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Bruce Willis and BYU

BYU Goes Globetrotters in 81-67 Win Over Pacific and Generals in 85-74 Loss to St. Mary's

Meadowlark Lemon passed away last week.

He was the long time face of the Harlem Globetrotters and showman supreme. No question he had some basketball skills, but have you ever wondered how he would have fared going head to head in a real game against NBA guards like Oscar Robertson or Jerry West?

We know he couldn't lose to the Washington Generals but what about the Lakers, Bulls and Knicks?

Same question for Dave Rose. After 4 years of WCC play, we know he can beat the Washington Generals of the WCC, which this year happens to be Pacific, but when will he be able to consistently beat the cream of the crop in this league.

He hasn't won an outright title or a post season title in the WCC. Yet. Based on the road performance of this past week against Cream of the WCC Crop Saint Mary's and the "Generals" of Pacific, it doesn't look promising for this season either.

Sure, BYU looked good in closing out the first half and the second half against Pacific, but against a “real” team with “real coaching” like St. Mary’s, the result was disheartening.

I’m not a real movie buff, but I know what I like. I didn’t like the much ballyhooed Star Wars. It was fantastic in its production and graphical displays, but the storyline was less than ordinary and the acting was just a notch above ward roadshow.

Based on what I have seen this season and the past decade, BYU is the original Star Wars. The graphics of three point shooting and up tempo offense can be spectacular when the ball is going in the hoop and the opposition doesn’t do anything to slow the game down and run their own half court sets.

But with BYU, the plot and storyline are mediocre and seem to always be exposed against good teams and good coaches.

Yeah, I know that Dave Rose has taken BYU to eight NCAA post tournament appearances and I know that he has produced some exciting players, and I thought Star Wars was an interesting diversion, but not a good movie.

Ditto for BYU. The Cougars are entertaining, but they are not ever going to contend for an Oscar for acting like a big time legitimate star in the basketball galaxy. When and who is the last team to win or even go deep in post season action that plays like BYU?

Who is the last team in the WCC to win a title that plays like BYU? Hint. It hasn’t been BYU.

Yeah. I’m well aware that BYU is coming off a 5-game road trip and coming home with a 3-2 record. I’m also well aware of the fact that BYU’s losses against good teams have all been on the road this season and usually are in most seasons. I am also aware of the fact that really good teams also beat BYU at home. Which is my point. BYU is not a really good basketball team and never has and likely never will be with the current style of play they employ.

Yes, I know all about the future excitement for the next few years with a plethora of talent. But I also know that unless BYU as a team goes Zac Seljaas (shooting 60 plus percent from beyond the arc) on another team, they will not be able to handle consistently good and well coached teams.

Back to Star Wars. I didn’t think it was a very good movie. But I actually thought it was entertaining. I don’t think BYU is an upper echelon college basketball team. Time and the last decade has proven that to me. I still think, however, that they are an entertaining team.

Bruce Willis will never win an Oscar and BYU will never win an NCAA title in basketball in my lifetime or yours. But both are entertaining to watch on the big screen and on the Marriott Center court.

Both are run 'n gun icons. Willis runs from bad guys and shoots from the hip. BYU runs and shoots from beyond the arc. Both are entertaining, but both will never carry home an Oscar or NCAA deep tournament run because all they do is run 'n gun.

That's why I settle for entertainment and not substance with both Willis and BYU hoops. It makes movies and BYU basketball much easier to watch and enjoy.

Roll the Credits

Chase Fischer still casts it up unconsciously, but he has also been cast as BYU's go to guy in the last four outings where he has scored 20 or more points. Against St. Mary's he had 21 and against Pacific he was good for 23.

Kyle Collinsworth was spectacular against Pacific with 22 points. He was 5-8 from the field and 12-17 from the line. His play was good enough that the television commentators kept saying that he was a lock for the NBA after this season.

He was anything but a lock against St. Mary's when he was 4-15 from the field and made no trips to the free throw line. He ended with just 8 points.

Nick Emery is still logging star minutes, but he was relegated to a cameo role during those minutes in the last two games. He scored just 14 points on this two-game road swing and shot just .260 from the field.

That's a long distance from how Zac Seljaas shot the ball from distance in those same two contests. He was 5-8 from the three-point line in the two games. He didn't see big minutes against St. Mary's because he was battling the flu. For the year, Seljaas is now shooting at a torrid .622 clip from distance.

Next up for the Cougars will be two home contests this week against Santa Clara on Thursday and San Francisco on Saturday. The SC game will tip at 9:00 pm and be shown live on ESPNU. The SF game tips at 7:00 pm and will be broadcast live on BYUtv.

Roster Reduction is what has happened to BYU basketball since the beginning of the season. Dave Rose opened the year with 16 players on his team. On the recent road trip he dressed just 12. Here is how the math works out.

Cooper Ainge was a walkon in September. He opted to concentrate on academics. Cory Calvert said he would transfer and Jake Toolson is now on a medical leave. Elijah Bryant and Alan Hamson are still redshirting and now Davin Guinn, another walkon is traveling with the team to make it a 12-man road roster.

