

HB Arnett's



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Poignancy in Ponytails

I don't know a lot of the tactics of soccer. I know off sides when I see it, but am clueless when it comes to strategy and intricacies of the game.

I love the World Cup every four years because of the passion and nationalism of the game. I now have a crush on the NCAA's Women's College Cup.

Saturday night I saw major league passion and poignancy with BYU women's soccer and loved it.

I saw two teams, BYU and Marquette, literally leaving it all on the field. It truly was a do or die game for both squads.

I used to think kicking a game winning 42 yard field goal in football was pressure. It is nothing compared to the pressure of penalty kicks by five to eight women to determine whether you keep playing or go home.

BYU is still playing thanks to their 1-0 win over Marquette in a sweet sixteen matchup. The game went two overtimes, but had to be decided on penalty kicks. BYU came out on top 6-5 in that format.

I saw BYU's best player, Carlee Payne Holmoe, sobbing because she missed her penalty kick. I saw her freshmen teammates looking over in disbelief at the toughest player on the team sobbing. I saw those same freshmen stepping up to relieve the grief and drama by nailing their kicks.

Grown Men

I saw grown men (me), who used to think soccer was a peripheral sport at BYU, jumping out of their seat in the same manner they did when John Beck found Jonny Harline in the end zone a few years back in Salt Lake City.

I saw the game winner go to the back of the net off the foot of Kayla Varner. I saw the standing room only crowd rush the field.

They had no chance of getting there first when they were up against the athletic ability of the National League's Rookie of the Year. Bryce Harper got there first and looked like he was in a full sprint to snag a ball hit to the gap for the Washington Nationals.

It was just a fleeting glimpse on the television screen, but I would swear that it was Harper, the multi-million dollar bonus baby, in his grey knit cap, hugging and hoisting his girlfriend Varner in celebration.

I don't know who was announcing the game for BYUtv, but he is the best of the BYU bunch I have seen and heard before.

Applause and Boos

I applaud BYUtv for showing the game. I boo them, however, for hurriedly cutting away from the poignancy of one of BYU's greatest sports moments in the last two decades, to show us a contrived studio show about a very mediocre, mismanaged and mangled 6-5 football team.

You only get a few chances to document ecstasy and poignancy in BYU athletics. BYUtv blew it on this occasion.

For years I have wondered why grown men with good IQ's, good jobs, and good education in developed nations act like fools when it comes to *fútbol*.

I started to understand two World Cups ago. Last Thursday and Saturday night, I was almost as foolish and feverish as any English Premier League hooligan, without the booze and boorish behavior.

Football and basketball are the cash cows of Cougar sports, but when it comes to producing milk, I saw the cream rise to the top on Saturday night. It wasn't in the form of giants padded up or grunting in the low post.

It was in ponytails producing a poignant moment I won't forget for a long time.

UNC Dynasty

The memorable moments of last weekend in BYU women's soccer won't have time to quickly fade away. BYU now moves to the final eight and will host North Carolina, the perennial power of women's soccer, this Friday in Provo. The match is set to begin at 6 pm Mountain Time. No word yet from BYUtv on their broadcast plans, if any.

The winner of this match will advance to the Final Four the following week in San Diego.

All four regional No. 1 seeds have advanced to the final eight. Stanford, Penn State, BYU and Florida State will all host games this coming week to try and advance to the Final Four.

If BYU can get past North Carolina, they will face Stanford, the No. 1 ranked team in the country.

You can bet NCAA Women's Soccer officials will be cheering for the Cardinal. That is because the Final Four is set for Friday semi-finals and a Sunday championship game.

Television plans are already in place, but all will have to be moved and postponed to Monday if the Cougars get by the Cardinal. BYU won't play on Sunday and NCAA rules are in place to accommodate the Cougars No-Sunday-Play position.

Publicly the NCAA says nothing, but you can bet that if BYU-Stanford meets in a semi-final on Friday, Nov. 30, those NCAA officials will all secretly be rooting for the Palo Alto based school.

Of course that is all water coming down the river and yet to get under the bridge. Fighting off North Carolina has to happen first.

The Tar Heels have won 20 of the last 29 national titles and will be coming to Provo with a 13-5-2 record. BYU currently is at 21-1-1. UNC is coached by Anson Dorrance and BYU is coached by Jennifer Rockwool. Both are LDS.

We googled both and it was very interesting reading.

Time Isn't on Dave Rose's Side

Timing is everything and it couldn't be worse for Dave Rose.

The BYU head coach had to be hoping that his BYU basketball team would show well against national caliber competition last week in New York. He had to be hoping that a good showing in Brooklyn would parlay well with an official visit from Jabari Parker this coming weekend in Provo.

The Cougars showed up, but they didn't show well. Parker will also show up, but it will take some major explaining from Rose to Parker as to why BYU basketball got caught empty handed this season at point guard and why depth in the post is non existent.

