

HB Arnett's

COUGAR SPORTSLINE

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BYU NON-MAINSTREAMS TULSA 24-21 TO TAKE ARMED FORCES BOWL

He doesn't talk like a mainstream football coach. He doesn't practice like a mainstream coach. His recruiting model is quirky. His relationship with the media is weird. He alienates his fans. He infuriates the fans of opponents.

What he does, however, is win, win, win.

We may criticize the way he wins and the methods and model he employs to get those wins, but eventually you have to give the guy his due.

Good football coaches win. Bronco Mendenhall wins. That makes him a good football coach.

BYU's good football coach did what he does against Tulsa last week in a 24-21 win over the Golden Hurricane.

You can argue his methods, means and model, but the numbers don't lie.

Bronco Mendenhall wins.

In seven years as BYU's head football coach, he has won in many different circumstances and with many different rosters.

In seven years, he has produced two-10 win and three 11-win seasons. In seven years, he has produced a 5-2 bowl record.

And it doesn't look like that trend is going away anytime soon.

Couched in the coaching culture of today, Mendenhall is certainly not mainstream, but he definitely is a winner.

He doesn't do it alone. He has had some good football players during his coaching tenure at BYU. He

also had good players help him against Tulsa.

Cody Hoffman was spectacular accounting for three touchdowns on passes from Riley Nelson. He finished the day with 8 catches for 122 yards.

Nelson was not very good for most of the game until the contest was on the line.

That's when Nelson produced with a vital fourth down conversion and a game-winning third TD toss to Hoffman with 11 seconds remaining in the game.

While Hoffman and Nelson had their stellar plays, it was the defense of Mendenhall that won the game.

They held a very good Tulsa offense to numbers way under their normal production.

If you are looking for another stellar moment, it would be senior left tackle Matt Reynolds' peel back block without a helmet that allowed Nelson to hit Hoffman for another touchdown.

Now that this season has concluded, it is never too early to start thinking about next year.

Here is what jumps out at us. BYU will need a running back that can consistently deliver. That back will have to be found on the current roster.

Michael Alisa showed that he might be that back.

BYU will need to finally find a tight end that can be counted on. They have now gone through two years without a good tight end. Many were tried but few delivered because of injuries or just plain inconsistency.

The Cougars will need to come up with a backup quarterback to be ready to play if Riley Nelson gets hurt early.

BYU will need a big time safety. That may be furnished by Craig Bills when he returns from his LDS mission.

The Cougars will need to revamp their offensive line and find a couple of more productive defensive linemen.

Who knows how that will all come together, but based on what we know about Bronco Mendenhall and his past performances and track record, it should all come together again for BYU football.

COUGARS SPLIT WCC OPENERS

Dave Rose and his BYU Cougars split their inaugural debut in West Coast Conference basketball action last week.

The Cougars were drubbed 98-82 on the road at the hands of Saint Mary's last Thursday, but bounced back in Provo two days later by delivering a drubbing of their own against San Diego to the tune of 88-52. BYU is now 1-1 in league play and 12-4 overall.

Brandon Davies came up big in both the win and loss. Against Saint Mary's, he was the BYU offense, scoring 28 points and pulling down 7 rebounds.

He was even better against San Diego with 21 points and 22 rebounds. No, that is not a typo. Davies had 22 rebounds against the Toreros.

Take away the opening loss of the season to Utah State in Logan while BYU was discovering just what their lineup options would be this season, and in the other three losses to Wisconsin, Baylor and Saint Mary's, the Cougars were crushed by the three ball and their inability to defend against it.

There is no question that BYU misses Jimmer Fredette this season, but based on the defensive liabilities in defending the perimeter in losses, maybe Jackson Emery is an even bigger loss than Jimmer.

Emery could close out and contest shots. So far it appears nobody on the guard line this season has that ability against quality opponents.

It doesn't take a doctoral dissertation for a basketball student to figure out in a hurry that the BYU guard line is just ordinary to this point in the season. Even with the insertion of Matt Carlino in the rotation, the point guard spot currently is still a work in progress and in our opinion, the shooting guard play to date is also pedestrian to poor.

There is hope, however. With Brock Zylstra, Anson Winder and Craig Cusick you are not going to get much more than we have already seen from this trio. All three are stop gap measures until Dave Rose can get Tyler Haws back for next season or some new guards in the recruiting pipeline on campus.

Carlino shows flashes. He doesn't lack for confidence, but he needs more consistency to go along with that confidence.

Extrapolation from statistics doesn't mean much, but it can be interesting and extend optimism for the future when it comes to point guard play.

For example, Carlino has played in six games for the Cougars this year.

We compared Carlino's first six games as a Cougar to Jimmer Fredette's first six games in a BYU uniform.

Here is what we found.

