

HB Arnett's
COUGAR SPORTSLINE

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As a subscriber, you are allowed to access our new blog. You can view it by going to www.cougar-sportslines.blogspot.com

Just a reminder that we are now sending the newsletter via two separate email accounts to help solve distribution issues that many subscribers experienced last year. That means you may receive two identical letters. If that is the case, please just discard the extra.

COUGARS GET BACK TO ACTION AGAINST UNLV

On paper and in the win-loss record, UNLV looks a lot like they have always looked...Not very good. The Rebels are just 2-4 on the year and coming off a two-game losing streak. Their most recent loss came against conference foe Air Force last weekend in Colorado Springs when the Falcons defeated the Rebels 31-14.

On the field, however, UNLV is actually not bad, despite their record.

Offensively, they are a lot like New Mexico. The Rebels have an athletic quarterback and they have a running back that can chew up yardage and the clock.

Travis Dixon is a quarterback that can make plays if you don't account for him. Frank Summers is a bruising back that can run over defenders.

They will score points against the Cougars in Las Vegas when the two teams match up on Saturday. The key will be how their defense performs against BYU's offense.

Passing Team

The last time the Rebels faced a good passing team, Hawaii's Colt Brennan and the Warriors put up 49 points on UNLV earlier this season. That game was played in Las Vegas.

The last two times these two teams met, BYU defeated UNLV 55-14 and 52-7.

We don't expect to see the Cougars scoring 50 plus points this time around.

We do expect BYU to be able to move the ball, but this should be a much more competitive contest than the last two outings between these two clubs.

The key, as it always has been this season, is protecting Max Hall. The Cougar offensive line has to keep him healthy and on his feet.

The Cougar running game will add balance, but to beat UNLV, you have to throw the ball.

With the extra week because of the bye, BYU was able to allow some key players time to get healthy.

The guy that needed it the most was wide receiver Austin Collie.

Nurse Injury

He will have to nurse his ankle injury for the rest of the year, but he should be closer to 100 percent against UNLV than he has been since the Tulsa game when the injury occurred.

While BYU has been very productive with its passing game in going to the tight ends and running backs, it is Collie that has to be on the field to stretch defenses and make those two other options consistently succeed.

On defense for the Cougars, the two guys to watch are the BYU safeties. They will need to be active against the UNLV running attack.

The other thing to watch is the ground. If you see BYU put the ball there more than three times, the Cougars will lose. As Stanford's monumental upset of USC in the Coliseum proved, when you turn the ball over five times, like the Trojans did, you can lose to anyone.

We expect the Cougars to control their turnovers and come out with a win. We call it BYU 34 UNLV 24.

The game will be televised live on the Mtn and kicks off at 7:30 pm Mountain Time.

MOUNTAIN WEST MID-TERM

Midway through this 2007 football season, we now have a pretty good grasp of where the pecking order is in the Mountain West Conference.

Give us another week and we will have a definitive answer. While our main focus will be on the upcoming BYU-UNLV match up, we will pay close attention to an earlier game on Saturday.

That will be when the New Mexico Lobos are in Laramie facing off against the Wyoming Cowboys.

For those who have access to the Mtn Network, that game will be available for viewing beginning at noon Mountain time.

The Cowboys appear to be for real. They dominated Virginia in Laramie in the season opener for both teams. After that loss, the Cavaliers have since reeled off five straight wins.

Cowboys

The Cowboys are currently 4-1 on the year and 1-0 in MWC action with their 24-21 win over TCU in Laramie last week.

The Pokes lone loss came on the road at Boise State in a 24-14 defeat.

The Lobos of New Mexico are 3-2 and coming off a bye week. The winner of this game will most likely be the closest thing to a contender for BYU in the quest for the league championship.

If Wyoming emerges with a win on Saturday over UNM, that earmarks the November 17 game against BYU in Laramie as a probable conference championship contest.

