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None of My Business, But...

I consider myself to be a fairly observant person. I notice things that seem a little incongruent, such as decaffeinated Dr. Pepper and selections and seedings in NCAA tournaments.

Last week I noticed a very nice sports utility vehicle parked at the train station near my home. It had bike racks mounted on the rear of the vehicle and ski racks on top. It also had a handicap parking placard mounted on the rear view mirror. Like I said, it's none of my business, but it seemed as incongruent as the time Julia Roberts was married to Lyle Lovett. Talk about decaffeinated Dr. Pepper.

It also reminded me of Spring Football in which BYU is presently fully engaged. No, not the Julia-Lyle reference, but the SUV-Handicap scenario.

With a new coaching staff, which appears to be energizing the program and fan base with their openness and effervescence this spring, it should be duly noted, that the SUV Kalani Sitake and Ty Detmer are currently driving this spring, still has a big handicap parking placard on the rear view mirror.

Key cogs are still confined to the sidelines with injuries or other issues. Last week we detailed most of them such as Taysom Hill, Travis Tuiloma, Handsome Tanielu, Tejan Koroma, Kyle Johnson, Kai Nacua and Logan Taele, whom we forgot to mention in last week's letter. We also forgot to say that Michael Shelton and Jordan Preator are as yet not participating in practice.

As creative as Ty Detmer is on offense and as good as Ilaisa Tuiaki and Sitake will be on defense, they still need healthy and eligible bodies to compete at the level the 2016 schedule demands.

They also need a tight end and a go to wide receiver for Taysom Hill or Tanner Mangum to throw to and a lock down corner.

Basically what I am saying is don't take down the handicap sticker from the window just yet with your expectations for football this fall. In case you forgot, the schedule includes, Arizona, Utah, UCLA, Michigan State, West Virginia, Mississippi State and Boise State among others.

As giddy as we all are about Ty Detmer and as good as he was as a quarterback, this is the same guy that was bludgeoned by Texas A&M in the Holiday Bowl and humbled by Hawaii the day he received his Heisman. Good teams with good players have a way of beating even good coaches with ordinary players.

That said, there is a palpable excitement surrounding the program. I received a detailed text from a guy who knows his BYU football and his observations pretty well summarizes the buzz at BYU. Here are the salient sentences from his text:

Algie (Brown) will likely see fewer carries as he is playing more fullback position. Look for there to be a ton more throws to backs out of the backfield and Algie will be a big part of that...Francis Bernard is a beast at LB...Ed Lamb and Gilford are absolute studs, our secondary is going to be better. They are man pressing on the outside and the safeties are playing much closer to the line...The day of the gritty walk on is likely gone as this staff greatly values talent and speed and the guys playing skill positions are those kind of guys...I shouldn't be this excited but Detmer is an offensive savant and it is incredibly exciting what they are doing on offense. They are going to attack, especially the middle of the field and deep. The QB's already look markedly better in their mechanics and fundamentals. Detmer is very fiery as a coach and he requires excellence and is very demanding and animated...The run game will be markedly better next year. Different blocking schemes. I'm very excited even though it is meaningless spring ball.

Okay, based on the buzz of the spring maybe I will put the handicap sticker in the glove box and wait to pull it out against Michigan State and UCLA. This may just be the year that we as BYU football fans are going to actually *Lyle Lovett* when it comes to BYU football this fall.

BYU Announces NIT Invitation

Here is the official announcement from BYU

PROVO, Utah – BYU basketball will compete in the postseason for a program record 11th-straight season as the Cougars accepted an invitation to the 2016 National Invitational Tournament Sunday.

No. 2 seed BYU (23-10) will host the No. 7 seed UAB Blazers (26-6) Wednesday in the Marriott Center at 8 p.m. MDT. The game will be televised live on ESPNU and broadcast live on the Cougar IMG Sports Network and KSL Newsradio 102.7 FM and 1160 AM. The winner of Wednesday's game will face the winner of No. 3 seed Virginia Tech and No. 6 seed Princeton in the second round.

