

Senior Thesis Internship Project:

Deseret Digital Media Sports

Chanel Barnes

Southern Utah University

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Deseret Digital Media Sports Internship

I spent years frustrated with the lack of women in athletic professions, and from my own personal stereotype, I figured the lack of female presence was a result of men keeping it a man's world and living by the stereotype that women don't know the first thing about sports. However, heading into my internship at Deseret Digital Media with that mentality—and the determination to break the stereotype—I quickly realized I had it all wrong. Growing up as a female athlete, I can't think of a single time there was a female reporter waiting outside of the locker-room, and I only saw a handful of female reporters on ESPN throughout my youth. After spending six months in the sports journalist trenches, learning the ins and outs of sports media, I learned that the deficiency of women is mostly attributed to women's lack of interest in sports professions—not that it was intentionally a man's world.

As always, there are exceptions. There are times that sports companies may overlook females assuming they have an extreme lack of sports knowledge and they can't make it under pressure-packed situations. However, after discussing the topic with Aaron Morton, the sports editor at Deseret Digital Media, he said he always wants more females on the team, but there is a lack of female applications. Of the 26 applicants for last fall's Deseret Digital Media (DDM) sports internship, only six of those applicants were female. And according to Morton, that's a much higher fraction of female applicants than usual.

The application process was rigorous. I applied for the internship back in the summer of 2014—no luck. I then swallowed my pride and applied for the internship again in the summer of 2015. After sending in a cover letter, resume, and a handful of writing samples, I was called in for an interview. The night before the interview, I emailed around 7:00 p.m. to write an article

about whether or not I thought the BYU had a shot at joining the Big 12. I didn't have a clue. I was up all night researching and writing and researching and writing to put together my best work. After finishing the article around 3:00 a.m., my alarm went off a short two hours later to make the drive from Southern Utah to Salt Lake City. As I sat in the lobby of KSL/Deseret News in downtown SLC, I was a nervous wreck. This was it. This was the internship I'd had my eyes on for years. This was my make it or break it opportunity. My palms were sweaty, and due to my professional insecurities at the time, I was certain I was going to blow the interview. Morton rescued me from my overthinking just a few minutes later and took me into a conference room on the top floor with a couple of big-time Deseret News reporters. At that point, I wondered whether I was interviewing for the Deseret News editor-in-chief position or my part-time, five-month internship. I managed to pull myself together and nail the interview. I was feeling like a million bucks when I walked out of the building. But I then didn't hear back from D-News for two weeks. It was over.

I was at a family reunion in the middle-of-nowhere, Idaho, mourning in my own self-pity, having no idea what my future would hold, when I received a call from Morton to offer me the internship. You would have thought I'd won the lottery. I was ecstatic. A short few weeks later, I was through that same sweaty-palm lobby—this time, as an intern.

Just a few weeks into the internship, I couldn't believe how much I had learned. I was given a great amount of responsibility, I was put in situations that were way out of my pay-grade, I was criticized and critiqued on my articles, I was put on air, and I was interviewing the top coaches and athletes in Utah. My brain and heart were ready to explode. And aside from the nitty-gritty work experiences, I had an inside look on something that interests and fascinates me more than anything—women in sports.

As time went on in the internship, and as I was immersed in the sports journalism atmosphere, a few other roadblocks linked with the lack of women in the career field came to my attention. After the realization that there was a lack of interest in women, I wondered *why*? And after spending six months drowning in that world, I understood *why*. It's a tough gig. From the outside, it's "the dream." Getting paid to watch sports is just living the dream, right? Sure, it has its perks. But with the perks come a lot of trials. One of those trials being the brutal work schedule, which comes with a lot of deadlines, a lot of long nights, a lot of night and a lot of weekend shifts. The long, rigorous work hours run parallel with passion. It's a career path full of give-and-take. If you're passionate enough about sports journalism to sacrifice a life outside of work, then the tradeoff is worth it. And in my experience, that tradeoff comes much easier to males than females. Along with the passion (or lack thereof) and the work schedule is the third trial: criticism. There's a lot of responsibility that comes with being a sports journalist. On the one hand, there always seems to be an angry editor that is down your throat for every wrong move you make. That just comes with the job. On the flipside of the editor come the furious coaches and players. Interviewing a player after a tough loss can be a challenge. And dealing with a coach calling the sports editor griping about a "wrong quote" or a "bias article" can be a lot to deal with. Women are more sensitive creatures, and the harsh criticism isn't something women typically volunteer for, so they tend to avoid the career path altogether.

There was a great deal of reduction throughout my six months at DDM. I thought I had it all figured out; I didn't have anything figured out. Along with gaining a better understanding of women in the field, I had experiences that are once in a lifetime. Those experiences molded my professional myself leaps and bounds ahead of where I was before. I will go into greater detail on those experiences in the "Internship Experiences" section of this paper.

Literature Review

Women in the sports world have been a central theme for many studies relating to sports over recent years. The die-hard male sports junkies more than outweigh the die-hard female sports junkies. Sure, there are times it is a gender issue. However, through my research and internship experiences, I hope to point out that it isn't just a gender issue. I will highlight the lack of women in the sports world isn't necessarily because women aren't adequate or because it is a sexist profession, but that because the profession isn't commonly desired among women. Along with the lack of desire, I will explain *why* this profession isn't desired among women.

Clifton (2012) blames early prejudices for the lack of women in sportswriting and sportcasting. Sure, Title IX provides equal opportunity, but the discriminations women faced historically certainly molded certain stereotypes relating to sports that carry through today and affect everyone. Women are discouraged and intimidated to think twice about a career in athletics because they never saw it as an option. There are more women today than there ever have been in sports media, but equality is still a distant dream. M. Hardin explained that many of the everyday work experiences and factors of women might discourage them from continuing in sports media careers. This links with the harsh criticism women receive in the sports media workplace and can't seem to push through. Although sports media careers for women have recently increased, women in the sports media career still face a patriarchal environment that discourages them from pursuing long-term tenure.

Through analyzing my internship with Deseret Digital Media Sports, I used the anticipatory socialization approach. According to Fredric M. Jablin (2001), the way new organizational recruits communicate is through anticipatory socialization. This "provides them (recruits) with certain expectations (often of questionable accuracy) of the communication

characteristics of their occupations and work environments” (p. 733). Jablin goes on to say, “This discussion is followed by an examination of the organizational assimilation process, and in particular, how people become socialized into the communication cultures of organizations and concomitantly attempt to change these environments to better suit their needs and goals” (p. 733). As recruits begin work at a new organization, it is natural to have preconceived expectations. This was certainly prevalent as I anticipated my experience at DDM sports.

Running nearly parallel with the anticipatory socialization approach is the organizational entry approach. This approach is described “as a life-span developmental process and thus began by ‘tracing’ from childhood through employment in one’s ‘chosen’ vocation the development of an individual’s work career” (p. 733). Preconceived expectations are not pulled out of the blue; rather they are conceptions that were developed based on our upbringing and experiences. My conceptions of *why* women were not in the sports profession was based on growing up and realizing and recognizing very few women in those respective sports broadcasting and journalism positions.

Through applying the anticipatory socialization and the organizational entry approach, I was able to analyze my experience as a woman in the sports profession and differentiate my preconceived expectations with reality, as well as decipher the reality and truth regarding why there is such a lack of women in the profession.

According to Ferguson (1984), “Real social change comes about when people think and live differently. Feminist discourse and feminist practice offer the linguistic and structural space in which it is possible to think, live, work, and love differently” (p. 212). Unfortunately, there isn’t a quick fix or easy change to the concern of women in college athletics. This is going to

require a complete social change. Daniels, Spiker, and Papa (1984) point out that due to the lack of women in many professions, the organizational benefits of their diverse perspectives are not realized” (p. 73). After spending time in a respective field and watching the world change and progress, I believe we will see this change, but unfortunately, we must be patient.

