
2008 Predictions

Posted by McGregor - 2007/12/29 10:27

Here are a few things I think you will see this upcoming year.

1) Anae. First of all, I think a lot of the complaints about Anae are unwarranted. Uniformly there are football answers to all complaints I see, but I will save that discussion for another thread. But in 2008, you will see a more "open" BYU. Robert has been here long enough that he can comfortably run some plays within his system and style that we maybe haven't seen before. I know I've seen some plays in practice that have never made it to the game field.

2) Collie. I'm a Collie homer, I admit. But think about what he accomplished this year coming off a mission and on a sprained ankle. Expect this guy to shave a tenth, or more, from his 40 time, expect him to polish off his already EXCELLENT route-running, and expect him to lean up a bit more. With all of this, and an entire off season building that connection with Max . . . Wow! I have it on pretty good authority that Collie expects that this coming year to be "Heismann-esque" (not that he will win it, but that at the end of the year, he will be able to fill a similarly-looking highlight reel).

3) Max Hall. I expect Max to increase the velocity of his throws a little, and I expect to see him work all summer at moving through his progressions. I also expect that he's going to work on his foot speed.

4) Jan Jorgensen. Favorite defender. Does anyone else need reminding that he's only a sophomore??? He will work on his technique, build a little more muscle mass, but work on his burst.

While I'm at it, I think Denney will be the other DE. Add his development in, and I think we will have an amazing DL, almost regardless of who we plug into the DT. Also look for Steve Fendry to make some noise.

5) Harvey The Unga. So no one is going to mistake Harvey as a track star, but it would not be a stretch to accuse his freshman play as "junior." I think he's two years ahead of the curve. I expect that next year he will block better and catch better. I do think he'll try to get a little faster, too. I think his main concern, though, should be learning the offense and blocking. That's the main thing we miss without Curtis Brown. If Harvey learns this, I expect better protection for Max, and more swing passes to Harvey.

6) The secondary. I love the guys we have this year. BUT. Expect to see much, much more speed in the secondary. I'm repdicting G Pittman as the next Morgan. Howard has already proven that he's quite capable--I have no worries about him. I think the CB position will be every bit as strong as it was this year, but a LOT quicker. Just think--If Coach Hill can compensate for lack of athleticism with our current DB's by teaching them the fundamentals, think what that teaching could mean to someone with more athletic ability. Crazy.

I don't expect to see Tafuna, and I'm not sure Fowler will keep his job. I think before the season started there were freshman that were competing for the starting job. I just think Bronco wanted to keep these guys in the wings if he could.

7) JJ DiLuigi. He hasn't touched the turf yet, but I'm excited. We could write pages of why we didn't see the slot this year, but suffice it to say, JJ will bump out the competition. He will be cross trained at slot and RB, but will add a deminsion to this offense that will open things up again.

8) No loss on the OL. Sete was great, but Sorenson will be NO drop off.

9) LBers. We know Doman can play. So can Hooks and so can Bauman. I expect that Van Sweden and Nelson will also get some serious looks. Brian Kehl will be missed, but I think the collective speed at the LB position will be enhanced, with no toughness or mass lossed.

10) Special teams. I've talked about this elsewhere, but I think Sorenson beats out Payne. I think some of it will depend on Sorenson's mission plans, which I understand are not solid (but I've heard otherwise from reliable sources--interestingly, I heard BOTH from reliable sources). As someone mentioned on another thread, I think Sorenson's field goal ability and the field position with added depth on kickoffs will earn us at least 3 points a game, if not more. I think it's safe to say he will get us an extra field goal, and give us field position for an extra touchdown per game.

Also, Austin Collie will be returning kicks. I expect that Bryce may not be returning punts, nor back with Austin returning kicks. G Pittman was looking like he may get that call. Also, if we land Chambers, he may have a shot.

And finally, I think deep-snapping duties go to either Denney or Fendry, likely Fendry.

11) Remember, for what it's worth, Tonga and Vakapuna will both be back.

12) Bronco. I think what is also EXTREMELY important to remember is that Bronco will be a senior. His 6-6 campaign

was his freshman effort. He was still learning, and baking a cake without all the ingredients.

2006 was his sophomore year. Both he and the team finally had identity. That helped make a great class of seniors that much better. But he still had a lot to learn.

In 2007, his junior year, he faced a monumental challenge: take an infant offense and make them compete. It didn't help that his secondary had a hard time staying healthy (or waking up). But he did it. He was able to make the results of the previous year, even if he didn't produce as much results. But he learned a lot.

2008 is Bronco's senior year. He knows how he wants to do things. He knows what makes HIS recruits tick. He knows his staff. He knows strengths and weaknesses. And most importantly, his players believe his word as gospel.

If you've made it all the way to this line, then dock me some karma points.

Please add your own.

JL McGregor
Cleveland OH

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Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by runbyu1 - 2007/12/29 11:03

Wow, McGregor, I never thought I'd actually dock you karma! :o) Great post, I don't know what to say as I pretty much agree with everything said. I REALLY hope you are right about Anae opening up. I think the secondary and kickoff returns could be exciting and I can't wait to see JJ start tearing it up. The slot is needed! Oh and I really hope you are right about Unga learning the protection better because we LIVED OFF THOSE SWING PASSES last year and I think Harvey has potential to break those for a lot more yards than even Curtis did. Can't wait for next year!

