

HB Arnett's



Cougar Sportsline

"Lite"

hbarnett@fiber.net

801 372 0819

Vol. 38, Issue 25, - January 14, 2019

Is There a Place for Intellectual Curiosity for a BYU Sports Fan?

An article in the *Deseret News* last week was detailing an upcoming meeting between former *Washington Post* reporter Bob Woodward of Watergate fame and current Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Apostle, Elder D. Todd Christofferson. [Click here to read the article.](#)

Woodward and his colleague Carl Bernstein won a Pulitzer prize for their reporting on the early '70s scandal. At the same time, Elder Christofferson was then a law clerk for Judge John Sirica. The two of them, Sirica and Elder Christofferson, were the only two who had access to the secret tapes and listened to them. You probably know the rest of the story.

Here is the quote in the article that got my attention. "He's obviously a very thorough and intellectually curious individual who wants to get to the bottom of things and learn all he can about things," Elder Christofferson said. "That's an admirable trait."

BYU basketball is no "Watergate" but, in my opinion, it has stirred a little "intellectual curiosity" from Cougar fans the last couple of years.

Maybe we should define intellectual curiosity first. According to the dictionary, ***Intellectual curiosity*** is a term used to describe one's desire to invest time and energy into learning more about a person, place, thing or concept.

Some BYU sports synonyms for Intellectual Curiosity are Chat rooms, Message Boards, Sports Talk Radio, Twitter, Instagram and Church foyer conversations between two old men who remember who Ott Romney and Hal Kopp were and still care.

I freely admit that I am not an intellectual about any subject, especially BYU sports, but I am curious about how to become one.

I found this on the internet in referencing how to foster intellectual curiosity. It says there are 8 steps to increase your intellectual wellness. Here they are:

1 **Read** for fun. 2 **Debate** an issue with a friend but choose the viewpoint opposite the one you hold. 3 **Improve** your skills for studying and learning. 4 **Learn** a foreign language. 5 **Play** a game. 6 **Play** a musical instrument. 7 **Write** down your thoughts or journal frequently. 8 **Do** crossword or sudoku puzzles frequently.

Did I mention that I found these 8 steps on an Illinois State University webpage? [Click here](#) to see for yourself. Speaking of puzzles and intellectual curiosity, am I the only one who is still intellectually puzzled as to how BYU lost to Illinois State and Weber State in basketball earlier this year?

The step that caught my eye was No. 2: *Debate an issue with a friend but choose the viewpoint opposite the one you hold.*

For example. Politically, if you are a Democrat can you make a case for Republicans. And if you are a Republican, can you make a case for Democrats. Okay, that might be too hard because an intelligent and intellectual politician is the ultimate oxymoron.

More pertinent might be: Is Dave Rose a good basketball coach? Is Dave Rose not a good basketball coach? Is Kalani Sitake a good football coach? Is Kalani Sitake not a good football coach?

Ninety percent of BYU fans have an opinion on those two topics. You probably have one. I have one. If we are being intellectually honest, can we make a case for the opposite viewpoint from ours?

Tom Holmoe has already made his viewpoint known. He extended Dave Rose's current contract for another two years. He has not yet extended Kalani Sitake's current contract. Pick a side and debate that one.

Here's my intellectual input. It's one I have espoused for decades. *It's the players, not the coaches.*

In my opinion, BYU athletics will only be as good as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints demographics will allow. The bigger and broader The Church grows, the bigger and broader the only legitimate and consistent recruiting base of BYU athletics is.

Yes, BYU recruits and signs non-church members, but they are few and far between. A BYU alum and non-Church member playing in the professional ranks is rare. In the NFL there 10 former BYU football players currently on rosters. They include Ziggy Ansah, Michael Davis, John Denney, Taysom Hill, Bronson Kaufusi, Tejan Koroma, Daniel Sorensen, Kyle Van Noy, Fred Warner and Jamaal Williams.

Davis and Williams are non-Church members. That makes it 80 percent for the Church and BYU football.

