

HB Arnett's



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COUGARS AND CLINT EASTWOOD SHARE THE GOOD, BAD AND UGLY THIS PAST WEEKEND

BYU had a good 85-67 win over a bad Portland team last Saturday night in Oregon.

It was a welcome relief from the ugly and bad 83-63 loss to a very good Gonzaga team two days earlier in Spokane.

Just like any good Clint Eastwood spaghetti western, BYU's play on the court established the pecking order of the West Coast Conference basketball race.

As of now, BYU is the spaghetti on the bottom of the plate and Gonzaga and St. Mary's are the sauce on top of the Cougars the WCC race for a championship this season.

BYU is al dente and all right when it comes to beating up on the also rans of the league, but they are soft and mushy against the Zags and Gaels.

Speaking of beating up, that is the defense de jour now by WCC teams against the Cougars. The game plan of all BYU league opponents seems to be to get as physical as you can against the Cougars and dare the officials to call a foul.

From our perspective, 7-out-of 10 times they won't.

Face Down

I firmly believe that officials should let a game be decided by the players on the court, but not by players who are face down on the court.

That's enough of my opinion of most of the WCC officiating I have seen this season. Regardless of officiating, good or bad, BYU is not good enough to beat Gonzaga this year.

They are an outstanding basketball team and were never seriously threatened by BYU. The Zags took Tyler Haws out of the game. He was one of those BYU players who seem to spend more time face down on the court than facing up to the basket.

Yes, the Zags physically beat Haws up and were allowed to do so with the style of officiating of this game.

The other issue in this loss was the fact that BYU just isn't big enough, deep enough or talented enough to compete with the front court of Gonzaga. Yes it was that obvious.

With the road split, BYU is now 16-6 overall and 6-2 in WCC play.

The conference regular season race is now down to playing for second place for Dave Rose and his Cougars.

Gonzaga appears to me to be unbeatable, even in the Marriott Center in late February.

BYU's chances of securing even a sniff at NCAA post season play will come down to two things. They will have to hold serve with soft side of the league schedule and then it is an absolute must that they beat St. Mary's on the road.

The formula for any chance of another NCAA appearance boils down to St. Mary's in Moraga.

Meanwhile, this week it's Pepperdine in Malibu on Thursday and Santa Clara in Provo on Saturday.

ALABAMA WILL OUT RECRUIT BYU

Relax when it comes to BYU football recruiting.

Based on stars, rankings and internet evaluations, the Cougars are not going to out recruit Alabama or probably 40 other SEC, Big 10, Big 12 or Pac 12 teams. BYU would probably rank 8th or 9th in recruiting even in the ACC..

The SEC and most other big name conferences simply have too much going for them in demographics and not enough going for them in academics and scholastics.

BYU has its recruiting niche. It is never going to change. It is always going to be dominated by the LDS prospect. BYU is also never going to get all of the premier LDS prospects. They just have to get their share.

And, in spite of the internet and message boards, nobody, including you and me and coaches can ever be sure which prospects will turn out to be real players. We all have our suspicions, but nobody knows for sure.

Waste of Time

I've been doing this newsletter thing now for 30 plus years. I've seen enough recruiting classes come and go that getting excited or depressed about a class is a waste of time.

BYU will always have some recruiting surprises and some recruiting busts. Years ago I used to stay up nights worrying about who would commit and who wouldn't.

It is a total waste of time.

It is not about stars, headlines and hoopla. It's about who can play.

All any team hopes for is that of the 25-30 players they ink each year, they can get 7-9 real players in that class.

I can remember when BYU won its only National Championship and how excited I was that LaVell Edwards was now going to compete with the big boys of college football for all the hyped recruits. Didn't happen and never has.

If you want BYU recruiting to be more like Alabama, BYU doesn't need better recruiters and better facilities. They need less ecclesiastical endorsements.

I have been around long enough to know that not being able to get one of those has kept many a player and coach from plying their trade at BYU.

BYU recruiting is like a good mutual fund. There are going to be some years that are better than others, but in the long run, regardless of coaches and LDS players going elsewhere, it will still produce good solid results.

After 30 years or more of recruiting hindsight, I honestly can't think of any terrible or terrific recruiting classes. BYU just plugs along with its long range goals of trying to always have a good quarterback, good players and good people.

Like any good mutual fund, it has had its up years and its down years, but the trend is definitely up when it comes to quality of players over the last 30 years.

