

HB Arnett's

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HEAPS, HEAPS HOORAY!

They say some of the first signs of senility in sports writing are that you become confused and take up cussing.

If my confusion serves me correctly (more on cussing later in the letter), the last press conference held by a junior in high school that I attended was my own. It was when I announced at the Amapola Cafe in Blythe, California that I was making a choice between Nancy Johnson, Yolanda Gallegos and Etta Lou Hudson as to whom I was taking to the junior prom.

Nobody showed up, including Nancy, Yolanda or Etta Lou. In hindsight, it must have either been the venue or menu that kept the crowds away because from my perspective, I was certainly a “can’t miss prospect”. How could any girl in her right mind not be interested in the No. 8.479 rated prom prospect at Palo Verde High?

Had I been able to produce a nice video and post it on You Tube, I am positive I would have been rated much higher. With a well edited video I still think I could have been at least the No. 7.163 rated prom boy.

Mark Winegar, Shaler Stinson and Hector Fuentes were all more highly rated than me. Mark might have been a better dancer. Shaler was definitely a better dresser and you could land a helicopter on Hector’s haircut. The chicks in those days dug a nice crew cut, but I certainly thought I was the better overall package and prospect.

25-Year Reunion

It took a couple of decades and a 25-year high school reunion to finally have my prom self esteem vindicated and validated.

That’s when I found out that two of the higher rated prom prospects were in prison. I guess I showed those guys. The girls fared much better. Only one of the three was still serving time. Word was that she was prom queen of the state pen and would be out in time for the 30th year reunion.

As I have become older, wiser and more sophisticated, I quit attending press conferences held by high school students and focus now on attending more mature multi-level marketing seminars and presentations.

Sometimes the line between recruiting press conferences and multi-level presentations becomes a little blurred.

Fast forward to late last week to another press conference held at a restaurant in Salt Lake City by a

high school junior.

The ambience must have been much better than at the Amapola because the attendance certainly was. It probably had to do with Jake Heaps announcing he was choosing to play quarterback in college between Washington, LSU, Tennessee, Cal and BYU. He picked the Cougars.

Heaps is the No. 1 rated high school quarterback prospect in the nation for next year's recruiting class. He's a can't miss prospect. No word on his dancing skills, but he was certainly sartorially splendid and had a nice haircut. Mark, Shaler and Hector would have been proud.

Mendenhall Mum

Bronco Mendenhall and his assistant coaches couldn't tell us how they felt as per NCAA recruiting rules, but after three years of hard work in recruiting Heaps, the Cougar coaching staff have already been vindicated and validated.

We'll have to wait and see how they feel 25 years from now.

I am still a little confused as to whether last week was a press conference or a multi-level marketing presentation. If it was a press conference, Heaps was impressive and the hope he held out for Cougar football fans was exhilarating.

If it was a multi-level pitch, we should all get in now on the ground floor.

Based on the Heaps hoopla, now is the time sign up as Bronze, Silver or Golden distributors and donors of the Cougar club.

If you hurry, you too can qualify for the BCS bonus money that is sure to follow.
In case you aren't already in the down line of Heaps, here are his credentials:

At 6-2, 195 pounds, he is the No. 1 rated high school quarterback prospect in the nation (Scout.com). He is 28-0 as a sophomore and junior starter for Skyline High School in Washington. He will be a senior this coming fall.

He has led his team to consecutive state championships. Last season, he completed 203 of 312 passes for 2,910 yards and 38 touchdowns. He threw just four interceptions last year and also had seven rushing touchdowns.

For his current two-year career, he has completed 405 of 648 passes for 6,104 yards and 69 touchdowns, 11 interceptions and rushed for 21 TDs.

He had over 26 scholarship offers, but narrowed down those down to a top-five list of Washington, LSU, California and Tennessee and BYU.

BYU was the big winner.

In the context of either a press conference or multi-level presentation, Heaps is a certified can't miss...unless he does.

Here is the deal about multi-levels that make money.

It is all about marketing. If the product is actually decent, it is a bonus.

That basically is how we see the Heaps hoopla.

Based on his high school, summer camps and combine performances of the last two years, he certainly appears to have talent and ability.

History has shown that early talent at the high school level is usually a 50-50 predictor of how that talent turns out at the college level and beyond.

Here's a case in point. Ron Powlus was a sure-fire two-time Heisman Trophy winner coming out of high school in Pennsylvania. He never won any trophies at Notre Dame and was lucky to win games.