Rose can show Parker the BYU recruiting and personnel board in his office and show him that the career ending injuries to Chris Collinsworth was devastating. He can show Parker that two actual low post players that are productive will be in the program next season. That would be Eric Mika and Luke Worthington, both of whom signed last Wednesday with BYU.

He can even give Parker the football roster and show him why Bronson Kaufusi will be a much needed stop gap measure for this season.

What he won't be able to explain is why Brandon Davies can't stay on the floor and play. The 6-9 senior has talent, but it is wasted sitting on the bench because of constant foul problems.

Rose has a chance to explain it all away to Parker. What he can't explain to Parker and the rest of us is how he got caught so short at point guard for this season and likely for at least next season also.

The Matt Carlino experiment is not working out. Rose is still publicly supportive of the sophomore point guard, but BYU took a two-by-four to the head last weekend in Brooklyn because there was absolutely no point guard production.

In BYU's two losses at the Coaches vs. Cancer Classic last week, Carlino was just 1-14 shooting the ball. BYU lost to Florida 88-70 and also was defeated by Notre Dame 78-68 in the tournament. BYU is now 2-2 on the year.

BYU will return home this week for two games in the Marriott Center. They will face UT-San Antonio on Wednesday and Cal State Northridge on Saturday.

Carlino will have better games and performances, but they will come at the hands of the Eastern New Mexico, Northern Arizona and the Cal State Northridge's of the schedule.

Check out the career of Carlino going back to high school. Against ordinary teams with ordinary guards, he looks good.

But just as soon as he is matched up with guards that are athletic, quick, fast and penetrators, Carlino thinks that he is just like those type of guards and tries to play like them. That doesn't work because he doesn't have those same athletic abilities.

The sooner he realizes the reality of his game and quits trying to be the next Jimmer or big time point guard, the sooner BYU will get back to being a better basketball team. The sooner he realizes he is only the third best player on the team and the third scoring option at best on this team, the sooner the point guard play for Rose will improve.

If that doesn't happen soon, then Rose is going to have to start shopping for a juco point guard to sign in the spring.

Cory Calvert isn't the long term answer to the point guard problem for BYU because he is leaving on an LDS mission after this season.

Nick Emery likes to have the ball in his hands, but he is two years away from playing because of LDS mission plans right out of high school. Yes, he did sign with the Cougars last week.

Kyle Collinworth can play a little point and will be back next year from missionary service in Russia, but he isn't the long term answer at that position either. Okay, we take that comment back.

Matthew Dellavedova does well for Saint Mary's and is not an exceptionally quick player, but he can penetrate to the basket with his size and craftiness. Maybe Collinworth can do the same next season.

To be a Dellavedova type player, Collinworth will have to greatly improve his outside shooting, however.

Meanwhile, the point guard options for the remainder of this year are slim to none for BYU unless Carlino has some sort of sudden mental makeover. At least that is how I currently see it.

The Brock Zylstra at point guard mistake of last season lasted just one game. Raul Delgado isn't the answer yet. Craig Cusick is consistent, but not a long term answer at the point.

The other option is to bench Carlino and go with Calvert for the remainder of the non-conference season in hopes that the experience will get him ready for WCC play.

I just don't see Rose doing that. He has seen enough glimpses of a good Carlino to continue holding out hope that Carlino can generate more consistency in his game and face the hard reality of knowing that he is not the next Jimmer Fredette.

Rose had better hope it happens soon, because his point guards options are getting thin.

If there has been a bright spot this season to date, it has to be the play of Tyler Haws. With Brandon Davies just a part-time player because he can't stay on the floor and with Carlino struggling, Haws has to carry the team.

He is doing just that with his two nice performances against Florida State (23 points) and Notre Dame (21 points).

Now if we could just get his brother and dad to join him on this team, things would really start to pop.

His brother, T.J. will be along in two years unless he opts to serve a mission coming out of high school. His dad who has to be in his 40's now, probably still would be an upgrade on the current point guard play.

Mendenhall and the Mendoza Line

Bronco Mendenhall has stated that one of his passions is organizational behavior.

I'm not sure if Mendenhall is a Major League baseball fan, but he could take a page from that league and incorporate it into his organizational thinking when it comes to BYU football.

It would be especially relevant now that BYU is 6-5 after a 20-14 loss to San Jose State last Saturday night and now totally irrelevant this season.

I am referring to the infamous "***Mendoza Line***".

According to Wikipedia, the **Mendoza Line** is an expression in baseball in the United States, derived from the name of shortstop Mario Mendoza, whose batting average is taken to define the threshold of incompetent hitting

The cutoff point is most often said to be .200, and, when a position player's batting average falls below that level, the player is said to be "below the Mendoza Line". This is often thought of as the offensive threshold below which a player's presence in Major League Baseball cannot be justified, regardless of his defensive abilities.

While this football season is over for all intents and purposes and all interest in BYU football exhausted, the only thing left to discuss is at what point can a quarterback's bad offensive play not be justified, regardless of his personality abilities and assets?

Call it the **Grit Graph**, the **Riley Rating** or the **Mario Mendenhall Line**.

