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No Cover Up Needed, Just Wins

Improper Benefits Allegations are Awkward and Embarrassing

BYU is currently conducting an internal investigation concerning allegations of “improper benefits” being given to athletes in the football program.

That certainly is awkward to the BYU football program in particular and the BYU athletic program in general. The awkwardness stems from the fact that BYU promotes itself as a flag waving follower of NCAA rules. Even if the allegations turn out to be unfounded, the news coverage and covering of behinds has been awkward and will remain that way.

If BYU is exonerated and no sanctions or punishment is ever handed out by the NCAA or in house, the BYU brand has been tarnished. As Rondo Fehlberg, the former Cougar AD was fond of saying, “Perception is Reality”.

The fact that BYU football has been talked about, speculated about and even falsely accused in the media, means the average non BYU fan’s perception is now likely to be that the Cougars are just like every other good football program. They have to fudge, cheat and push the rules envelope if they want to be a winning program. It’s not true but it is the perception that many have and as Fehlberg stated, “perception is reality”.

But the real embarrassment from this deal falls on the heads of BYU football fans. If “improper benefits” have been doled out for years as some have alleged, shouldn’t Cougar fans expect something better than two consecutive 8-5 pedestrian years on the field?

Return Policy?

Many retail and on line stores have a return policy if you are not satisfied with the product you purchased.

Does the same hold true for those given alleged “improper benefits”? Can we return for a refund the offensive line of the last two seasons if any of them were involved? What about a do over for receivers who can’t get open?

My personal take on the whole deal is that something did happen, but what went down is closer to socks than the other sensational allegations being levied. It is closer to extra crust on a free pizza than cash changing hands between a benefactor and a player.

Again if cash was exchanged, then BYU fans got cheated. We should have had better players and better records.

Who knows how this will turn out? It might be Southern Methodist sensational with the death penalty handed down or it might be Shakespearian and “Much Ado about Nothing.”

My money is on Shakespeare and no suspensions or sanctions.

The sensationalism of this story has run its course, but it is still being kept alive and on life support by media outlets that in today’s market have to produce something daily. You can only interview so many past, former or present players, but the only ones who are willing to talk really have nothing concrete or consequential to say.

Irony

The irony of this all is if a player shoplifted a pair of socks, there would be no NCAA or internal investigation, but if he was given a free pair of socks, look out.

If the alleged improper gifts were given to the player through Church assistance and a Bishop would that also be improper and a NCAA violation?

What was allegedly being done by a BYU athletic employee can cause an NCAA stink, but those same acts of charity and kindness will probably earn that same person a few extra rungs on the heavenly scale in the life hereafter.

BYU's athletic and institutional public relation arms will try to make up for any of the perceived damage this issue has caused, but it will be useless.

Again, perception is reality.

Auburn Model

The only sure fire way for this thing to blow over is to use the Auburn model.

You may remember them? They are the school in Alabama that has had more than their fair share of NCAA infraction run-ins and allegations.

Some have been spectacular and sensational.

The bottom line is that all of those issues were superseded by winning football games. Cam Newton, the former Heisman winner and current NFL starting quarterback, was the subject of much speculation and investigation by the media and NCAA, but the bottom line is that while that was all taking place, he led his team to a national title.

Auburn fans remember that and not the rest of the story just like USC fans remember Reggie Bush and his productive seasons despite Bush getting "improper benefits" that went way beyond free socks.

BYU is not in the same league as these two schools when it comes to wrong doing and production on the field, but they can put some gloss back on their image by winning on the field this fall.

Winning solves everything, even internal investigations about improper benefits.

BYU probably has some very professional public relation employees on their staff, but none of them can make this perception as reality go away.

Fortunately, BYU also has Taysom Hill on their football team. He is our Cam Newton and Jamaal Williams is our Reggie Bush. Not in the "improper benefits" way but in producing on the field.

I still maintain that winning will be frequent and frenzied this season. That is the kind of football team Bronco Mendenhall has this fall. Winning 11-12 games will make this spring time mess go away and be forgotten by everyone except the die-hard BYU haters.

Everything Eventually Relates to Golf...Even the P5 Conferences Playing or not Playing BYU

Country Clubs and their members determine who is allowed to play on their courses, either as a guest or member.

When you have the best courses and the most money, you are entitled to also have a little elitism.

The rest of us, including BYU football, play at public links. The game is still the same and is still enjoyable, but it lacks the elitism and in the case of BYU football, the money.

BYU wants in the Country Club. Somebody will have to sponsor them for membership and a vote will have to be taken.

Here's the good news. Sometimes even country clubs have problems and need help for from the plebeian public. There are times when club memberships are sold and solicited at a severe discount for a variety of reasons.