Internship Experiences

“Learning by fire” is the method used at DDM. On my first assignment, I was assigned to cover the Real Salt Lake vs. Portland Timbers professional soccer game. I had two assignments that night. My first assignment was a player grade article. I was told to watch the players closely, grade them on a 1-10, and explain why I chose that number. My second assignment of the night was a sidebar article, which is basically writing about anything you want. That sounds easy, but it’s 10 times harder than an assigned article. That first night on the job in Rio Tinto Stadium was absolutely surreal. Between writing two articles on a sport I wasn’t very familiar with to competing with other journalists from around the country to interviewing professional athletes in their respective locker rooms, it was one of the most intimidating—but also most incredible—experiences of my life. And it was hands down—up to that point—the most incredible professional experiences I had had.

That was the learning process at DDM: go and figure it out. There were times that I absolutely loathed that learning process, but in retrospect, it was the best way to learn. As a six-month intern, they don’t have time to sit around for a month or two and hold your hand. The turnaround is too quick. It’s get up, get out, and write. A few weeks later I was up in Logan, Utah covering the Aggies. By that point, I was ready to roll. It was still an extremely intimidating atmosphere, but I had the confidence, work ethic, and skills to get the job done. And get it done well.

My primary responsibility was covering the Utah State Aggie football program. I wrote an average of four or five articles every week recapping and previewing games, position breakdowns, sidebars, etc. Along with those responsibilities, I was assigned random,

miscellaneous events like high school football, other collegiate football games, RSL games, and even a handful of NBA games. As an NBA junkie, those games were hands-down the highlights of my time at DDM.

For my first Jazz game (see appendix pg. 10), I covered the Jazz vs. Clippers game in the Vivint SmartHome Arena on December 26, 2015. Before the game, I was told I had 15 minutes to interview the Clippers in their locker room. I walked into their locker room and came face-to-face with some of my favorite players in the league. I swung the door open and made immediate eye contact with Chris Paul. I then looked to my left and made eye contact with one of my favorite players in the league, DeAndre Jordan. To my right, Jamal Crawford and Austin Rivers. After interviewing the players, I took my seat with the rest of the media in the lower bowl of the arena soaking in every minute. I wasn't able to interview Jordan before the game, so I was determined to interview him afterwards. Following the game, Jordan was nowhere to be found. As the media were rounding up their interviews, Jordan lingered in. As the 6'11" center was lacing up his shoes, he looked at me and said, "Do you like my shoes?" I responded, "I love your shoes." He said, "Don't lie to me." I responded, "I don't lie." To which he said, "Now I know you're lying." Jordan, the rest of the media, and I laughed it off before I asked Jordan, "Do you like my shoes?" Jordan looked at my shoes before looking at me in the eyes and said. "Nah." There was an awkward silence before he said, "Just messing, I love your shoes." Such a simple interaction, but when it's one of your favorite players in the league, and one you've watched closely for years, it's so much more than an interaction. It's a life highlight.

Along with a lot of the highlights of my internships (Real games and Jazz games), were a lot of nights doing what was called "manning the desk." I held this glorious responsibility three to four nights per week in extensive eight-hour shifts. While I was manning the desk, our other

reporters were out covering events, sending them in, and I was responsible to post them on DeseretNews.com and post on social media. Additionally, responsibilities included editing articles, creating headlines and captions, keeping an eye on the flow and content, strategically timing and posting articles, interacting with followers and readers, and much, much more. When I was first told about these long, late shifts, I figured I was going to have a lot of down time. Time to grab a nice dinner, read a book, play basketball and eat treats in the break room, etc. I couldn't have been more wrong. I barely had time to breath. The pace was extremely fast and there was a lot of responsibility for one person, but it did make the shifts go by incredible fast, and in retrospect, I learned a lot over those late, long shifts.

I learned how to work quickly and under pressure as the turnaround for articles submitted to posting was often within the span of minutes. I learned how to problem solve, as I was the only person in the office to assure things got done. Most importantly, I learned to tap into my creativity and write, write, write. I'm extremely grateful for the opportunity I had every day to be creative, as it has helped me every single day since my internship concluded—in and out of the work place.

From the outside, it all looks easy. Getting paid to go to a sporting event and write an article or two and maybe take some video. It was hard. It was scary. It was intense. But it was all so rewarding and worth it. I will utilize skills learned in those experiences throughout the rest of my professional career.

There will soon come a time where women have a strong desire to enter the sports profession or any other male dominant career path. However, this is going to demand a culture shift, and that is going to take time. Daniels, Spiker, and Papa point out that feminist perspectives

have a lot to offer, and the majority of organizations are not utilizing this asset. “One way to promote creativity and innovation is to bring people together who have different ways of viewing the world. The perspectives of women and minority group members are often unique because of different socialization experiences that shape their world views (pg. 73).

Conclusions

The rigorous hours, the long nights, the nerve-racking situations, and the deadlines—they were all worth it because the passion was there. With that being said, following my internship, I realized that being a sports journalist wasn't my dream gig, and I came to a point that I was okay with that. If there is one thing I learned and I wish others would understand, it would be that—although it is certainly the case in some situations—the lack of women in professions is not always because of a sexist or gender bias organization, rather there is a lack of women with the confidence and desire to pursue careers in respective fields. This is something that I believe will come with time, as more and more women are empowered. In time, as Daniels, Spiker, and Papa articulate, the value of women in the workforce will be prevalent. “To increase the pool of creative and innovative ideas within organizations, managers must empower members whose views have typically been silences and include their diverse perspectives in all important forms of decision making” (pg. 73). To reiterate one last time, women bring a unique and different perspective to the table. That perspective will become more noticed, valued, and utilized with a real social change.

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Appendix

Deseret News Published Articles

BYU drawing negative national attention for punching incidents 12,298

BYU basketball: Collinsworth sets NCAA career triple-double record after rebound recount

11,400

From the Jazz fans to the snowy mountains, the Clippers' favorite things about Utah

By: Chanel Barnes

December 27, 2015

SALT LAKE CITY — The Clippers haven't lost a game in Salt Lake since 2012, and Saturday night kept the streak alive as they fired up a comeback in the fourth quarter to down the Jazz 109-104.

Along with four years of victories in the Vivint Arena, there's more the Clippers love about Utah.

For CP3, it's the fans.

"Everybody's homers. Some arenas you go to, you have some fans that cheer for you," Chris Paul said. "But here, everybody's for the Jazz."

DeAndre Jordan is all about Salt Lake's downtown Japanese steakhouse.

"They've got a Benihana close to the hotel," Jordan said. "And yesterday was Christmas, and there's snow here. So that's cool."

Clippers rookie Branden Dawson got a kick out of the Jazz Bear.

"The mascot climbing up the ladder with the make some noise sign. That was my favorite part," Dawson said. "I was kind of nervous for him, but he did it."

For both Austin Rivers and Wesley Johnson, the atmosphere in Salt Lake is something special.

“They have a great crowd here. They’re really rowdy and loud,” Rivers said. “This is actually one of my favorite places to play on the road.”

“The atmosphere. Playing in this arena with all the history here,” Johnson said. “That and the scenery. Looking out at all the mountains when you’re flying in, it’s a very scenic view.”

Born and raised in Seattle, Jamal Crawford loves coming to Utah for a breath of fresh air.

“The air is clean and crisp,” Crawford said. “I’m from Seattle, so I can appreciate something like that.”

Video: <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865644446/From-Jazz-fans-to-the-snowy-mountains-heres-the-Clippers-favorite-things-about-Utah.html>

A look at BYU's 14 head football coaches

By: Chanel Barnes

December 14, 2015

PROVO — Here is a look at BYU's 14 head football coaches.

Alvin Twitchell

He was the first head football coach at BYU, serving from 1922-1924.

The Cougars were beaten by a combined score of 137-3 in their first three games against Utah State, Utah and Colorado Mines — a 47-0 homecoming shellacking. BYU did manage one win that season, a 7-0 victory over Wyoming. Twitchell, who led the Cougars to a 5-13-1 record, also served as basketball coach.

