

HB Arnett's



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Adjustments Needed by Coaches, Players and Especially Fans

BYU lost to Washington 31-16 last Friday night in the Fight Hunger Bowl. It was a game in which several adjustments were made by coaches and players from both Washington and BYU during the game. Now it's time to make one more adjustment. It needs to be made by BYU football fans.

BYU was out talented by the Huskies. It was obvious to me that the most athletic and gifted player on the field was Taysom Hill. Hill accounted for 426 of BYU's 473 total offensive yards. He had 293 yards passing and 133 yards rushing.

Unfortunately, when it came to athleticism and talent, his skills were negated by the sheer number of other athletes UW had in comparison to the paucity of offensive talent put on the field by BYU.

Except for the aberration of Virginia, BYU was beat consistently this year by teams like Utah, Wisconsin and Notre Dame that had better players, especially on the line of scrimmage.

Here's the bottom line adjustment that needs to be made by Cougar football fans. BYU fans need to accept that the Cougars have Mountain West talent on the line of scrimmage that can't hold up against BCS Big 5 talent. It's that simple.

It is also obvious that BYU coaches, including Bronco, aren't the most gifted when it comes to game management, play calling and in game adjustments. But even if they were the reincarnation of Nick Saban et al, you can't make adjustments if you don't have enough talented players with which to make those adjustments.

Here is a segment of the Fight Hunger Bowl post game press conference that featured Hill and Bronco which gives credence to that assessment.

Question: Taysom, what was Washington doing defensively in the second half? You had some opportunities in the first half and in the second half UW was shutting you out. What was the key to that?

Hill's Answer: "What they started doing in the second half was bringing their safeties down. They were playing ten yards deep and stacking the box. What really started clicking for us in the second quarter was a play fake, slant pass over the middle but we still had room with the safeties back to complete that and really sustained a lot of drives through that. Then they adjusted and took that away and unfortunately we weren't able to adjust and capitalize on a lot of opportunities that we had in the second half."

Bronco then jumps in and interjects the following: "The way to adjust and beat that is for protection to hold long enough for receivers to run by them and ultimately the offensive front has to keep the players off of Taysom long enough to run by guys that are playing safety at 8 yards. It's pretty simple."

I've made my feelings known in previous issues about how I feel this BYU offense is flawed and geared for failure. Foremost, there isn't enough talent on the offensive front and secondly, you can't let your best player and key cog in this offense be exposed to the pounding that Taysom Hill is taking. Not only are defenders gearing to beat him up by bringing safeties down in the box. BYU coaches are just asking for Hill to be beat up and injured by letting him carry the ball 30 times a game.

An offense that is dependent on just one guy, like BYU's offense currently is, is eventually doomed to failure because of injury. This is especially so with the current situation at offensive line. Knock on wood, Hill is still healthy, but in my opinion, he can't take the kind of beating he currently takes for two more seasons.

Those beatings are inevitable if the offensive line doesn't make dramatic improvement beginning next season.

All of which brings to the forefront the question, How did BYU's offensive line get to be so ordinary and mediocre? There is only one real answer. Recruiting, recruiting and lack of recruiting. All of which breaks down to evaluation, misevaluation, salesmanship or

lack of salesmanship. Before recruiting, however, comes targeting and marketing. BYU's hands are tied because they automatically have their pool of potential lineman limited based on who wants to come to BYU and participate in its unique lifestyle and whether those who want to come to Provo to play can actually get in school. For BYU offensive lineman, it is about talent or lack of it, but also lifestyle choices. Coming to BYU is a big lifestyle choice.

I am not opposed to the BYU lifestyle, consequently I have adjusted my expectations under Bronco Mendenhall when it comes to Cougar football recruiting, especially on the line of scrimmage.

Since Bronco took over 9 years here are the offensive linemen he has recruited during that time period.

Feel free to pick out the guys that jump out and scream, "Stud, Big Time and Difference Maker." Even more importantly, feel free to pick out the guys playing significant minutes in the NFL or likely to ever be playing in the NFL. The only guy I see from 9 years of Mendenhall recruiting playing in the NFL is Tayo Fabulujue, the TCU retread, who will be starting next season for the Cougars. All weights are those coming out of high school or jucos.

2005...Sete Aulai, 6-3, 290, El Camino JC, CA; Matt Reynolds, 6-5, 285, Timpview HS, UT; Peter Vailahi, 6-4, 290, Waddell HS, NC.

