

HB Arnett's
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As a subscriber, you are allowed to access our new blog. You can view it by going to www.cougar-sportsline.blogspot.com

Just a reminder that we are now sending the newsletter via two separate email accounts to help solve distribution issues that many subscribers experienced last year. That means you may receive two identical letters. If that is the case, please just discard the extra.

Bourne, Bruce, Bruins and Bronco

We like a good movie, but usually like the sequels even more.

If we had our way, Jason Bourne would swim out from the East river and his latest movie be renamed Bourne Pen Ultimatum.

That means there is room for one more.

Bruce Willis and Sylvester Stallone never met a sequel they couldn't star in.

We never met a movie sequel we couldn't tolerate.

That pretty much sums up my impression of the BYU-UCLA sequel set for the Las Vegas Bowl Saturday night in Las Vegas.

Even if we don't like it, we should be able to tolerate it.

In the original, BYU had the lights of college football notoriety aimed right at them.

They were set for a box office and BCS bonanza. All they had to do was give a couple of more Cougar cameo appearances in the end zone and a few less cameo coughups on the turf and running the MWC table would have meant something.

This game does mean something for BYU and UCLA. For the Bruins, it gives the players a chance to prove that their interim coach, Dewayne Walker should have the job permanently.

Better Athletes

The Bruins still have better athletes overall than BYU and those athletes will be playing hard.

BYU still has the better quarterback in Max Hall and that negates the better athlete theory.

Where this game will be won or lost for BYU is with the over/under. We're not talking gambling lingo, but Harvey Unga verbiage.

It is still incredulous that in the first meeting, BYU's best offensive weapon only had eight touches of

the football against UCLA.

Unga had five carries for 28 yards and 3 catches for 43 yards.

Use it or lose it certainly applies again to this match up. If BYU's offensive brain trust chooses to not use Unga or if he is physically unable to be used, then BYU will again lose this game.

Even with good athletes, UCLA has struggled to be an efficient and effective offense.

That shouldn't change for this game. Quite frankly, their quarterback play has been ordinary at best. On the opposite end of the spectrum, BYU's quarterback play has been surprisingly good.

Current Season

Take Max Hall out of the current BYU season and the Cougars would still be in Provo instead of Las Vegas awaiting their third straight bowl game.

With Hall at the helm, BYU has shown some offensive firepower, but not enough scoring power. The Cougars have yet to play their best offensively. Hopefully that will occur this Saturday against the Bruins.

Meanwhile back to the over/under and Harvey Unga. The ground game will make or break the Cougars in this contest.

If BYU can't rush for at least 120 yards, they will lose. It is that simple.

If the Bruins can stop Unga and the rest of the BYU backs, they will get the win.

Football really is simple. This game will be decided by the BYU offensive line and the running game.

It will also be decided by the BYU offensive brain trust. With a full month to get ready for this game, we expect the UCLA defense to throttle the BYU run game early.

BYU coaches can't be afraid of that and go away from running the ball, but history shows that the Cougars sometimes panic if the ground game isn't productive early and quickly revert to their pass-only mode.

Offensive Balance

That won't cut it against UCLA. BYU has to have some balance offensively to win.

Our instincts tell us to take the Bruins and the points. The fact that UCLA is only a 4.5 point dog in this game which will basically be played on a BYU home field with the Cougars controlling the gate and attendance, says that the odds experts still respect a team with quarterback and injury problems a lot more than the casual BYU fans does.

We expect a very close game. The first time these two teams met in September we called it UCLA 31 BYU 17. We have now factored in the Bruins spotty quarterback play and running back injuries. We call this one UCLA 24 BYU 17.

HARVEY UNGA AND THE SETA SEQUEL

When you produce a good movie and it makes money and attracts patrons you start looking at a sequel.

If you are a football coach and you have a good running back that produces, makes plays, gains big yardage and can catch the ball out of the backfield, what do you do?

You immediately look for another back of the same caliber so you can have a sequel or replacement in case the original back gets hurt or needs some breathers during the remainder of his career.

If you are Bronco Mendenhall, your big movie of the year was Harvey Unga. Your sequel is Seta Pohauhau.

Can you say clone?

Seta Pohauhau is the closest thing to it. He is a 6-0, 215 pound running back from Aragon HS in the

San Francisco Bay area. He will sign with the Cougars this February.

The following article was written by John Reid of the *Palo Alto Daily News* after Pohahau was named the Daily News Player of the Year for 2007. It gives the reasons why Pohahau could very well be Harvey Unga, The Sequel.

Aragon running back/linebacker Seta Pohahau didn't hesitate on whether he prefers playing defense to offense or vice versa.

"I like playing defense better than playing offense," said the senior Pohahau, the Daily News Player of the Year for 2007.

That's quite a statement considering Pohahau rushed for 1,927 yards, scoring 21 touchdowns. On defense, Pohahau was a terror, registering double digits in sacks with 23 tackles-for-loss. This season was the first time that Pohahau, a three-year varsity player, had played on the defensive side of the ball for the Dons. Pohahau, who rushed for around 4,000 yards in his career at Aragon, is expected to play running back at BYU next year.