C. J. Hart

C.J., also known as Charles, took over as BYU's second head football coach at the young age of 29. Hart ran the show from 1925-1927, finishing with a 6-12-2 record.

G. Ott Romney

Romney was the third head football coach at BYU, coaching there from 1928-36. His brother was E.L. "Dick" Romney, who Utah State's football stadium was named for. They are both distant relatives of former presidential candidate Mitt Romney. His record at BYU was 42-31-5, with his best season coming in 1932 with an 8-1 record. Montana State University named its first gymnasium on campus after him. Romney died in 1973 at the age of 80.

Eddie Kimball

Kimball served as BYU's head coach twice. The first time was from 1937 to 1941 and then again from 1946-48, taking time off to serve in the U.S. Army. In total, his Cougars finished with a 34-32-8 record. Heavily involved with the Cougars athletic department, he was also the athletic director from 1937-63 and was also the BYU head basketball coach from 1935-36 and from 1938-41. He was named Mountain States Conference Coach of the Year in 1938 and 1941. Kimball was inducted into the BYU Athletic Hall of Fame in 1975. He passed away in December 1990.

Floyd Millett

Floyd Millett was an assistant coach from 1937-41 before becoming the head coach for the 1942 season (the BYU did not play from 1943-45 due to World War II). While that 1942 team went just 2-5, the Cougars did beat Utah 12-7, the first-ever win over Utah. He was also BYU's athletic director from 1963-70. Inducted into the BYU Athletic Hall of Fame in 1976, Millett was also the head basketball coach from 1941-49. Millett passed away in June 2000.

Chick Atkinson

Atkinson coached at BYU from 1949-55. He had one winless season and two one-win seasons, compiling a 18-49-3 record. He did tie Utah in 1950. He has a lot of ties to the Idaho, playing for the Idaho State Bengals in college and coaching at three Idaho high schools. Atkinson died in 1962.

Hal Kopp

Kopp was the only head coach in BYU history that was not LDS. He was the head coach for the Cougars 1956-58, finishing just shy of a winning record, 13-14-3. Kopp led the Cougars to a second-place Mountain States Conference finish in 1957 with a 5-3-2 record. Prior to BYU he was the head coach at Rhode Island. He was also an assistant coach at Yale, Harvard, Connecticut, Brown and Northeastern. He did take a break from coaching to serve in World War II and the Korean War. Kopp went on to become the head coach at Bentley College. He died in 1998.

Tally Stevens

Tally Stevens worked as the head coach from 1959-60, going 6-15. Prior to that he was an assistant coach at BYU and the head coach at East and Morgan high schools. After he left BYU he owned Stevens and Brown Sporting Goods. Stevens died in August 1995.

Hal Mitchell

The former UCLA and New York Giants offensive lineman coached the Cougars for three seasons in the '60s). His best season was 1962, where his Cougars finished the WAC tied for second place.

He coached the Cougars from 1961-63, compiling an 8-22 record.

Tommy Hudspeth

Hudspeth was BYU's head coach from 1964 to 1971, compiling a nearly-.500 record of 39-42-1. The highlight of his career at BYU was winning the WAC championship in 1965 — the school's first conference title. Prior to coaching at BYU he was an assistant coach at Oklahoma high

schools and for the Calgary Stampeders of the Canadian Football League. Upon leaving BYU he went on to become the head coach at UTEP and also for the Detroit Lions of the NFL and Toronto Argonauts of the CFL. Hudspeth also worked behind the scenes for the Detroit Lions in 1975.

LaVell Edwards

Edwards' coaching career started in 1953 at Fort Mead, Maryland, where he played and coached. He then came to Salt Lake City and became the head coach at Granite High from 1954-61. From there it was all with the Cougars. He began his BYU coaching career in 1962 as a student assistant. Soon after that, he became an assistant coach under Tom Hudspeth. He served in that role until being promoted to head coach in 1972. For the next 29 seasons, Edwards racked up 257 wins (with 101 losses and three ties), seven bowl victories, 19 conference titles and one national championship in 1984.

Gary Crowton

The first head coach at BYU after the LaVell Edwards era, Crowton started his career at BYU on a 12-game winning streak. The Cougars lost the final two games of that season, and they suffered three straight losing seasons after that. A former player at Snow College and Colorado State, he was the head coach at BYU from 2001 to 2004. He also was the head coach at Louisiana Tech. Prior to BYU, Crowton also was on the coaching staffs of the Chicago Bears, Georgia Tech, Boston College, New Hampshire, Western Illinois and Snow College. Since leaving BYU, where he had a 26-23 record, he has been the offensive coordinator at Oregon, LSU, Maryland and Southern Utah.

Bronco Mendenhall

Mendenhall became the head coach in 2005, but came to BYU as its defensive coordinator in 2003. Prior to arriving at BYU he had been on the coaching staff at New Mexico, Louisiana Tech, Oregon State, Northern Arizona, Snow College and Oregon State. At most of those schools he was defensive coordinator for some period. Mendenhall played football at Snow College and Oregon State.

Mendenhall, who is now the head coach at the University of Virginia, finished his career at BYU with a 99-43 record.

Kalani Sitake

The former Oregon State defensive coordinator boasts an impressive resume. In his time at Utah before heading to Corvallis, Sitake helped guide the Utes to a 7-1 bowl game record, including being the linebackers coach for the undefeated 2008 Sugar Bowl champion Utah team.

Sitake played fullback for LaVell Edwards in the late 90s before moving on to become an assistant coach with SUU, Utah and Oregon State.

No 'bad blood' between Jalen Moore and former teammate Kyle Davis

By: Chanel Barnes

December 9, 2015

Just a couple years ago Jalen Moore and Kyle Davis were on the court repping Utah State jerseys as teammates.

On Wednesday night, not only were the two on opposing teams, but the two were also guarding each other neck-and-neck from start to finish as the Cougars completed an 80-68 win over the Aggies at the Marriott Center.

"We didn't have any bad blood or anything like that, so for me it was just a really cool experience," Moore said of playing against Davis. "And I think it was for him too."

Davis traded his Aggie uniform in for a Cougar jersey following his sophomore season, 2013-14, at Utah State.

Due to NCAA transfer rules, Davis watched last year's 91-81 BYU victory over USU redshirting from the bench as Moore racked up a double-double with 15 points and 11 rebounds.

Davis hit the court hard this time around, leading all scorers at halftime with 10 points before finishing the game with his own double-double of 14 points and 14 rebounds. To polish it off, the forward added four assists.

"It was cool to get to play against each other," Moore added. "They just got the better end of the deal getting the W."

Moore held his own on the court, leading the Aggies with 15 points, six rebounds, two assists and three steals. USU head coach Tim Duryea called Moore's defensive performance the best of his career.

"I'm proud of Jalen Moore," Duryea said. "His post defense (this game) was the best he's played."

Davis and Moore played hard, aggressive basketball on each other all night, but despite the in-state rivalry and the hunger to win, it was clear that the two have a mutual respect for one another both on and off the court.

It's safe to say Davis is happy with the switch—and so is the BYU student section as the ROC started slow chanting "Kyle Davis" with a few minutes remaining before sliding into a "we love Kyle" chant just before the clock ran out.

BYU drawing negative national attention for punching incidents

By: Chanel Barnes

December 3, 2015

Wednesday night's Utah-BYU rivalry got a bit overcooked as the Cougars' Nick Emery punched Utah's Brandon Taylor in the closing minutes of the Utes' 83-75 victory.

Since then, the sports world has reacted, and it's the fourth time the BYU athletic program has received negative national attention for such incidents dating back to the brawl at the end of the Miami Beach Bowl in December 2014. While each incident has been unique and come with different arguments about severity and intent, the national reaction hasn't been positive for the Cougars.

Sports Illustrated called Emery's shot a "vicious sucker punch," and Yahoo! Sports said that the freshman's poor decision "ensured BYU lost more than just a basketball game."