Recruiting has always been good for my business because there is interest in it. But trust me; it is like the Academy awards. It is a big thing at the time, but two months later can you remember who won the award for best actor?

Can you tell me who was the most coveted and prized recruit from BYU's 2010 recruiting class? Neither can I. Can you tell me who won the Academy award for best actress three years ago?

Can you tell me which three BYU recruits held a joint press conference at Iggy's sports grill three years ago to announce to the world that they would be attending BYU and bringing home a national championship?

Here's a hint. Two of the three are no longer enrolled as football players at BYU. The third has not had any significant impact as yet.

You just need 8-9 players a year from a list of 25-30 signees. It took me a while to figure the hype and hoopla out. But once I did, it made following BYU football recruiting much easier and more relaxing.

As I mentioned, recruiting is good for my business and good for the egos of prospects and their parents, but other than that, you always have to wait at least two or three years to see just who really is good and just who really did have a great recruiting class.

My advice? Relax and enjoy the next three years and watch what happens on the field and not on the internet recruiting sites.

If that doesn't work for you and you still get worked up and full of angst when it comes to BYU football recruiting, then you can hang your recruiting hat on the hope that coaches are fired and better recruiters are brought in.

Oops! That did happen. Just like with players, we likely will have to wait at least three years to see how that works out.

Football National Letter of Intent Day Just 9 Days Away

Two weeks ago, we listed BYU committed football recruits and some of those they were pursuing.

With just 9 days remaining until National letter of intent day, there have been a few changes. Here is the latest list with updates and changes

Letter of intent day is set for Wednesday, February 6.

We will start with the solid commits

Francis Bernard, RB, 5-11, 215, Herriman HS, UT

Ma'ataua Brown, DL, 6-5, 340, Cerritos JC, CA

Michael Davis, WR, 6-2, 180, Glendale HS, CA
(BYU's best speed at WR since Todd Watkins)

Nathan DeBeikes, RB/LB, 6-2, 195, Thousand Oaks HS, CA
Garrett England, DB, 6-3, 180, Skyline HS, UT

Rylee Gautavai, LB, 6-1, 205, Bountiful HS, UT

Billy Green, QB, 6-2, 200, Kings HS, WA
(Already enrolled in school. Will participate in spring drills)

Keegan Hicks, OL 6-2, 270, Bingham HS, UT

Brayden Kearsley, OL, 6-5, 295, Aloha HS, OR
(Done deal. Now a solid commit. He was impressed with his visit with new offensive coordinator Robert Anae)

Moroni Laulu-Pututau, WR/TE, 6-4, 190, Mountain Crest HS, UT

Dallin Leavitt, DB, 5-11, 200, Central Catholic HS, OR
(Son of former Cougar linebacker Jared Leavitt)

Samuel Lee, CB, 6-0, 180, College of Canyons JC, CA

Inoke Lotulelei, WR, 5-9, 175, Cottonwood HS, UT

Kalolo Manumaleuna, LB/DL, 6-2, 250, Compton JC, Ca

Kaimana Nacua, QB/DB, 6-1, 195, Liberty HS, NV

Patrick Palau, RB/LB, 5-11, 240, East HS, UT

JonRyheem Peoples, DL, 6-6, 300, Rigby HS, ID

Trajan Pili, LB, 6-1, 220, Centennial HS, NV

Jordan Preator, DB, 6-0, 180, Fremont HS, UT

Addison Pulsipher, DL/OL, Temecula Valley HS, CA

Thomas Shoaf, OL, 6-6, 260, Columbus North HS, IN

Talon Shumway, WR, 6-3, 190, Lone Peak HS, UT

Merrill Taliauli, DL 6-2, 300, East HS, UT

Kuj Tapusoa, DB, 5-11, 195, Kahuku HS, HI

Trent Trammell, DB, 5-11, 185, San Francisco City College, CA
(Already enrolled in school)

New commits since the last list

Chasen Anderson, 6-0, 215 LB, Logan HS, UT, Son of new Wisconsin coach Gary Anderson. Missed all of last season with a torn ACL.

Josh Carter, OL, 6-5, 280, Eastern Arizona JC

Quincy Awa-Dubose, OL, 6-2, 300, Moorpark JC, Calif...Recommended by new o-line coach Garret Tujague whose team face Dubose for a couple of years. Had an offer from Wyoming. Not LDS.

Bye Bye BYU

These guys told BYU no last week.