"He could play either side of the ball on Saturday's," Menlo School coach Mark Newton said of Pohahau. "He could play strong safety or weakside linebacker. He has a natural sense of the game. As a running back, he has great vision and power. Pohahau's one of the best high school players I have seen in years."

The 5-foot-11, 205-pound Pohahau is the second Dons player to be named Daily News player of the year in the past three years, joining Matangi Tonga, the 2005 honoree. Tonga's older brother, Manase, will be a senior running back at BYU next fall and was an all-time Aragon great himself.

"Seta compares very favorably with Manase," Aragon coach Steve Sell said. "In terms of being a dominant force on defense and offense, Seta and Manase definitely belong in the same sentence. Seta is a little bit quicker than Manase. When you combine Seta's speed, strength, quickness, lateral agility and great instincts, it makes for a great high school running back. He's deceptively powerful. He's a great kid and a pleasure to coach."

Sell related a story of a play when Pohahau carried the ball in the Dons' Central Coast Section Large School Division semifinal game against Menlo-Atherton.

"There was a player from M-A that was unblocked," Sell said. "There was a collision at the line of scrimmage. It turned out to be a 10-yard gain for Pohahau. There were a number of plays he ran during the season that went for big yards that had no business going for big yards. The great ones make plays on their own. He finished every run. He runs like a guy possessed and refuses to go down."

The CCS semifinal was Pohahau's final game as a Don as Aragon fell 41-28. Pohahau went out in style, rushing for 123 yards on 15 carries. He caught two short passes and turned them into touchdown receptions of 62 and 46 yards, leaving Bears defenders in his wake as he turned on the jets. Pohahau gained the bulk of his rushing yardage in the first half. That's mainly because he broke his left thumb while sacking M-A quarterback Troy McCabe early in the third period and was unable to carry the ball after that.

Pohahau, however, doesn't mind playing in pain. One of his favorite plays in his prep career occurred in a game against Terra Nova. That's when Aragon linebacker Ahmed Shehade and Pohahau collided.

"They ran a quarterback sneak and Ahmed and I went for the same guy," Pohahau said. "I came from the left side and he came from the right side. Ahmed hit me, and I cut my lip. That was fun."

One of Pohahau's many highlight reel runs was bittersweet, an electrifying 71-yard gallop in the Dons' 21-14 loss to Menlo-Atherton in the regular season. The play began at the Don's 2-yard line. However, Pohahau was stripped of the ball at the end of the run and fumbled with the Bears recovering. The loss helped end a four-year Peninsula Athletic League Bay Division reign by the Dons. Despite gaining 141 yards on the ground, Pohahau took the loss hard, standing stoically in M-A's west end zone for a long time after the game was done.

"Seta couldn't live without football," Sell said. "He loves the game that much. If he could play three

games a week, he would do it. You'd have to drag him off the field."

"I love football because you can hit somebody without getting in trouble," Pohaahau said. "I don't try to be physical, but if there's no other option, I'm as physical as I can be when I get the chance."

Pohahau took to ball and ran with it in his days at Aragon. This season, he proved that he could take down ball carriers, not just run them over.

SPEAKING OF TONGA

The article above mentioned that Matangi Tonga was the Player of the Year in 2005.

In case you haven't been following his post high school career, he played as freshman at BYU on the defensive line in 2006.

He was also charged with seven felonies for breaking into a series of apartments near BYU in late 2006 and early 2007. He was suspended from the football team and school.

Last month, he was sentenced by a 4th District Court judge in Provo to 26 months of probation and 90 days on an ankle monitor, for pleading guilty to four third-degree burglary felonies.

In a deal with prosecutors, the charges will be dropped to misdemeanors next year if he completes probation conditions and doesn't have any new criminal trouble.

During all that time, he has been enrolled at UVSC taking classes and staying on track with the NCAA requirement that players make progress towards graduation and making up some reported academic deficiencies incurred at BYU.

Bronco Mendenhall has stated that he is expecting Tonga to be back on the team and enrolled at BYU again in January.

That will be pretty good timing because by the time spring drills start, the 90 days of wearing the ankle bracelet will have expired.

SPEAKING OF SEQUELS, ARE YOU READY FOR BEN OLSON, PART II?

We all remember the hype surrounding Ben Olson don't we? He was the best LDS football prospect in the history of BYU football. He was a can't-miss, have-to-have recruit for BYU.

As a sophomore in high school, he was the guy that BYU needed to put them in the big time of college football.

We all know how that movie ended.

Brace yourself for the sequel from Sammamish.

This time the movie stars a sophomore sensation newcomer named Jake Heaps of Sammamish, WA. He is LDS, a can't-miss prospect and evidently somebody BYU, Bronco Mendenhall and everyone else thinks they can't live without.

