

HB Arnett's



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BYU Wins 31-14

Should Have Consulted the *Daily Racing Form*

I was wrong. I picked Utah State to beat BYU last week. My excuse is that I didn't consult the Bible. No, not that Bible. I'm referring to the Bible of horse racing: The *Daily Racing Form*.

I have no excuse for ignoring the *Racing Form*, especially with one of the world's top three sports spectacles coming up in a few weeks at Santa Anita. I'm referring to the Breeder's Cup to be held Nov. 2-3. In case you're wondering, the other two world's greatest sports spectacles are the World Cup and the Olympics.

If the *Daily Racing Form* had handicapped the BYU-Utah State game of last week they would have picked the Cougars to win 31-14, which, as it turned out, was the actual score.

For those who are unfamiliar with the *Daily Racing Form*, each horse has a history that is published for handicappers to see and use. Several items are listed that give good clues as to how a horse will perform in his next race.

One of the most important is how the horse or team fared in their last outing. BYU was coming off a wire to wire drubbing of Middle Tennessee State. Utah State was coming of a 17-10 defeat to USC. The Trojans have a good defense. So does BYU. That should have been a dead give away.

BYU's coach, Bronco Mendenhall, according to *Racing Form* data, is not a front runner. Historically he starts slow with two or more losses early in the season. He then has a history of coming on late in the year and running and winning during the stretch run.

Chuckie Keeton also had a *Racing Form* history against the Cougars. It isn't great. As a freshman in 2011, he was just 13-25 throwing the ball for 122 yards. He rushed for 25 yards on six carries. Last year, he was a little better, but not much. Keeton completed 22-38 passes for 202 yards. He rushed 10 times for 37 yards.

Not Secretariat Stats

In horse racing parlance, those are not Secretariat stats. Extrapolating numbers from the limited first quarter action Keeton saw last week against BYU before succumbing to a torn ACL and MCL, he was just 4-10 for 26 yards with 1 gimme touchdown due to a BYU turnover inside the 10 yard line. He also had a game opening interception by Kyle Van Noy. Keeton rushed the ball just 3 times for 17 yards.

Based on those numbers, if the game was a claiming race, BYU can claim that they owned Keeton the three times they have faced him.

Another key indicator in the *Daily Racing Form* is the Beyer Speed Figures. Plug in Taysom Hill into those ratings and he shows well with his ability to run the ball, but did not figure to be a factor passing the football. That will change for handicappers next week as Hill showed that he can indeed get the ball downfield and over the top of defenders.

Hill had the best day of his career in the air against Utah State. He completed 17 of 32 throws for 278 yards and 3 touchdowns; all to Mitch Mathews. The td tosses were from 30, 6 and 43 yards out. BYU's other touchdown came when the Cougars broke out early from the starting gate and Kyle Van Noy intercepted Keeton's first pass of the night and returned it 17 yards for the score.

"Boxing"

There is another similarity between BYU football and horse race betting. It's called "boxing". In pari-mutuel wagering, a popular bet is the "Trifecta" and "Superfecta". You have to pick the exact order of finish for the win, place and show in the Trifecta and the top 4 finishers in order for the Superfecta.. Many bettors, especially beginners, use "boxing" as an easy way to try and win this bet. It works like this. The better picks the 3-4 or more horses he or she thinks has the best chances of winning. He then "boxes" those picks. The box bet covers all possibilities of finishes for the horses selected. So, as long as horses picked by the bettor are the first horses to finish the race, the bettor wins.

In football, defenses like Utah and Utah State this season have bet defensively on boxing BYU. That means they bring 8-9 guys down into the box in an effort to stop BYU running the ball in general and specifically to keep Taysom Hill from running the ball effectively.

It worked for Utah because Hill couldn't produce in the passing game. It failed at Utah State because Hill was productive and made the Aggies pay for their boxing strategy as Hill hooked up over the top of the USU defense with Mitch Mathews three times for touchdowns.

Muddy Track

Here's one more race track reference: Fast, firm and muddy tracks. The condition of the track has a huge influence on who wins the race. Most horses like firm and fast conditions. A muddy track is usually not conducive to a horse running his best.