Claudell Louis, DL, 6-6, 270, College of Sequoias JC, CA
(Gone. With the coaching changes, said adios to BYU and hello to Fresno State)

Johnny Ragin III, LB, 6-3, 215, Wilsonville HS, OR
(Said no to BYU and yes to the Cal Bears)

Tanner Shipley, WR, 6-2, 190, Wilsonville HS, OR
(Still shopping with a trip to Boise State this past weekend. Oops, actually committed to the Broncos on Saturday)

Gaius Vaenuku, DL, 6-5, 280, Euless Trinity HS, TX
Vaenuku committed to Utah this past weekend.

Lowell Lotulelei, DL, 6-2, 300, Bingham HS, UT (now committed to Utah)

Siale Fakailoantonga, TE/LB, 6-4, 220, Cottonwood HS, UT (Also will now sign with Utah after wavering)

Prospects that Cougars are still trying to land

BYU is still working on **Lloyd Tunstall**, a 6-4, 330 pound offensive tackle. He tripped to BYU in early December, but when he tripped to TCU, he committed to the Horned Frogs. A couple of days later, his head coach and offensive line coach at Canyons, Garrett Tujague, was announced as a new assistant coach at BYU. The Cougars are still pursuing Tunstall.

He originally prepped at LA Baptist in North Hills, Calif. Now that BYU is making a push to entice him, you can look for TCU to counter by having Tunstall talk to Tayo

Fabuluje. He is the former BYU player who didn't like BYU and transferred to TCU where he is now a starting left tackle.

Zach Barnes, LB/DE, 6-3, 215, Grayson HS, GA

Other Offers and Long Shots

Nic Purcell, OL, 6-8, 300, Golden West JC, CA...LDS returned missionary originally from New Zealand. 26 years old, but has NCAA eligibility issue to be resolved because played two games on a "social club" team in NZ before coming to US and before serving a mission. Oregon is spearheading an appeal. (Too many eligibility issues at play here. k BYU still hoping some eligibility issues can be resolved, but we don't hold the same optimism)

Auston Johnson, LB, 6-1, 245, El Camino JC, CA (Visited campus but did not get an offer)

Chongo Kandolo, OL, 6-4, 300, Fresno City JC, CA...Visited BYU on 12/7, Illinois on 11/7, visiting Tennessee this week and will visit Nebraska next weekend. (A huge long shot for the Cougars to land)

Transitional Transfers

If you are wondering why BYU is making a push for junior college transfers, it makes sense.

Almost all of the jucos are either offensive or defensive linemen. The latest push is for O-linemen. Last year BYU didn't have a great offensive line. They need immediate help in talent and especially depth.

You can also look for BYU to bring in more junior college players next year. They have to in order to make the transition from most of their high school LDS players going directly on LDS missions because of the new age limits now in play.

What is now happening is that the LDS recruiting pipeline has been extended even more than it usually has been. It will be junior college players that help transition BYU with players until the pipeline begins pumping out players at its normal rate.

The emphasis on juco recruiting is unusual for BYU, but is a stop gap measure with so many LDS high school recruits heading on missions at 18. It will probably take a couple of years of solid juco recruiting to fill the void until those new 18-year old missionaries start coming back from their missions.

Television Timetable

BYU vs. Pepperdine

Thursday, January 31 at Malibu
Tipoff: 8:00 pm Mountain Time
TV: Time Warner Cable and Root Sports in Utah

BYU vs. Santa Clara

Saturday, Feb 2 at Provo
Tipoff: 7:00 pm Mountain Time
TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. San Diego

Thursday, Feb 7 at San Diego
Tipoff: 8:00 pm Mountain Time
TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. San Francisco

Saturday, Feb 9 at Provo
Tipoff: 7:00 pm Mountain Time
TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. Portland

Saturday, Feb 16 at Provo
Tipoff: 7:00 pm Mountain Time
TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. Utah State

Tuesday, Feb 19 at Provo
Tipoff: 7:00 pm Mountain Time
TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. St. Mary's

Thursday, Feb 21 at Moraga
Tipoff: 9:00 pm Mountain Time
TV: ESPN2

BYU vs. Gonzaga

Thursday, Feb 28 at Provo
Tipoff: 9:00 pm Mountain Time
TV: ESPN2

BYU vs. Loyola Marymount

Saturday, Mar 2 at Los Angeles
Tipoff: 9:00 pm Mountain Time
TV: ESPNU