In basketball, there is no BYU player currently in the NBA. The closest is Kyle Collinsworth and he is currently in the “G” league playing for Toronto.

If you go back and look at BYU’s best teams and even those that made NCAA post-season appearances, they were all Church loaded with players. Here’s a thought. Maybe the Church players Dave Rose now has aren’t as good as the Church players he used to have.

In football, it’s also all about players. If you don’t believe that, you didn’t watch the Alabama-Clemson national title game.

Cougar football is not about coaching. It is also about Church players. The more and better members of the Church you can get and recruit, the better your team will be out of necessity because you aren’t going to ever sign big time non-Church recruits.

Yeah, but what about women and BYU sports. How do you explain the success women’s sports like volleyball, softball, soccer has achieved?

Country Clubs.

Those three sports are sparse on minorities because they require money to get good. You must be able to travel, play club sports and afford the cost. BYU reaps the rewards because of that criteria in women’s sports.

In football, it is subsidized by school districts and tax payers. Basketball is also a club sport, but it is subsidized by shoe companies. If you are good enough, you can play. Not so, with the “country club” sports”. It takes money to play.

Here’s my view on BYU football and basketball. If there are enough good Church member players available, even Nancy Pelosi or Donald Trump could coach them, and BYU would be good. It not coaching, it’s players who are members of the Church that sponsors the university.

BYU just needs to find a way “to build a wall” around those Church member players and everything else will work out.

Greatest Public Relation Tool Ever for Coaches

When the NCAA came up with legislation to allow players to transfer to another school without approval from their previous coach, it was a public relation boon for both player and coach.

It's called the Transfer Portal, either as a transfer or a graduate transfer.

Before that it was called pulling scholarships.

Not renewing scholarships is part of the NCAA sports scene. In most cases it is done because of scholarship numbers and lack of talent of the player from whom the scholarship is being pulled.

Now instead of pulling a scholarship in the hopes you can use it on another more talented player, both the coach and player can save face by saying that the player has put his name on the transfer portal and will play elsewhere.

If you have followed the tweets of those moving to other schools, both coaches and players get a chance to have a graceful exit and express glowing words about the experience both had while at the previous school.

Maybe a few of those expressions are legitimate, but most are a face-saving way to say that the coach is pulling the scholarship.

For the player, he has also announced that he is available. In most cases, if he is on the portal, it means he will be transferring to a school with less talent where he can finally play.

Here is a list of BYU's current Transfer Portal players.

Tevita Mouniga DL
Jacob Jimenez, OL
Christian Folau, LB
Riley Burt, RB
Akile Davis, WR
Isaiah Armstrong, DB
Wayne Kirby, DL

BYU COACH ON TRANSFER PORTAL?

It looks like Ryan Pugh's tenure as offensive line coach at BYU is a one-and-done deal. There are multiple reports that Pugh is leaving BYU to take over as offensive coordinator at Troy.

Here are several stories on the subject. Click to view.

<https://www.sltrib.com/sports/byu-cougars/2019/01/14/byu-offensive-line-coach/>

https://www.heraldextra.com/sports/college/byu/football/byu-football-might-have-first-coaching-shake-up-pugh-rumored/article_a5c55e31-4520-54c1-b5db-5353558a914b.html

<https://www.deseretnews.com/article/900050551/report-byu-offensive-line-coach-ryan-pugh-moving-on-to-troy-as-offensive-coordinator.html>



BYU and Utah Extend Football Series

Television Timetable

BYU vs. Pepperdine (M Basketball)

Thursday, January 17 at Malibu

Tipoff: 9:00 pm MST

TV: ESPNU

BYU vs. San Francisco (M Basketball)

Saturday, January 19 at San Francisco

Tipoff: 9:00 pm MST

TV: TheW.tv

BYU vs. Gonzaga (W Basketball)

Thursday, January 17 at Provo

Tipoff: 7:00 pm MST

TV: BYUtv

BYU vs. Portland (W Basketball)

Saturday, January 19 at Provo

Tipoff: 7:00 pm MST

TV: BYUtv