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Basketball Recruiting

In a radio interview last week, Mark Pope, a BYU assistant basketball coach, said that the coaching staff was very excited about their team for next season.

He also said that the Cougars are recruiting a couple of guys who can help them at the four spot next year. That screams junior college to us.

If BYU does indeed bring in another four from either the high school or most likely the juco ranks, it also says tons about what the feeling is about what is currently on the roster.

If Chris Collinsworth was healthy, there is no way that we see BYU beating the bushes for a juco four man. If Collinsworth somehow does get healthy and can play next season, that would be a bonus, but with BYU actively recruiting another four to sign this month, it sounds like they are taking out added insurance against Collinsworth's knee.

It also is a pretty good indicator that the staff doesn't think that Nate Austin can consistently play the four either...at least not at this point in his Cougar career. BYU looking for another juco front court player also says that they are not totally sold on the status of Stephen Rogers' knee or his consistent production value.

Again, coaches have not said that, but in my opinion, actions speak much louder than words.

If anything, it appears to us that any minutes that Rogers gets next season will have to come at the three spot. That looks like it will be minimal time on the court with the return of Tyler Haws from his LDS mission. Haws should see most of the action next season at that spot.

It was "Deep Throat" who told Woodward and Bernstein to follow the money. In BYU's junior college recruiting cases, it involves following the connections and history.

Since Steve Cleveland and Dave Rose arrived on campus, they have brought in some productive juco players. Most of them came from a very limited pipeline.

Cleveland brought in some guys from Fresno City College where he coached previously to coaching

at BYU. His best get was Terrell Lyday. He is still cashing checks playing overseas. He recently signed a two year extension with UNICS Kazan, a Russian team.

Cleveland and Rose also brought in some local jucos in Trent Whiting and Sam Burgess of Snow College, Ben Murdock and Kevin Woodbury of Dixie and Travis Hansen of UVSC.

When it came to out of state juco signees, BYU relied on the Brazilian connections of former assistant coach and director of basketball operations, Walter Roess. He delivered Raphael Araujo and Fernando Malaman from Arizona Western and Luis Lemes from Eastern Oklahoma.

Keena Young came from South Plains JC in Texas and Rashaun Broadus was from Western Nebraska. Stephen Rogers came from Mesa CC in Arizona, but the Cougars had a bead on him from his high school days at Mountain View HS in Mesa and through his career at University of San Diego, ASU and MCC.

Programs like BYU don't automatically start recruiting juco players from programs where they have no connections. Those connections are with coaches with whom BYU has a history or with players who have an LDS connection.

If you are looking for possibilities of finding a four man, you go back to proven connections.

Steve Green is still the coach at South Plains. His team just won the NJCAA national title. Indian Hills Community College of Iowa also made the tournament.

Indian Hills is currently coached by Barret Peery. He was the runner up for the Southern Utah head coach vacancy. He was also the head coach at College of Southern Idaho and an assistant coach under Jim Boylen at Utah. He is LDS.

His assistant coach is John Wardenburg, the former assistant coach at BYU.

BYU is batting .500 with Western Nebraska in Scottsbluff. A few years back, they tried to recruit Joao Batista, but he went to Gonzaga. They tried last year with Hauns Brereton, who is LDS, but he opted for Hawaii. They were successful with Rashaun Broadus and will sign Raul Delgado this month. Both were and are guards. The last BYU player to come out of the juco ranks in California was Lamont Morgan, Jr.

BYU has always tried to recruit College of Southern Idaho, but have been shut out there. They always look at Arizona Western and may be looking at Otero JC from La Junta, CO. Otero also made it to the NJCAA tournament and BYU had some looks at that team while scouting Western Nebraska. They are in the same region.

Lemes' old school, Eastern Oklahoma, also participated in the NJCAA tournament this year. So did College of Southern Idaho.

If BYU is looking for a juco, the chances are good that he will likely come from these schools because that is where BYU has connections.

RECRUITING RIDDLE

Here are a couple of philosophical questions to ponder.

If a tree falls in a forest and no one is there to hear it, does it make any noise?

If Jabari Parker is in Provo and Salt Lake to visit his grandparents and participate in General Conference and Dave Rose and his staff are in New Orleans at the Final Four, does Parker make any noise?

The answers are:

(1) A tree making noise in a forest depends on whether or not it fell voluntarily or was the victim of a chain saw randomly falling from a passing Fed Ex plane.

(2) Yes, he makes big noise.

Parker, the premier prep player in the nation from Simeon Career Academy in Chicago, was in Salt Lake and Provo this past weekend.

He was accompanied by his older brother Christian. Both were here for a spring break trip and to visit family. Parker's grandparents on his mother's side reportedly live in Salt Lake.

He was also here to attend LDS General Conference. Did we mention that the only hope BYU has is that he is active LDS?