At what point does a players grit, determination, hard work, high threshold to pain and all the other adjectives associated with the current BYU quarterback, become a detrimental factor to actually winning games?

At what point does lack of passing skill supersede all the other admirable qualities that have kept Riley Nelson at the offensive helm of this 2012 football team?

Apparently, that point hasn't been reached or determined by Mendenhall and his lack of a line in the sand has produced 4 losses that shouldn't have been. That's my opinion.

None of this matters now. The season is over and what showed so much promise has turned south and sour.

To be fair, not all of the problems can be laid at Riley Nelson's feet. There are six parts to this offensive football team; Coaching, Offensive Line, Tight Ends, Wide Receivers, Quarterback and Running Backs.

Cody Hoffman and Jamaal Williams did their part in the equation. It is my opinion that the other four pieces came up woefully short. You can decide for yourself why they all came up short, but they did and BYU is not a very good offensive football team because of it.

Now the focus of football will have to turn to fixing the problems before the start of next season and a brutal schedule.

The two most important places to start will be at quarterback where new faces will be in the mix and in coaching concepts on offense. It remains to be seen if new faces will be incorporated there.

That said, nothing can fix the problems until the guy in charge establishes his own **Mendenhall Line** for quarterback play and assistant coaches.

I can't take any credit for this BYU football Mendoza Line of thinking. I stole it from a subscriber and his email sent to me this morning. This guy is a former BYU football player and has his own thoughts on explaining what went wrong this season. I will protect his anonymity, so don't bother to call or email and ask who he is. I'll just call him Mario Mendoza.

Here is what he emailed:

HB:

I've been waiting with baited breath to hear the insights into our football team's sad failures this season. But I have not received Cougar Clicks or the Sportsline since Saturday. After the election and this week's football funk, you must be in a depressed state.

Isn't it sad that Brandon Doman learned the offense of Gary Crowton (whose chaotic and frenetic offense had no semblance to the sequential and systematic of Doug Scovil) and

Robert Anae (who was mostly tutored by Mike Leach, another "spread" offense guru). We have not had a Doug Scovil playbook since Norm Chow left.

Seeing the plays SJSU ran, I thought I saw glimpses of our old offense.

With the tools we have had this year, even with an "average" offense from the 80s or 90s, this team would have had at most 2 losses.

One of the great things missing for the last decade is a "king-maker" coach. Oh, sure, you can see they anointed Riley Nelson king, but a Doug Scovil was a master at making his king play well. This was through frequent confidence-boosting conversations and other communication. I do not see that happening between the QB position coach or the OC. In fact, the OC seems almost aloof and introverted. Maybe this is why they (the coaches) prefer to pick the most outwardly confident QB as their favorite.

But, when the favorite can't hit the proverbial barn with a football, you've gotta go to the bench. It's OK to put a team on the shoulders of Jimmer or Ainge, McMahon or Young, but to put the whole season on the weak arm of an injured QB makes no sense.

Do you remember the season that started with Giles, then Duva, then Nielsen? That was my freshman year. Those coaches knew how to pull the plug and didn't let their own pride get in the way of success.

I hope we can do that this off season.

Don't get me wrong. Bronco is the right head coach (or DC) for this team. He only has to have the dispassion that LaVell had in his first 15 years to go outside his staff to find a DC. After the National Championship, Lavell started going in-house for his assistants, which is easier, but was less productive. For example, it took Norm many years to be able to run the playbook, and he always got befuddled when he didn't have the right tools in every position. Scovil was able to "make-do" with some pieces that weren't perfect, and still "lit up the scoreboard."

Regards,

"Mario Mendoza"

FLUFF AND STUFF

The conference expansion flywheel is back spinning. Maryland's board of regents is voting today on whether to accept an invite from the Big Ten. Rutgers also has an invite.

It will be interesting to see if the restart of expansion will have any spin off consequences for BYU.

Last week BYU announces a home and home two game series in football with UNLV. Good. It's drivable and doable from accessibility and getting a win that will be much needed considering the step up in formidable competition in the future.

And hopefully, it will lead to a renewal of basketball games between the two schools. It is a natural because of Dave Rose and Dave Rice, the respective coaches of both schools.

Television Timetable

BYU vs. UT-San Antonio (*B-Ball*)

Wednesday, Nov 21 at Provo

Tipoff: 7:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. North Carolina (women's soccer)

Friday, Nov. 23 at Provo

Start: 6: pm Mountain Time

TV: Most likely BYUtv

BYU vs. New Mexico State (*F-Ball*)

Saturday, Nov. 24 at Las Cruces

Kickoff: 1:30 pm Mountain Time

TV: ESPN3 only (via internet)

BYU vs. Cal State Northridge (*B-Ball*)

Saturday, Nov 24 at Provo

Tipoff: 7:00 pm

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. Montana (*B-Ball*)

Wednesday, Nov 28 at Salt Lake City

Tipoff: 7:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: BYUtv