Despite the talk that the BYU-Utah rivalry has dwindled over the years, CBSSports noted the "rivalry is one that's more heated and vehement than most realize."

The bad publicity began last year at the end of the Miami Beach Bowl, a double-overtime victory by the Memphis Tigers. The game ended when Memphis' DeShaughn Terry intercepted Christian Stewart's final pass. From there, Memphis' celebration and BYU's sorrow turned into one big, ugly brawl as both teams riled with flying fists, swinging helmets and punches.

The brawl blew up across the nation. [ESPN](#), [FOXSports](#), [SB Nation](#), [CBSSports](#) and [Sports Illustrated](#) are just a few of the organizations that covered it. [The OC Register](#) noted, “BYU brandishes a reputation for playing to the whistle and beyond.”

Just last weekend, BYU linebacker Harvey Langi was seen on camera throwing a jab at Utah State running back LaJuan Hunt. But was it a punch, or an attempt to force a fumble? [Deadspin](#) went with the former; [FanSided](#) went with the latter, saying Langi is “just terribly bad at forcing fumbles” and the attempt is “so terrible, (it’s) actually quite comical to watch.”

Earlier in the season, BYU offensive lineman Ului Lapuaho’s groin punch to Boise State’s Chancellor James on Sept. 12, on the other hand, was much less debatable.

Lapuaho was first to grab control of a loose ball before James slid in out of nowhere in an attempt to take possession. Lapuaho was not having it. The two wrestled around and long after the whistle was blown, Lapuaho took a clear shot below the belt.

[FanSided](#) went as far as to call the Cougars the “dirtiest team in college football ... crossing the metaphorical line in order to (seemingly intentionally) hurt opposing players” and that BYU has a “well-earned reputation for playing dirty.”

Following Lapuaho’s shot, [The Washington Post](#) wrote, “the Cougars are developing a bit of a reputation for over-the-line behavior.”

USU Basketball: No. 6 Duke blows over Aggies in second half

By: Chanel Barnes

November 29, 2015

DURHAM, N.C. — Utah State stuck with Duke in the first half, trailing by just 11 at halftime.

The second half was another story as the Blue Devils blew the Aggies out of the gym for an 85-52 win.

The Aggies rounded out the game with just one player in double digits as Chris Smith posted 13 points. Jalen Moore and Lew Evans each added eight points.

Duke rallied for a 15-0 run to launch the second half, and from there, the Aggies never stood a chance.

Luke Kennard and Grayson Allen led the way for Duke, each pouring in 22 points apiece. The Blue Devils enjoyed a smooth-shooting afternoon, shooting 55.6 percent from the field and 53.3 percent from the three-point line.

Utah State shot just 33.3 percent from the field and 25 percent from beyond the arch.

The Aggies have outrebounded all of their opponents so far on the season, but the Blue Devils came out on top in the rebounding game, 40-26.

Moore poured in a layup seven minutes into the first half to pull within four points of the Blue Devils, 16-12. Duke extended its lead to 15 with 3:22 to play in the first half before a short Aggie-rally cut the gap at the half to a 38-27 advantage.

Despite a well-fought first half battle, No. 6 Duke downed the Aggies, 85-62.

BYU basketball: Collinsworth sets NCAA career triple-double record after rebound recount

By: Chanel Barnes

November 29, 2015

PROVO — After a triple-double performance in Saturday's win over Belmont in the Marriott Center, BYU's Kyle Collinsworth is now the NCAA all-time career triple-double leader.

The senior guard posted 26 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists in the Cougars' 95-81 victory over the Bruins. The triple-double marks the first on the season and the seventh of his career.

Collinsworth sealed the double-digit points early in the game, but the double-digit rebounds and assists didn't come until the final minute of the game. Collinsworth connected with Nick Emery in the final minute to seal his 10th rebound.

The Provo native's final rebound didn't come until Sunday morning, as the NCAA approved his 10th rebound. Collinsworth missed a basket with just under three minutes to play in the game before making a clear attempt to follow-up the shot with a tip. Collinsworth was not originally given credit for his offensive rebound.

Collinsworth posted his first triple-double just shy of a year ago vs. Hawaii on Dec. 6, 2014, with 19 points, 12 rebounds, 10 assists. The guard has since racked up six triple-doubles to set the record.

BYU basketball video: Fischer found his 'mojo,' Collinsworth ate his Mini-Wheats

By: Chanel Barnes

November 29, 2015

PROVO — Despite a 4-1 record launch to the season, it's been a bumpy ride for the Cougars. But they're coming along.

After beginning the game shooting just 1-for-8 from the field and 1-for-7 from the three-point line, the Cougars managed to find their rhythm as the night went on, finishing the game shooting 45.8 percent from the field and 48.1 percent from beyond the arch.

"We're starting to play. We've had a couple more games, guys are getting used to each other and the chemistry is starting to go," BYU guard Chase Fischer said. "Chemistry is everything in basketball. Everybody is kind of falling their spots."

Fischer has particularly struggled over the last few games, but it's safe to say he's back at it as the guard finished the game 5-10 from the three-point line.

The "slump" is no longer.

"I've been trying to get going every game and I've been struggling. It's probably one of the worst slumps I've had in my career," Fischer said. "My teammates have been pumping me up, my coaches believed in me and I believe in myself. It was really rewarding ... for some shots to go in and kind of get my mojo back."

The key for Kyle Collinsworth? A big bowl of Mini-Wheats.

“I had my bowl of Mini-Wheats this morning,” BYU guard Collinsworth said. “The key to getting over these little slumps is being consistent and working hard. I felt like I’ve done that.”

The Cougars finished with four guys in double-figures with freshman Nick Emery leading the way with a career-high 27 points, including five treys.

“Congratulations to our team. This is a good win for us,” head coach Dave Rose said. “We played with a lot of urgency and energy tonight.”

Video: <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865642652/BYU-basketball-video-Fischer-found-his-mojo-Collinsworth-ate-his-Mini-Wheats.html>

Sunday morning quarterback: Stars and stats from Utah State's loss to in-state BYU

By: Chanel Barnes

November 29, 2015

LOGAN — BYU took it to Utah State on a snowy afternoon in Maverik stadium, snapping the Aggies' 14-game home winning streak.

“It wasn't our night. Congratulations to them, they played well enough to win it,” head coach Matt Wells said. “We weren't good enough in all three phases to win it. We had a lot of good, but we struggled in a couple areas.”

Scoring recap

The Aggies put the first points on the board early in the game on a 52-yard Chuckie Keeton run before BYU's Algernon Brown punched in an 8-yard yard to knot the game at sevens.

Cougar Trevor Samson knocked in a 41-yard field goal to capture the lead for BYU before LaJuan Hunt posted a six-yard touchdown to regain USU's lead, 14-10.

Keeton connected with Hunter Sharp on a 24-yard pass — setting USU's new passing touchdown record at 61 — to strengthen USU's lead, 21-10.

BYU responded as Tanner Mangum found Mitch Mathews on a 35-yard pass to cut Utah State's lead to four. Tomasi Laulili scored on a 37-yard Keeton-fumble recovery on the final play of the second quarter to pull ahead of the Aggies, 24-21.

Utah State never saw the lead again.

The Cougars put up back-to-back touchdowns in the third quarter before Nick Vigil posted a touchdown just seconds into the final quarter to pull within 10 of the Cougars.

BYU polished off the win with two final touchdowns in the fourth quarter to mark the 51-28 win.

Three stars

Chuckie Keeton

Keeton hit Hunter Sharp on a 24-yard pass in the second quarter to set the school record for career touchdown passes. He now has three touchdown passes this season and 61 over his career.

The redshirt senior threw for 243 yards, marking the 19th time he has thrown over 200 yards in a game over his career.

“It took too long to get there. It was special, but at the same time it was part of the game,”

Keeton said of breaking the touchdown pass record. “Like I said, it took a long time. It was just something that I wanted to get out of the way.”

