

HB Arnett's



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Cougs 4-0 and Counting

BYU Makes UVA's "Hoos" Who List With 41-33 Win Over Cavaliers

After beating Virginia 41-33 last Saturday afternoon in LaVell Edwards Stadium and on ESPN's national platform, it appears that the early trend of taking Taysom Hill and BYU lightly this season is officially over.

Here are a few paragraphs from the [UVA official football web site](#) describing their take on the game to back up that claim.

In the third quarter, BYU took its first lead, at 20-16, thanks to a 15-yard touchdown by Hill, who eluded linebacker Max Valles' tackle attempt in the backfield. Hill finished with 72 yards and a TD on 17 carries.

That Hill is a superlative runner is common knowledge. Equally impressive are the strides he's made as a passer. A year ago in Charlottesville, he completed only 13 of 40 attempts and threw a game-changing interception in a 19-16 loss to Virginia. In the rematch, he was 13-for-23 passing for 187 yards and two TDs.

"I told him after the game, he's going to win the Heisman," said Valles, who led UVa with two tackles for loss. "He's probably the best athlete I've ever played against, high school or college. So, props to him."

Hill "is a big, physical guy," London said. "He's a really good player, a really good quarterback, and he performed in the clutch for them when it counted."

"That's a good football team we played, and they'll win a lot of football games."

Here's what BYU's "really good quarterback" did against the Cavaliers. Hill carried the ball 17 times for 72 yards and one touchdown, a nifty little 15-yard scamper where eluded the grasps of at least two UVA defenders. One of those defenders was Max Valles, who was quick to praise Hill after the game.

Hill also completed 13 of 23 passes for 187 yards and two touchdowns. Jordan Leslie, the UTEP transfer, caught the first throw for an 8 yard score. Mitchell Juergens reeled in the second scoring toss for a 50-yard touchdown in the fourth quarter of the contest.

Hill Help

Hill had help in the ground game for BYU. Jamaal Williams had a nice game pounding the ball on the ground. The junior running back tallied 68 yards on just 13 carries. He also added a 2-yard TD run.

BYU's final touchdown came on a 99-yard kickoff return from Adam Hine. The junior has been "close but no cigar" when it came to breaking a big return for the last two seasons. Hine was finally able to light up the scoreboard and crowd with his game clinching score.

Trevor Sampson added the rest of the Cougars' points with two field goals from 28 and 37 yards out.

Defensively, BYU got an early jump on Halloween against the Hoos. This normally solid unit was actually "scary bad" against Virginia. The common term for the Cougars' defensive performance would be "they were exposed". A more correct description would be that they were excoriated and exfoliated. According to Merriam-Webster, they were "skinned good" by a previously very ordinary offense.

All Virginia did against BYU's and Bronco's defense was rack up 35 first downs, and 519 yards of total offense (327 yards passing and 192 yards rushing). It is one thing to have an occasional "bad hair day", but this scalping by the Hoos will take a while to heal and grow back.

Delegating Defense?

While Bronco Mendenhall is enjoying his new found role as manager of the entire BYU football kennel, another defensive performance like the one last Saturday may force the Cougar head coach to rethink his decision to delegate the defense.

When Mendenhall was in charge, his defense played like pit bulls and junk yard dogs. Hopefully last Saturday was a one time anomaly and aberration, but against the Cavaliers they played more like poodles.

Poodles or pit bulls, BYU continues to climb in the polls.

The Cougars are now No. 20 in the AP rankings and No. 21 in the *USA Today* Coaches poll.

AGGIES ON AGENDA IN TWO WEEKS

I've heard of being between a rock and a hard place, but BYU is now between a bye and a bovine.

If Aggie fans can affectionately refer to BYU as Zoob City, then I can lovingly call USU Moo Moo U.

Cluck-Cluck College might be more appropriate based on the egg laid by the Aggies last week in a 21-14 loss to Arkansas State.

In any case both schools will get a week off in preparation for their encounter in Provo on Friday, Oct 3. The game is slated to be televised live by ESPN with a kickoff time of 8:15 MDT.

For the Cougars the break in the schedule comes at an opportune time. Two more weeks will allow players like Brayden Kearsley, Bronson Kaufusi, Algernon Brown and Jordan Leslie (twisted ankle against UVA) to finally heal and get back to action.

The bye week should also insure the debut of wide receiver Nick Kurtz against the Aggies. The ultra talented wide out has nursed a hairline fracture in his foot since the second week of fall camp.