2006...Ryan Freeman, 6-4, 275, Orem HS; Braden Hansen, 6-6, 265, Alta HS, UT; Walter Kahaialii, 6-4, 303, Hawaii; Tom Sorensen, 6-4, 290, Brighton HS, UT; Rich Wolfley, 6-4, 290, Star Valley, WY.

2007...Famika Anae, 6-5, 260, Timpview HS, UT; Levi Mack, 6-5, 315, Eastern AZ JC; Houston Reynolds, 6-2, 295, Timpview HS, UT.

2008...Michael Yeck, 6-7, 260, Keller HS, TX; Jesse Taufui, 6-5, 320, Long Beach JC; Brock Stringham, 6-6, 280, Mt Vista HS, CO; Solomone Kafu, 6-2, 315, Rio Linda HS, CA.

2009...Terrance Alletto, 6-3, 290, Ponderosa HS, CO; Tui Crichton, 6-4, 300, Timpview HS, UT; Ryan Mulitalo, 6-4, 290, Hunter HS, UT; Fono Vakalahi, 6-4, 320, Bryan HS, TX; Brad Wilcox, 6-7, 265, North HS, OK.

2010...Jordan Black, 6-7, 250, Jordan HS, UT; Manu Mulitalo, 6-3, 300, Granger HS, UT; Tayo Fabulujue, 6-6, 300, Oak Ridge HS, TX and TCU transfer; Blair Tushaus, 6-2, 260, Notre Dame Prep, AZ.

2011...Ului Lapuaho, 6-7, 280, Hunter HS, UT; Ryker Mathews, 6-6, 270, American Fork HS, UT; Brian Rawlinson, 6-6, 280, Oologah-Talala HS, OK.

2012...Austin Hoyt, 6-7, 260, Argonaut HS, CA

2013...Josh Carter, 6-5, 290, Eastern AZ JC; Tim Duran, 6-4, 290, Cabrillo JC, CA; Keegan Hicks, 6-3, 285, Bingham HS, UT; Brayden Kearsley, 6-4, 295, Aloha HS, OR; Addison Pulsipher, 6-6, 260, Temecula Valley HS, CA; Thomas Shoaf, 6-6, 265, Columbus North HS, IN; De'Ondre Wesley, 6-7, 330, Diablo Valley JC, CA; Edward Fusi, 6-0, 315, Mt. SAC JC, CA.

2014...Current Verbal Commits; Austin Chambers 6-5, 295, Shawnee Mission West HS, KS; Chandon Herring, 6-5, 270, Perry HS, AZ; Tejan Koroma, 6-0, 260, Allen HS, TX.

9 Mendenhall recruiting classes and no offensive lineman has been drafted by the NFL as yet.

Here are the official stats from BYU for offensive linemen who played for the Cougars this season. It is broken down by Games Played In/Games Started.

Terrance Alletto...10/7; Josh Carter...2/0; Tim Duran...1/0; Edward Fusi...10/6; Cole Jones (Walkon)...1/0; Solomone Kafu...13/11; Brayden Kearsley...11/1; Quinn Lawlor (Walkon)...6/0; Ryker Mathews...10/4; Brock Stringham...8/3; Manaaki Vaitai...12/2; De'Ondre Wesley...12/9; Brad Wilcox...13/1; Michael Yeck...13/13

Based on games played and started, it would appear that Michael Yeck and De'Ondre Wesley were BYU's two best offensive linemen for this past season. If you have a couple of hours to kill, go back and re-watch the BYU-UW game and count how many sacks on Taysom Hill, the two best BYU offensive lineman game up. If you don't have two hours, the answer to sacks allowed against the Huskies is 5.

The fact that BYU's offensive line was mediocre to poor this season, is in my opinion, a sign of poor recruiting or a poor recruiting pool or a poor recruiting model for that position.

That is why I have made the adjustment as a fan to accept that BYU, especially on the offensive line, but for a few aberrations and anomalies, under the current coaching regime is always going to be MWC caliber and never BCS caliber.

In the 34 years I have been writing this letter, here is the list of BYU offensive lineman that have been drafted in the NFL or played in the NFL. They are listed by year drafted and round selected.

