

HB Arnett's

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(This issue will serve as the monthly issue for June. We are just sending it a few days early)

ARCHIVAL ANALYSIS

There have been several names in the news lately concerning football and basketball recruits that have committed or not committed to BYU.

When those names pop up, we always like to take a peek at past issues to see what we had to say about those recruits. Here are some past observations and current comments about these prospects.

Riley Nelson

Here is what we wrote about him in Issue 35 on March 31 of this year when we printed a list of returned LDS missionaries that would be returning to the BYU program. We included Nelson in that list.

Riley Nelson, QB, Barcelona, Spain...We list him here because there have been numerous rumors that the former Utah State quarterback will be transferring to BYU upon his return from his mission.

We dismissed those rumors until recently. There were plenty of stories filtering out of the recent BYU coaching clinic that Nelson, may indeed, be returning to BYU instead of USU.

His grandfather is Rod Tueller, the former Aggie Head Basketball coach and Athletic Director.

Despite those strong USU ties, there are those who are very credible sources now telling us he is coming to BYU. Nobody will publicly confirm that of course, but we learned a long time ago where there are multiple smoke signals, there is usually a pretty warm fire.

Nelson won't be back until the summer of 2009 and if he does matriculate at Provo, he would redshirt a year and then be a redshirt sophomore in 2010, the year BYU will be looking to replace Max Hall.

From our vantage point, the fact that BYU did not heavily recruit a quarterback this past season and did not sign one, gives even more credence to the Nelson stories.

With Max Hall firmly entrenched for another two seasons, when he finally graduates, BYU will have Stephen Covey and Nelson to choose from as a replacement for Hall.

This also lines up nicely for the BYU quarterback timeline for the future.

Hall has two more years. In 2010, he will likely be replaced by either Covey or Nelson. Covey will have two years left to play and Nelson would three.

In February of 2010, BYU is also hoping that they can sign Jake Heaps to a letter of intent. He is the highly touted LDS quarterback out of Skyline HS in Seattle.

If he does sign with the Cougars, he would likely redshirt a year in the fall of 2010 and then leave for an LDS mission. That means when either Covey or Nelson are finished with their stint at quarterback, Heaps would be back from a mission and then be ready to play.

The quarterback picture is already charted on the BYU board from Hall this coming fall until 2012-13 with the projection of Heaps if the Cougars can land him.

We also wrote the following in October of 2005 in Issue 8.

A Lot Like Alex Smith, Only Smaller... While BYU has already secured a verbal commitment from James Lark, the 6-3, 205 quarterback from Pine View HS in St. George, they are also still looking at other high school quarterbacks, including another one in Utah.

During BYU's bye week, Brandon Doman, the Cougar qb coach, was in Logan to watch Riley Nelson, the 6-1, 185 pound left-handed qb from Logan High School.

Doman saw a lot. All Nelson did was throw for 465 yards and six touchdowns and then run for two more.

It would not surprise us if BYU offers Nelson a scholarship. He is getting attention from Pac 10 schools and other teams that run the spread offense.

He is on pace to erase the Utah record for passing touchdowns set last season by Lark. It looks like Pine View and Logan are on track for an epic showdown in the state playoffs in November.

After six games, here are the comparisons between Lark and Nelson. Lark has thrown for 16 TDs and run for 3. Nelson has thrown for 27 and has 9 rushing scores. In passing yardage, Nelson has 1784 yards after six games compared to Lark's 1454. Both are completing close to 67% of their passes and both average 15 yards per completion.

We also wrote the following the next week in Issue 9 of October 9, 2005:

We have seen both James Lark and Riley Nelson play in person this season. They are the two best quarterbacks in the state this season and two of the best in the west.

In our opinion, and if BYU was asking for our input, and you could only take one quarterback, we would take Nelson. All he does is "stick it in the end zone".

That was then, this is now:

After we wrote two months ago that it was likely that Nelson and Covey would be the heir apparent to Max Hall, we had several subscribers ask us if we had forgotten about James Lark.

We didn't.

BYU was on to Lark during his junior year and targeted him as "their guy".

In our opinion, and based on what we now know and see, they were way too early in pulling the trigger before seeing just how special Nelson was.

After Lark committed, BYU was locked in. They also were heavily invested in Lark and didn't want to admit that Nelson was a better qb.

Incidentally, in the epic showdown for the state championship in November of 2005, Logan defeated Pine View 56-21.

A high school coach, whom we consider to be one of the top offensive coaching minds in Utah, at any level, told Pine View people a few days before the game that they should be prepared to be down by at least 28 points at the half.