The noise by Parker and his Provo appearance was generated by tweets from BYU fans that saw Parker with his brother and cousin Harvey Unga making appearances at some local companies in Utah County. He was also seen participating in a pickup game of basketball at the Richards PE building.

The Parker brothers also made noise while in town with an appearance on a local internet radio show called "Sistas in Zion".

Both brothers presented themselves well. Christian is well traveled. He played one year at BYU-Hawaii, served an LDS mission in Atlanta, resurfaced for a season at College of Southern Idaho in Twin Falls and then got a job on the coaching staff at Tacoma Community College in Washington.

He is bidding his time to join Lorenzo Romar's staff at UW in some capacity. Romar and Sonny Parker, the father of Christian and Jabari go way back and are good friends. Both played together in the NBA.

When asked by a caller on the show what BYU's chances of landing him are, Jabari graciously would only say that the Cougars were a contender.

We will say not so graciously that so is Kentucky, Kansas, Duke, North Carolina, Michigan State and every other big time program in the nation.

Let's be real here. BYU's chances are slim and slight. Of course, that also describes what the Egyptians said about Moses at the Red Sea. We know how that turned out.

In our opinion, it appears it will take some Providential parting for Parker to end up playing basketball

in Provo.

That is our opinion, but here is what we know for sure would happen if Parker in Provo becomes reality.

Remember Jimmer mania from last year? The positive press coverage for BYU and the LDS Church was a public relations bonanza.

Should Parker pick Provo, his story and the press coverage by the nation's sports writers would make Jimmer mania look like a two inch school board meeting story in the Provo Herald by comparison.

Parker is that big and would be a big boost to BYU on the court and in the news.

If we were making book on Parker and his college choice, we would make Kentucky a clear 2-1 favorite to land the 6-8 junior who has said he will make his decision this fall before his senior year begins at Simeon.

While some BYU basketball fans were expressing glee that Parker was in town last week in Provo, Kentucky fans were probably pointing out that the Wildcats were all in New Orleans for the Final Four.

The most interesting thing we heard Parker say in his radio show appearance with his brother was his response to a caller's question about where he was going to college.

Parker simply said that he hasn't made a decision, but that he would be doing a lot of fasting and praying and that a Patriarch would be involved in the decision making process.

This kid might be a Moses in the making. As a teenager, if his decision making process involves what he said it would, we can't begrudge his personal decision regardless if he ends up at Kentucky, North Carolina, Illinois, Kansas, BYU or even Bemidji State.

If Parker chooses the Beavers of Bemidji State, I will be moving to Minnesota to start a newsletter. I am already working on the masthead. It will be HB Arnett's Beaver Bylines.

I won't be moving to Kansas. Jake Heaps beat me to it. And I won't be moving to Kentucky because all of the good entrepreneurial ideas have already been taken there.

In case you didn't know, the tooth brush was invented in Kentucky. If it had been invented anywhere else, it would have been called the teeth brush.

Rest assured, before I wrote this I checked the data base to see if I have any subscribers in Kentucky. I don't and am now assured that I never will.

I don't expect to be moving to Bemidji and I don't expect to be writing the headline: *Parker, Provo and Providential*, but after 30 plus years of doing this, nothing would surprise me now, even when it comes to Jabari Parker and BYU basketball.

SPRING SUMMARY

Men's Volleyball...The BYU Cougars swept two matches from Cal State Northridge in Provo last weekend. The wins move BYU into first place in the MPSF standings with a 16-4 league record and a 20-5 overall mark.

BYU is assured of a quarterfinal spot in the MPSF tournament which will be held April 21-28. The MPSF champion and Automatic NCAA tournament Automatic Qualifier is determined at the tournament.

The Cougars will travel this weekend to UCLA to face the Bruins in Los Angeles.

Women's Softball...The Cougars lost two games on the road last Friday at Fresno State. A third contest was rained out on Saturday. Fresno took a 3-1 win over BYU in the opening game of a doubleheader and then came back to eke out a 10-9 victory in the night cap.

BYU is now 21-10 on the year and 3-2 in WAC play. They will face Southern Utah at home on Tuesday and Hawaii also in Provo in a three-game series on Friday and Saturday.

The game against SUU will be televised by BYUtv and the Saturday double header against Hawaii will also be televised via BYUtv.

Baseball...The Cougars lost two of three games to Nevada last weekend in Reno. BYU is now 11-11 on the year and still 4-2 in WCC play.

The Cougars will travel to Salt Lake City on Tuesday to face Utah in a non-conference contest and then return home for a three game WCC series in Provo against Loyola Marymount. Single games will be played on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The Thursday and Friday games will be televised live by BYUtv.

Rugby...BYU Rugby defeated Arizona 80-8 last Saturday night in Provo. The Cougars are now 11-0 on the year and 5-0 in conference action.

They will host Utah in Provo this coming Saturday at 1 p.m.