San Diego State is the only other undefeated team in league play, but the Aztecs are not a contender.

Utah and TCU will still beat a lot of league teams, but with two losses in conference play, both teams realistically can't hope to even get a piece of the conference championship.

If New Mexico can burst the Wyoming bubble on Saturday, the Lobos still have a very realistic chance of getting a piece of the championship.

If Wyoming comes out on top, you have to like the Pokes being there at the end.

Here are the current conference standings:

	Conference	Overall
BYU	2-0	3-2
Wyoming	1-0	4-1

SDSU	1-0	2-3
Air Force	3-1	4-2
UNLV	1-1	2-4
TCU	1-2	3-3
UNM	0-1	3-2
Utah	0-2	3-3
CSU	0-2	0-5

The MWC has four bowl affiliations. The Las Vegas Bowl set for Dec 22 will have the MWC No. 1 pick vs. either the fourth-or-fifth-place team from the Pac 10.

Remember, the Las Vegas Bowl doesn't have to pick the MWC champion. They can pick whomever they want from the league as long as that team is bowl eligible.

The Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl in Fort Worth is played on Dec. 31 and will pit a team from the MWC against a team from the Pac 10.

The San Diego County Credit Union Poinsettia Bowl will be held Dec. 20 and feature Navy, provided they are bowl eligible, against a MWC opponent.

Beginning in 2008, the San Diego bowl will get the second pick from the MWC and also the 7th place team from the Pac 10. In 2009, the Pac 10 will send its 6th place team to face a team from the MWC.

The New Mexico Bowl is also set for Dec. 22 and will feature a MWC team vs. a team from the WAC.

The Texas Bowl in Houston will feature a Dec. 28 match up with teams from the Big 12 and C-USA.

Beginning next season, TCU, from the MWC can also be in the mix.

BYU STILL NEEDS JUCO HELP

Because of LDS missions, BYU will still need junior college help before the defensive line pipeline is filled with high school players.

Even when it is filled, we think you can always look for BYU to be seeking jc help on the defensive line.

Finding quality d-linemen is hard. There are always going to be mistakes on players from high school that don't pan out.

This year, BYU has already secured a commitment from Tevita Hola, a 6-1, 300 pound defensive tackle from Snow College.

BYU is still looking for more juco help and had a prospect on campus this past weekend for an official visit.

Bernard Afutiti is a 6-1, 270 pound defensive end from Mt. San Antonio JC in Walnut, Ca.

He is LDS and was recruited by BYU when he was playing high school football in Fontana.

Here is what a Mt. Sac defensive coach had to say about Afutiti in June for a JC Football article when he projected the defensive lineman to be Mounties top D-1 prospect this season.

"He's our top guy this year i think. He's got a really high motor and he's super quick. He plays with great leverage and he's just so quick he really causes problems for offensive linemen on every play.

"He's 6-0, 260 and he can play inside on passing downs and also move outside and play some strong side defensive end. He'd be a really good strong side defensive end at the next level, but he could put on some weight and play inside on an every-down basis.

"He's not a sheer pass-rush guy, but just a solid player who will really help a team when he gets there. He's going to have a lot of offers."

Afutiti was in Provo this past weekend on an official visit to BYU. Mississippi, Oregon State and Oregon are also all involved.

Afutiti signed with San Jose State out of high school, but never qualified academically to enroll. He was very highly recruited out of high school by BCS programs, but lack of academics made all eventually shy away from him.

He reportedly is on track to get his AA degree and be able to move on to the D-1 level next season.

BYU is trying to get their foot in the door of another outstanding LDS defensive lineman, but probably will not have much success.

Tevita Finau is a 6-4, 275 pounder from Phoenix College JC in Arizona. He prepped at three different high schools in Hawaii, with his last stop at Kahuku HS.

He is a cousin to current BYU wide receiver Saia Hafoka and soon to be BYU wide receiver Spencer Hafoka, who is currently serving an LDS mission.

