decade of trying, it seems obvious that game management is not Bronco Mendenhall's strong suite. He is going to have trouble overcoming this rap. His decision to opt for a re-kick instead of taking the ball on the 35 was a lot like Taco Bell's 3 tacos for 99 cents. It sounded good at the time, but the after taste lingered way too long.

Offensive line play...It's hard to say just how improved the offensive line play was until we know how good UConn's defensive line play was and will be. What I do know, however, is that this group is nastier, snottier, and meaner than I have seen in a couple of seasons. It bodes well. So does the fact that two true freshmen are key cogs now and will be in the future.

Big is better...BYU's best receiver on Friday night was 6-6 Mitch Mathews. UConn's best receiver was 6-5. Size presents problems for cornerbacks, even the good ones. I can't wait until 6-5 Nick Kurtz returns from his fractured foot. A big boy on both sides of the field for the Cougars could be scary. Right now I look for Kurtz to be back in time for the Virginia game on September 20. While big is better, Mitchell Juergens, a small walkon wide out from Houston had a very nice game.

Penalties...I would be money that the officiating crew for the UConn game was either from the SEC or ACC. I make that assumption based on the fact that those two leagues wanted to penalize BYU in scheduling and don't consider the Cougars P5 worthy. With 15 calls against BYU for 150 punitive yards, this was the most punitive and patriotic game I have witnessed in some time. It was like the 4th of July, with flags waving and wafting all over the field.

Players...You didn't have to watch much college football this past weekend to quickly determine that it is all about players. Those teams with good to great players with size and speed almost always beat teams with less of that same size and speed.

BYU won the size and speed battle against UConn. They should also have the S&S advantage over all the teams they face on their schedule the rest of the year...with the exception of Texas.

The other factor that is even more important than size and speed, is a good to great quarterback. A good QB with a team with good S&S makes for a pretty good football team. A team with not the best size and speed can still win if they have a great quarterback.

BYU has the best size and speed they have had in decades, if not ever. They also have one of the greatest quarterbacks they have ever had. That is why I have them ranked way up there on the S&S (*Special Season*) scale.

SOS Stumbles out of the Gate

Even if BYU turns in a magnificent season and even if they go undefeated, the chances of the Cougars being invited as one of the four teams to participate in the national championship are slim to none.

That's because rules for qualifying for the championship are stacked against BYU and so is their strength of schedule. That SOS took a serious hit this past weekend. Here's how it played out:

UConn lost 35-10 to BYU at home
Texas beat North Texas 38-7 at home
Houston lost 27-7 to UT San Antonio at home
Virginia lost 28-20 to UCLA at home
Utah State lost 38-7 to Tennessee on the road
Central Florida lost 26-24 to Penn State in Ireland
Nevada beat Southern Utah 28-19 at home
Boise State lost 35-13 to Ole Miss in Atlanta
Middle Tennessee beat Savannah State 61-7 at home
UNLV lost 58-13 to Arizona on the road
Savannah State lost to MTSU 61-7 on the road
Cal beat Northwestern 31-24 on the road

Cougar fans have to hope that Texas runs the table with their only loss to BYU. Cal also needs to have a great season and a loss to BYU to benefit the Cougars.

[Click Here](#) to see the criteria for getting selected to participate in the playoffs and see for yourself why the selection deck is stacked against BYU, even if they have an undefeated season.

TV Timetable

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

BYU vs. Virginia

Saturday, September 20 at Provo

Kickoff: TBD

TV: TBD

BYE

Saturday, September 27

BYU vs. Utah State

Friday, October 3 at Provo

Kickoff: 8:15 pm MDT

TV: ESPN

Extra-Curricular Cinema

Just wondering if you think BYU should find a place on their roster for this legacy recruit? Watch this kid against Mission Hills HS in San Diego last Saturday. MH is the high school that produced Fred Warner for BYU and currently has his younger brother, Troy, on defense. He, along with the legacy recruit in the video, are both being pursued by BYU. [Click Here](#) to watch.