Hunter Sharp

Sharp had seven catches in the matchup for 100 yards, etching the sixth 100-yard receiving game of his career. The senior posted a career-long 27-yard punt return.

Andrew Rodriguez

Rodriguez snatched a career-long, 58-yard reception and finished the game with 78 receiving yards on four catches.

A look at the numbers

- BYU snapped Utah State's nine-game home winning streak in 2013 and now snapped Utah State's 14-game home winning streak

- Despite the loss, Utah State led in net rushing yards with 202 to the Cougars' 74, and finished with 449 total yards to BYU's 358.

- Keeton made his final appearance at Maverik Stadium, throwing 20-of-45 for 243 yards and one touchdown.

"There were too many points given up by the defense. I don't think we did a very good job of stopping the run game. The defense let the team down. I thought the offense played well," Vigil said. "I felt like we were very inconsistent. ... We have to get things figured out before the bowl game."

Up next

It's going to be a week or so before the Aggies find out whom they will be matching up with in their bowl game, but they'll be ready, the coach said.

"We will be ready to go. We still have something to play for. ... It's a chance to win four-straight bowl games and these seniors know that," Wells said. "We have to rally the troops and play well in the bowl game. That's something that is important to us no matter where we go."

Twitter roundup: Utah State vs. David Collette

By: Chanel Barnes

November 25, 2015

David Collette up and left the Aggies' basketball team just two days before the season tipped off in early November. Two weeks later he was denied release from his contract. And now, the whole thing is just ugly.

Collette told Yahoo Sports, "The coaches and administrators (at Utah State) always talk about how they have their players' backs. Well, obviously not. From what I've experienced, they do not have my best interest at heart whatsoever."

Collette didn't stop there.

"Who does that? It's so childish. I compare Utah State to a bitter ex-girlfriend. I feel like I broke up with Utah State and now she's doing everything she can to get back at me."

Speaking of childish...

remainder of article included twitter link offs

Full article (including tweets and roundups):

http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865642472/Twitter-roundup-Utah-State-vs-David-Collette.html?clear_cache=1

Utah State denies David Collette's release; appeal to take place in December

By: Chanel Barnes

November 25, 2015

LOGAN — Two days before Utah State's season opener (Nov. 13), David Collette informed head basketball coach Tim Duryea that he planned to quit the team. Two weeks later, Utah State denied his scholarship release.

Utah State backed up its reasoning in a written response.

“Utah State University has followed all applicable NCAA procedures and applied consistent internal practices in declining the request for release. David Collette chose to leave Utah State two days prior to its season-opening contest, which hamstrung the team in terms of recruiting a new player to that position or even practicing with other players for that position. The timing of David's decision to leave the team is the reason Utah State is handling his release this way.”

Collette has since appealed Utah State's decision. If the appeal is denied, Collette will not be granted any athletic aid and will have to pay his own tuition out of pocket.

The appeal hearing will take place sometime in December. The appeal committee consists of a handful of USU faculty, staff and students. The only member of the committee with ties to the athletic department is one student-athlete from the Student Athlete Advisory Committee.

The sophomore forward told ESPN he quit the team due to issues he had with Duryea — including a sucker-punch from one teammate to another, which Collette said Duryea

downplayed. USU acknowledged the incident and told ESPN the situation was handled internally.

Collette said he isn't too happy with Utah State.

"I don't understand why Utah State would do this," Collette told Yahoo Sports. "If a guy's not comfortable where he is or not happy, why not let him go?"

The only immediate benefit Collette will see if the appeal is approved will be the chance to begin the recruiting process.

Collette averaged 12.8 points per game as the No. 2 scorer last season and led the Aggies from the field, shooting 59 percent. While losing Collette has undoubtedly hurt the team, the Aggies are off to a 4-0 start after the Aggies' 81-55 victory over Utah Valley University on Tuesday.

Former Ute Delon Wright, former Cougar Jimmer Fredette headed to the D-League

By: Chanel Barnes

November 24, 2015

Jimmer Fredette and Delon Wright are heading to the D-League.

Former University of Utah player Delon Wright was assigned to the NBADL on Tuesday morning, according to CBSSports. The rookie will most likely play for the Raptors 905 in Wednesday's game against the Utah Jazz-owned Idaho Stampede in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada.

Meanwhile, Upside & Motor reports that former BYU standout Fredette will return to the Westchester Knicks after a stint with the New Orleans Pelicans. The Knicks next game is Tuesday night against the same Stampede.

The Toronto Raptors picked up Wright as the 20th overall draft pick in the 2015 NBA Draft.

Wright has appeared in just four games this season.

Wright was a dominant player during his time at Utah. As a senior, Wright posted 14.5 points per game, 5.1 assists per game, 1.0 block per game, and shot 51 percent from the field. The California native was the first Ute in school history to be named to the first-team All-Pac-12 for two consecutive years ('14 and '15).

Fredette is in his fifth year as a professional playing for the Sacramento Kings, Chicago Bulls and New Orleans Pelicans.

What you may have missed: Off the field tidbits from the Utah State-Boise State game

By: Chanel Barnes

October 19, 2015

LOGAN — Oh yes, "SportsCenter," a statement has been made. Loud and clear.

After USU chalked up 21 points in the final 85 seconds of the first half, the Aggie nation went absolutely nuts. From Chuckie Keeton to Kyle Whimpey to every fan in Maverik Stadium. The whole place erupted.

Touchdowns like Costco samples

Following Utah State's fifth touchdown of the night with 1:05 to play in the opening half, Keeton excitedly approached a handful of players on the Aggie bench and shouted, "Boise State is handing out touchdowns like Costco samples tonight."

Yet another BSU turnover? Whimpey knew.

Whimpey, just like every fan in the stadium, was star-struck at Utah State's dominant performance throughout the entire game — but particularly the final minutes of the second half.

Following the Broncos' seventh turnover of the opening half, former Aggie Whimpey motioned in Utah State's direction before the call had even been made.

He just knew.

large portion of article included twitter linkoffs

Complete article (with link offs/imbeds): <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865639359/What-you-may-have-missed-Off-the-field-tidbits-from-the-Utah-State-Boise-State-game.html>

Saturday Morning QB: Stars and stats from Utah State's shock over No. 21 Boise State

By: Chanel Barnes

October 17, 2015

LOGAN — It had been said all week that Boise State's offense would be the ultimate test for the Utah State's defense. Well, the Aggies' passed with flying colors.

In the Broncos' four games prior to Friday's game, BSU outscored its opponents 204-24. In just one night, the Aggies more than doubled that number with a shocking 52-26 victory.

"I don't know if I have ever seen anything like that first half," Utah State head coach Matt Wells said. "Hats off to our players. It was an unbelievable effort and an unbelievable win for this program."

Scoring recap:

Boise State drew blood first with a 46-yard field goal just a few minutes into the game. Little did the Broncos know that it would be their only lead of the night. Kent Myers connected a short pass to Wyatt Houston a few minutes later to snag the lead at 7-3.

Jake Thompson extended the Aggie lead with a 51-yard field goal. The USU scoring continued as Myers found Hunter Sharp for a touchdown with just under a minute to go in the first quarter to mark a 17-3 lead in the first.

The second quarter was the quarter that won the game. The powerhouse Aggie defense forced turnover after turnover, and the Aggie offense turned them into touchdown after touchdown. The

Broncos punched in a touchdown with just over three minutes to play in the half to cut the gap to 24-10.

Then came the Aggie explosion with three touchdowns in under a minute and a half. Myers bolted in a 39-yard run, Myers found Sharp on a 91-yard pass, and Marwin Evans returned an interception for 90-yards.

That was that. Maverik Stadium erupted as the Aggies hit the locker room at halftime with an unbelievable 45-10 lead.

Both teams scored a touchdown each in the third quarter before the Broncos put up a field goal and a rushing touchdown in the final quarter.

Utah State's seven-point second half didn't matter because its 45-point first half more than sealed the deal.

"It was amazing. We've wanted to beat Boise State so bad since last year. We really wanted that revenge," Myers said. "We just have to battle it out, and that's what we came in here and did."

