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BCS Will Require a Bronco Breakthrough

We love July and August. BYU is undefeated, underrated by the national media and a pretty good bet to pick up their first BCS Bowl bid after this season.

We are not immune to all the summer hype that accompanies BYU football in the off season. Most years we actually contribute to that hype.

The anticipation for BYU football this year is at a fever pitch, thanks to Hall squared.

Take Bronco Mendenhall entering his fourth year as BYU's head coach and times him by Max Hall entering his second season as the starting quarterback, and you don't quite have the formula for Einstein's theory of relativity, but you should get a nice equation that should produce a high number of wins in 2008.

We are a little more cautious in our calculations concerning a BCS Bowl bid, however.

It will take a Bronco breakthrough for BYU to be in Tempe for the Fiesta Bowl this coming January.

Since I was a three-year high school letterman in remedial math (I was held back twice, but exercised my option for a third year), here are the numbers I have come up with in trying to explain why, unless Bronco improves, BYU and BCS don't add up.

In the three years that Bronco Mendenhall has been the head coach of BYU, he has never won a non-conference road game.

Admire

You have to admire a coach like Mendenhall who has figured out how to win 16 consecutive MWC games and two straight Las Vegas Bowls, but it will take a better Bronco and some road wins over non-league opponents if BYU has a chance of busting into a BCS bowl game.

For the record, here's the math for Mendenhall when it comes to his first three seasons and non-conference road games. None, nil, nada.

In 2005 it was Notre Dame 49-23 in South Bend. The next season it was Arizona 16-3 in Tucson and Boston College 30-23 in Massachusetts in 2006. Last year wasn't any different. BYU lost to UCLA in Pasadena 27-17 and tripped in Tulsa against the Golden Hurricane 55-47.

BYU and Bronco will get another chance to rectify the record this year. Washington in Seattle on Sept. 6 and Utah State in Logan on Friday, Oct 3 looks likely for stopping the losing streak.

Actually, if BYU can't beat the Aggies on the road in Logan, the Cougars, and not USU, should be the school to consider dropping down to I-AA status.

The Huskies of UW are another matter. Despite coming off a dismal 4-9 season, history says they will

give BYU all they want and probably another road loss.

We don't base this prediction on UW's record last year, but BYU's uninspiring road record against any and all Pac 10 teams during the last 33 years.

Beginning in 1975, BYU is 4-14 on the road against Pac 10 teams. The four wins were in 1976 against Arizona (23-16), 1978 against Oregon State (10-6), 1983 against UCLA (37-35) and most recently in 2001 against Cal (44-16).

A Bronco breakthrough and a BCS bowl bid will all be determined in Seattle on Sept 6.

NAMES AND GAMES

Defensive Gold, Silver and Bronze...BYU coaches recently timed defensive players in the 40 and here is how it shook out.

Brandon Howard was the fastest defender timed. Brandon Bradley came in second, G Pittman was third and Vic So'oto was fourth among all defenders.

The fact that Howard, Bradley and Pittman were all the fastest players timed, gives some credibility to the fact that this is athletically, the most gifted and talented defensive secondary BYU has had in a long, long time.

All three defensive backs will be in the playing mix with either the first or second units this fall. It will all be contingent on their learning the schemes and executing them and on avoiding injury. Pittman and Bradley are coming off injuries from last season.

So'oto should give Cougar fans reason to be exuberant...on the offensive side of the ball.

The former tight end moved over to linebacker this past spring and it looks like he will garner significant playing time on the outside, if not start for BYU.

He has all the tools. He can run, likes to hit and should be able to cover some decent ground in pass coverage.

The fact that So'oto moved from offense to defense tells us that BYU was already loaded at tight end where Dennis Pitta and Andrew George are both explosive players and playmakers.

Euro 2008 and In State Recruiting...I've changed my mind. For years I couldn't understand why anybody would watch soccer. That changed this summer as I started watching Euro 2008 and became a convert.

My change of heart probably had to do with seeing soccer at its highest level and with its most riveting moments. My previous soccer experience was bringing treats to soccer games for kids who, along with me, had no idea what was going on.

That said, I am still not going to start writing about BYU soccer in the newsletter, but I freely admit that I found Euro 2008 compelling and extremely entertaining.

Riveting is not how I would describe football recruiting, but I have also had a small change of heart when it comes to that topic.

It wasn't too many years ago that we would criticize BYU football recruiting for having too many Utah preps on the roster. The old theory used to be that if Utah preps were so good, why didn't other schools outside of the state try and recruit them?

It now looks like the outside football world has discovered the beehive state when it comes to football recruiting.