Nick Eyre, 1981, 4th ; Bart Oates, missionary, 1982, USFL then NFL; Louis Wong, 1985, 5th ; Robert Anae, missionary, 1985, 3rd ; Trevor Matich, missionary, 1985, 1st ; John Hunter, 1989, 3rd ; Mo Elewonibi, 1990, 3rd ; Neal Fort, 1991, 6th ; Eli Herring, missionary, 1995, 6th ; Tim Hanshaw, missionary, 1995, 4th ; Evan Pilgrim, 1995, 3rd ; Morris Unutoa, missionary, 1995, undrafted; Larry Moore, 1997, undrafted; Jason Anderson, 1998, 7th ; Eric Bateman, missionary, 1998 5th ; Joe Wong. 1999 7th ; John

Tait, missionary, 1999, 1st ; Dustin Rykert, 2003, 6th ; Scott Young, 2005, 5th ; Ray Feinga, 2008, undrafted; Travis Bright, missionary, 2008, undrafted; Lance Reynolds Jr., missionary, 2005, undrafted; Dallas Reynolds, missionary, 2008, undrafted; Matt Reynolds, missionary, 2011, undrafted.

It should be noted that of all the offensive linemen listed above, none were recruited by Mendenhall. Since Bronco Mendenhall has been the head coach at BYU, he has not had an offensive lineman drafted by the NFL. He has had a couple of undrafted free agents get a couple of cups of decaffeinated coffee in the league, but no bona fide offensive lineman good enough to be drafted by the big boys. It has now been 8 years since a BYU offensive lineman has been drafted by the NFL. He has yet to sign an offensive lineman that has been drafted by the NFL.

NFL notes: The Reynolds brothers were all undrafted, but got their NFL careers kick started by being picked up and signed as free agents by Andy Reid at Philadelphia and now at Kansas City.

In my opinion, BYU's best ever football team was the 1996 Cotton Bowl squad. There were 3 NFL offensive linemen on that team: Larry Moore, Eric Bateman and John Tait.

Feel free to now make your own adjustments as a Cougar football fan when it comes to the current offensive line situation at BYU.

When I am feeling upbeat and optimistic, I start thinking that under Bronco Mendenhall, maybe it takes 9 years to get the offensive line recruiting pipeline filled and pumping out good players. When I am less upbeat, I take a look at the offensive linemen recruited under the current regime and shake my head.

It is a little better on the defensive side of the line of scrimmage for Mendenhall, but only by accident. Ziggy Ansah was an accidental walkon and not recruited by Mendenhall or anyone else.

Here is a list of Mendenhall's defensive line recruits:

2005...Jan Jorgensen, 6-3, 250, Carbon HS, UT (Kentucky Transfer after mission); Russell Tialavea, 6-3, 265, Oceanside HS, CA.

2006...Ian Dulan, 6-1, 245, Kamehameha HS, HI; Mosese Foketi, 6-1, 240, Laney JC, CA; Romney Fuga, 6-2, 280, Edison HS, CA; Jordan Richardson, 6-4, 250, Bonneville HS, ID; Matangi Tonga, 6-2, 270, Aragon HS, CA.

2007...David Angilau, 6-2, 255, Niwot HS, CO; Star Lotulelei, 6-3, 245, Bingham HS, UT; Eathyn Manumaleuna, 6-3, 270, Timpview HS, UT.

2008...Bernard Afutiti, 6-0, 260, Mt. Sac JC, CA.

2009...Thomas Bryson, 6-5, 230, Layton HS, UT;

2010...Jordan Afo, 6-4, 300, Cottonwood HS, UT; Graham Rowley, 6-4, 270, Waialua HS, HI; Travis Tuiloma, 6-3, 290, Washburn Rural HS, KS.

2011...Corbin Kaufusi, 6-7, 230, Timpview HS, UT; Moses Kaumatule, 6-2, 240, Bingham HS, UT; Baker Pritchard, 6-2, 240, Bingham HS, UT; Stehly Reden, 6-6 245, Valley Center HS, CA; Kesni Tausinga, 6-1, 285, Bingham HS, UT; Hebron Fangupo, 6-1, 310, USC Transfer, undrafted NFL free agent; Ziggy Ansah, 6-6. 290, walk on first round NFL pick.

2012...Marques Johnson, 6-2, 310, El Camino JC, CA; Theodore King, 6-3, 245, Valley Christian HS, CA; Steven Richards, 6-4, 240, Alta HS, UT.

2013...JonRhyheem Peoples, 6-6, 300, Rigby HS, ID; Merrill Taliauli, 6-2, 300, East HS, UT; Kalolu Utu, 6-2, 285, Compton JC, CA.