Rick Mirer, also a can't miss prospect at Notre Dame, did miss. He was a cup of coffee guy in the NFL, but had a commercial grade college career.

Mitch Mustain of Arkansas high-school-can't-miss territory, is still waiting for his fame fame and glory at USC after a brief stop with the Razorbacks of Arkansas.

If we take the high road with Heaps, he very well could be the next John Elway, Peyton Manning or Tim Tebow.

Using a baseball analogy, who wouldn't want a .500 hitter?

BYU already struck out with Ben Olsen, but hopefully have hit a homerun with Heaps.

Time and talent will tell.

Apparent

What is apparent, however, is while we will have to wait until his talent is fulfilled on the college field, Heaps' marketing prowess is already proven.

He used his press conference and national credentials to bring on board two other Diamond Distributors to the Cougar down line and hopefully, BYU's future BCS bottom line.

Ross Apo and Zack Stout, along with Heaps, also announced that they will jump on board the BYU football recruiting bandwagon.

Both are big gets for the Cougars. They both are LDS, as is Heaps.

While we will wait until Heaps actually enrolls in college to give our product analysis of his talent, we have already concluded that the guy is charismatic and a marketing maven.

He is the Cougars' best recruiter and has been for the last two years.

He has the sizzle and national brand name to sell the program to other potential recruits. That is what he did with Apo and Stout and what he will continue to do with other recruits BYU has on their "A" list for next year.

If Heaps has the football substance at the next level to back up the selling sizzle he has clearly demonstrated already, then the Cougar Club will need to implement another level in its donation program for football fans.

Forget Bronze and Silver Cougar clubbers. The new "J. Golden" level will be for senile sports writing skeptics and skinflints. It only takes a few dollars a year to join, but you get to say "Well I'll be damned" when Heaps delivers the national title he predicted in his press conference.

IT'S STILL ALL ABOUT PLAYERS

Jake Heaps gets it.

Beyond high school, football is all about players. You can't win on the big stage without players who have talent and ability.

Coaching is nice, but good players are better.

Heaps is a player. The fact that he could call a press conference and a standing-room only crowd of media and fans show up, speaks volumes of his abilities.

The fact that he also brought along two other highly-skilled players with him to the press conference and BYU, indicates that he gets it when it comes to talent and wants it surrounding him at BYU.

Ross Apo is the chief case in point. This 6-4, 195 pound receiver from Oakridge HS in Texas, is good enough to have already committed to the Texas Longhorns. As a matter of fact, that is exactly what he did a few weeks back.

He has been a star on the summer combine and camp circuit recently.

He now says he will be a Cougar and Christmas came early for BYU.

He had Texas, Oklahoma, State, Missouri, Nebraska and BYU all offering scholarships.

Zac Stout is a 6-2, 220 pound linebacker from Oak Christian HS in Westlake Village, California. Oak Christian is a Division I producing football factory and this year is no exception.

With Jake Heaps turning down the Washington Huskies, Steve Sarkisian, the UW new coach, is now targeting Nick Montana of Oak Christian. Yes, he is the son of Joe Montana.

Before committing to the Cougars, Stout had official offers from Arizona, Washington, Washington

State, Oregon State and Nebraska.

While BYU coaches have recruiting restrictions placed on them by the NCAA, Jake Heaps doesn't. He was very instrumental in getting Apo and Stout on board the BYU train and will continue to work on behalf of the Cougar football program.

With Heaps, Apo and Stout now committed, here is the latest list of BYU verbals for the 2010 recruiting season.

Zac Stout...LB, 6-2, 220, Oaks Christian HS, CA
Ross Apo...WR, 6-4, 195, The Oakridge School, TX
Jake Heaps...QB, 6-2, 195, Skyline HS, WA
Tuni Kanuch...DL, 6-1, 285, Bingham HS, UT
A.J. Moore...RB, 5-10, 190, Murrieta Valley HS, CA
Collin Keoshian, LB, 6-2, 225, Santa Clarita Christian, CA
Travis Tuiloma, DL, 6-3, 290, Washburn Rural HS, KS
Graham Rowley, OL, 6-4, 270, Waialua HS, HI
Jordan Black, OL 6-7, 235, Alta HS, UT
Joey Owens, LB, 6-2, 215, Pleasant Grove HS, UT
Algernon Brown, RB, 6-1, 205, Skyline HS, UT
Bronson Kaufusi, DL, 6-6, 225, Timpview HS, UT

Here is a list of other prospects that BYU has offered, but have not yet committed.