Utah's three stars

Nick Vigil, LB

Defensively, Vigil posted four solo tackles and 10 assisted tackles for a total of 14. Vigil also led the game with two sacks and 2.5 tackles for loss for 20 yards.

Along with forcing his second fumble of the season and the seventh of his career, Vigil recovered the first fumble of his career in the first half.

“The defense played pretty well,” Vigil laughed. “We got a lot of turnovers, which was huge to give our offense opportunities in the red zone.”

Kyler Fackrell, LB

Fackrell’s 2.5 tackles for loss increase his TFL total to 10.5 on the season and 31.5 in his career. The senior linebacker recovered two fumbles and tacked on a season-high 11 tackles (four solo and seven assisted).

Marwin Evans, SS

Evans put up what was arguably the play of the game. The senior defensive back snagged the first interception of his career, and he returned 90 yards for his first career touchdown.

As if that wasn’t enough, Evans forced a fumble in the second quarter.

Analyzing the stats

The Aggies rushed for 197 yards to the Broncos’ 87; BSU had 299 receiving yards to USU’s 157; and both teams went 5 of 16 on third-down conversions. So, what was the difference? Turnovers.

Boise State had eight turnovers to Utah State’s one. The Aggies forced two fumbles in the first quarter, two fumbles and three interceptions in the second quarter, and another forced fumble in the third quarter.

“The key to the game was obviously those turnovers and turning them into touchdowns,” Wells said. “Both sides fed off each other’s energy and production. The stats are pretty even except for that one thing.”

Myers is now 8-1 as the Aggies' starting quarterback. The sophomore completed 17 of 24 passes for 157 yards and no interceptions. Myers also rushed for 76 yards, including a 39-yard touchdown.

Who's next

Myers said the team will take 24 hours to enjoy their big win over Boise State, but then it's on to San Diego State.

The Aztecs hold a 2-0 Mountain West record — the only undefeated team in the West Division — with their third conference game set to kick off Saturday at 7:30 p.m. PT at San Jose State.

After launching the season with a massive 37-3 win over San Diego, the Aztecs suffered three-straight losses before picking up wins over Fresno State (21-7) and Hawaii (28-14).

“This is obviously a huge win, but it means nothing if we don't do anything the rest of the season,” Vigil said. “We still have a lot of work to do in the Mountain West, and we have another big opponent coming up in San Diego State.”

The Aggie-Aztec conference battle will begin next Friday, Oct. 23, at 8:30 p.m. MT at Qualcomm Stadium in San Diego.

Utah video: Homecoming week pep rally, Paul ready to 'bear hunt' (+video)

By: Chanel Barnes

October 9, 2015

SALT LAKE — Homecoming week pep rally, ESPN's "College GameDay," a pair of undefeated teams set to square off on Saturday night.

The Utes are ready for kickoff.

Utah coach Kyle Whittingham and the Utes' football captains each took a turn with the microphone at Utah's homecoming week pep rally Thursday night to pump up the fans.

"This will be a big test for our team. There are only two teams undefeated teams left in the Pac-12, us and Cal-Berkeley," Whittingham said. "Only one of those teams is walking out of that stadium undefeated. We're going to do everything we can to make sure it's us."

Jared Norris quickly got the crowd amp up as he yelled, "We're going to put a stomping on those bears."

The hype continued when Gionni Paul grabbed the mic.

"I don't know about you all, but I'm a big hunter," Paul said. "The duck season is already over.

So now it's time to go bear hunting."

Video: <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865638658/Utah-football-video-Homecoming-week-pep-rally-Paul-ready-to-bear-hunt.html>

Trio of projected NFL draft picks help SUU Thunderbirds to 3-game winning streak

By: Chanel Barnes

October 6, 2015

CEDAR CITY — The NFL hype surrounding Southern Utah this year is new territory for the Thunderbirds. And it's quickly proving to be thrilling, new territory as the T-Birds enter their bye week on a 3-game winning streak.

Last Friday Southern Utah blew out its in-state rival, Weber State, 44-0. A great deal of the shutout is owed to the T-Birds' defensive projected NFL draft picks James Cowser, Miles Killebrew and LeShaun Sims.

Southern Utah head coach Ed Lamb was quick to credit not only the humility of the trio, but the widespread of productive players scattered on the T-Bird roster.

"They are great leaders because of how talented they are and how humble they are," Lamb said.

"Night in and night out, whether those guys are even our most productive players, is always a question mark. We've got a lot of other really productive players on defense."

Lamb explained that the NFL isn't something that is frequently talked about. Right now, every split-second of attention is for the T-Birds.

"Their whole goal is right here at SUU, and I think that's real leadership," Lamb said.

At defensive end, Cowser explains the recent game-time success is a reflection of the intensity on the practice field.

“We have improved the intensity and focus at practice,” Cowser said. “We had solid practices in the beginning of the season, but they’ve improved as games have gone by.”

Although the projected NFL draft picks are giving college football their attention, the NFL light at the end of the tunnel provides the trio with an extra shove of motivation.

“It makes me work hard at the little things,” Cowser said. “Those are the things that fall away the fastest, but the extra motivation keeps me focused.”

In the 2012, in the lead-up to Brad Sorensen being drafted by the San Diego Chargers, it wasn’t unusual to see a scout or two at the SUU football games. Now, in the Cowser, Killebrew, Sims era, seeing numerous scouts at a single practice is just another day.

The scouts don’t only keep the threesome on their toes, but the entire Thunderbird program.

“Accountability increases performance. So having them (NFL scouts) around keeps you accountable,” Cowser said. “Same goes for the team.”

Cowser, Killebrew and Sims have made all sorts of transitions since they stepped foot on T-Bird terrain, but with years of determination and trust in the program, the NFL is nearly tangible.

“One thing they all had from the moment they got onto campus was trust,” Lamb said in a SUU press release. “We started talking about longterm goals and about taking care of business in the classroom and the weight room and these guys trusted that. That trust has helped put them in the position they are in now.”

The trust has paid off: the three Southern Utah defensive powerhouses have earned spots on the [CBS Sports 2016 NFL Draft Prospects List](#).

At 6-foot-4, 258 pounds, Cowser is ranked 13th at the defensive end position, 125th overall, and is projected to be a fourth-round draft pick.

“I always hoped that it would come, but it felt so distant,” the Davis High graduate said of reaching his NFL dream. “It’s fun having the opportunity. It makes things different and exciting.”

At 6-foot-3, 230 pounds, Killebrew holds a national 12th place ranking at strong safety and is projected to go in the sixth or seventh rounds.

“I’d be lying to you if I said it wasn’t awesome,” the Henderson, Nevada, native said in a SUU press release. “It’s definitely fun to have that exposure and work to make it to the next level.”

Sims, cornerback at 6-0 and 200 pounds, is a projected seventh round draft pick.

“Playing in the NFL has always been something I hoped for, but now that it’s finally coming to fruition, it’s definitely surreal,” the Las Vegas native said in a SUU press release.

USU football: Nothing but confidence in starting QB Kent Myers

By: Chanel Barnes

October 1, 2015

The Aggies and the Rams have alternated wins over the past four years. If the pattern continues, Utah State will have Saturday's game in the bag.

Back in 2013, the Aggies captured a 13-0 victory over Colorado State before the Rams took their turn last year with a tight 16-13 win.

In 2011, Colorado State topped Utah State in double overtime, 35-34. The Aggies bounced back the following year with a 31-19 win over the Rams.

“(They’re) a team that we know a decent amount about personnel-wise. We have a lot of respect of them in the games we’ve played against them,” head coach Matt Wells said. “They’ve all gone down to the wire.”

With the combination of the Aggies' first home game in exactly a month, their homecoming whiteout game and first Mountain West Conference battle, and sophomore Kent Myers at starting quarterback to lead USU's offensive, there's a lot of hype heading into Saturday's Colorado State matchup.