FOOTBALL NAMES AND GAMES

Just to be clear, BYU's new head football coach is Kalani Sitake and not Ty Detmer. If you dropped in from outer space and only read local newspapers and watched local news the last few weeks, you might get confused.

Detmer certainly is deserving, but the inches and minutes he is getting by the media is more than Sitake is getting. If the last week of media coverage was an accurate representation of the coaching change, in my opinion, this was a Sonny and Cher remake. Detmer is Cher, the chosen one and Sitake is Sonny, the second fiddle.

That should all change as new names are announced soon to fill out the remainder of the coaching staff. The coverage should skew more to Sitake as letter of intent day approaches on February 3.

That is because recruiting is what Sitake does best. At least that is one of the reasons given by Tom Holmoe for selecting Sitake.

So let's talk recruiting.

BS or before Sitake, the Cougars had two commitments that they no longer have. Under the new regime, scholarship offers Keaton, a quarterback from Bingham HS in Utah and Wayne Taulapapa, a running back from Punahou HS in Hawaii.

With renewed interest by other recruits since Sitake took over, there has been a scholarship crunch and something had to give.

The Sitake hire paid immediate dividends last week when Handsome Tanielu, a 6-2, 305 defensive tackle from Snow College signed with the Cougars. He was headed to Oregon State until Sitake switch allegiances and then so did Tanielu.

Here is BYU's current commits for football:

Handsome Tanielu, DT, 6-2, 305, Snow College
Solofa Funa, LB, 6-1, 216, Spanish Fork HS, UT
Jaren Hall, QB, 6-1, 185, Maple Mountain HS, UT
Aleva Hifo, DB, 5-10, 170, Heritage HS, CA
Drew Jensen, DB, 6-2, 195, Brighton HS, UT
Freddy Livai, DL, 6-3, 250, AB Miller HS, CA
Darius McFarland, DL, 6-2, 250, Box Elder HS, UT
Keenan Pili, LB, 6-2, 205, Timpview HS, UT
Skyler Southam, K, 6-0, 175, Wasatch HS, UT
Max Tooley, DB, 6-2, 195, Bountiful HS, UT
Jonah Trinnaman, WR, 6-0, 190, Snow College, UT
Troy Warner, DB/WR, 6-2, 185, Mission Hills HS, CA
Hank Tuipulotu, TE, 6-3, 225, Nation Ford HS, NC

Atunaisa Mahe, DL, 6-2, 350, West Jordan HS, UT
Britton Hogan, DS, 6-3, 220, Olympus HS, UT

Here is a list of returning missionaries and others who will gobble up scholarships. This list was released by Bronco Mendenhall in December and will likely undergo some editing and redacting and retracting before next fall starts.

Tanner Jacobson, SO, DB, 5-10, 175, Texas Tech transfer (missionary)
Austin McChesney, FR, WR, 6-1, 175, Lone Peak HS, CA (missionary)
Rylee Gautavai, RS-FR, LB, 6-0, 220, Bountiful HS, UT (missionary)
Keegan Hicks, FR, OL, 6-3, 285, Bingham HS, UT (missionary)
Inoke Lotulelei, FR, WR, 5-9, 175, WR, Cottonwood HS, UT (missionary)
Addison Pulsipher, RS-FR, OL, 6-6, 260, Temecula Valley HS, CA (missionary)
Thomas Shoaf, RS-FR, OL, 6-6, 265, Columbus North HS, IN, (missionary)
Merrill Taliauli, SO, DL, 6-2, 312, East HS, UT, (missionary)
Johnny Tapusoa, FR, DB, 5-10, 195, Kahuku HS, HI, (missionary)

Now throw in a few names that Bronco's staff wasn't recruiting or tried to recruit but couldn't that has changed with the hiring of Sitake, and it gets interesting and complicated and the numbers or lack of numbers of scholarships gets very, very tight.

Speaking of Recruiting...

BYU may be the object of recruiting by the Big 12 if the other Power 5 conferences vote on January 15 to force the league to have a championship game involving two separate divisions.

That may force the Big 12 to add two more teams. In case you missed the last go around with the Big 12 and BYU, it seems to be starting again. There is plenty of smoke, but still no fire. It will get interesting and entertaining again, but wake me when somebody with authority finally pulls the trigger.

If you think the Republican Presidential race is muddled and crowded, look for the same with Big 12 expansion with teams like Cincinnati, Connecticut, South Florida, Central Florida, Houston and BYU all having their names and hats thrown in the ring.

Volleyball Starts This Week

BYU is ranked preseason as the No. 1 men's volleyball team in the country. We will see this week if they deserve the ranking as the Cougars kick off their 2016 season at home with games against Loyola-Chicago and George Mason.

[Click here](#) for a nice pre-season look at BYU.

Television Timetable

BYU vs. Santa Clara (M Basketball)

Thursday, January 7 at Provo

Tipoff: 9:00 pm MST

TV: ESPNU

BYU vs. Loyola-Chicago (M Volleyball)

Friday, January 8 at Provo

Match Start: 7:00 pm MST

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. San Francisco (M Basketball)

Saturday, January 9, at Provo

Tipoff: 7:00 pm MST

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. George Mason (M Volleyball)

Saturday, January 9, at Provo

Match Start: 7:00 pm MST

TV: TheW.tv (streaming)