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Vol. 36, Issue 19– December 14, 2015

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Ken Niumatalolo Projected to Be Next Football Coach at BYU

With the polls now closed on the east coast with the conclusion of the Army-Navy game and with just 8 percent of the precincts reporting...which is also how many consecutive Army-Navy games he has won...Cougar Sportsline is now projecting that Ken Niumatalolo has been elected as the next head football coach at BYU.

Other networks are not ready to call it yet and want to wait until next Monday when all the votes will be counted, but not me. It is a done deal and according to all my exit polls has been a done deal for two weeks.

Those other networks are hesitant to call this one because they actually believe that Niumatalolo will be talking seriously for the first time with Tom Holmoe on Monday. The Navy coach himself has said that he will be visiting BYU on Monday to see what they have to say and offer.

If you followed the primaries, you should know that Holmoe didn't find out about Bronco Mendenhall leaving for Virginia just before Bronco signed the contract with the Cavaliers.

The UVA athletic director, as does every other AD in the country, contacted Holmoe to ask permission to talk to Mendenhall before the job conversations got underway. That is how it is done.

You also have to know that Holmoe knew a year ago that Mendenhall was looking to move when Bronco made overtures to Oregon State and Wisconsin.

Holmoe and the big boys in charge of BYU athletics have had their short list and front runner in place for the last 12 months. Those months have now expired. That is why BYU will call a press conference late Monday afternoon to announce that Niumatalolo will be the next BYU football coach.

With all the public acknowledgement that Niumatalolo is coming to Provo to check out the situation, you don't honestly believe he and his agent would have stated publicly that he is coming to BYU to hear what BYU says if he didn't already have the job, do you? Hopefully you don't also believe that BYU is going to bring Niumatalolo to Provo just to embarrass him by offering the job to someone else, do you?

For those who want to wait until all the votes are counted, here is a poll that you will have a hard time discounting. [Click here](#) for Nuimatalolo's Army post game comments and video when he refers to his 18 years at Navy in the past tense.

I privately projected the Navy Coach as Bronco's replacement a week ago, but with the key precincts now reporting, I have officially entered N-I-U-M-A-T-A-L-O-L-O into my spell checker.

I have already been making up a few headlines for future reference, such as: *Ken and Barbie meet BYU and BYU Accused of Poaching.*

Niumatalolo's wife's name is Barbara – hence the Ken and Barbie reference and there is a good chance that the new head coach will bring his youngest son, Ali'i, with him to join his other son Va'a as BYU football players. Ali'i, recently committed to sign a letter of intent with Boise State, but I look for that the change and a headline in Boise to include the word poach sometime soon.

Niumatalolo, 49, was promoted to head football coach at the Naval Academy on Dec. 8, 2007, by Naval Academy Director of Athletics Chet Gladchuk. He is the second Polynesian head coach in Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) history and the first Samoan collegiate head coach on any level.

Now, I know that there will be those who think that Niumatalolo is too much like Bronco when it comes to his perspective that there are more important things than football. I agree and I think you will also think similarly by watching this presentation given by the new BYU coach in April of this year. [Watch Here](#).

I think he is more LaVell Edwards than a Bronco wannabe. And if somehow my call of him as the new coach at BYU with just a few precincts counted turns out to be an updated version of Dewey defeats Truman, I wouldn't be surprised if he isn't hit up to be a new Seventy or Mission President sometime soon.

I see more Lavell than Bronco because I also see Niumatalolo hiring two coordinators and letting them run their own shows on offense and defense.

As long as we are talking votes and politicians, there are some Cougar fans who will go Donald Trump on Niumatalolo saying that the triple option offense should be banned from the Country of Cougars.

There will be no triple option offense in Provo anytime soon. Now that this hire is done, the big hire will be who will be hired to be the new offensive coordinator.

When it comes to stacking up against Bronco, Mendenhall has already won the assistant coach battle in taking assistants with him. He is taking Robert Anae, Jason Beck, Garrett Tujague, Mark Atuaia, Nick Howell and Kelly Poppinga with him to Virginia. As a sidebar, Mendenhall also hired Ruffin McNeil as a linebacker coach. McNeil was fired at ECU this weekend.

Look for Niumatalolo to bring with him Shaun Nua and Dale Pehrson. Nua is a former BYU football player who had a four-year career in the NFL and Pehrson is the current Midshipmen defensive coordinator. Both are LDS. I'm sure that Tom Holmoe will highly encourage that Niumatalolo retain Guy Holliday, Paul Tidwell and Steve Kaufusi to make the transition smoother. Holliday recently closed on a home in South Jordan.

When it comes to money, Nuimatalolo is currently making \$1.6 million at Annapolis. He also has a free home to live in provided by Navy. BYU will match that if they have to, but after listening to Niumatalolo in the video above, I don't think they will have to.

Now for the elephant in the room. Can Niumatalolo recruit Polynesians? Who knows? BYU had 3 ½ Polynesians on Bronco's staff in Kaufusi, Atuaia, Anae and Holliday. How did that work out?

Here's my take on recruiting Polynesians and all other players at BYU. Just like at Navy, the first thing you look for is somebody that can qualify for entrance into the institution. Same with BYU. Just because a Polynesian or any other recruit is LDS, they have to fit the matrix and ecclesiastical mandates for entrance to the school. I'm not looking for any immediate Polynesian recruiting miracles to materialize.