The BYU defense, under Bronco Mendenhall's tutelage can't control the weather, but they do control the track on which opposing offenses play.

Whether by scheme, position mastery, execution etc, opposing offenses find performing at their best past performance levels difficult against the Cougar defense. Say what you want about the Cougar head coach, but Mendenhall can bring the "mud" defensively for almost all the offenses he faces.

They did it again against the Aggies of Utah State in Logan last Friday night. USU is now 3-3 on the year and the Cougars are 3-2.

Not So Toughest Schedule

NEXT UP: GEORGIA TECH

Remember in early August when the BYU media mob was declaring this 2013 Cougar football season the toughest ever?

Just like a not so prime cut of meat that is tough, if you pound it and beat it enough before cooking, it becomes softer and more palatable to chew. That describes this current slate of games. There are enough supposedly tough teams that BYU has faced and will yet face that have been beat often enough that "toughest schedule of all time", really doesn't hold much water anymore.

Even those two teams that have already beaten BYU are not tough. Virginia is currently 2-3 and coming off a 48-27 loss to Ball State in Charlottesville. That should make David Letterman (a Ball State alum) proud, but it should make the BYU loss to the Cavaliers even more embarrassing.

Utah is the one that stings. They are not that good. Their early PAC 12 record proves it. Their late PAC 12 record will reinforce just how bad the Utes are.

Texas is an embarrassment period. The Longhorns are a primary reason that pundits picked this schedule as the toughest ever. The cattle after which UT is named produce tough and stringy beef. They have been beat often enough now that playing the Longhorns is now considered a delicacy and delight.

On Paper

Utah State, looked good on paper early, but even with Chuckie Keeton healthy, they were just 3-2 with losses to two PAC 12 also ran's; Utah and USC. BYU's beating on the Aggies puts USU at 3-3 on the year.

Notre Dame is 4-2 on the year with losses to Oklahoma and Michigan. Three of their 4 wins are against Temple, Purdue and an over inflated and over rated ASU. Temple is currently 0-5 with losses to Fordham and Idaho. Purdue is 1-4 with the lone win coming against Indiana State.

Look for the Irish to polish their season record in the next few weeks. They get USC, Air Force, Navy and Pitt on successive Saturdays before facing BYU. USC is a train wreck at 3-2. They lost to Washington State and were pummeled by ASU. The wins were against Hawaii, Utah State and Boston College. Air Force looked great in their opener...against Colgate, for their only victory of the season. The Falcons have since dropped 5 straight games. Navy is currently 4-1 win the wins coming against Indiana, Delaware, Western Kentucky and Air Force. Pitt is a credible 3-1 team, but their wins aren't. They came against New Mexico, Duke and Virginia. The UVA loss is like rubbing salt in BYU's opening game wound.

Boise State is currently 3-2. This is not your grandfather's BSU. The Broncos' three wins have been netted against Tennessee Martin, Air Force and Southern Miss. The combined current record of that trilogy of terrible is 1-10 for the two FBS teams, AFA and USM. Tennessee-Martin is a FCS team with a 3-2 record and wins against SE Missouri State, Chattanooga and Central Arkansas.

Houston, BYU's foe in two weeks, is 4-0 on the year. That sounds good, but the opponents the Cougars beat for that gaudy record aren't. The wins came against Southern (FCS 2-3), Temple (0-5), Rice (3-2) and UT-San Antonio (2-4).

Georgia Tech is still a credible name on the national scene, but their 3-2 season record is not so credible on the field. The three victories have been hung on Elon, Duke and North Carolina. The losses have occurred in the last two weeks to Virginia Tech and Miami.

The Yellow Jackets will face the Cougars this Saturday in Provo. Kickoff is set for 5 pm Mountain Time and the contest will be televised live on ESPNU. Tech is one of just a

handful of teams that still run the option offense. Air Force and Navy are the other two notable teams that utilize the same system.