That's why BYU's current football situation doesn't worry me even if the self proclaimed elite of the sport are going country club on the rest of the college football world.

If you live long enough what goes around comes around.

My observation has been this. If you are a good enough golfer, you will always be invited to the exclusive club as a guest. If your handicap is good enough, some member will always be willing for you to be his guest for the club tournaments and major events.

Just win and it will take care of itself. Money talks, but winning on the field shouts.

That is where BYU is now. They just need to win and the rest will take care of itself. Parenthetically, despite the noise generated by the SEC and ACC that playing BYU would not count the same as playing another P5 conference team, BYU has two new home and home series signed with two schools from the other 3 P5 schools.

BYU has chosen to not announce those home and home series as yet, so I won't either because I promised I wouldn't, but they are done. One of those series is with a team that has a national brand and cache.

Again, just like in making NCAA infractions disappear from the mind and memory of fans, inclusion in the P5 country club is all about winning. If BYU can do that, things will take care of itself.

I hate to play the ecclesiastical card when it comes to football, but there are several who are adamant that BYU football is a missionary tool. I actually tend to lean a little that way also.

If you are one that has no problem putting BYU football and missionary work in the same sentence, then you should check out the latest from LDS pulpits about "hastening the work."

If football is meant to be a help, then somehow it will, most likely as a P5 member. I suggest checking out our ecclesiastical history on how when the situations seem the bleakest, something usually works out. I hate to use the word faith in context of football, but we really are talking about a program and sponsoring institution that embraces that term.

To me, it is no big deal if the SEC and ACC don't want to count BYU in their self centered and self generated methods of hoping to get into the P5 playoffs.

Let's be real. There are maybe 15-20 teams that are actually going to compete consistently for the playoffs. The rest of the 45 teams are never going to have a shot, except in when a "hell freezes over" moment comes along.

If BYU, in my opinion, wants to somehow secure an invite to the country club, they need to make sure they aren't just another "when hell freezes over" team. That gets us back to the winning solves everything theory.

I'm not smart enough to figure all the machinations and maneuvering that will have to take place for BYU to get a chair at the table. I am old enough however, to have seen the impossible turn out to be possible.

Just win and the invites will take care of themselves. This season would be a good time for that to happen. Revisionist history of BYU football is rampant. We like to think we are a premiere program, but history says that it has been 18 years since BYU has had a season with less than two losses. Here's a last 20-year history lesson for us all:

2013, 8-5; 2012, 8-5; 2011, 10-3; 2010, 7-6; 2009, 11-2; 2008, 10-3; 2007, 11-2; 2006, 11-2; 2005, 6-6; 2004, 5-6; 2003, 4-8; 2002, 5-7; 2001, 12-2, 2000, 6-6; 1999, 8-4; 1998, 9-5; 1997, 6-5; 1996, 14-1; 1995, 7-4; 1994, 10-3; 1993, 6-6.

In 20 seasons, BYU has had 8 years where they were pretty good. They have had 12 seasons where they were pretty pedestrian. It's time to step it up on the field and the rest of it will take care of itself.

Forget the fact that there are plenty of teams like BYU in the country club leagues of college football that are even much more pedestrian than BYU. They already have their memberships to the club and don't want to see their equity positions diluted by increased membership.

It is about money, money, money or its equivalent such as your own TV network that actually produces content that is seen worldwide. If you can bring that to the table, your chances of Country Club membership rise dramatically.

In college football, the way you get the attention of the new membership committees is by winning football games and lots of them.

Forget backroom deals. This is about beating the snot out of teams on the field. When BYU starts to do that, they will be in. It really is that simple. Winning solves all problems and issues and the sooner the better.

2014 BYU Football Schedule

With start times for some games

Connecticut...Friday, August 29 at East Hartford...ESPN...5:00 pm MDT
Texas...Saturday, September 6 at Austin...Fox Sports 1...5:30 pm MDT
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...7:00 pm MDT
Middle Tennessee...Saturday, November 1 at Murfreesboro...CBS Sports...1:30 pm MDT
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)

Fluff and Stuff



There's a new In-N-Out at BYU... Forget the burgers, here's the latest in and out of players coming and going to and from BYU.

Matt Carlino has left the BYU basketball program and will play his final season of eligibility at Marquette

Kyle Davis, a 6-7 scoring and rebounding magnet, has left Utah State as a sophomore after leaving Southern Utah as a freshman and will sit out this season and then finish his remaining two years of eligibility with Dave Rose and the Cougars.

Stephanie Rovetti, a backup point guard on the women's team last season, will play her final year at Fresno State. She is immediately eligible because she graduated from BYU this spring.

