

HB Arnett's **COUGAR SPORTSLINE**

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HARVEY IS HISTORY

Here's BYU's recent news release from last week concerning Harvey Unga and Keilani Moeaki.

Two BYU student-athletes, football player Harvey Unga and women's basketball player Keilani Moeaki, today announced they have decided to withdraw from school. Both students have made the decision to withdraw as a result of a violation of the BYU honor code.

Unga, a 6-foot, 237-pound running back, is the school's all-time leading rusher with 3,455 yards gained over his first three seasons in the Cougar backfield. he led the Mountain West Conference in rushing last year while garnering first-team All-MWC honors after a third consecutive 1,000-yard season.

"I fully support Harvey and his decision regarding his personal situation," BYU football coach Bronco Mendenhall said. "The possibility of not having Harvey on the field in the fall would certainly have an impact on our team, but my main concern right now is in supporting Harvey."

Moeaki, a 6-foot-2 forward, has started in 67 of 91 games in three seasons. She averaged 4.4 points and 2.2 rebounds while starting all 33 games this past season, helping BYU advance to the quarterfinals of the WNIT. "Keilani has been a valuable contributor to our team the past three years," BYU women's basketball coach Jeff Judkins said. "She has my support while she takes time to address some important personal matters."

INEVITABLE, BUT STILL ENVIABLE

Nobody likes it, but attrition in BYU football is part of the deal.

When you have a roster of 105-plus players and walk-ons, you are not going to keep them all academically eligible, healthy and in line with the BYU honor code.

No matter how you couch it, or how you coach it, or who the coach is that is couching it, as long as you play Division I football at BYU, the sheer numbers of players involved in the program is going to make it eventually inevitable that attrition from the big three of academics, injury and honor code is going to happen.

Here is our take on what we see as the reality of BYU football and attrition.

No matter how you refine your recruiting of personnel, injuries, academic issues and honor code violations have occurred, are occurring and will continue to occur.

You can keep them to a minimum with the prospects you look for and recruit, but the sheer number of players involved insures that you are going to have an occasional incident that you won't be happy with.

The key word here is occasional.

Give BYU and Bronco Mendenhall credit. The school and the coach are both principle based. So is the football program that is sponsored by the school and currently coached by Mendenhall.

Even so, there are going to be the occasional blips and blemishes. It is unavoidable as long as you are recruiting players that come with human foibles in addition to football talents.

From our years of observation, when it comes to athletic attrition at BYU, there is a pecking order of palatability for patrons.

If you are going to lose a player, injury is the most palatable to the fan base because it is universal to all football programs and unavoidable. Academic ineligibility can be explained away and accepted because it is always assumed that if the player would work harder in the classroom, he can get his grades and career as a Cougar back in gear.

Honor code violations, in our opinion, are the hardest for the BYU fan base to swallow.

Forget the pain and trauma suffered by the individual players and their families; it is as if the private infraction is a personal affront to the fan base.

How dare a football player slip up and ruin the reputation of our favorite school? Even more damaging, how could that player jeopardize what was going to be a great season?

Disgust and disdain is proportional with the talent of a player and the impact he has on the team.

A walk-on fourth-string tailback that has an honor code issue never makes headlines and doesn't even cross the minds or conscience of most Cougar fans.

Speaking of proportions, problems and perspective, the occasional honor code blip and slip may be inevitable, but shouldn't drastically diminish overall from the extremely enviable way the entire 105-man BYU football roster represents the Church, the school and its fans.

WHAT BACKS UP SPECIAL?

BYU running back coach Lance Reynolds was quoted a few weeks ago concerning Harvey Unga and his abilities on the football field.

"He does so many things so well. He's got so much experience, so much talent," said Reynolds. "He's

the ideal running back for us. He's big, he's fast, he's physical, he can catch. He's as good a player as we've ever had. He's a special, special player."

We will find out this fall what backs up special.

Harvey Unga has played his last game for BYU. That's how we see it. His next carry should be for a paycheck, either as a player drafted in the July NFL supplemental draft or as a free agent signee this fall.

As an underclassman, Unga did not declare for early entry into this week's NFL draft and consequently can't be drafted by any team.

We have seen enough of J.J. DiLuigi and Bryan Kariya to know that they both are serviceable, but a long way from spectacular.

Unga's history actually gives the most hope.

He showed that a freshman running back can have a big year, despite inexperience. In case you forgot, as a redshirt freshman, he rushed for 1,227 yards. With Unga gone, the running back future is freshmen.

Luke Staley rushed for 432 yards and 10 touchdowns as a true freshman at BYU, despite only getting 92 carries during his initial Cougar campaign. Unga had 244 carries while garnering his 1200 yards as a frosh.

BYU fans will have to hope for a productive year from one of four freshmen if they hope to come close to compensating for the loss of Unga.

The most likely candidate to replace Unga is Josh Quezada. The freshman had a very nice spring while getting his feet wet in spring drills.

