

HB Arnett's



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BYU Football Making Lots of Internal Noise, But Can They Make National Noise in the Fall?

If it works for Kentucky it might work for BYU.

John Calipari and his Kentucky basketball program are noted for bringing in one and done freshman players that compete for one season and then move on to the NBA.

It has worked wonders for the Wildcats, but will that strategy work for BYU football?

Bronco Mendenhall has also loaded up on one and done players that have graduated from their previous schools and will be on the BYU roster this fall. That strategy tells me one of two things.

Either BYU is desperate and in deep trouble for the coming season, or Bronco thinks this team was on the edge of having a great season, but needed just a couple of more pieces to put him over the top and the Cougars back into the national limelight.

If you live and breathe Cougar football, which is highly likely if you are reading this newsletter, you know by now to whom I'm referring.

That would be a bevy of bodies at wide receiver and another defensive back. The one and done receivers are Jordan Leslie from UTEP and Keanu Nelson from Stanford. Add two years and done juco receivers, by way of Oregon, Devon Blackmon and juco newcomer Nick Kurtz and then throw in incoming freshman, Trey Dye from Abilene Cooper HS in Texas. Dye is likely going to be a one and done player who will leave for an LDS mission after his freshman season this fall.

Bronco and his coaching staff knew what most of us fans refused to see last season. Despite our love affair with Cody Hoffman, BYU was woeful at wide out last season either because of injury or lack of playmakers in the open field, which also describes Hoffman and why he is more than likely going to be a free agent in the upcoming NFL draft.

Taysom Hill proved that he is a play maker with his legs, and now with much more talented receivers at his disposal this coming season, we will see if he can make plays with his arm. If he can, and that is what I think will happen and it is readily apparent that is also what Mendenhall is banking on.

BYU also added Harvey Jackson to the defensive backfield mix. Jackson is coming from Nebraska where he was not a star but did see plenty of significant time in the Husker defensive backfield. Jackson, like Leslie and Nelson, will be a graduate from another institution with one year to play for the Cougars.

Jackson will give Mendenhall and defensive coordinator Nick Howell many more options for next season. He also is a great insurance policy for the Cougars in case there are any unforeseen complications with Trent Trammell and Jordan Johnson both coming off ACL injuries.

The bottom line, it looks like Bronco is banking on this being a big, big year for him and his team. With the new bodies showing up, with a big time proven quarterback to run the offensive show and with a schedule that is somewhere between cupcake and cheesecake, the cards and stars seem to be aligned for a big, big year for the Cougars.

Yeah, but what about the offensive line? Obviously Mendenhall and his staff think we will see a much improved unit. We will know if they are right after week two and the results from the Texas game are in the books.

With Bronco at the positive punch bowl dispensing the BYU kool-aid this off season, I actually am in line to drink it.

With a soft schedule, big quarterback and better receivers with an offensive line that can't be worse than it was last year, this actually really could be the magical season we have been waiting for.

If I'm drinking the Bronco positive punch, here are the cookies and cupcakes on the schedule to go along with it.

2014 BYU Football Schedule

Connecticut...Friday, August 29 at East Hartford...ESPN
Texas...Saturday, September 6 at Austin...TV TBA
Houston...Thursday, September 11 at Provo...ESPN
Virginia...Saturday, September 20 at Provo...TV TBA
Utah State...Friday, October 3 at Provo...TV TBA
Central Florida...Thursday, October 9 at Orlando...ESPN
Nevada...Saturday, October 18 at Provo...TV TBA
Boise State...Friday, October 24, at Boise...ESPN or ESPN2
Middle Tennessee...Saturday, November 1 at Murfreesboro...TV TBA
BYE...Saturday, November 8
UNLV...Saturday, November 15 at Provo...TV TBA
Savannah State...Saturday, November 22 at Provo...BYUtv
California...Saturday, November 29 at Berkeley...TV TBA (most likely Pac 12 Network)

TIME FOR A COUGAR CHECKUP

At my age, a physical exam becomes more relevant with each passing year. In sports parlance, it's "gut check" time as I discovered that I don't have to know how to spell colonoscopy to have one. I'm not a movie star but I'm going in this morning for my *way up* close and personal colon-cameo appearance and screen test on the monitor. Look for it on You Tube.

Throw in some blood work and a few other medical procedures and the recent results would indicate that my body is deteriorating right on schedule. That's my personal health report

Based on the performances of the past year, here is my "health" report on BYU Sports programs: But first a caveat and disclaimer. Health in sports programs is relative. In context of the West Coast Conference BYU sports is at the top of the chart. The good news is that no program is on life support.

Nationally BYU represents well in overall sports success, especially with the less visible sports and thanks to the health of the women's programs, but quite frankly, BYU football and basketball, the two sports that provide life support to the overall body of BYU athletics, were a little sickly during their most recent and respective seasons.

South Field and Smith Fieldhouse

Thank goodness for those two venues. That was where the best BYU teams performed last season. BYU Rugby captured their 3rd consecutive national title and the men's volleyball team got to the final four of their sport. The women's volleyball and soccer teams also had outstanding seasons with both teams getting into NCAA post season play.

Unfortunately, those are niche, but not nationally recognized sports across the country. The niche has been helped along by BYUtv for three of the programs, but for whatever reason, that particular broadcast entity has chosen to ignore BYU's Rugby reign and embrace the less successful sports of this season like softball, gymnastics and baseball.