There was some talk of redshirting the 6-6 speedy and smooth receiver, but with the ankle injury to Leslie, and the less than stellar over the top and deep performances of the current crew of receivers, look for Kurtz to start to play.

One guy, who hasn't played yet, is the touted Harvey Langi, According to the game participation reports that I read, the sophomore linebacker and transfer from Utah has yet to see the field. That smells like a redshirt year to me.

Third of Season Gone Grades

Coming out of fall camp I offered grades for the different positions on the team. I am ready to re-grade those same spots with a third of the 2014 season now in the books.

Defensive Front: My fall camp description of this group was that they would be good, but not great. That still seems fair. Against ordinary offenses, they are okay, but as was proved against Virginia, they can be pushed and shoved around by big and powerful offensive lines. The Cougars appear to be a man or two short here. They also lack anyone who has the athletic ability to get to the passer by himself with a decent pass rush.

Defensive Backs: In the fall my assessment of this group was that these backs would be the best that BYU has ever had collectively. I still stand by that opinion. With out a pass rush, this group is severely handicapped. They are also being asked to play a bend but don't break scheme and seldom allowed to use press coverage. Overall, this is still the strength of the defense.

Linebackers: Very Ordinary is my assessment after 4 games. This unit is lacking a dominant playmaker. Alani Fua has not lived up to his preseason hype and billing. Bronson Kaufusi has only played a couple of downs so the jury is still out on him. In the middle, there is nothing special here. There are plenty of journeymen playing hard, but nothing to take notice of.

Offensive Line: Not a surprise coming out of what I saw in the fall, but this group has played well. They have face three good defensive front sevens in Houston, Texas and Virginia and acquitted themselves extremely well. This group is night and day better than they were last season.

Running Backs: For an offense that is all about Taysom Hill, this group of backs has played well under the circumstances. Jamaal Williams is the best of the bunch at running back. Give him a pro set or featured tailback offense to run and he would be getting gaudy numbers. Overall this group is better at blocking against the pass rush and actually protecting the ball better than they did last year. So far so good.

Wide Receivers: Based on my assessment that this would be the best group of wide receivers in decades, this group has been a disappointment. Jordan Leslie is the real deal, but the rest of the group looks ordinary so far. That may change with the addition of Nick Kurtz in a couple of weeks. This group also might be better if Taysom Hill was more patient and not so talented with his legs and feet. I still expect to see an exciting bunch of wide outs with the addition of Kurtz. We will see.

Quarterback: The fact that nobody is clamoring for Christian Stewart says it all about this position at BYU. Taysom Hill is the real deal. Enough said. Yes, as mentioned above, he could be more patient in the pocket and a tad more accurate, but can you imagine how plebian and poor this offense would be without him?

Kicking: The Cougars are getting great punting from Scott Arellano. They have consistent mid-range field goal kicking from Trevor Samson, but the jury is still out from 40-yards out. The jury has already returned a verdict on kick offs. For what seems like a decade, BYU can't find anybody out of Brazil, Bakersfield or Bingham HS that can get the ball into the end zone on kickoffs. Maybe that is the trade off for Taysom Hill being so good.

Stalking the SOS

We are still stalking BYU's Strength of Schedule to see if there will be a realistic chance of the Cougars landing a spot on the big dance card for New Year's Eve or New Year's Day.

Here is how the teams on BYU schedule fared last week:

UConn; lost 17-14 at South Florida, next up: Temple

Texas; had a bye, next up: Kansas

Houston; beat UNLV 47-14, next up: bye

Virginia; lost to BYU 41-33, next up: Kent State

Utah State; lost 21-14 to Arkansas State, next up: bye

Central Florida; beat Bethune-Cookman 41-7, next up: bye

Nevada; bye, next up: San Jose State

Boise State; beat Louisiana Lafayette 34-9, next up: Air Force

Middle Tennessee; lost 36-17 to Memphis, next up: Old Dominion

UNLV; lost 47-14 to Houston, next up: San Diego State

Savannah State; lost 42-28 to Fort Valley State, next up: bye

Cal; lost 49-45 to Arizona, next up: Colorado

TV Timetable

BYE

Saturday, September 27

BYU vs. Utah State

Friday, October 3 at Provo

Kickoff: 8:15 pm MDT

TV: ESPN

BYU vs. Central Florida

Thursday, October 9 at Orlando

Kickoff: 5:30 pm MDT

TV: ESPN

BYU vs. Nevada

Saturday, October 18 at Provo

Kickoff: TBD

TV: TBD