He has size, shake and looks to be a very good between-the-tackle runner, yet with just enough speed to occasionally get around the edge.

Other freshmen running backs that will get a chance now to earn playing time in the fall include Algernon Brown, 6-1, 205, Skyline HS, Salt Lake City, UT; AJ Moore, 5-10, 190, Murrieta Valley HS, Murrieta, Calif. and Drew Phillips, 6-0, 175, Boaz HS, AL.

GET IN LINE FOR NFL DRAFT

The NFL draft begins this Thursday, April 22 and runs through Saturday, April 24.

If you are a draft junkie, start tuning in on Thursday. If you only follow the draft to see where BYU players are taken, you probably won't have to turn on the television until Saturday.

The first BYU player selected will be tight end Dennis Pitta. He is projected to be a 3rd or 4th round selection at best.

Despite Pitta's nice showing at the NFL combine, there are six other tight ends projected to go ahead

of him in this year's draft.

They include: Jermaine Gresham, Oklahoma; Rob Gronkowski, Arizona; Jimmy Graham, Miami; Anthony McCoy, USC; Dorin Dickerson, Pitt; Ed Dickson, Oregon.

The list of players projected to be drafted in front of Max Hall is significantly bigger. Hall is rated at the 17th best draftable quarterback in this year's draft.

Quarterbacks expected to go in front of Hall include: Sam Bradford, Oklahoma; Jimmy Clausen, Notre Dame; Tim Tebow, Florida; Colt McCoy, Texas; Tony Pike, Cincinnati; Dan LeFevour, Central Michigan; Jonathan Crompton, Tennessee; John Skelton, Fordham; Jarrett Brown, West Virginia; Levi Brown, Troy; Zac Robinson, Oklahoma State; Jevan Snead, Mississippi; Mike Kafka, Northwestern; Sean Canfield, Oregon State; Matt Nichols, Eastern Washington; Tim Hiller, Western Michigan.

Hall is projected to go in the 7th and last round or to sign as a free agent.

That is the same projection for Manase Tonga. There are six other fullbacks in the draft rated higher than Tonga. They include: Clay Harbor, Missouri State; Rashawn Jackson, Virginia; John Conner, Kentucky; Jameson Konz, Kent State; Richard Dickson, LSU; Riar Geer, Colorado.

The top pick from the Mountain West Conference is projected to be Jerry Hughes of TCU. He is slated to be a late-first round selection.

His teammate, Daryl Washington is listed as a top-fifty pick and should be the next MWC player selected. Koa Misi, from Utah is also projected to go early and should be a second round selection. Pitta, according to prognostications should then be the fourth MWC player snatched up.

HOPE *SPRINGS* ETERNAL FOR SOME

It wasn't a banner week for BYU spring sports. At least as expressed in the email we received yesterday from a BYU booster.

Actually, this guy is not any booster, but a huge life-long booster who has been extremely generous with his funds, time and support of all things BYU.

Dear HB,

The Week that Was was probably one of the worst in BYU athletic history.

1) Unga leaves school and leaves football team reeling.

2) Women's BB starter leaves school.

3) Baseball team swept in 3 games series with TCU. Has a program fell further than baseball? See women's golf below.

4) Volleyball team with a chance to win conference title and host conference tournament loses at home.

5) Powerful women's softball loses to lowly Colorado State. At least there is hope and a goo coach

here.

6) Women's golf team (coached by an ex football player and now athletic fund raiser) finishes last in 7-team MWC tournament, even finishing behind the dreadful U of Wyo team, a team that practices on snow. This is a team that even you could coach to better results.

7) I don't bother to follow the men's golf anymore. They have fallen so low.

What happened to the pride that used to characterize all of the spring sports programs and BYU?

Here are my answers to a good friend, great golfing partner and a longtime and loyal Cougar booster.

1) See my explanation in the article above. As long as Honor code is here to stay, some players are here to eventually leave early.

2) If a tree falls in the forest and nobody is there to hear it, does it make any noise? BYU women's basketball is the tree and Cougar fans are the forest.

3) I hope the global warming guys are right. The sooner the better for the baseball program. Pitching or lack thereof is directly tied to temperature and snow pack in Provo at game time.

4) When you and I play golf with our usual Nassau, I have been known to miss a crucial putt on the front nine, but still collect the cash after 18. Same here with volleyball. My bet is still on the Cougars.

5) Think Utah in football. Every dog eventually has its day and 15 minutes of fame. Random aberrations are part of the sports universe but don't last.

6) Again, in golf, even a bad day on the course is better than any day at work. If you have daughters or granddaughters get them started early on golf lessons. Next to rowing, it is the best and easiest way to get a college athletic scholarship.

7) Drive for show, putt for dough and pray for another Johnny Miller, Mike Weir, Mike Reid, or Bobby Clampett to show up soon.