LDS

Ricky Heimuli, DL, 6-4, 285, Brighton HS, UT
Toloa'i Ho Ching, LB, 6-0, 225, Alta HS, UT
Kona Schwenke, DL, 6-5, 210, Kahuku HS, HI
Alani Fua, LB, 6-5, 210, Oaks Christian HS, CA
Sefa Tanoa'i, DL 6-4, 270, Pleasant Grove HS, UT

Non LDS

Justin Utopo, DL, 6-3, 260, Lakewood HS, CA
Cameron Roberson, RB, 6-1, 215, Newbury Park HS, CA
Keanon Lowe, DB, 5-10, 170, Jesuit HS, OR
Drew Phillips, RB, 6-0, 185, Boaz HS, AL
Joseph Champaign, LB, 6-0, 200, Grayson HS, GA
Blair Tushaus, OL, 6-2, 270, Notre Dame HS, AZ
Jase Butorac, OL, 6-3, 280, Skyline HS, WA
Kyle Benson, LB, 6-2, 215, Corona Del Sol HS, AZ
Joseph Quezada, RB, 6-0, 200, La Habra HS, CA
Brandon Bourbon, RB, 6-1, 210, Potosi HS, MO

Cardinal over Cougar

BYU offered two LDS prospects, but both chose Stanford over the Cougars. They were:

Dallas Lloyd, QB, 6-3, 205, Pleasant Grove HS, UT
Chris Badger, DB, 6-1, 195, Timpview HS, UT

FLUFF AND STUFF

Jim McMahon and Mark Wilson...We bring up these two former BYU and NFL quarterbacks because theirs was a unique playing time situation.

Both were talented as evidenced by their NFL careers. The problem for LaVell Edwards was that he wanted to maximize their abilities and talents for the benefit of the program.

That is why he redshirted Jim McMahon in 1979 in order to get a two-year gap in their respective eligibility.

Consequently, he was able to get three years out of Wilson and two years as a starter from McMahon.

That could be what we will be looking at with Riley Nelson and Jake Heaps.

Heaps is hoping to compete for the vacated starting job left by Max Hall in 2010 as a true freshman.

If Nelson is the backup to Hall this fall as we expect he will be, it will take a herculean effort from Heaps to win that job from Nelson.

If neither Heaps or Nelson redshirts, there will be a natural two year spacing in their eligibility.

If Heaps redshirts as a frosh and doesn't go on an LDS mission, that would give him the opportunity to be a three year starter after Nelson graduates. As of now, a mission is not in Heaps plans.

Our early handicapping of the quarterback derby after Max Hall is done, is that it will take Heaps living up to all his hype, and then some, as a true freshman if he is to wrest the job from Nelson. We smell redshirt or mission for Heaps before he is done at BYU.

Mendenhall Mess...Bronco Mendenhall has been a very good coach for BYU, but in our opinion, despite all of his accomplishments, he is not without some serious failings.

We are speaking of the current defense.

How does a defensive-minded coach and defensive coordinator who has the final say on all recruiting matters, get caught after four full years on the job with no defensive players?

Sure you can blame unexpected mission calls and some academic issues, but after four years, shouldn't you at least have some defensive personnel that could start for other teams in the Mountain West Conference.

We hope to have to eat our words, but from what we see, the defensive line is very ordinary, the line-backing corp could be worse than last season and while the defensive backfield should be better, there isn't anybody there that could even make the two-deep at the majority of teams in the conference.

LaVell Edwards figured it out. You have to recruit juco corners to compete in this league.

It looks like Mendenhall has finally got the message, but it is a few seasons too late to help for this year.

The coaches are trying to patch the leaks by switching some incoming recruits from offense to defense and by hoping that their incoming juco corners will pan out, but any way you cut it, after four years at the helm with complete control of recruiting, the defensive personnel should be better.

In our opinion, it will take some major offensive production from that side of the ball at BYU for the Cougars to be successful and win games this season.

Can Cougars Win State of Arizona Championship?...BYU will get to see if they are good enough to capture the mythical Arizona college basketball championship this coming season.

The Cougars will host Arizona State in Provo and face the Arizona Wildcats in Tucson on December 28.

The ASU game is a return game for BYU after facing the Sun Devils last season in Glendale.

The UofA game is part of the Fiesta Bowl Basketball Classic, but the game is set for McKale Arena in Tucson.

Other non-conference games include contests at Logan against Utah State, at Hawaii against the Warriors, against Fresno State in Los Angeles and games against either Tulsa, Nevada or Nebraska

in the Findlay Toyota Classic in Las Vegas.