

HB Arnett's



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Shaquille O’Neal and Tip O’Neill talk BYU Football Recruiting

Here’s a quote from Shaquille O’Neal: “When you’re righteous, you don’t have to tell people that you’re righteous.” To paraphrase Shaquille as it relates to BYU football recruiting,” If you had a good recruiting year, you don’t have to tell people that you did. It will eventually show up on the field.

And here’s a quote from Tip O’Neill, the former Speaker of the House: “All politics is local.” To paraphrase the former Speaker when it comes to this year’s BYU recruiting class, “BYU lost in a landslide locally.”

The Cougars lost 4 LDS recruits all lived within 15 miles from campus to other schools. Porter Gustin, from Salem Hills HS, signed with USC, Britain Covey, from Timpview HS, signed with Utah, his teammate, Gabe Reid, signed with Stanford and James Empey, from American Fork HS, signed with Utah.

There plenty of stories to accompany the signatures of these player to other schools. Some will never be told. Some are easy to figure out and others will most likely be told down the line. Those stories will become salacious if BYU continues to turn in sorry performances on the field. If however, BYU can get it turned around and start winning

games consistently, those stories will be stashed in irrelevancy. “Just win baby!” is another quote by Al Davis that as it concerns BYU’s recruiting and reflects less on a recruit’s location and more on his talents.

Here’s Bronco Mendenhall’s quote on BYU’s recent recruiting class: “We are excited today to welcome the newest members of the BYU football program. These young men are talented football players and quality individuals who will help us get better as a program.”

Discounting the geography of recruits, Bronco pretty well nailed it. This is not a superstar class of recruits, but it is a very good class that should produce on the field. I don’t have another quote, but I do have a quintet of players from this class that I think will make an impact.

Mika Tafua...Linebacker...This is a guy that BYU had to fight off the big dogs for. An extra early commit to the Cougars, USC, Washington and Oregon came on strong at the end.

Charles West...Running Back...If he can pick up the offense and pass rushers, he will see plenty of time this coming year. He has some shake and legitimate speed to take the ball to the house.

Kieffer Longson...Offensive Lineman...His impact will be delayed two years by an LDS mission but kid can play.

Dayan Lake...DB...This will be the perfect storm for BYU. This kid is a quality athlete that can play with toughness and BYU is always in need of cornerbacks.

Akile Davis...WR...Has a combination of decent speed, toughness and good hands. Will be in the rotation by the time the Cougars take the field against Nebraska.

Mountain or Molehill?

Regardless of what happens down the road, BYU reaped a public relations bonanza with their signing of Motekiai Langi, the 6-7, 410 pounder from Tonga. His story went viral and was carried by almost all sports media outlets. You can’t buy that kind of publicity. It reminded me of a reverse Bill Veeck move. Veeck was the owner of the St. Louis Browns, who signed 3-foot-7-inch Eddie Gaudel to a one day contract and let him have a plate appearance in 1951. We have no idea if Langi can play or ever will play for the Cougars, but Mt. Mormon, as coined by some media, paid for his scholarship with the publicity that BYU hasn’t been able to buy since Jimmer Fredette and Taysom Hill early last season.

Here is BYU’s official list of signees as released last week. Click on names for bios and videos.

Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown	Last school
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Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown	Last school
Kieffer Longson	OL	6-7	295	San Ramon, Calif.	Dougherty Valley HS
Akile Davis	WR	6-1	186	DeSoto, Texas	DeSoto HS
Micah Simon	WR	6-1	185	Dallas, Texas	Bishop Dunne HS
Beau Hoge	QB	6-1	198	Fort Thomas, Ky.	Highlands HS
Kody Wilstead	QB	6-6	215	St. George, Utah	Pine View HS
Charles West	RB	5-10	187	Coppell, Texas	Coppell HS
JJ Nwigwe	OL	6-4	260	Rockwall, Texas	Rockwall-Heath HS
David Lui	DL	6-4	255	Pittsburgh, Calif.	Pittsburg HS
Tevita Mo'unga	DL	6-3	300	Murrieta, Calif.	Vista Murrieta HS
Mika Tafua	OL	6-3	225	Laie, Hawaii	Kamehameha HS
Devin Kaufusi	OLB	6-6	240	Provo, Utah	Timpview HS
Will Sedgwick	MLB	6-2	220	Laguna Hills, Calif.	Laguna Hills HS
Jeremiah Jeremia	MLB	6-0	230	Hurricane, Utah	Hurricane HS
Riley Burt	DB/RB	6-1	195	Mantua, Utah	Box Elder HS
Zayne Anderson	DB	6-2	190	Stansbury Park, Utah	Stansbury HS
Dayan Lake	DB	5-11	190	Layton, Utah	Northridge HS
Trevor Brent	DB	5-10	165	Balch Springs, Texas	West Mesquite HS
Demetrius Davis	OL	6-4	265	Pleasant Grove, Utah	Pleasant Grove HS
Jacob Jimenez	OL	6-6	275	Pflugerville, Texas	Pflugerville HS
Motekiai Taukolo Langi	OL/DL	6-7	410	Liahona, Tonga	Tonga HS
Eric Takenaka	DB	5-10	205	Salt Lake City	Snow College/West HS
Squally Canada	RB	5-10	192	Milpitas, Calif.	Washington State/Milpitas HS
Brady Christensen	OL	6-6	240	Bountiful, Utah	Bountiful HS