I'm sure there are valid reasons for not broadcasting a world wide popular sport to the masses, probably most notably because BYU Rugby is a club sport and without scholarships or being under the official BYU athletic umbrella.

Still, you don't have to be a programming genius to figure out that more people are interested in seeing the reigning Miss America than the current Miss Congenialities of the past Cougar sports seasons.

Here then are my rankings of BYU Sports Team's performances for the past year.

1. **BYU Rugby**...Maybe it's time we learned who coaches this team that has won three straight national titles. That would be David Smyth.
2. **BYU Men's Volleyball**...The Buffalo Bills made it the Super Bowl numerous times, but never won it. That could describe this team, but the journey to the NCAA tourney is certainly fun to watch. This team had the best performer of all BYU athletes in Taylor Sander. He was more valuable to his team than Taysom Hill or Tyler Haws or Jennifer Hamson was to theirs.
3. **Women's Basketball**...Based on their deep run in the NCAA tournament this team lands in this spot.
4. **Women's Soccer**...Another year, another NCAA post season appearance. This is one of the most consistent and talented teams on campus. And they win.
5. **Women's Volleyball**...This is a team that is back on track after bumbling, stumbling and mumbling through several coaching changes. They should be even better next season with the return of Jennifer Hamson.
6. **BYU Football**...Just the name and history of this team lands it here. Quite frankly a five-loss team is nothing to write home about. Last season was like watching a reunion tour of the Eagles. They aren't nearly as good as they once were, but hope springs eternal for old rock groups and BYU football.
7. **BYU Golf**...Won a conference title, which is more than BYU basketball has been able to do in the past three seasons.
8. **BYU Track**...BYU has always been good in this sport, but they have a chance to be even better with a dynamic Ed Eyestone running both the men's and women's programs. The digital age had enhanced this sport as more fan friendly. With electronic timing and scoreboards, you now know what is always happening. Even with less than world class sprinters, leaning against the fence at the finish line is an exhilarating experience as fine tuned athletes pound the track and exert every muscle in their bodies to try and hit the tape first.
9. **BYU Basketball**...This is the team started fast, faded fast and resurrected itself just in time for an NCAA invite and another post season disappointment.

10. **BYU Softball**...This team doesn't have as many wins as normal, but they do have a roster of young promising players. Even with a subpar performance, they will more than likely win the championship of the inaugural WCC softball competition.
11. **BYU Baseball**...Mike Littlewood is finding out in just two years what most Cougar baseball fans have known for two decades. It's all about pitching, pitching and more pitching. BYU didn't have enough this season.

No Name Rankings

I am stopping at ranking BYU athletic teams at No. 11 based on the ***no name rule***. If you can't name one player or participant on the roster of a BYU team, that sport doesn't count except for the coaches and parents of those athletes. Please don't send me derogatory emails for my lack of sensitivity unless you actually know the name of a player on these teams without looking it up.

For me personally, that includes the following BYU sports: Women's gymnastics, men and women's tennis, Cross Country and all swimming and diving teams.

In this category, the Cross Country teams from the men and women would have to be top ranked.

NFL Draft

The annual NFL draft officially gets underway this Thursday night. It will officially begin for BYU on Friday.

Thursday, May 8 is reserved for the first round of the draft that will be televised by ESPN and the NFL Network.

BYU won't have anybody selected in the first round. I actually don't expect to see Kyle Van Noy get picked until the third round. Daniel Sorensen, the safety who put up good numbers at the NFL combine, is being talked about as a late round selection, but personally I expect him to join Cody Hoffman as a free agent signee.

If you aren't going in the top four rounds, signing as a free agent is actually usually a better deal for a prospect, because they can pick the team that fits their skills and sign with that club.

Names and Games

Since our last issue, **Matt Carlino** announced that he was transferring from BYU to play his final season of basketball eligibility at Marquette with newly named head coach Steve Wojciechowski. That's old news. Breaking news is that Carlino and Marquette also get the exclusive rights to this [video](#). Dave Rose and BYU get to keep the video highlights and [box score](#) of Carlino's last performance against Oregon in NCAA tournament action.

Zach Nyborg is the latest addition to the BYU football program from the Timpview HS pipeline. Nyborg was hired recently by Bronco Mendenhall to replace Duane Busby, who retired, as the new Director of Football Operations. He is coming from Wisconsin where he served in the same capacity to Gary Andersen, the head coach of the Badgers. [Click here to read his entire bio.](#)

Trent Hosick, a redshirt quarterback at Missouri and a QB way down on the current depth chart for the Tigers is looking at BYU as a possible landing spot to increase his potential playing time. [Click here](#) for the story. He will be on campus for an official visit this weekend.

Here are some **more names**. These guys have already committed to BYU and Bronco Mendenhall to sign with the Cougars in February of 2015.

[Devin Kaufusi](#), DL, 6-5, 200, Timpview HS, UT
[Dayan Lake](#), DB, 5-11, 185, Northridge HS, UT
[Will Sedgwick](#), LB, 6-2, 220, Laguna Hills HS, CA
[Mike Tafua](#), DL, 6-3, 210, Kamehameha HS, HI

Click on the names for video on each player.