“It will be tough challenge. I'm excited to be at home again. It feels like it has been forever. Shoot, it's been a month,” Wells said. “It should be a great atmosphere. I look for our guys to be really energetic, have a lot of juice, and be ready to go.”

Since Chuckie Keeton sprained his right knee against the Washington Huskies, all eyes have been on Myers. Fortunately, the Aggies have nothing but confidence in Saturday's starting QB.

"His teammates are very, very confident in him. He brings athleticism and he throws the ball well whether it's down the field, in the pocket or on the move," Wells said of Myers. "He's improved from last year, but game time will tell. I like where he's at."

Video: <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865637998/USU-football-Nothing-but-confidence-in-starting-QB-Kent-Myers-video.html>

Video: Provo rapper James the Mormon writes, performs song about BYU football team

By: Chanel Barnes

September 18, 2015

PROVO — James Curran, better known as James the Mormon, was asked to write a song for BYU football after the hype of kicking off the season with back-to-back Hail Mary victories.

And with thousands of video views, it appears James the Mormon nailed it.

The rap includes a tribute to injured Taysom Hill, freshman quarterback Tanner Mangum and the Cougar exciting season that lies ahead.

Released yesterday, [DREAMIN: A Tribute to BYU FOOTBALL](#) has nearly 23,000 views on YouTube and over 76,000 views on Facebook.

Captioning the tribute release on [James the Mormon's facebook page](#), Curran said, “Tanner Mangum is one of the most humble people I’ve ever met.”

Assisting James the Mormon in the making of this video were Sam Wilder behind the camera and Chance Lift editing the rap.

Video: <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865637072/Video-Provo-rapper-James-the-Mormon-writes-performs-song-about-BYU-football-team.html>

Matt Wells will go to the end with Chuckie Keeton

By: Chanel Barnes

September 14, 2015

SALT LAKE CITY — Aggie head coach Matt Wells said it best: Chuckie Keeton is a winner.

When Keeton is game on, Utah State is game on.

“(He’s) not perfect. None of us are,” Wells said of Keeton. “But I love that kid. I’ll go to the end with that kid.”

With the combination of the confidence Wells has in Keeton and the Game 1 and Game 2, Utah State is en route to win a lot of games this season.

Keeton threw two touchdown passes in Friday’s 24-14 loss to Utah, tying the school record for career touchdown passes with 60. The Houston, Texas, native sits tied with Jose Fuentes (1998-2002).

Along with touchdowns passes, Keeton now holds the second-place all time record in school history with 937 pass attempts.

“I see everything going uphill from here. I’m excited to see what this team is about to do,” Keeton said. “It’s never good to lose, but to have so much promise, I’m excited for them to deliver. And I know we will.”

Video: <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865636725/USU-football-Matt-Wells-says-he-will-go-to-the-end-with-Chuckie-Keeton.html>

Saturday Morning QB: Stars and Stats from Utah State's loss to Utah

By: Chanel Barnes

September 12, 2015

SALT LAKE CITY – The in-state battle saw a 14-14 tie at the half before the Utes (2-0) cracked open the game in the second half for a 10-point win, 24-14.

With every intention to upset the Utes at Rice Eccles Stadium, the Aggie offense couldn't deliver with a scoreless second half.

“It's a loss. We won't spin it any other way than that. This program didn't come down here to play good. This program didn't come down here to show improvement from game one. We came down here to win a dad-gum ballgame,” coach Matt Wells said. “We came up short. I give Utah credit.”

On a positive note, the Aggies (1-1) showed substantial progress between game one and game two. If they can provide similar progress between game two and game three, Utah State will have some fun at Washington next weekend.

Scoring recap:

Utah put the game's first points on the scoreboard in its opening 75-yard drive. Travis Wilson finished the drive with a 12-yard touchdown run. Andy Phillips nailed the extra point.

The Aggies responded early in the second quarter as Chuckie Keeton connected with LaJuan Hunt for a short 8-yard touchdown. Brock Warren made the PAT to lock the game at 7-7.

Regaining its lead, Utah's Devontae Booker punched in a 4-yard touchdown run with 6:46 remaining in the half.

With 24 seconds left in the second quarter Keeton found Zach Van Leeuwen for a 15-yard touchdown pass and Warren added the PAT to knot the game at 14.

Utah backup quarterback Kendal Thompson scored on a 2-yard bolt in the third quarter for the game-winning touchdown. Phillips provided insurance points for the Utes just a few minutes into the final quarter with a 37-yard field goal.

"We struggled a little bit in the third quarter just getting in rhythm," Wells said. "I thought we picked it back up in the fourth quarter. You can't have two turnovers down inside the 30-yard line."

Utah State's three stars:

Chuckie Keeton, quarterback

After struggling to live up to the hype of "the return of Chuckie Keeton" in their season-opener against SUU, the vintage Keeton returned in game two.

Keeton hit two touchdown passes and finished the game 22-of-35 for 256 yards. Last week, Keeton was just 16-of-33 for 110 yards. Along with his throwing game, the senior quarterback rushed for 59 yards.

"Chuckie Keeton's a winner," Wells said. "He can't even walk after every other hit and he battles. He's a warrior in every sense of the word, every sense of the word."

LT Filiaga, linebacker

The former-Ute had a career-high 12 tackles in the matchup, his fourth double-digit tackles outing of his career. The senior finished with three solo tackles, nine assisted tackles and one tackle for loss.

Devonte Robinson, wide receiver

As far as receiving goes, Robinson dominated. The senior tied his career-high with six receptions, broke the 100-yard receiving mark for the first time and caught a career-long 51-yard reception. With 119 receiving yards on the night, Robinson nearly doubled the runner-up, Utah's Britain Covey with 61 yards.

Analyzing the stats

In last week's home opener against SUU, the Aggies went just 1-for-18 on third down conversions. Friday night, USU went 8-for-15 on third down conversions. Talk about offensive improvement.

The Aggies concluded the game with 256 receiving yards to Utah's 132. Robinson led with 119, followed by Zach Van Leeuwen with 31 and Wyatt Houston with 26.

Nick Vigil and Filiaga contributed 24 of USU's 88 total tackles with 12 each. Vigil's tackles marked his second-straight double-digit tackle game this year and the eighth of his career. Of Vigil's 12, six were solo tackles.

"I'm proud of my kids. They fought. This team is going to win a lot of games," Wells said.

"We'll make corrections. There's a lot of good, there's a lot of things that need to get corrected. I know that. We'll be very diligent in doing that. We'll move on and continue to improve."

Up next: Washington

Utah State will travel to Washington for its first out-of-state game of the season where the Aggies will take on the Huskies.

Washington opened the season with a tight 16-13 loss to Boise State. The Broncos led 16-0 at half time before a Huskies 40-yard field goal, a 76-yard punt return and a 28-yard field goal left Washington just four-points shy of a victory.

The Huskies take on Sacramento State later today.

Former Fremont Silverwolves reunited in USU-SUU game (+video)

By: Chanel Barnes

September 5, 2016

LOGAN — Five former Fremont High School teammates stormed Maverik Stadium on Thursday night for old times' sake. But this time, the players split on opposite sides of the line. Thunderbird uniforms, Aggie uniforms — it didn't matter. The friendship and respect between the Plain City natives was clear as day, on and off the field.

On the field, the D1 football players were 100 percent game on. Off the field, they're just a bunch of old high school buddies.

Utah State's Nick Vigil hadn't seen most of his high school teammates in over three years, and the reunion was sweet. As the Aggie star linebacker said, "It was cool to see them. I haven't seen those guys in a long time and yeah, it was good to see them."

Vigil, the College Sports Madness Mountain West Defensive Player of the Year and member of the USA Today Sports 2015 preseason All-America football team, took on four former Silverwolves in Thunderbird uniforms in the Aggies' home-opener.

"He's gotten a heck of a lot bigger than the last time I saw him," SUU's punter Tate Lewis said of Vigil. "One thing about Nick that has always been apparent to me is that he's not just a stud on the field, but off the field as well."