BYU offered the 6-2, 180 pound quarterback from Skyline HS a scholarship last month.

What did Heaps do then? He led his Skyline Trojans to the Washington State 3A championship with a 42-35 win over O'Dea HS.

Oh yeah, he also picked up another scholarship offer as a sophomore from the Washington Huskies.

It certainly sounds like a Ben Olson re-run, but the ending has yet to be scripted at the college level.

The storyline is pretty good in high school, however. As a sophomore, Heaps threw for 2815 yards and 29 touchdowns, with only six interceptions.

In the title game, he had 287 yards while completing 19-of-30 passes. He threw two touchdown passes and had one first half pick. He also led his team on the go ahead score with 90 seconds to go by completing crucial passes with the game on the line.

He is already being touted as potentially being one of the all-time greatest high school quarterbacks

to come out of Washington.

Stop me if you have heard this before, but wasn't that exactly how the Ben Olson movie opened?

Okay, the Heaps kid is the real deal. He will be a great high school quarterback and has the potential to be very good and possibly great in college and beyond.

Here's the plot twist that is in every movie about can't-miss prospects. Nobody, including Bronco Mendenhall and Ty Willingham knows how Heaps or his movie will end.

BYU fans are hoping and betting that it will be a feel good ending for BYU.

That is how the previews looked with the Ben Olson movie and it certainly wasn't a feel good ending and it certainly turned out for BYU's football program to be a movie they are glad they missed.

PATIENCE PAYS OFF

It was four summers ago that we were sitting in the auxiliary gyms of Palo Verde, Las Vegas and Green Valley High Schools in Las Vegas watching Lee Cummond for the first time.

He was playing on an Arizona AAU traveling team and we were blown away by his skills.

It was no coincidence that everywhere we saw Cummond play that summer, we also saw Steve Cleveland, Dave Rose and John Wardenburg.

We were so impressed by what we saw that we remember writing in our newsletter that we had just seen the next Danny Ainge and that this guy was ticketed for stardom if he signed with the Cougars.

We may even have mentioned that in our opinion, he could also play beyond the college game.

The last two years, Cummond has certainly been a steady and valuable player for the BYU Cougars, but this past week he rekindled our review of him from a few years back.

Cummond was spectacular as a skinny prep player. This past week he was spectacular as a skinny college player.

How do we define spectacular?

How about his play against Pepperdine?

All he did in the 86-67 BYU win over the Waves was score 21 points on 10-12 shooting, pull down 6 rebounds, dish out 5 assists, block 4 shots and produce 2 steals in 36 minutes of play.

Earlier in the week in an 88-66 win over Lamar, Cummond was even better. He scored 27 points, had 10 rebounds, 8 assists, 1 block and 1 steal. His 27 points came on an 11-16 shooting performance.

That means in his last two games, Cummond has scored 48 points while shooting 75% from the floor.

What is even more amazing is that none of those two-game totals in points came from the free throw line where Cummond is even more deadly. He currently leads BYU in free throw shooting with a .870 percentage.

It is not a coincidence that the surge in scoring by Cummond has been accompanied by the benching of Jonathan Tavernari as a starter.

He was replaced by freshman Chris Collinsworth and came off the bench against Lamar and Pepperdine.

While Collinsworth gives the Cougars added rebounding power and better defense and size, the switch also meant fewer minutes and fewer shots for Tavernari and more for shots for Cummond.

Even with the taming of Tavernari with fewer minutes on the floor in the last two games, he still leads the team in shots taken.

After 11 games, he has taken 144 shots compared to 123 shots for Trent Plaisted and 105 shots for Cummond.

Cummond is leading the Cougars in shooting percentage with a .629 average. Plaisted is at .602 and Tavernari is shooting just .389. Collinsworth is currently shooting at a .387 clip.

Cummond is hands down, the Cougars most efficient scorer. Until Tavernari comes out of his current shooting slump, he is at the other end of the spectrum.

Despite playing only 25 and 22 minutes in the last two games as a non starter and despite an obvi-

ous conscious effort to involve teammates by passing up shots he normally would take, the sophomore Brazilian still managed to get up 12 attempts in each game. He made 4 of those 12 shots against both Lamar and Pepperdine.

When he comes out of his shooting funk, Tavernari will win some critical games for the Cougars. Until that happens, Dave Rose will have to deal with not only shooting inefficiency, but egos.

That is why they pay him the big bucks and signed him to a recent contract extension.

TELEVISION TIMETABLE

BYU vs. Southern Utah

Friday, Dec. 21 at Provo

Tipoff: 6:30 pm Mountain Time

TV: Mtn

BYU vs. UCLA

Saturday, Dec. 22 at Las Vegas

Kickoff: 6:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: ESPN

BYU vs. Boise State

Saturday, Dec. 29 at Boise

Tipoff: 7:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: KBYU and BYUTV

BYU vs. Loyola Marymount

Thursday, Jan. 2 at Provo

Tipoff: 7:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: Mtn