Big Men, Boxing Out and Thinking Outside the Box

BYU played two games on the road last week against Pepperdine and LMU and came away with a split. They faded down the stretch against the Waves and ultimately lost 80-74 against the Waves. Against Loyola Marymount, the Cougars defeated the Lions 87-68.

Against Pepperdine, BYU post players couldn't find a way to defend the Waves' Stacy Davis. The 6-7 player torched the Cougars for 24 points. BYU's Bigs totaled just 6 points and 8 rebounds. While BYU's post played appeared better against LMU, the reality is that it appeared that way because Josh Sharp, the seldom used forward grabbed 7 rebounds.

Throw in the fact that LMU is not as good a team as Pepperdine and except for the fact that BYU Bigs played with more energy and purpose, the post production was about equal to what it has been for the entire season: pretty poor.

Wait Until Next Year

When it comes to BYU's post play, help and hope always seems to be just over the horizon. If you haven't been charting the perpetual promise of post play for BYU here are the basics.

Nate Austin might get a medical hardship and play next season. Jamal Aytes will be healthy and Kyle Davis will be eligible next year. Eric Mika will eventually come back from his mission to Italy. Peyton Dastrup will be the "answer" once he gets back from Panama and his LDS mission. Corbin Kaufusi and Isaac Neilson shows flashes of promise and with a year under their belts will be better next year and beyond.

Barring a Jekyll and Hyde transformation of BYU's post play beginning this Thursday against Saint Mary's in Provo, just over the horizon for BYU shows the sun setting on any chance of an at large big to the NCAA tournament.

I was optimistically hoping that this year's lack of inside play and presence was just a temporary burp or bump in BYU's big men production based on the past, present and future.

That hope had some holes poked in it when I received the following letter from a subscriber last week. Here is what this particular outside-the-box thinker and follower of BYU basketball had to say.

HB,

I would be interested in you doing a run down in the next newsletter or two on the Bigs that have been recruited by Rose since he assumed the head coaching job. Watching the Waves/BYU game last night I just couldn't stand it any longer after the Davis kid blistered the Cougars again. I had to shut off the TV with 2 minutes remaining in the game.

Here is my list of what I remember since Rose took over 10 years ago in 2005.

2014- Corbin Kaufusi, Ryan Andrus, Dalton Nixon

2013- Jamal Aytes, Erik Mika, Isaac Neilson, Graham Pingree, Luke Worthington

2012- Augustin Ambrosino, Bronson Kaufusi

2011- Nate Austin, Ian Howard, Josh Sharp

2010- None

2009- Brandon Davies

2008- Michael Boswell

2007- Chris Collinsworth, James Anderson

2006- Gavin MacGregor

2005- Vuk Ivanovic, Fernando Malaman,

I count 2 kids, Davies and Mika (benefit of the doubt) that were or will be impact players around the hoop for BYU. That is it. Two kids out of 21 recruits. Those two kids literally came from spitting distance of the BYU campus. Prior to this illustrious list of big men, we had Trent Plaisted. I would have to give Steve Cleveland the glory on that selection since it came in under his watch.

The list of kids who wanted to come to BYU, but ended up, for various reasons at USU, Weber and Utah during Rose's tenure, have had an impact on those programs. The Wesley decision was like the Seahawks throwing on second down in the Super Bowl. Now with Stew Morrill's retirement, I think BYU should go for a part-time hire in Morrill.

His only job would be to review the big men of a three state area for Rose and put his stamp of approval on those kids who he thinks can make it onto the BYU roster and have a positive impact on the game. Stew would have veto authority on Rose's Big man picks! BYU would have Rose's ability to choose every other player and Stew's ability to choose big men. What a line up we could have.