I stand by my LaVell Edwards comparisons. Niumatalolo has all the requisites that those who do the hiring and sponsor the institution are looking for. As for the BYU football fan, the key to Niumatalolo's success at BYU will be who he hires as his coordinators.

I like the hire. I like it a lot. If it doesn't work out it won't matter to me because the rest home where I will someday soon be residing has a great shuffleboard court. If somehow I'm wrong on Niumatalolo, I will get plenty of immediate practice with my shuffling.

As for those other candidates, their concession speeches were mostly delivered early this week. Here they are:

Darrell Bevell and **BYU**
Lance Anderson
Kalani Sitake

3 Game Sweep

Women Shown Exit by Nebraska

BYU was shown the highway by the Huskers of Nebraska Friday night in NCAA volleyball tournament play.

The Cougars finished the year with a great record of 28-4, a trip to the sweet sixteen and a fourth consecutive WCC volleyball title. As in the regular season, BYU was led by Alexa Gray. She had 19 kills against the Huskers to go along with her 15 digs.

Head Coach Heather Olmstead in her post game comments said, "I'm so proud of our team and these girls and their fight. I think we struggled to bounce back after that close first set loss (26-23, 25-17, 25-23). We couldn't seem to get it going the way that we had all season."

Basketball Different Story

It was the BYU women showing the rest of the state the exit this past week in basketball. The Lady Cougars whipped Weber State in Ogden Thursday night 68-51. They came back on Saturday in Provo for a 73-59 thumping of Utah.

Lexi Eaton-Rydalch turned in a big double-double for the week. She lit it up for 25 against Weber and came back with 29 more against the Utes. Since upsetting nationally ranked Texas A&M in Hawaii, the Cougars are on a roll. They have won their last 6 games are now 8-3 on the year. League play in the WCC is now on the docket after a two-week layoff.

BYU will travel to San Diego on December 23 to open their league season with a game against the Lady Toreros.

Cougars go “Clue”less in Colorado

BYU was killed 92-83 in Colorado against the CU Buffs. If this was a board game called “Clue”, here is how it happened.

BYU was bludgeoned in the low post ballroom by CU's more skilled and athletic scorers and rebounders.

The BYU guard line used its own rope in the conservatory to hang itself in this loss. BYU's shot selection in the first half from beyond the arc was anything but conservatory. Sticks and stones are great weapons for "Clue", but the early bricks thrown up by BYU was as deadly as they come.

The prime suspect in this Colorado case was Colonel Mustard. According to Wikipedia, **Colonel Mustard** is the stock character of a great white hunter. Unfortunately, BYU's great white hunter forgot to pack his ammo.

Chase Fisher is decent when he is on. He is catastrophic when he isn't. He was 0-9 from long distance against CU. This Cougar loss was easy to solve. The BYU demise and death in Boulder was done by Colonel Mustard beyond the three-point line with a revolver without any bullets.

The encouraging clue that hopefully will lead to a successful conclusion to this Cougar basketball case this year could be the second half play of Nick Emery and Zac Zeljaas.

The two freshman certainly had good alibi's in the second half when the freshman duo lit it up from beyond the arc. In good detective work, they say you need to follow where the evidence leads you. Emery had 23 and Zeljaas scored 18 in the loss.

If Dave Rose is any kind of a detective, the evidence is that Zeljaas needs more minutes and Fisher less. Next up for BYU will be Western Michigan in Provo next Friday, November 18. The game is set to be televised by BYUtv.

With the loss, the Cougars are now 6-3 on the year.

Commitment is Relative This Past Recruiting Weekend for BYU

Jonah Trinnaman, the speedy receiver from Snow College, by way of American Fork HS, is BYU's most athletic football recruit this year. He is a verbal commit for the Cougars, but that commitment didn't keep him from making a visit to the Utah campus this past week.

Same with Troy Warner. Most BYU football fans breathed a sigh of relief when Bronco Mendenhall announced several weeks back that Warner had signed an offer of admission. [Click here](#) to read the press release from BYU.

Turns out those letters are not binding. Consequently, Warner tripped to USC this week for a recruiting visit. To read how recruiting in general and offers of admission in particular work [click here](#).

Scripturally Speaking

It Doesn't Look Good for BYU against Utah in Las Vegas

6:24...No that is not the score I predict for BYU against Utah in Friday's Las Vegas Bowl. It is a reference in Matthew that says: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other."

That pretty well describes, in my opinion, BYU's preparation for Utah and the Las Vegas Bowl. All the verbiage about BYU having good practices and anxious to play the Utes is probably true.

But when they hit the field, who will they be playing for? Bronco Mendenhall or Ken Niumatalolo? Will they want to send Mendenhall out with something he hasn't had in his last four tries – a win over Utah?

Or will they subconsciously be playing for their new coach Niumatalolo hoping that he will notice how they play in the bowl game?

Bronco and most of his staff have already landed jobs elsewhere... Virginia. Despite the vows of giving all they have to finish up at BYU, these guys are human. I think it will show in the bowl game with both the Cougar players and lame duck coaches.

I would love it if both the coaches and players crammed some lame duck down my throat, and I hope I have to eat .it. I don't see it happening. I call it BYU Chapter 18 Utah verse 24.

Television Timetable

BYU vs. Western Michigan (M Basketball)

Friday, December 18 at Provo

Tipoff: 2:00 pm MST

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs Utah (Football) Las Vegas Bowl

Saturday, December 19 at Las Vegas

Kickoff: 1:30 pm MST

TV: ABC