

HB Arnett's



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COWHERD CRITERIA

Collin Cowherd is a radio host for ESPN. Like all sports talk show guys, you either like him or you don't.

Regardless, he made an interesting comment recently. He said that the NFL isn't rocket science. To be a good team in that league you need a pass rush, either with great players or great scheme. You need a good quarterback and you need to be able to protect that quarterback.

What about BYU? How did they stack up last year using Cowherd's criteria? Let's compare the Cougars with the three teams that beat them last season. That would be Texas, a 17-16 winner over the Cougars. Then there was Utah. You remember them, don't you? If not, let me refresh your memory. It was a 54-10 in Provo.

The third loss was to TCU, a 38-28 setback at Arlington in Cowboy Stadium. BYU was out sacked in both delivering and taking sacks in all three losses last season.

Those three games are a small sample size, but after looking back two years, the sacks allowed and sacks delivered has almost always been in favor of the teams that beat BYU.

BYU fans are taking it for granted that this season BYU will have a good quarterback in Riley Nelson. Count me in on that same assessment. That means the Cougars meet one of the three Cowherd criteria needed to be a winning and good football team. But can they protect him and can they get to opposing quarterbacks?

Maybe, instead of focusing on the glitter guys like receivers and running backs, we should spend more time looking at BYU's football prospects this season through the lens of the lines, both offensive and defensive.

Here it is. The way it looks right now, no offensive coordinator is going to have to double team or seriously account for any BYU defensive lineman.

Last season, BYU tallied 17 sacks on defense. Kyle Van Noy accounted for 7 of those sacks. Jordan Pendleton had four.

No BYU defensive lineman who played significant minutes last season had a sack. Maybe it's a scheme thing. Maybe BYU and Bronco have the defense designed in such a way that the defensive linemen just eat up blocks and the Cougar linebackers do the feasting on sack lunches.

On the other hand, maybe it is just me and my observations, but BYU hasn't had a decent outside pass rush generated by the defensive line for years. We have heard now for two seasons that Ziggy Ansah will be the guy that will provide the killer outside rush for the Cougars.

He has potential, but now it's all about production. If all the NFL dreams and banter that have been spouted by coaches and me here in this newsletter are to be believed, it's put up or shut up time for Ansah.

He has always been a Ghana good story, but now he needs to be a ghoulish good pass rusher.

The top four guys who should see the majority of time for BYU on the defensive line this season are Eathyn Manumaleuna, Romney Fuga, Ian Dulan and Russell Tialavea. Two of those guys are two years removed from playing football. Both Dulan and Tialavea are returning from missions. All four are seniors and account for BYU's recent recruiting emphasis in juco defensive linemen for next season.

To their credit and despite any proven pass rush, whether by design, scheme, or lack of skill, this group has proven that they can stop the run. That is good because that is the top priority of Mendenhall, who also serves as the Cougar defensive coordinator.

After the top four guys, it is a case of the three R's: Recruits, Remnants and Redshirts.

Recruits: BYU signed only two defensive linemen last year. That would be freshman Jherremya Leuta-Douyere and juco Marques Johnson. Neither look ready to play at this

level and are likely at least a year away from contributing. BYU did not have a good recruiting class in the defensive line category last February. They missed on a lot of guys they were hoping to sign.

Remnants: While Bronco won't say it, we will. Most of the rest of the defensive linemen on the roster are either walk-ons or remnants from last year.

Redshirts: There are two potential contributors in the future in this group. Bronson Kaufusi is just a few weeks back from an LDS mission to New Zealand. He will be a player, but unless forced into action once he gets back in some sort of shape, he should redshirt this season.

Bronco has already singled out another returned missionary for his play. That would be 6-3, 340 pound Tui Crichton at nose guard. He might be the next Hebron Fangupo.

A redshirt year would really help this guy, but he already did that as a true freshman before leaving for his mission. He might be a spot contributor before the season is over.

While it may not look glamorous and great, the reality is that BYU will do very well for itself this season on the defensive line, but only if their first four guys of Dulan, Tialavea, Manumaleuna and Fuga can stay healthy.

It won't hurt either that the Cougars are loaded at linebacker. The defensive front seven should acquit themselves quite nicely this year.

Offensive Line

On the offensive line, BYU is spending the first few days of fall camp mixing and matching linemen trying to come of with their top eight guys.

When push comes to shove, here are the eight that should show up on the depth chart: Ryker Mathews, Braden Brown, Brock Stringham, Braden Hansen, Houston Reynolds, Michael Yeck and Blair Tushaus.

The Cougars have some nice young prospects that will either be going or just coming back from missions. They include, Austin Hoyt, Brad Wilcox and Terrance Alletto.

We mentioned last week that less mass and more muscle are the new buzz words of fall camp. Leaner linemen on the offensive line hopefully will help in downfield blocking and keeping good opposing pass rushers off the edge.