They told him he was crazy because Pine View was coming into the game with a 12-1 record and they didn't believe Logan had played anybody as good as Pine View.

It was 21-0 after one quarter and 49-7 at the half. Nelson and Logan toyed with Pine View.

Nelson rushed 19 times for 161 yards and passed for 335 yards with 17-23 passing stats.

The same coach who told Pine View what they were in store for also went up against Nelson with his team.

He says that Nelson has some nice physical tools, but what makes him so special is that he can see it coming. His biggest asset is that he has the ability to see what defenses are going to do and then do what it takes to exploit their plans and ploys.

There are a lot of gifted quarterbacks at all levels with exception physical abilities, but very, very few have the gift of seeing and understanding what a defense is doing and then be able to exploit it with his decision making and play.

Nelson is currently serving in the Spain, Barcelona LDS mission and will be back home in March of next year.

Nate Austin

Here is what we wrote in August of 2007 after Austin played on a team with Lone Peak HS players Tyler Haws, Josh Sharp and Kimball Payne in a tournament in late July in Las Vegas:

Austin reportedly played well enough in Las Vegas and at other AAU venues to make himself a prospect. He will be a junior this coming season. He is thin, but being 6-10 makes him interesting. Keep your eye on him.

That was then, this is now.

Austin verbally committed to Dave Rose and the BYU Cougars two weeks ago. The 6-10 post player will likely be the “Justin Hamilton Story” of this coming season.

Hamilton, also 6-10, played sparingly for Lone Peak as a junior, but played well enough during the following summer to earn a scholarship to Iowa State. He eventually started as a senior for Lone Peak.

That story should repeat itself with Austin. He was a reserve for the Knights as a junior, but will be a starter this coming season and has already earned a scholarship from BYU.

After playing his senior season this winter, he will serve an LDS mission and then enroll at BYU a few years down the road.

Austin has had a good spring outing already while playing with the Salt Lake Metro AAU squad and in games with Lone Peak.

His signature game of the spring was when he was playing with the Lone Peak squad and he had 24 points and 22 rebounds in a overtime win against Outlaws Elite in Las Vegas in the Las Vegas Spring Showcase. The Outlaws is a team that draws players from across the country and had five players who are headed to D1 programs.

Jordan Ellis

Here is what we previously wrote about Ellis:

Absolutely nothing. We had never heard of him before this week.

That was then, this is now.

Ellis is a 6-1 point guard from North Medford HS in Oregon. BYU is recruiting and evaluating him aggressively.

He plays his AAU ball for the Oregon Rebels and was in the Double Pump Tournament in Denver in April.

That is the same tourney in which the Utah Pump ‘N Run team played. The roster for the local team includes Brandon Davies and Kyle Collinworth, two prep players that are high on BYU’s recruiting radar for the future.

Ellis averaged 15.5 points per game as a junior last season for the Black Tornado. He was instrumental in leading his team to the 6A Oregon State Basketball playoffs for the first time in a decade. North Medford finished fifth in the state.

Besides BYU, other schools showing recruiting interest in Ellis include Oregon State, Portland State, UC Irvine

and Utah State.

Tyler Haws

Here is what we wrote in August of 2007.

There is no question that BYU's biggest recruiting target for the near future will be Tyler Haws, the 6-5 guard from Lone Peak HS in Highland, Utah.

We wrote this March 3, 2008:

We find it a little surprising that there are some casual fans who, after watching Haws in person, say that they were unimpressed.

We have a thought on why they come away wondering what the deal is and why Haws is so heavily recruited. Because of the big-time numbers Haws consistently posts, most run-of-the mill fans are expecting to see a Kobe Bryant or LeBron James.

What they get is a Manu Ginobili. The Spurs star isn't as flashy or explosive as Bryant or James, but all he does is make big shots, gets to the basket whenever he wants and camps out at the free throw line.

That was then. This is now.

Since being named MVP of the 5A state tournament and leading the Lone Peak Knights to the hardware, Haws has been busy.

He was recently invited to the NBA Players Association Top 100 camp. This is an extremely elite camp and features only the upper echelon of high school basketball recruits.

During April 25-27 Las Vegas Spring Showcase, Haws was playing with Lone Peak and his team finished with a 4-2 record in the Gold Division.

In the quarterfinal game against Outlaws Elite, he hit a 15-foot shot to win the game in overtime. He finished with 29 points and six rebounds.