UAB, 26-6 overall and 16-2 in Conference USA, won nine of its last 10 games before falling to Western Kentucky in the quarterfinals of the Conference USA Championships. Robert Brown leads the Blazers in scoring at 13.5 points per game while Chris Cokley (13.1) and William Lee (10.7) also average double figures. Cokley is the team's leading rebounder at 6.4 boards per game while Nick Norton averages a team-best 5.2 assists per game.

Brown earned All-Conference USA First Team honors while Cokley was named to the second team and Lee and Norton earned third-team recognition.

Coached by Jerod Haase, UAB averages 79.0 points per game while shooting 47.9 percent from the field and 37.0 percent from downtown. In four seasons as the Blazers' head coach, Haase has posted a record of 80-52. Last season he led UAB to the Round of 32 in the NCAA tournament.

BYU coach Dave Rose has guided the Cougars to the postseason in each of his 11 seasons at the helm, including eight at-large bids to the NCAA tournament (2007-12, 2014 and 2015) and three to the NIT. In 2013, the Cougars won three-straight in the NIT to reach the semifinals in Madison Square Garden.

This will mark BYU's 12th appearance in the NIT. The Cougars have a 15-9 record in the NIT, including titles in 1951 and 1966. In addition to the 2013 appearance, BYU's prior years playing in the NIT were 1951, 1953, 1954, 1966, 1982, 1986, 1994, 2000, 2002 and 2006.

BYU is led by 2016 West Coast Conference Player of the Year Kyle Collinsworth, who averaged 15.2 points, 8.4 rebounds, 7.4 assists and 2.0 steals. The Provo, Utah, native is

the NCAA's career triple-double record holder and has the top two spots for triple-doubles in a season.

Fellow senior guard Chase Fischer earned first-team All-WCC honors while averaging a team-best 17.9 points to go with 2.5 rebounds and 2.0 assists. His 98 3-pointers are the third most in a season in BYU history.

Freshman guard Nick Emery also earned All-WCC honors as he was named to the Second Team and the Freshman Team. He has posted one of the most productive freshman seasons in BYU history, averaging 16.2 points, 3.3 rebounds and 2.4 assists while making a Cougar freshman record 87 3-pointers.

The NIT Selection Committee conducted selections for the 2016 NIT. Any regular-season champion of an NCAA Division I conference (as determined by the conference's tie-break protocol) not otherwise selected to the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Championship secured an automatic qualification into the NIT. The committee then selected the best available teams to fill the 32-team NIT field. Once selected, teams were seeded and placed into one of four eight-team regions.

The first three rounds of the NIT are hosted at the campus site of one of the participating teams. For each game, the higher-seeded team will have the first option to host unless logistical circumstances preclude such an opportunity. First-round games will be played March 15 and 16. Second-round games will be played March 17-21 and quarterfinal games will be played March 22 and 23.

The 2016 Postseason NIT will be in its 79th season at New York City's Madison Square Garden. On Tuesday, March 29, the four quarterfinal winners will square off with the Championship scheduled for Thursday, March 31.

[2016 NIT Bracket](#)

Let's Talk Politics and BYU Basketball

At least until Tuesday, it is still a four-man race for the Republican Presidential nomination.

I know this because I get at least three daily email solicitations for financial support from three of the candidates. The basic pitch for money is that these candidates are surging in the polls and show remarkable resiliency by finishing second, third or fourth in the most recent voting.

Realistically, however, their chance at taking home the championship trophy of the Republican nomination is slim to none, but that doesn't stop the blathering of how they are surging and with just \$25 more from me, they can see the prize within their grasp.

That pretty much describes the current scenario for BYU basketball. BYU is always surging and just a returned missionary away from actually finishing first in whatever league they are in.

You aren't surging if you finish 3rd in your league behind Gonzaga and Saint Mary's. You are actually the Marco Rubio of the WCC. Third and still holding out hope that relief is just around the corner.

Yes, I know how important the Florida primary is for Rubio and I know how important the return of TJ Haws, Eric Mika, Payton Dasturp and Elijah Bryant are to Dave Rose and the legions of hopeful BYU basketball fans next year.

