

HB Arnett's



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Vol. 34, Issue 2 – August 12, 2013

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MY EARS ARE RINGING...WITH TAYSOM TINNITIS

After one week of BYU's fall football camp I keep hearing Yogi Berra quotes in my head. The most prominent quote ringing in my ears is: "It's *déjà vu* all over again".

The year was 2001, the first season of Gary Crowton as the head coach of BYU. During that first week of fall camp I watched Brandon Doman and Luke Staley run Crowton's innovative option offense. I also watched BYU's defense struggle to stop the option attack.

Crowton and his crew could almost score at will. I remember writing in the newsletter after that first week of fall camp, something to the effect that BYU football fans better get down to camp and see what I was seeing (In those days before the internet, practices were open to the public). Crowton's offense was basically unstoppable. In case you forgot, they scored 70, 52, 44, 35, 54, 24, 63, 59, 56, 41, 24, 41, 45 and 10 points en route to a 12-2 season.

Now it's another fall camp 12 years later and "It's *déjà vu* all over again".

I am again encouraging BYU fans to get down to fall camp and see an unstoppable offense. But don't take that invitation literally because they won't let you in to a BYU football practice these days.

See Your Doctor

But if they did, and you knew only just a little about offensive football, you would immediately get an appointment with your doctor and have your blood pressure and pace maker checked to make sure you will be able to survive the offensive excitement that will be generated by the Cougars this season.

If you are a wagering type person, book those rivalry bets with all your Utah acquaintances now. They won't want anything to do with you after the first two weeks of the season.

Yogi also said, "You can observe a lot just by watchin'." Here is what I see after one week of practice.

I'll start with another quote. "Larry Bird's not walking through that door fans". That's the famous quote from Rick Pitino ([watch video](#)) while he was coaching the Boston Celtics.

Neither Jim McMahon nor Ty Detmer is coming through that BYU offensive football door. I say that for all the BYU fans who don't think Taysom Hill is an accurate enough passer to be considered a great BYU quarterback. I will concur that Hill appears to have a current problem throwing the ball high while sprinting out to his left. That's fixable, however.

Those Days are Over

Hill not being a McMahon or Detmer clone would worry me if BYU was still running a two back, pro set offense. Those days are over folks. That offense isn't coming through that door again. It is the read option now, and with Hill, BYU has probably one of the top three read option college quarterbacks in the nation. The other candidates include Johnny Manziel, T&M, Chuckie Keeton, Utah State and Braxton Miller of Ohio State.

For those who think Ammon Olsen, the current backup quarterback, is a better passer than Hill, you may be right. But BYU is not running their pro set offense of two decades ago. As much as I want to see Jim McMahon in the BYU hall of fame because he was special as a drop back passer for BYU, he couldn't run this current offense. He doesn't and didn't have the skills.

Hill does. He is a good passer, not currently a great passer, but his skill set of quick reads, speed, open field elusiveness and decision making, are what is required now. Again, Hill is the guy that makes the clock tick, cows lactate and Cougars not lapse into another mediocre 8-5 or worse season.

Hill and McMahon and their respective offenses do have one thing in common. Second down and 30 after a holding call, doesn't mean the drive is over. Prolific offenses, like the one McMahon ran and the one Hill is running, keep the chains moving even when it is second or third and long.

Selling Signatures

If you don't believe that Robert Anae's offense it is all about the quarterback, then take a look at what happened to Baylor after RG3 left for the NFL. Check out what will happen to Texas A&M's offense this season if Johnny Manziel is ruled ineligible for selling his signature.

Now may be a good time to get a defensive perspective on the read option offense and the importance of the quarterback. Here is how Stanford's defensive coordinator explains it. [Defending the read option \(video\)](#)

I know. Many of you are saying, yeah but what about the offensive line? You probably say they are atrocious. Okay, let's compromise and say they have improved this fall to being ordinary. If BYU was running the pro set offense of old, then ordinary would be disastrous because of pure pass protection that would be needed. There will be very little pure drop back passing in the offensive attack. Almost all passing will be generated off the read option scheme.