We will know how that is working out after the Utah game.

Grunts Win Games, But Glitter Still Sells Tickets

We've gone over the BYU grunts on the line of scrimmage. They're the guys that actually win or lose games.

But it's the glitter guys that sell the tickets.

Get in line or go on line if you don't already have tickets for this season.

Jamaal Williams is the real deal. He will sell tickets and be worth the price of admission.

It's way early and the kid has not even played in a real Division I game, but BYU coaches are all grins. They are still able to hold back the gushes of praise, but barely. They know what they have. They have a legitimate marquee running back.

Think Ronney Jenkins, only not quite as fast or think Jamal Willis. The difference between Williams and Jenkins and Willis is that Williams can not only get to the edge, he also can run between the tackles.

For those of you who are still wondering why Josh Quezada would transfer so late in the summer, look no farther than Jamaal Williams. At best, Quezada would have been the third back on the depth chart.

You can bet he had that candid discussion with his coaches before making his transfer decision.

He apparently also had some other discussions.

It was announced recently that Quezada was baptized a member of the LDS Church this weekend in La Mirada, Calif. He was baptized by his former running back teammate, Bryan Kariya.

CME or CBOT

If BYU football was listed on the Chicago Mercantile or Chicago Board of Trade and BYU players were futures contracts, my suggestion is that you go long and margin yourself to the hilt on at least three players. We have already extolled Taysom Hill, the freshman quarterback and transfer from Stanford. He is the offensive future of BYU.

BYU is playing it smart right now and giving James Lark, the senior qb, plenty of reps in fall camp. He is the No. 2 guy now and rightfully so. If Riley Nelson goes down anytime in the first four games of the season, it is Lark.

After the first third of the year, however, look for Hill to start getting increased reps and getting ready to be the heir apparent. He is a talent.

Get on board with a contract for an October delivery with Manoa Pikula. BYU's seniority and position mastery matrix will keep Brandon Ogletree and Uona Kavienga playing and

playing well at inside linebackers for Bronco, but Pikula will be a limit-up type player by October. He is a redshirt freshman who prepped at Bingham HS.

Think a Kyle Van Noy type linebacker, only inside.

For those who like to chart future contracts check the Cougar Sportsline chart of two years ago. We said then, that, in our opinion, Pikula was the best recruit signed by BYU in February of 2011. He was the typical head and shoulders breakout waiting to happen.

Dylan Collie will be a long term fundamental futures buy. You just have to wait for a while before cashing in on him.

He is small and not exceptionally fast, but he can catch the ball and make plays. There is always room in the pigskin portfolio of BYU football for a guy like him. Think Austin Collie, only shorter and not as fast, but just as cocky and competent.

Redwoods and Runts

That would be my assessment of the current Cougar receiving corp.

BYU is blessed with four big receivers in returning players Cody Hoffman and Ross Apo, returned missionary, Brett Thompson and redshirt freshman Terran Houk. All four are in the 6-3 to 6-4 range and all four can get down field and get up and go get balls.

Hoffman is the real deal. Apo, Thompson and Houk, given time, could be the same type of receivers. I look for one of those to actually become a go-to guy similar to Hoffman.

Mitch Mathews is 6-6 and just back from an LDS mission. He likely won't be a factor this season, but those five are the redwoods on the receiving roster.

There are also plenty of runts.

I realize that sounds derogatory, but Redwoods and small, possession-type receivers just didn't have the same headline ring and resonance.

I talked already about Dylan Collie. He looks to be the real deal, but is only listed at 5-10. J.D. Falsev is even smaller and listed at 5-8. A couple of walk-ons have also made some positive noise in fall camp to date.

Cody Raymond is down at 5-9, but if the ball is anywhere in the same area code, he can catch it. Skyler Ridley is a tweener. He is listed at 6-0, but has made himself visible because of his consistency catching the ball.

There is a place for small receivers, even in the NFL. You can still be small and be a playmaker. Just ask Steve Smith of Carolina and Wes Welker of New England.

College is replete with smallish receivers who are good playmakers. That said, bigger receivers who can also make plays are more in demand and will make more money at the next level.

When it comes to BYU receivers and this season, we look for bigger to better in the playmaking and touchdown departments.

No 10's...Yet

When it comes to attractive women, I know a 10 when I see one.

When it comes to tight ends in the BYU offense, all are in the height range of 6-3 to 6-6. Richard Wilson is 6-3, Marcus Mathews is 6-4, Kaneakua Friel is 6-5, Michael Edmunds is 6-4, Stehly Reden is 6-4, Austin Holt is 6-4, Trevor Brown is 6-5 and Devin Mahina is 6-6.

Based on what I have witnessed and the production on the field dating back to last season and this fall camp, 6.3 to 6.6 is also about the score I would give any and all current BYU tight ends based on a 1-to-10 scale.

Something has to give and get better soon at tight end if Brandon Doman and the BYU offense is going to be better in the throwing game this season.