Rubio may not like Trump (neither do I) but you have to beat him to say you are surging. Ditto for Rose. You have to beat Gonzaga and Saint Mary's and not lose to the panty waists of the party like Pacific and Portland, before you can use the surging slogan.

Here's hoping that the chant for Rose and BYU basketball isn't four more years; four more years, because the last four years despite two NCAA one and done invites, BYU has never beaten the frontrunner for a WCC title.

It was supposed to happen this year. It is supposed to happen the year before and of course it is supposed to happen next season also. It just never does. Meanwhile, the refrain from Rose and Rubio is the same; wait until next season and wait until Florida.

For Rubio, the crossing of the Rubicon is Tuesday. For Rose he has 8 months to find a pontoon bridge of productive post players, if he ever hopes to quit surging and finally savor an actual championship and decent run in the NCAA tournament.

That said, it is never too early to talk a little Cougar campaign talk in basketball for next season.

Kyle Collinsworth was amazing. He was player of the year in the WCC and the horse BYU rode most of the season. He just wasn't the best player on his team. There are those who say that redshirt transfer Elijah Bryant was and will be the best player on the team.

He has the same size and skills as Collinsworth, but he can shoot from outside. He will be the point for BYU next season. He can get to the basket, and penetrate and dish to the open man.

BYU will have a five-man guard rotation next year with Bryant at the point with Nick Emery as his backup. When not at the point, Emery and TJ Haws will be the offensive weapons that defenses will have to account for. Jordan Chatman will be the fourth guard in the rotation, but I look for BYU to need a fifth.

The most likely guy is Jake Toolson. He has some serious health issues, and BYU is taking care of all his needs. If he can be ready to play again and his back issues clear up,

he will be the fifth. He is the bird in hand for Rose and the guard line if he is healthy. If not, Rose will have to find someone else. One option is walkon freshman Steven Beo from Washington.

There will plenty of times that BYU will use the offensive attack they used last year with four guards and one big on the floor for significant minutes.

As always for this team, the question remains in the post.

Here are the hopeful answers for next year: Eric Mika, Payton Dasturp, Yoeli Childs, Corbin Kaufusi, Kyle Davis and Braiden Shaw. It looks like the Jamal Aytes experiment didn't turn out well and it remains to be seen where Jakob Hartsock will see time.

My money is again on BYU post's play surging, but never winning against the post players from Gonzaga in Prezemek Karnowski, Domantas Sabonis and Ryan Edwards.

Here's hoping for the political and post upset for BYU in this department next year. BYU is loaded, has been loaded and will be loaded on the perimeter, but the game is still won inside and BYU has constantly preached that they are surging, but never actually survive the WCC battle in the paint.

After 5 seasons in this league, Gonzaga still holds all the Trump cards and BYU is still the Rubio of the race. Florida may be the turning point for Rubio and Mika may be the missing post for Rose. Polls are interesting, but real post play is better. That's what I'm waiting on.

Standings Tell Story for BYU Spring Sports

Baseball

Schools	Conf W-L-T	Conf PCT	W-L-T	PCT
BYU	0-0-0	.000	15-1-0	.938
Portland	0-0-0	.000	9-6-0	.600
Saint Mary's	0-0-0	.000	8-6-0	.571
San Diego	0-0-0	.000	9-7-0	.562
Gonzaga	0-0-0	.000	7-6-0	.538
Santa Clara	0-0-0	.000	7-8-0	.467
Pepperdine	0-0-0	.000	6-8-0	.429
Loyola Marymount	0-0-0	.000	6-9-0	.400
Pacific	0-0-0	.000	6-10-0	.375
San Francisco	0-0-0	.000	2-14-0	.125

Softball

Schools	Conf W-L-T	Conf PCT	W-L-T	PCT
Loyola Marymount	0-0-0	.000	13-6-0	.684
BYU	0-0-0	.000	12-8-0	.600
Pacific	0-0-0	.000	10-8-0	.556
San Diego	0-0-0	.000	8-12-0	.400
Santa Clara	0-0-0	.000	5-13-0	.278
Saint Mary's	0-0-0	.000	5-15-0	.250