Smash mouth football requires dominant offensive line play. That is why Alabama is so good at running the ball. Air Force never has dominant offensive linemen, but their offense is always at the top of national rushing statistics because they are running their own version of a read option offense.

You will love this offense...as long as Taysom Hill is healthy. You can't get into practice, but you can start getting ready for what, in my opinion, will be one of those mouth watering, much anticipated BYU offensive seasons. And remember, the scrimmage that was open on Saturday and saw by thousands was all about basic plays.

Quiver of Quotes

BYU kept things under wraps, but just watching the wraps and scraps of this offense should be enough to get you reaching for your Austin Collie quote quiver. The arrow with which he zinged Utah a few seasons back, also will apply to this season.

Yes indeed, "Magic Happens".

Yogi Berra also said, "When you come to a fork in the road, take it!"

A year ago Bronco Mendenhall came to an offensive fork in his program's road. Like Berra, he took the right fork in firing his old staff and bringing in a guy like Robert Anae who has installed the read option offense.

I was proved right in 2001 in my preseason assessment of BYU football after watching a week of fall camp with Gary Crowton. I think BYU's offensive production will prove me right again after one week of watching Robert Anae and his offensive scheme.

If I'm right about this year and the offense is as prolific as it was in 2001, I don't expect adulation and praise, just what Yogi Berra said, "I want to thank all those who made this night necessary."

That would be the new BYU offense which should make watching BYU football this fall a necessity.

What's in a name? Apparently quite a bit

It could have been worse.

Bronco could have insisted that players have Tradition, Spirit, Honor tattooed on their actual backs instead of just adorning the backs of their uniforms.

According to the Monroe Doctrine, Mendenhall's Doctrine, which was an attempt to have players wear the tenets of the program instead of their last names on their jerseys was considered egregious aggression and an affront to the sovereign Cougar nation of fans.

An all out twitter skirmish ensued, but Kim Jung-il type nuclear retaliation by Cougar nation was averted when Mendenhall's Doctrine was ditched and replaced by Mendenhall's Diplomacy in admitting his mistake.

If a picture is worth a thousand words, a video is worth millions. [Click here to see and hear](#) Mendenhall's explanation. His remarks were refreshing and reinforced his attempts to become more personable with the public. His uniform utterances start at the 3:20 mark.

POSITION MASTERY AND MYSTERY

Position Mastery is one of the catch phrases of the Bronco Mendenhall tenure as head coach at BYU. What you seldom hear about, however, is Position Mystery.

Here is a Mastery and Mystery synopsis position by position based on the first week of fall camp.

Quarterback: Do I need to say more. Taysom Hill is the man. He will remain the main guy until he is either injured or inducted into the military which is highly unlikely. Heaven forbid, but if either scenario did occur, Ammon Olsen would be the next guy up. He is very capable as a thrower. For him to show just how talented he really is would require some serious tweaking of the offense. Both guys can play, but only one can thrive in this new offense. That is Hill.

Running Backs: No mystery here. BYU is loaded with legitimate Division I backs. That would be Jamaal Williams, Adam Hine, Paul Lasike and Michael Alisa. The mystery will be how to get all four enough carries to keep them all happy. Winning games solves that issue because all are team players. Williams should be special this season now that he has been around the block at BYU, but I still peg Hine as a guy to watch and produce.

Wide Receivers: Also a group on the roster that is loaded with talent and depth. No mystery or mastery here is needed to find out who will see the field. It's simple. Drop a ball and drop down the depth chart. Making plays and making catches gets you on the turf. Cody Hoffman is the marquee guy here, and Mitch Matthews is making fall camp headlines, but still has to prove he can produce when the lights come on. I am betting that those lights will illuminate the true talent that he can be. Ross Apo is still a mystery. Being highly touted, talented and athletic didn't get him any headlines or history as a go to receiver. Maybe a new wife and a new coach will be the answer. Don't know if his new spouse will be demanding, but can guarantee you that his new coach, Guy Holliday will be. We shall see.