Stew doesn't even have to leave his armchair in Logan to review the Big's for Rose! Give him a DVD player, a computer, internet connection and a 12 plane tickets a year while paying him 100k a year for 10 hours of work a month. It would be money well spent and BYU would be a top 10 team almost every year. Some coaches just have an eye for certain types of players. Rose has eyes for guards and small forwards, but no eye for big men. Morrill does!

I may have missed some kids in my list, but you wouldn't if you adapted it to your Sportsline. Copy, plagiarize or steal whatever you would like from my comments! I am sure others have a lot more insight on these issues that I do. I hope this Davis transfer plays well for BYU next year and if he does, it will solidify my comments on Morrill and Rose.

*Best,
Troy*

The last name was withheld by me, not the author, because I don't want this guy to have to go into the BYU fan witness protection program for expressing his observations and opinions. And more importantly, just in case he starts his own newsletter, I don't want to aid and abet any future competition.

Records...Past, Present and Future

Past...My first two records were 45's and on vinyl. I purchased Brenda Lee's "I'm Sorry" and Johnny Mathis' "Chances Are". News flash! If you know what vinyl and 45's

are and who Brenda Lee and Johnny Mathis are, you are officially old and should immediately stop what you are doing and go take a nap. So much for the past.

Present...Unless you were napping, you should already know that Kyle Collinsworth racked up a career high 23 points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists in leading the Cougars to a win over Loyola Marymount. That outstanding performance helped BYU to an 87-68 win over the Lions, but put Collinsworth in a class by himself as the junior point guard garnered his fifth triple-double of the season.

The old NCAA mark was held by five players, including Collinsworth. He now has the season record all to himself with 5 games remaining in the regular season and any potential post season action that may come BYU's way.

Future...Over the past week, Tyler Haws had his 22 locked, loaded and sighted in on Jimmer Fredette's BYU career scoring record. Haws put up a pair of 22 point performances against both Pepperdine and LMU as the Cougars split their Los Angeles road trip last week.

Haws now has 2530 points in his BYU basketball career. He needs just 70 more points to break Fredette's scoring record of 2599. Haws, has five more games in the regular season to put his name in the record book and at the top of a pretty prestigious list that includes Fredette, Danny Ainge, Michael Smith and Devin Durrant.

Fluff and Stuff

Men's Basketball...The Cougars are currently 8-5 in WCC play and tied for third place with Pepperdine. The Waves hold the tie breaker should the two teams end the season with similar marks.

Women's Basketball...The Lady Cougars swept two games at home last week against LMU and Pepperdine, two bottom feeders in the league standings. BYU is now 19-5 overall and 11-2 in league play. They trail 12-0 Gonzaga in the conference standings.

Volleyball...The Cougars did what was expected by dominating Cal Baptist last week with a 3-1, 3-0 sweep. Now it gets tougher. BYU will head on the road to take on USC this coming week in Los Angeles. The Trojans and Cougars are tied atop the MPSF standings with 7-1 records.

Track...Shaquille Walker, a sophomore from Georgia has literally exploded out of the starting blocks in early track action for BYU. Two weeks ago, he set a BYU indoor 800 meters record at the University of Washington Invitational. His time of 1:47.44 in the 800 meters became the fastest indoor time in school history and the fifth-fastest 800-meter time overall for a BYU runner. His time is also the third-fastest 800 meters in the nation this year. Last week at the New Mexico Classic, Walker's winning time in the 600 meters was 1:17.32. Walker has placed first in every event he's raced so far this indoor season.

Baseball...No. 16 (Collegiate Baseball) UC Santa Barbara hosts BYU baseball in a four-game series starting Friday (Feb. 13) for the season opener. The Gauchos (34-17-1 in 2014), picked to win the Big West Conference, are the first of two ranked teams BYU (22-31 in 2014) plays in consecutive order, followed by No. 23 (Perfect Game) Nebraska the following week in Arizona. "They have great pitching, a number of excellent returning position players and will be a great challenge for us," BYU coach Mike Lirtlewood said. "I believe they were the most athletic team we saw last year (UCSB won 9-5)."

Softball...The women opened their season in Tempe at the Kajikawa Classic with a 2-3 record. The had wins over Virginia and New Mexico but lost to San Jose State, California and Cal Poly.

TV Timetable

BYU vs. Saint Mary's

Thursday, February 12 at Provo

Tipoff: 7:00 pm MST

TV: ESPN2

BYU vs. Pacific

Saturday, February 14 at Provo

Tipoff: 7:00 pm MST

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. San Diego

Thursday, February 19 at Provo

Start: 8:00 pm MST

TV: ESPNU

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