In the semis, held an hour later, Lone Peak got beat at the buzzer by Belmont Shores Up and Coming.

Haws had 32 points, six rebounds and three assists. He shot 80% from the field and was 89% from the line.

For the six games, Haws averaged 32.7 points and 8.3 rebounds. His shooting percentage for those games was at 60%, he was 44% from the three-point line and 83 percent from the charity stripe.

Earlier in April, Haws and Lone Peak captured the state AAU title with a 57-53 win over Skyline. Lone Peak played without Nate Austin, who was nursing a sprained ankle.

Haws lit it up with 34 points.

Here are the other AAU games that Lone Peak won leading up to the championship and points scored by Haws:

LP-67 Alta-38...Haws 19

LP-69 Kearns-31...Haws 21, sat the last 10 minutes

LP-62 Davis-44...Haws 27

LP-51 Bear River-43...Haws 25

LP-64 Copper Hills-27...Haws 33

Jeremy Olsen

Here is what we wrote in August of 2007 after watching Olsen play in Las Vegas:

This 6-9 LDS prospect from Georgia was playing on the Worldwide Renegades AAU team. He was also playing against some of the elite AAU teams in the country.

It was a little hard to get a handle on him because in the three games we saw, he probably had less than ten touches. His teammates were reluctant to get him the ball.

He does have a mid-range game, but against the elite athletes we saw, he is a mediocre rebounder and has some serious defensive liabilities against bigs who have quickness.

His recruitment by BYU will not be a slam dunk. He has programs like Ole Miss, Xavier and Utah involved.

In games we saw, he had at least one of his family entourage who attended the games in Las Vegas wearing a t-shirt that said, "Friends Don't Let Friends Go To BYU".

That was then, this is now.

Two weeks ago, Olsen verbally committed to Utah. BYU was quick to leak the word that they never offered Olsen. They had plenty of looks and followed him and saw plenty of games over the last year.

We saw this one coming the moment we saw the t-shirt while sitting behind the Olsen family in the Foothill HS gym in Henderson, NV.

FLUFF AND STUFF

Take Trent Plaisted off your wish list for returning for his senior season at BYU.

He has hired an agent and can't return to the BYU basketball program. Instead, he will continue working out in California and with the help of his agent just nailed down the hoped for invite to the Orlando pre-draft camp and individual workouts with teams.

Manase Tonga, the senior running back for the Cougars, has been declared academically ineligible and will not play this coming season. He can apply for re-admission and play again in the 2009 season.

His academic issues were no surprise to BYU. You have to be on probation before you are dismissed from school for academic reasons.

The fact that BYU offered a scholarship to LDS missionary Malosi Te'o during spring drills, tells us that they knew it was highly likely that Tonga wouldn't be available this fall and they would be short a running back on the depth chart this fall..

Te'o signed with UNLV out of Kahuku HS in Hawaii, but never played for the Rebels. He is currently serving a mission in New York.

If BYU ever gets an invite to a BCS conference, in our opinion, it won't because they are winners in football and basketball. It will be because of television sets.

Forget gawking at how successful BYU football and basketball have been recently. That won't get the Cougars an invite.

Start keeping track of the growth projections for Utah. It will be a population explosion and expanded television market that will eventually earn the Cougars a ticket to a BCS conference.

There is currently no incentive for BCS conferences to invite BYU. If they did, it would mean they would have to share the money with a team that currently doesn't bring any significant way to add to the pile of cash. BYU fans like to say that having BYU in a league would deliver more ticket sales to teams in that league.

Ticket sales for BCS teams are nothing. The big money is in the television contracts.

With growth in Utah, comes a bigger TV market and the bigger TV and the more valuable BYU becomes as a potential member of a BCS conference.

We never thought we would see it, but we are starting to change our mind about BYU and a BCS invite.

We saw numbers recently in growth projections for Utah County that expects 1 million people to be living here in just a few years. Those same projections had 250,000 people living in Cedar Valley, just east and over the mountain from Utah Lake.

Utah is still among the top states in population growth.

Growth is terrible for traffic and congestion, but it will be the only way BYU ever warrants an invite to a BCS conference. Just remember, the next time you sit through three semaphore cycles on University Parkway without

moving while on your way to a Cougar football game and your body heat starts to rise, so do the chances of BYU of eventually landing a BCS invite.

It's all about delivering market share. The current estimated population of Utah is 2.5 million. When that figure doubles, it makes the Cougars much more attractive and BYU then would become a viable candidate for inclusion into a BCS conference.