Tight End: Mystery or Mastery? Based on what I have seen of the new offense, the only mystery is when BYU will actually be back in the recruiting market for a tight end again. You don't recruit what you don't need. The days of the double tight formation appear to have gone away. There will be a few plays, maybe in goal line situations, where bigger bodies and blockers are needed, but they will be few and far between. What Anae is looking for now are big bodies that run and catch. If you are a tight end that can't do that in the future, you need not apply.

Offensive Line: This is mystery at its best. Nobody knows right now who will be playing along the line this season. That is why they are waging war on the O-line roster this fall. Last year was like Custer's last stand: A disaster. This season, Anae and his line coach Garret Tujague, are taking the Sioux approach. The more bodies you have the better chance you have of finding some players and winning the wars in the trench and at Little Big Horn. BYU brought in 8 new offensive linemen for the fall. We now know most of the names in contention. They are Michael Yeck, Ryker Matthews, De'ondre Wesley, Brayden Kearsley, Terrance Alletto, Solomone Kafu, Manaaki Vaitai, and Brock Stringham. Another mystery to be solved is the status of TCU wannabe transfer Tayo Fabuluje. He is applying to enroll in school and he can't do anything with the football program until he achieves the status of student in Provo. Actually being eligible to play this season would depend on obtaining a waiver from the NCAA. TCU has refused to release him and likely won't.

Defensive Line: This is about quality over quantity here. Bronson Kaufusi and Eathyn Manumaleuna are proven producers. The nose tackle position has Bronco breathing easier now with the emergence of redshirt juco transfer Marques Johnson, providing he can get healthy and stay that way this fall. Another option would be freshman Tuni Kanuch.

Linebackers: Bronco should be embarrassed at his riches at this position. He is loaded with legitimate talent and playmakers at linebacker. Kyle Van Noy and Spencer Hadley are about as good as it gets nationally as an outside backer tandem. Inside, BYU will get meaner and more athletic with Uani Unga and either Tyler Beck or Manoa Pikula. BYU will be so deep that a guy like Alani Fua, who has waited his turn on the roster and has proven that he is extremely talented, will still be looking for full time work this fall.

Defensive Backs: Put Jordan Johnson in your prayers. If he goes down with injury, losing the redshirt junior field corner would be almost insurmountable for this defense. At the other side of the field at boundary corner, BYU appears to have found two guys that can be serviceable, if not good. That would be late juco signee Robertson Daniel and true freshman Dallin Leavitt. The safeties are set with returning veterans Daniel Sorensen and Craig Bills. They are the kind of guys Bronco relishes. They are smart, savvy and love to hit people.

Kicking Game: Until one of the three kickers vying for the job can successfully kick at least two consecutive field goals during a game, this remains a mystery to me. The trio of contenders includes Justin Sorensen, Trevor Samson, a juco transfer and frosh Vance Bingham. Punting appears to be solid with a redshirt juco Scott Arellano.

Season Record: No mystery to me. I am conservatively calling the Cougars at 10-2 for the regular season. You can call me crazy, cranially impaired or challenged mentally, but I have been around long enough and seen enough BYU football seasons to know the difference between hopeful, hype and history. Historical seasons are few and far between, but I see history being made this year for the Cougars. This team really is that good.

Schedule Covers all Conferences except for the SEC

If we are talking about the two teams playing in the national championship game next January, a good bet would be that one of those teams would be from the SEC.

The chances of BYU being the other team are a long shot and contingent on a couple of things. First, the Cougars have to go undefeated. You already saw my 10-2 season record prognostication, so I don't see it happening. But even if the Cougars go undefeated, that by itself won't get it done. The teams BYU would defeat en route to a perfect season would also have to be champions of their respective leagues.