We give Gary Crowton all the credit for changing the perception. Since being fired at BYU and serving as an assistant coach at Oregon and LSU, he has consistently gone after and offered recruits from Utah.

Norm Chow is now doing the same at UCLA, but it is Crowton, with his profile at LSU, the reigning national champ, that has made other schools sit up and take notice.

If Utah prospects are good enough for LSU to offer, they must be good enough for the rest of the col-

lege football world.

While the new dynamic is great for local recruits, it has made BYU's job of keeping players in state more difficult.

Here is a list of local preps that have offers from big time programs, including BYU. BYU will have to fight off the big boys to keep these guys in state.

Richard Wilson, TE, 6-4, 215, Spanish Fork HS...Offers from BYU, LSU, Miami, Utah, Washington, Arizona, Boise State, Tennessee and Stanford...LDS

Xavier Su'a Filo, OL, 6-5, 270, Timpview HS...Offers from BYU, LSU, Miami, UCLA, USC, Stanford, Utah...LDS

Latu Heimuli, DL, 6-4, 305, Highland HS...Offers from BYU, Arizona, Colorado, Utah, Washington, Washington State...LDS

L.T. Filiaga, LB, 6-0, 235, Bingham HS...Offers from BYU, Utah, Stanford, UNLV, Washington, Arizona...LDS

Chris Washington, DB, 6-2, 195, Northridge HS...Offers from BYU, Utah, Utah State...Not LDS

John Martinez, OL, 6-3, 270, Cottonwood HS...Offer from BYU, but has narrowed his choice to UCLA, USC, Ohio State and LSU. All have offered...Not LDS

OUT OF STATE OFFERS

These are recruits that are outside of Utah that the Cougars have offered.

Manti Te'o, LB, 6-2, 225, Punahou HS, HI...Offer from BYU, Cal, Colorado, Notre Dame, Stanford, UCLA, USC...LDS

Kyle Van Noy, LB, 6-4, 205, McQueen HS, NV...Offer from BYU, Arizona State, Boise State, Cal, Colorado, San Diego State...LDS

Taysom Hill, QB, 6-2, 210, Highland HS, ID...Offered by BYU, Stanford, Washington State, Arizona, Boise State and Utah. Recently committed to Stanford...LDS

Steven Fanua, LB, 6-1, 210, Milpitas HS, CA...Offered by BYU, Arizona, Arizona State, Cal, Fresno State, UNLV, Washington...LDS

Brett Thompson, WR, 6-3, 210, Oak Ridge HS, CA...Offered by BYU, Air Force, Nebraska and UNLV...LDS

BOYS IN THE BAG

BYU now has a total of 11 verbal commitments for the 2009 recruiting class. They are all LDS and include:

Adam Timo, RB, 6-1, 185, Snow Canyon HS, UT...Committed as a sophomore. Had a new coach and a new spread offense last year as a junior. Should have a big senior campaign. Because he committed over a year ago, some are taking him for granted, but this kid is a big time player and athlete. Stanford also offered.

Craig Bills, DB, 6-2, 205, Timpview HS, UT...Also committed over a year ago. Had he not made up his mind so early, he could name his school.

Jray Galea'i, DB, 6-0, 175, Kahuku HS, HI...Played at Timpview as a sophomore, then transferred to Kahuku. Performed extremely well at summer camps and made a name nationally. Was also offered by Hawaii.

Terry Alletto, OL, 6-3, 265, Ponderosa HS, CO...Joined his brother as a Cougar when he committed last fall. Considered one of the top prospects out of Colorado.

Tui Crichton, OL, 6-4, 280, Timpview HS, UT...Offered by BYU and Utah, but committed to the Cougars. Reportedly underwent shoulder surgery recently and missed most summer work and camps.

Peni Maka'afi, RB, 5-10, 215, Northridge HS, UT...Received a scholarship offer from BYU after impressive performances at summer camps. A big horse that can, block, run and catch the ball.

Trevor Bateman, DB, 5-11, 180, Palm Desert HS, CA...Was offered by Arizona early, but after a trip to Provo for a camp, the Cougars offered and the case was closed. Played running back for the Aztecs last year to help pump of the offense, but defensive back is where his future is. UNLV also offered.

Mitch Mathews, WR, 6-5, 195, Southridge HS, OR...Another who will follow in the footsteps of his brother Marcus, who is currently serving an LDS mission. Offered by BYU after a camp appearance and also offered earlier by UNLV.

Remington Peck, TE, 6-5, 215, Bingham HS, UT...Latest in a long line of Bingham players to sign up with the Cougars, Peck can play te, lb or de depending on how his body grows and develops.