Even the infamous French figure skating judge of the Salt Lake Olympics a few years back can't make it better than it really is.

I actually think the tight end play for this season will eventually be good, but I also think that the tight end that eventually makes it happen will be a bigger wide receiver that will make the transition to tight end.

Bronco's Vocabulary a Little Vexing

As an apprentice senior citizen (one more year and I will be a journeyman), I admit to being old school, especially when it comes to football vocabulary.

Most old school football coaches I have heard in the past and the vast majority of current football coaches don't speak or talk like Bronco Mendenhall does, especially with the press.

With most coaches, you hear phrases like "snot bubbles", "rang his bell", "lit him up", and "knock him on his astrological sign"

In Bronco's eight years as head coach, his vocabulary has usually been more about position mastery, being trustworthy and executing at a high level.

Now, this fall he has taken it to a new level. Phrases like “practice healthy”, “delicate balance”, “get enough work without getting hurt”, “footwork and assignment worthy” are a little vexing to us old school guys.

Bronco has always been a little quirky in my opinion, especially when it comes to his public utterances, but on the field at the stadium or at the practice facility, he always was a coach who stressed his teams being physical.

We actually still think he does, but his newest vocabulary just doesn’t jive with his core beliefs as a defensive coach, which is still about knocking all opponents on their astrological Taurus and tushes.

In my opinion, his lexicon has always been one locker short of a full gym. He has never publicly sounded like a football coach, but this latest stuff is a prelude to either being a cutting edge coach or on the verge of a football catastrophe.

Despite the fact that football is a contact sport, I am okay with Bronco’s new non-contact vocabulary and verbiage, as long as he can eventually validate it the old fashion way. As Al Davis, the deceased Oakland Raider coach, general manager and owner, used to say, “Just win baby”.

Bronco has a very nice record when it comes to overall wins, but even those of us who wear blue-tinted goggles, recognize that his wins during the regular season against quality opponents are few and far between.

Winning big games validates any and all vocabularies. Mendenhall could start speaking Sudanese and it wouldn’t matter if he was regularly beating good teams.

The early test of his new vocabulary will be against Utah. They are a very, very physical football team and always hit at full tilt in their fall camp.

As stated earlier, Bronco’s newest vocabulary and methods in strength and conditioning, hitting less in camp, and an emphasis on nutrition will either turn out to be cutting edge or catastrophic. We will know in five weeks.

Just win big games baby and any and all verbiage is validated.

New BYU Campus?

You know about BYU-Provo. You have probably been to BYU-Idaho in Rexburg. How about BYU-Hawaii? Have any of you taken classes at BYU-Salt Lake Center?

The LDS Church as yet hasn’t officially announced its newest BYU campus, but Dave Rose has.

BYU-Lone Peak. It is located in Highland, Utah.

The only major offered by BYU at the North Utah County campus is basketball scholarships. Dave Rose already has his PhD from there. For Rose, it means **Piled Higher and Deeper** when it comes to BYU basketball recruiting.

It started with Jackson Emery. Then it was Tyler Haws. Throw in Josh Sharp and Nate Austin and the pipeline is beyond primed. It is pumping a steady flow of talented Division I basketball players to BYU.

The two most recent commits are Nick Emery and Eric Mica. Both will be seniors and will sign with BYU in November.

They are both rated nationally as consensus top 100 players by most basketball recruiting services. Consequently, ESPN now has BYU and Dave Rose rated with the No. 6 recruiting class in the nation.

If Rose can somehow reign in Jabari Parker, it would probably signal the death penalty for BYU basketball.

Not because BYU was cheating in its recruiting effort, but because they wouldn't have any fans left to watch them play. Getting Parker to sign on the dotted line would put 90-plus percent of BYU basketball fans into cardiac arrest.

The Lone Peak flywheel is still spinning. T.J. Haws is only a junior and also has committed to Rose and the Cougars. He will sign in November of 2013.

I still stand by what I wrote last year during basketball season and was roundly criticized for. T.J. Haws will be the best college basketball player to ever come out of Lone Peak H.S.

And the commit list continues to grow. Last month Rose offered Dalton Nixon a scholarship. The 6-7 Nixon will be a junior this year at Orem HS. He committed to Rose this weekend.

He is the son of former Cougar Kevin Nixon. His mom also played basketball for the Cougars.

He had offers from Utah, Utah State and San Francisco.

Television Timetable

BYU vs. Washington State

Thursday, Aug 30 at Provo

Kickoff: 8:15 pm Mountain Time

TV: ESPN

BYU vs. Weber State

Saturday, Sep 8 at Provo

Kickoff: 1:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. Utah

Saturday, Sep 15 at Salt Lake

Kickoff: 8:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: ESPN2

BYU vs. Boise State

Thursday, Sep 20 at Boise

Kickoff: 7:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: ESPN