Jordan Leslie, a wide receiver from UTEP, **Keanu Nelson**, another wide receiver from Stanford and **Harvey Jackson**, a defensive back from Nebraska, will all join the BYU team this fall. They all have one year to play after graduating from their respective academic institutions.

Iona Pritchard is using the same exit strategy. The Cougar fullback has graduated from Provo and will use his final year to play with his brother **Baker Pritchard** at Oregon State. Baker Pritchard, choose to transfer to OSU from BYU after serving a mission. Also heading out from the program is **Billy Green**, the quarterback who prepped at Washington. There is no word yet as to where Green might be headed. Some speculate that he is looking at Utah State, Washington and Washington State.

Trent Hosick, a 6-1, 225 pound redshirt freshman, is transferring to BYU with a pit stop along the way. Hosick, was at Missouri last season, but will play this coming season at Northeastern Oklahoma A&M JC this year before moving on to Provo. He will then have 3 years of eligibility at BYU beginning in 2015.

Jordan Leslie is our pick to be the go to guy at receiver for BYU this fall... That opinion is also shared by Mike Huguenin, a college football writer. He touts Leslie in the following article: [Jordan Leslie makes NFL.com Most Explosive story](#)

I also found it interesting that Leslie has an NBA connection with one of Jimmer Fredette's Chicago Bulls teammates. Read about it here: [Jordan Leslie, new BYU WR has NBA and family connections...interesting story](#)

Alabama vs. BYU? There has been some internet conversation lately about Alabama needing a home game in 2015. One local media based outlet in need of producing something daily extrapolated that to mean that BYU was contacted by the Tide, but turned them down.

I don't buy that, but I do buy that Southern Miss is considering returning to Tuscaloosa for the 2015 Alabama opening. The Golden Eagles already are scheduled to face Alabama this season.

As mentioned earlier, BYU already has a home and home deal with a major marquee P5 player that is set to begin in 2015. There is no need to add Alabama to the mix when you see the tentative 2015 slate below.

Thanks to FBSchedules.com, here is BYU's current 2015 football schedule

Saturday Sept. 5		at Nebraska Cornhuskers Memorial Stadium, Lincoln, NE	TBA	-- -
Saturday Sept. 12		Boise State Broncos LaVell Edwards Stadium, Provo, UT	TBA	-- -
Saturday Sept. 19	---	TBA	---	-- -
Saturday Sept. 26		at Michigan Wolverines Michigan Stadium, Ann Arbor, MI	TBA	-- -
Saturday Oct. 3	---	TBA	---	-- -

Saturday Oct. 10		East Carolina Pirates LaVell Edwards Stadium, Provo, UT	TBA -- -
Saturday Oct. 17		at Southern Miss Golden Eagles M.M. Roberts Stadium, Hattiesburg, MS	TBA -- -
Saturday Oct. 24		Cincinnati Bearcats LaVell Edwards Stadium, Provo, UT	TBA -- -
Saturday Oct. 31		Connecticut Huskies LaVell Edwards Stadium, Provo, UT	TBA -- -
Saturday Nov. 7		at San Jose State Spartans Spartan Stadium, San Jose, CA	TBA -- -
Saturday Nov. 14		at UNLV Rebels Sam Boyd Stadium, Las Vegas, NV	TBA -- -
Saturday Nov. 21		Fresno State Bulldogs LaVell Edwards Stadium, Provo, UT	TBA -- -
Saturday Nov. 28		at Utah State Aggies Romney Stadium, Logan, UT	TBA -- -

NFL Draft

As predicted here in our last issue, Kyle Van Noy was the only BYU football player selected in the recently completed NFL draft. He went early in the second round to the Detroit Lions.

A handful of other BYU players signed free agent contracts with various teams. They include: Cody Hoffman, Washington Redskins; Daniel Sorensen, Kansas City Chiefs; Eathyn Manumaleuna, New York Giants; Spencer Hadley, New Orleans Saints and Kaneakua Friel, Dallas Cowboys.

This may be the chicken or egg thing. BYU, as we outlined above, needs to start winning more consistently. So which comes first? More NFL draft caliber players to produce more wins or more wins to produce more NFL caliber players?

Going Off the Grid

I going Jason Bourne (of the Bourne Identity, Supremacy and Ultimatum movies) and will be without email, telephone or internet contact for the next week.

There will be no grid but plenty of girls as my wife and I have been asked to spend a week as “Grandparents” for our Stake’s Girls’ camp this coming week.

That means there will be no electricity, cold showers and warm Dr. Pepper, but estrogen should be in plentiful supply.

You can still subscribe, send me an email or call. I just won't process the order, respond to the email or answer the phone for the next 7 days.

Regards,

Jason "HB" Bourne