Anthony Heimuli, RB, 5-11, 225, Mountain View HS, UT...BYU watched this kid perform at the All Poly Camp earlier this summer and made him an offer he couldn't refuse. He has dropped some weight this summer and is a bruising type back.

SAVING THE BEST FOR LAST

As a former trader of commodities, I don't buy into the theory that speculation in oil futures is responsible for the spike in sweet crude prices.

Here's hoping that Congress doesn't intervene. If they do, it could be contagious and they might want to meddle in Mendenhall's futures recruiting methods.

The BYU coach has made offers to several sophomores. If he likes what he sees, he offers, regardless of year in high school.

Adam Timo and Craig Bills were the first to be offered as sophomores and they both will be headlining the current recruiting class come February.

The best may be yet to come. BYU already has a commitment from Bronson Kaufusi, the 6-6, 220 defensive end from Timpview HS. Yes, his dad is Steve Kaufusi, the former Cougar player and current defensive line coach.

There is no nepotism here, just some nasty defensive line play by the younger Kaufusi.

This guy is already unblockable as a skinny kid who is just relying on quickness and technique. When he bulks up, he will be a monster.

As highly touted as some of the current blue chip offensive linemen from Utah are this year, none of them could handle Kaufusi at the camps where they all participated.

Who knows if oil will hit \$200 a barrel, but if you are looking for a sure thing in the futures market, go long Bronson Kaufusi right now.

If you want to diversify your portfolio, do ditto with Jake Heaps, the LDS quarterback from Skyline HS in Seattle. This kid can make all he throws and proved it with performances in Provo this summer.

If you must, blame speculators for driving the price of gas up, but don't blame Bronco and his staff for buying football futures on Heaps and Kaufusi. Both will be juniors in high school this year and with Kaufusi already in the bag and Heaps seriously considering BYU, the future of BYU football looks to be locked limit up.

BYU AND BRONCO PRACTICING GOOD FOOD STORAGE PRINCIPLES

One of the key principles of food storage is rotate and replace. The same goes for football.

Attrition is inevitable on a football roster. Despite the hype of each recruiting season, not all players that are signed, actually turn out to be players. Not all stay injury free and not all are happy in a reserve role.

Even more importantly, not all have their scholarships renewed. It happens in every program, even at BYU.

When you get a spare minute, go back and peruse past press books. Even factoring in missions, you are lucky if half of your recruiting class stays intact and finishes its eligibility together.

Players transfer, don't qualify academically, have injuries or other issues.

This year will be no different. When the fall roster is released by BYU in August, we can guarantee that there will players missing from the previous roster.

Unless you are constantly rotating and replacing, your pork 'n beans and players will go stale and stagnant.

BYU South or Southern

Don't look now but Southern Utah University football has a definite BYU look to it.

Ed Lamb, the former BYU linebacker, is the new head coach at SUU. He has hired Jason Anderson as his offensive line coach and Justin Ena as a special teams and linebacker coach. Both are former BYU players

Steve Clark is a BYU graduate and former Cougar graduate assistant. He is the offensive coordinator for the T-Birds.

Paul Peterson played quarterback at Snow College and Boston College. He is the qb and receivers coach. It's a stretch, but his BYU connection is that his brother Charlie played qb at BYU.

Weekly Publication Just Around The Corner

I will begin publishing weekly again with our next issue. The first issue of Vol. 29 will coincide with the start of fall football camp on August 9.

Coming back for my 29th year of publishing *Cougar Sportsline* was not a sure thing.

This summer, my wife suggested we submit papers for a public affairs mission for the Church. We wanted to serve in Northern Mexico. I wanted to be a senior bullfighter in rural Chihuahua and have RULDS2? embroidered on the back of my bullfighting pants. My wife would have been in charge of keeping my stretchy pants and embroidery in good repair.

The whole idea was hers. She said I had lived a lifetime of bull and none of her friends and family would ever see her with me if we could get far enough rural and remote.

She also said that any fight I survived would have been a faith promoting experience that could be shared with the three or four patrons in the stands.

Alas, our dreams didn't come to fruition. My Bishop told me the Church didn't have any bullfighting

stretchy pants available in my size.

Mexico's loss means I'm back, but the dream lives on. It seems RULDS2?, when translated into Spanish, is: EUSDLUD tambien? Not many men can have that embroidered on the back of their bullfighting pants and still get their message across (figuratively and literally).

Meanwhile, I'll keep searching Ebay for unembroidered bullfighting pants in a size 48 short and pumping out more *Sportsline* issues.