Spencer and Finau were teammates at Kahuku during their senior seasons.

Finau was a tight end at Kahuku when he was just 225 pounds. He signed with Oregon State out of Kahuku, but never played there.

He now has seen his recruiting stock soar with schools like West Virginia, Auburn, Ole Miss, Colorado, Cal, Kansas State, Nebraska, Arizona, Tennessee, Florida and Arizona State all offering scholarships.

BYU is trying, but Finau is set to take trips to Auburn, Florida, West Virginia and Tennessee. He has already taken an unofficial trip to Oregon State.

BYU is still trying to land a high school defensive lineman for the 2008 recruiting class.

They whiffed on Sealver Siliaga, the 6-3, 340 pound nose guard from Copper Hills HS in South Jordan, Ut. He originally committed to the Cougars and then changed his mind and said he would be signing with Utah.

The Utes may also hurt the Cougars again in their quest for a high school defensive lineman.

David Kruger, a 6-5, 270 pound defensive lineman from Timpanogos HS in Orem, was offered by Bronco Mendenhall and the Cougars earlier this year.

He is also the younger brother of current Utah starting defensive lineman Paul Kruger.

This will come down to another BYU-Utah recruiting battle.

BASKETBALL BRIEFS

Dave Rose and his staff can officially start basketball practice for the 2007-2008 season beginning Friday, Oct. 12 as mandated by NCAA rules.

BYU will have their annual Cougar Tipoff on Oct. 24 and open with two exhibition games against Laval University of Quebec, Canada and Bryant University of Rhode Island on Nov. 2 and Nov. 7.

The Cougars first game of the season will be on the road against Long Beach State on Nov. 10.

If the Cougars can find a point guard they should have enough talent at the rest of the positions to again be a challenger for a conference title and a NCAA post season invite.

Here is the official 2007-2008 BYU Basketball Roster.

James Anderson...6-10, 220, F/C, FR, Page AZ/Page HS

Sam Burgess...6-3, 190, G, SR, Alpine, UT/Snow College

Chris Collinsworth...6-9, 205, F, FR, Provo, UT/Provo HS

Lee Cumard...6-6, 180, G, JR, Mesa, AZ/Mesa HS

Jimmer Fredette...6-2, 190, G, FR, Glens Falls, NY/Glens Falls HS

Vuk Ivanovic...6-10, 250, F/C, SR, Pancevo, Serbia/Seton Hill

Michael Lloyd...6-2, 170, G, FR, Las Vegas, NV/Palo Verde HS

Gavin McGregor...6-9, 235, F/C/, JR, Ridgecrest, CA/Burroughs HS

Nick Martineau...5-11, 170, G, FR, Fruit Heights, UT/Davis HS
Chris Miles...6-11, 235, F/C, SO, Provo, UT/Timpview HS
Lamont Morgan...5-10, 170, G, JR, Pomona, CA/Saddleback CC
Ben Morgan...6-2, 185, G, SR, Bountiful, UT/Dixie State College
Matt Pinegar...6-0, 185, G, FR, Provo, UT/Timpview HS
Trent Plaisted...6-11, 245, F/C, JR, San Antonio, TX/Clark HS
Archie Rose...6-5, 200, G, JR, Nassau, Bahamas/Lee College
Jonathan Tavernari...6-6, 215, G/F, SO, Sao Bernardo, Brazil/Bishop Gorman HS

TELEVISION TIMETABLE

BYU vs. UNLV

Saturday, Oct. 13 at Las Vegas
Kickoff: 7:30 pm Mountain Time
TV: Mtn

BYU vs. Eastern Washington

Saturday, Oct. 20 at Provo
Kickoff: 3:30 Mountain Time
TV: Mtn

BYU vs. San Diego State

Saturday, Oct. 27 at San Diego
Kickoff: 7:30 Mountain Time
TV: Mtn