Fredette

	Min	FG-FGA	3P-3PA	FT-FTA	PTS
Long Beach State...	25 ..	3-11	 3-6	0-0	9
Idaho State.....	17 ..	4-7	 2-3	0-0	10
Jackson State.....	23 ..	1-5	0-2	5-6	7
Hartford.....	19 ...	6-7	4-5	3-3	19
Louisville.....	12 ...	0-2	0-2	0-0	0
North Carolina.....	5 ...	0-0	0-0	0-0	0

Carlino

	Min	FG-FGA	3P-3PA	FT-FTA	PTS
Baylor.....	24	7-14	4-8	0-0	18

Buffalo.....	29	3-9	2-5	2-2	16
UC Santa Barbara...	32	8-14	3-5	3-5	22
CS San Marcos.....	21	6-7	3-4	4-4	19
Saint Mary's.....	27	5-15	3-6	0-0	13
San Diego.....	20	3-7	2-5	0-0	8

Keep in mind that Fredette played mostly the 2 guard spot in his freshman season until late in the year when he began to have the ball in his hands more often.

If Carlino can make the continued improvement that Fredette made in his BYU career, there is room for excitement. If improvement doesn't happen during the remainder of this season or in seasons to come, then the guard line excitement is still a couple of seasons away until guards still in high school finally hit the BYU campus.

BASKETBALL COACHING IS NOT A BY-THE-NUMBERS PROFESSION

Basketball coaches don't rely solely on numbers and stats. There is more subjective evaluation taking place in determining who plays and how long a player plays.

If it was all about numbers, however, the BYU lineup might look a whole lot different.

Here are two sets of numbers for this BYU basketball season and the top ten players on the current roster. The two categories are points scored per minutes played and rebounds per minutes played.

PTS Per Minutes Played

Matt Carlino - .58
 Noah Hartsock - .54
 Stephen Rogers - .50
 Brandon Davies - .48
 Charles Abouo - .46
 Damarcus Harrison - .40
 Nate Austin - .36
 Brock Zylstra - .31
 Anson Winder - .26
 Craig Cusick - .18

Rebounds Per Minutes Played

Brandon Davies - .30
 Charles Abouo - .25
 Noah Hartsock - .18
 Nate Austin - .17
 Matt Carlino - .14
 Brock Zylstra - .13
 Stephen Rogers - .11
 Damarcus Harrison - .09
 Anson Winder - .07

Craig Cusick - .07

If Dave Rose was a CPA and coached strictly by the numbers, we think you would see a lineup very similar to what we saw against Utah State in BYU's season opener in November.

Numerically speaking, according to how we read the numbers, the best lineup and most productive for BYU on paper appears to be Davies, Hartsock, and Rogers on the front line with Abouo and Carlino on the guard line.

The good news for BYU basketball fans is that Dave Rose isn't a CPA. He just needs a good one to help him keep track of the big money BYU is paying him for winning 20-plus games per season for the Cougars.

That said, we would still like to see what would happen if Charles Abouo takes over at the two guard position and Stephen Rogers moves into the lineup as the starting 3.

The bottom line in basketball is still scoring more points than your opposition. Making room for Rogers by moving Abouo to the shooting guard position and bringing Zylstra off the bench, according to the numbers, would seem to improve the point production.

Speaking of Rogers

Speaking of Rogers, he is due back and should be ready to see some action on the court beginning this week at Loyola.

He is coming back from a torn meniscus that required surgery and is projected to be ready to go this week.

The news isn't as good for Chris Collinsworth. He still appears to be at least two months out from his latest surgery on his knee.

BYU TELEVISION TIMETABLE

BYU vs. Loyola Marymount

Thursday, Jan 5 at Los Angeles

Tipoff: 7:00 p.m. Mountain Time

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. San Francisco

Saturday, Jan 7 at Provo

Tipoff: 4:00 p.m. Mountain Time

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. Santa Clara

Saturday, Jan 14 at Provo

Tipoff: 6:00 p.m. Mountain Time

TV: ESPNU

BYU vs. San Diego

Monday, Jan 16 at San Diego

Tipoff: 8:00 p.m. Mountain Time

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. Loyola Marymount

Thursday, Jan 19 at Provo

Tipoff: 6:30 p.m. Mountain Time

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. Pepperdine

Saturday, Jan 21 at Malibu

Tipoff: 6:00 p.m. Mountain Time

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. Virginia Tech

Wednesday, Jan 25 at Blacksburg

Tipoff: 5:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: ESPN3

BYU vs. Saint Mary's

Saturday, Jan 28 at Provo

Tipoff: 7:00 p.m. Mountain Time

TV: ESPNU

BYU vs. Gonzaga

Thursday, Feb 2 at Provo

Tipoff: 9:00 p.m. Mountain Time

TV: ESPN2