In 2010, Vigil, along with Thunderbirds Lewis, Evan Ross, Josh Talbot and Lloyd Stephens, took Fremont to the state tournament where the Silverwolves dropped to Bingham in the

championship game. The following year, after Lewis graduated, Vigil, Ross, Talbot and Stephens suffered déjà vu, falling to Lone Peak for the state title.

In Utah State's narrow 12-9 win over Southern Utah, Vigil recorded a game-high 13 tackles, including five solo tackles.

“He’s always been so humble for how good he is. He played a heck of a game but he never talks about it. He’d be the last person to talk about himself. ... It was good to see him though, a friendly face from the other team. Well, a kind of friendly face,” Thunderbird offensive lineman Ross laughed.

Video: <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865636169/Video-Former-Fremont-Silver-Wolves-reunited-in-USU-SUU-game.html>

Friday QB: Stars and stats from Utah State's tight season-opening win over SUU

By: Chanel Barnes

September 4, 2015

LOGAN — Southern Utah nearly pulled a massive season-opener upset over Utah State as the Thunderbirds held the lead up to the final minutes before an Andrew Rodriguez punt return handed the Aggies their first lead of the night, 12-9, which they held to the end.

As the Aggies look ahead to next week's Utah matchup, they'd better hope they got their jitters out — particularly in star quarterback Chuckie Keeton, who went just 16-of-33 for 110 yards.

But as USU coach Wells emphasized, Keeton is going to need more protection if he's looking to stay healthy and improve his game.

“We have to be able to protect him. We did not protect him very well and we're going to have to shore that up really quick. I can tell you that,” Wells said. “Because the guys we play next week will rush the pass a little bit better.”

Scoring recap: The Thunderbirds stopped the Aggies on their first offensive run with a punt block by Matt Holley, which was recovered by James Cowser on the Aggie 24. SUU didn't let the work go to waste as QB Ammon Olsen connected with Mike Sharp on a 27-yard pass to put the season's first points on the board.

The Aggies responded quickly as USU's David Moala blocked SUU's field goal attempt, which was returned by Torrey Green to cut the T-Birds' lead to four.

Utah State's Brock Warren nailed a 30-yard field goal late in the first quarter to force a one-point game, trailing Southern Utah 6-5.

The second quarter was scoreless on both ends until SUU launched a drive with 1:30 to play in the second, which led to a Keita Calhoun 36-yard field goal to push the Thunderbirds ahead to enter halftime 9-5.

"I really liked the way our defense played and our punter really kept us in the game," SUU head coach Ed Lamb said. "They were getting more field position on their drives than we were, but we kept the field position battle close and our punter was a big part of that."

With six punts and no points, the third quarter suffered a scoreless drought. The drought continued well into the final quarter before Rodriguez returned a punt for an 88-yard touchdown, the third longest punt return in Aggie history. Maverik Stadium erupted as Rodriguez, the JC transfer back-up punt returner, sealed the Aggies' home-opening victory.

Utah State's three stars

Andrew Rodriguez, receiver

This one is a no-brainer. Rodriguez pulled on an Aggie uniform for the first time in the SUU matchup. Little did he know he'd be the man of the night. Throughout fall camp, the USU coaching staff has been searching for a punt returner. After rotating through punt returners as the night went on, it's safe to say the Aggies have found the guy to get the job done. As far as numbers go, Rodriguez finished with 20 receiving yards and 136 punt return yards.

Nick Vigil, linebacker

Vigil wrapped up a game-high 13 tackles, five solo and eight assisted. His 13 tackles mark his seventh double-digit tackles in his career. The linebacker's experience, composure and consistency provided a solid foundation for Aggie defense. Earlier this week, Vigil was named to the USA Today Sports 2015 All-America football team, and Thursday night he proved why.

LaJuan Hunt, running back

Hunt led the game with 90 rushing yards, including a 14-yard rush to wrap up the first half. The sophomore also had a career-high two receptions in the SUU matchup. As the leading rusher from last fall, Hunt is right on track for a repeat.

Analyzing the stats

USU

Senior OL Ben Wysocki, redshirt freshman WR Zach Van Leeuwen, redshirt junior WR Rodriguez, senior NG David Moala, senior CB Tyler Floyd and senior SS Marwin Evans all earned their first career starts

Keeton's 33 pass attempts place him third all-time in school history career pass attempts with 902. Along with pass attempts, Keeton's 11 rushing yards placed him 18th all-time with 1,241.

Rodriguez's 88-yard punt return marked his first career touchdown and the third longest in school history behind Kevin Robinson (90 yards in 2004) and Dale Leatham (90 yards in 1950).

Braelon Roberts earned career-highs against the Thunderbirds in receptions (4) and receiving yards (25).

SUU

James Cowser posted .5 TFL, placing the senior defensive end that much closer to the all-time NCAA FCS record currently held by Sherrod Coates (2002) with 67. Cowser currently sits at 61.5.

Up next: Utah State hits the road to take on Utah next Friday. The Utes will face the Aggies after pulling a 24-17 victory over Michigan Thursday night. The Utes led just 3-0 to enter the second quarter before the Wolverines nailed a 29-yard kick to tie up the game. Utah's Travis Wilson connected with receivers on four throws before Devontae Booker sealed the drive with a 1-yard touchdown.

Utah extended its lead late in the third quarter with a 14-yard touchdown run by Wilson and a PAT from Andy Phillips. Michigan responded by cutting the lead in half (17-10) in the third before the Utes answered as Justin Thomas returned a 53-yard interception for a touchdown.

The Wolverines tacked on a final touchdown with under a minute to play — but still fell short as the Utes took the win.

Someone is going to suffer their first loss next Friday at Rice-Eccles Stadium. Will it be the Aggies or the Utes?

Nat Borchers returns to Rio Tinto, only to nail game-winner over his former RSL nation

By: Chanel Barnes

August 15, 2015

SANDY – Portland’s defender Nat Borchers and midfielder Will Johnson returned to familiar territory on Saturday night to take on their former Monarchs. Unfortunately for Real Salt Lake, Borchers and Johnson were a little too familiar as the Timbers grabbed a tight 1-0 victory in extra time.

The Monarchs outshot the Timbers 10-4 in the opening half and 15-10 over the span of the game, and despite RSL clearly controlling the majority of the game, Borchers knocked in the shot that counted in the 94th minute.

Johnson left Real Salt Lake nearly four years ago. Borchers, on the other hand, left his Monarch uniform behind less than nine months ago. RSL is still enduring the healing process after losing Borchers, and his goal reopened the wound.

“I played with them (Borchers and Johnson) for many, many years. Before the game, I see them as friends,” RSL defender Jamison Olave said. “But during the game, it’s different. They’re just like the others guys.”

A native of Tucson, Arizona, Brochers spent seven years with RSL before being traded to the Timbers less nine months ago. Brochers’ goal marks his third on the season.

Although Borchers was thrilled to nail the game-winner, he held his celebrating to a minimum out of respect to his former RSL family.

Olave and Borchers have been friends for years, however. When the whistle blows for game time, Olave sees jerseys — not faces.

“It’s the same for me. All goals are the same for me,” Olave commented on Borchers’ game-winner. “The game was just painful.”

The Monarchs have suffered only one home loss all-time against Portland in the last nine years — until Saturday. Borchers made certain to etch in RSL’s second loss on the RSL vs. PT record.

“We created a lot of chances, and we didn’t finish. It’s tough. It’s not good enough. In my opinion, you have to be smart. We pushed too hard in the first half and we couldn’t score,” RSL midfielder Javier Morales said. “If you can’t win, you have to lose. And we lost today.”

Johnson tackled RSL’s Sebastian Jaime from behind late in the first half, which resulted in a foul and an uproar from Johnson’s earlier fans. Johnson didn’t seem to be missed by the RSL nation.

However, there was a feeling of respect for Borchers that filled Rio Tinto stadium — even after nailing the game-winning goal.