That doesn't bode well for Georgia Tech in Provo because Bronco Mendenhall has a proven record of shutting down option offenses. Last season in Atlanta, BYU's defense stymied a Georgia Tech offense that was pretty prolific...until facing the Cougars. Mendenhall, now in his ninth season as the Cougar head coach, has faced Air Force 6 times in his tenure in Provo as a head coach and twice before as the defensive coordinator for Gary Crowton. In his 8 games facing Air Force, Mendenhall has posted a 6-2 record against the option offense of the Falcons.

That is enough proof for the odds makers in Las Vegas. They have established the Cougars as a 6 ½ point early line favorite. Of course, the Cougars also were a 6 point favorite over Utah in Provo and we all know how that turned out.

This game should be easy to figure out. Both teams primarily run the ball. Georgia Tech utilizes the option offense and BYU goes with the read option offense. Both teams have quarterbacks that can run. BYU has Taysom Hill and GT has Vad Lee. Both are threats with their feet, but the guy with the best arm and best passing production in this matchup will lead his team to victory.

I call it BYU 34 GT 24.

BYU Basketball Starts

HOW DO YOU REPLACE BRANDON DAVIES?

Most BYU basketball fans will go through a period of hand wringing and worry wondering how Dave Rose is going to replace Brandon Davies, his best front court player from last year.

How do you replace somebody who has signed an NBA contract with the Los Angeles Clippers and was the Cougars' only low post threat last season?

Here's the easy answer and the answer that has Dave Rose smirking and smiling. You replace Davies with an even better sure fire NBA prospect in Eric Mika.

Yes, Mika is that good. Have you ever wondered how big name and big time schools seem to find freshmen that can play and be productive right away? You are about to find out how that feels and looks at BYU. Yes, Mika is that good. He is NBA material.

But won't Mika need some front court help? How about Luke Worthington? He is built like Bronson Kaufusi and just as mean and nasty. The difference is that he is 3 inches taller than Kaufusi and has legitimate low post offensive moves.

When BYU basketball has their media day on Tuesday, most of the media will migrate to what they perceive as this season's top story lines. They will focus on the BYU backcourt

and how Matt Carlino and returned missionary Kyle Collinsworth will work together with only one ball.

They will rightfully focus on Tyler Haws. He has earned that attention with his play from last season and this summer. Those are nice stories and all three of those guys will be key cogs in how this coming season turns out. They just aren't what will make or break this season.

It starts up front and it will finish with the play of Mika and Worthington. That's my BYU basketball story for this season and I'm sticking to it.

FLUFF AND STUFF

Lost in the news of Michael Alisa being gone for the remainder of the season with a groin injury is the emergence of freshman Algernon Brown as a very productive running back.

Brown has turned out to be a very good back running the ball between the tackles. He has great lean and even when the play looks stuffed and stymied, he manages to rack up yards. He is good enough that even with Jamaal Williams healthy against Utah State last week, Brown earned carries that in previous games were given to Paul Lasike. BYU coaches might have found a winner in Brown.

They are still looking for a winner on the offensive line. The effort has improved, but this unit is not yet the kind of offensive line that Taysom Hill needs to be a very good passer or BYU needs to be a consistent and good offense. That will have to come next season with the addition of new bodies and recruits.

I can't prove it, but it is my opinion that the recruiting commitment of Jesse Wade, the outstanding point guard from Davis HS to Gonzaga last week, might have been influenced by BYU nabbing the commitment from Frank Jackson two weeks ago.

Wade will be a junior this season and Jackson will be a sophomore. BYU had not offered Wade, who is LDS and again, in my opinion, the offer to Jackson who is a year younger, may have been a factor. Here is a [nice article](#) on Wade and his decision to take his basketball skills to Spokane.

Television Timetable

BYU vs. Georgia Tech

Saturday, Oct 12 at Provo

Kickoff: 5:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: ESPNU

BYU vs. Houston

Saturday, Oct 19 at Houston

Kickoff: TBA

TV: TBA

Boise State vs. BYU

Friday, Oct 25 at Provo

Kickoff: 6:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: ESPN

Wisconsin vs. BYU

Saturday, Nov 9 at Madison

Kickoff: TBA

TV: TBA