Men's Volleyball

2016 MPSF MEN'S VOLLEYBALL STANDINGS

	M P S F					O V E R A L L						
TEAM	W	L	PCT	HOME	AWAY	W	L	PCT	HOME	AWAY	NEUT	STREAK
#Long Beach State	12	2	.857	7-1	5-1	18	3	.857	8-2	6-1	4-0	L1
#BYU	12	2	.857	5-1	7-1	16	2	.889	7-1	9-1	0-0	W12
#Stanford	13	3	.813	6-1	7-2	15	3	.833	6-1	9-2	0-0	L1
#UCLA	13	3	.813	6-1	7-2	19	3	.864	9-1	9-2	1-0	W6
Pepperdine	9	6	.600	4-4	5-2	10	6	.625	5-4	5-2	0-0	W2
UCSB	9	7	.563	5-2	4-5	14	8	.636	9-2	5-6	0-0	W1
Hawaii	7	9	.437	3-5	4-4	12	9	.571	8-5	4-4	0-0	W2
CSUN	5	9	.357	4-4	1-5	12	9	.571	6-4	2-5	4-0	L2
UC Irvine	5	11	.313	3-6	2-5	7	13	.350	3-6	2-5	2-2	W1
USC	4	12	.250	2-7	2-5	4	14	.222	2-7	2-6	0-1	L1
Cal Baptist	4	13	.235	1-8	3-5	9	13	.409	3-8	3-5	3-0	L1
UC San Diego	0	16	.000	0-7	0-9	5	17	.227	3-8	2-9	0-0	W1

Standings Through Mar. 12..# Clinched MPSF Tournament Bid

Trophies Tell Track Story

Every BYU athlete finishes in top five at nationals

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – All three BYU athletes placed in the top five in their respective events at the NCAA Indoor Championships this weekend.

“The bottom line is the athletes went out and performed and weren’t intimidated,” BYU track and field head coach Ed Eyestone said. “We got great efforts out of them.”

Junior Shaquille Walker took third in the men’s 800-meter finals with a time of 1:47.50. He trailed only Akron’s Clayton Murphy and Middle Tennessee State’s Eliud Rutto. He also ran a 1:47.36 in the men’s preliminaries on Friday, which also ranked third among all competitors.

Junior Zachary Blackham took third overall in the men’s high jump with a mark of 2.18 meters. He trailed only Air Force’s Taylor Smith and Texas Tech’s Trey Culver. With Blackham’s and Walker’s combined scores, BYU took 19th overall among men’s teams.

“All three of our athletes outperformed their ranking coming in to the meet,” Eyestone said. “The men took 19th overall as a team, and considering we only had two people that’s a very good result.”

Junior Shea Martinez-Collinsworth ran a 2:04.38 in the preliminaries on Friday afternoon, ranking second among all competitors. In the finals, she placed fifth with a time of 2:06.57.

“Just getting to nationals is a hard thing,” Martinez-Collinsworth said. “I just tried to close strong and stay positive throughout the race and enjoy the moment. I was happy with the outcome and being able to represent BYU. I’m grateful for my coaches and everyone who helped me get to this point. I’m really grateful for BYU and everything it does to help us succeed.”

Television Timetable

BYU vs. Utah (Baseball)

Tuesday, March 15 at Provo

First Pitch: 6 pm MDT

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. UAB (M Basketball)

Wednesday, March 16 at Provo

Tipoff: 8 pm MDT

TV: ESPNU

BYU vs. Pacific (Baseball)

Thursday, March 17 at Provo

First Pitch: 6 pm MDT

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. Pacific (Baseball)

Friday, March 18 at Provo

First Pitch: 6 pm MDT

TV: TheW.tv

BYU vs. Pepperdine (M Volleyball)

Friday, March 18 at Provo

Match Start: 7 pm MDT

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. Pacific (Baseball)

Saturday, March 19 at Provo

First Pitch: 1 pm MDT

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. Pepperdine (M Volleyball)

Saturday, March 19 at Provo

Match Start: 7 pm MDT

TV: BYUtv