If either Virginia or Georgia Tech are champs of the ACC, if Utah is the Pac 12 champion, Wisconsin captures the Big 10 title, Texas comes out on top of the Big 12, Houston wins the C-USA crown, Utah State or Boise State take the Mountain West title and Middle Tennessee tops the Sun Belt conference then nothing would be left for BYU to prove other than to play the SEC under the national title spotlight. A win at Notre Dame would also lend some credence to this Cougar dream.

Fluff and Stuff

Lost in the jungle of jersey gate last week was some nice recruiting news. Dave Rose received some good news early last week when 2015 recruit Zac Seljaas, a 6-7 shooter from Bountiful HS said he planned on being a Cougar.

In football, Bronco Mendenhall picked up a trio of commits. That brings to 13 the number of verbals he has lined up for next February's class. The latest to say they will play their 2014 seasons in Provo include Tyler Cook, a 6-3, 220 pound linebacker from Vista Murrietta HS in California

Cook was no surprise. He has been a lifer when it comes to BYU. He turned down offers from Boise State, San Diego State, Vanderbilt and Arizona. [Watch Video](#)

Cedric Dale, a 5-8 running back/defensive back from Hebron, TX also said late last week that he wants to be a Cougar. He had offers from North Texas and Texas Tech. [Watch Video](#)

The big fish from the weekend recruiting net was Nick Kurtz, the 6-6, 205 pound juco wide receiver from Grossmont JC in San Diego. Kurtz had offers from Oregon, Texas Tech, Kansas State, and Cal among a slew of others. He prepped at Valhalla HS in San Diego. [Watch Video](#)

Here is the latest BYU football commit list for the 2014 class.

LB - Fred Warner 6-3, 204, Mission Hills HS, CA
LB - Tyler Cook 6-3, 220, Vista Murrieta HS, CA
DL - Sione Takitaki 6-3, 240, Heritage HS, CA
CB - Michael Shelton 5-2, 170, Wakefield HS, NC
DL - Teancum "Tico" Fuga 6-1, 280, Edison HS, CA
DB - Kavika Fonua 6-0, 200, Syracuse HS, UT
RB/DB - Cedric Dale, 5-9, 175 Hebron HS, TX
OL - Austin Chambers 6-5, 285, Shawnee Mission West HS, KS
DL - Zac Dawe 6-4, 260, Pleasant Grove HS, UT
OL - Chandon Herring 6-7, 260, Perry HS, AZ
ATH - Neil Pau'u 6-3, 190, Servite HS, CA
WR - Trey Dye 5-11, 175, Cooper HS, TX
WR - Nick Kurtz 6-6, 205, Grossmont JC, CA

On the women's side of BYU athletics, Jennifer Hamson, the 6-7 all league performer in both basketball and volleyball, will forgo this season in volleyball. She will redshirt while completes her senior season in basketball. She will then play her senior season of volleyball the following season.

It is an effort to give full attention to both sports. Because of overlapping schedule, she has never been able to focus solely on both sports. Now she can.

In BYU football news from a selfish perspective, I have extra family coming to town that will be here for the Texas game on Sept 7. If any of you have two extra tickets for the Longhorn contest or know of someone that does, let me know. I'm in the market.

Television Timetable

BYU vs. Virginia

Saturday, Aug 31 at Charlottesville at Provo

Kickoff: 1:30 pm Mountain Time

TV: ESPNU

BYU vs. Texas

Saturday, Sept 7 at Provo

Kickoff: 5:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: ESPN2

BYU vs. Utah

Saturday, Sept 21 at Provo

Kickoff: TBA

TV: TBA

BYU vs. Middle Tennessee

Friday, Sept 27 at Provo

Kickoff: 7:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: ESPNU

BYU vs. Utah State

Friday, Oct 4 at Logan

Kickoff: 6:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: CBS Sports Network