9 Mendenhall recruiting classes and nobody has been drafted by the NFL as yet. (Lotulelei was a first rounder, but from Utah not BYU)

JAKE TOOLSON COULD BE THE BEST OF DAVE ROSE'S LATEST RECRUITING CLASS

A week ago I mentioned that Jake Toolson, the 6-5 scoring machine from Highland HS in Gilbert, AZ, had two games where he scored 39 and 30 points. He was back for more this past week.

He lit up Orem HS, yes, that Orem HS, in a tournament in Mesa, by toasting the Tigers for 39 points and 15 rebounds. The next day, he scored 33 points on Phoenix Pinnacle, the 2nd ranked team in the state. He would have had more but with 3 ½ minutes remaining in the game, he hurt his knee and left the game. Before leaving he also had 13 rebounds.

Highland is currently 11-2 on the year and it is all Toolson. There is no other help on this team. He is the biggest guy on the team and is making a living by bombing the ball from beyond the arc and then absolutely abusing defenders by taking them down low to post up.

After the injury, he went to the Phoenix Suns training room to get it checked out. It doesn't hurt to have connections and Toolson has them with his uncle being the former Suns coach and current Boston Celtics General Manager. That would be Danny Ainge, who was in attendance at the games this past weekend.

What Toolson is doing so far this season is amazing. Orem's Dalton Nixon, a BYU signee, had 26 points and 8 rebounds in the loss. The following night, he hit for 34 points and 7 rebound in another loss to Chaparral HS.

Ryan Andrus, another Cougar signee spent his weekend in a tournament in Palm Springs with his American Fork HS team. Andrus, in a loss to Long Beach Poly had 12 points against the Jackrabbits. The same day he had 14 points in a win over Tampa Catholic. The next night in a win over De La Salle of Northern Cal, he hit for 19 points.

TJ Haws and his Lone Peak Knights have taken the Christmas season off. After pre season Christmas action in Las Vegas, where he and sophomore guard, Frank Jackson made some national noise, Lone Peak won't play again until after the first of the year.

I Was Hoping to Not Have Enough Room in This Letter to Talk about BYU-LMU Debacle

It is now painfully obvious that the BYU defense has gone into hiding in the Federal Witness Protection Program. And rightfully so. They need to hide after the dismal display of defensive basketball last Saturday afternoon against LMU.

The way the Cougars are playing, or is it not playing defense, is a felony offense. If a district attorney is prosecuting this case, his biggest incriminating evidence would be the 87-76 spanking delivered on BYU's basketball butt by the very ordinary Loyola Marymount Lions in Los Angeles last Saturday. Corroborating evidence would be the current 3-game losing streak that BYU is on.

It is so bad that even a Matador Defense would be a improvement on what is being exhibited by BYU currently and exploited by almost everybody they now play.

Dave Rose has his work cut out for him during the remainder of this season. His team can't defend the post, can't stop penetration from quick guards and can't rebound well enough. That leaves trying to simply outscore opponents.

That worked early in the year, but teams have now figured BYU and their offense out. It's not rocket science. For BYU to win, they have to shoot lights out. The wattage is waning and scoring, especially from outside, has also gone dark. BYU shot just .300 from beyond the arc against the Lions.

I don't know of any BYU fans that don't like Dave Rose as a person and most like him as a coach. Unfortunately, it is now time for Rose to earn his remuneration from BYU and fix the problem that is plaguing the Cougars or BYU is likely to miss an NCAA post season invite for the second consecutive season.

BYU Television Timetable

BYU vs. Pepperdine

Monday, Dec 30, at Malibu

Tipoff: 8:00 pm MST

TV: Time Warner Cable also streaming on line live at TheW.tv

BYU vs. Pepperdine (Women's BB)

Monday, Dec 30 at Provo

Tipoff: 5:00 pm MST

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. Pacific (Women's BB)

Thursday, Jan 2 at Provo

Tipoff: 7:00 pm MST

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. St. Mary's (Women's BB)

Saturday, Jan 4 at Provo

Tipoff: 2:00 pm

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. San Diego

Saturday, Jan 4 at Provo

Tipoff: 7:00 pm MST

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. Pepperdine

Thursday, Jan 9 at Provo

Tipoff: 7:00 pm MST

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. Loyola Marymount

Saturday, Jan 11 at Provo

Tipoff: 7:00 pm MST

TV: BYUtv