-G
Orem, Utah/Laie, Hawaii

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Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by BOID - 2007/12/29 11:06

Good points, all, McGregor. I think Fui's going to be a bigger influence his senior season. I agree about JJ. Can't wait to see him in the slot. Justin Sorenson is going to be awesome. What about the other Sorenson? I remember a lot of talk about safety Daniel Sorenson being a huge commit, second only to Austin Holt at the time (it was Feb or March, and we hadn't yet gotten verbals from the likes of Jerry Brunner or Comer). IIRC, Daniel backed off his commitment at the advice from his HS coach and then recommitted. Any news about him?

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Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by BYUROCKS - 2007/12/29 11:08

Nice I like it McGregor Karma to you

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Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by McGregor - 2007/12/29 11:14

1) In general, we need to be careful about asking Anae to "open it up." Essentially, we're asking for Gary Crowton. He

opened it WAY it. It achieved the goal of keeping the defense off guard, but at the same time, we had players on the field that were not confident about their assignments. Anae, on the other hand, hates risks, and hates anything less than 100% execution. So over the past few years, there have been plays that the team has worked on in order to get those plays to be predictably safe to where all team members know their assignment.

I will say this: I think Anae is more in favor of keeping the play book thin, but using various formations to run the same play. That's why you've seen odd formations, or at least guys you did not expect to see there (like So'oto as a fullback).

2) I've just heard the general concensus that largely the team was blown away with how athletic last year's recruits were, especially in the secondary. Sorenson's name has certainly been mentioned among those athletes. I seem to recall, however, Jordan Pendleton getting the most love.

Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by Ygridiron4ever - 2007/12/29 11:16

Thanks for all the information! How many days to kick off?

The fun part for me is watching my friends and co-workers, who have no love for BYU, starting to include the cougars in their discussions and predictions for next year!

I haven't been this excited about BYU football since Crowton's first year when he was saying all the right things, we had a great record, and the recruiting class was shaping up to be the best in BYU history. The difference now is that Bronco has walked the walk....his talk means much more to me now!

Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by gordito - 2007/12/29 11:53

If all of those things happen the consequent will be 13-0.

Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by CougarPeasant - 2007/12/29 12:09

McGregor, as always, your information and posts are a must read.

I am sure you didn't mean to leave them out, but we got Tialavea coming back, as well as Nixon. The DL and LBs will be just fine and to hear you speak so glowingly of the DBs who will be playing 2008 makes it sound like the defense will truly be better than it has the past 3 seasons. You get a couple of lock down corners, or even at least one lock down and another very good corner, then the front seven can have a field day harassing the QB and shutting down the run.

I know DiLuigi is supposed to be special. I was watching a repeat of one of Air Force's games and most noticeably, I was paying attention to Chad Hall. Is it too much to think DiLuigi could do what Hall did? Perhaps not his first full season, but at some point during his career? I noticed Hall had better moves and shiftiness than I remembered, something I think DiLuigi adds, though Unga does well enough.

Further, what about Latu? With Unga established, DiLuigi coming on, and the next round of stellar RBs in this recruiting class, when will we see Latu, if ever?

Weber will have had a full year to work with the OL. Can he teach the old dogs new tricks with the stable of runners BYU now has? I know it's been said before, that BYU recruits pass blockers, not run blockers, but with the speed we are seeing on many DLs, don't we need run blockers who can run block instead? Meaning, we need athletic ability and quickness to counter the speed the new breed of DLs now have?!!!

Both Anae and Bronco are entering their senior seasons in their respective positions. Anae has a QB with a year's performance behind him and did well enough to be 1st team all conference. The talent around the QB is returning as

well, so I agree with you that this next season he should be able to open up the play book more and use more deception. Bronco has been a very quick learner for head coaches. I would say that BYU's talent has been slightly above average for the MWC, yet he's turned that talent into the BEST TEAM without qualification in just 3 years. Now that he knows more, learns from his mistakes, anything but BCS would be a let down next season.

Just an aside and forgive me for bringing it up, but Urban Meyer was in his 6th season as a HC when he won the NC last year. I know he coached at 3 different schools, but the nature of college football is that players are only around for a couple of years and usually only play 2-3 seasons at most. What I am getting at is coaching at three different schools is not much different than coaching at one when you get right down to it. (There are obvious differences, but I am ignoring them for now.) So, Bronco has done a remarkable job at BYU and his ultimate goal to compete for and win a NC is obtainable. I've visited other cougar boards that think it's impossible for a non-BCS school to win a NC and I understand why, but I think BYU is unique to other non-BCS programs since it has won a title before and had a history of success over the past 30 years. I believe he's actually ahead of his timetable to win a title. It took Edwards 10 years to win one. I really think BYU will be in the mix if not in 2008, certainly in 2009. Of course, Edwards thought it was his 1985 team that would actually compete for the title, not his 1984 team!!! If only history repeats for BYU!!!

I hope that last paragraph made sense, but Faulkner made a career out of such ramblings. ;)

McGregor, thanks again for your insights. I look forward to your answers.

CP

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Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by McGregor - 2007/12/29 12:17

CougarPeasant wrote:

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1) I don't know if Tia will be 100% by fall. His injury was significant. But I think Foketi, among others, or perhaps a new recruit like Mauga, will fill in just fine.

2) Yes, Nixon will come back. I hope he works on his technique. I'm concerned that against quick and strong TE's and OT's he does not break free fast enough.

3) The thing that will save us next year are two great corners. We need to be able to stack the box with little worry. This will prove true against Washington's Jake Locker. We need to contain him. That's hard to do, but not nearly as hard when you have corners that can both play man coverage.

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Posted by McGregor - 2007/12/29 12:19

CougarPeasant wrote:

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Further, what about Latu? With Unga established, DiLuigi coming on, and the next round of stellar RBs in this recruiting class, when will we see Latu, if ever?

That same comparison--Hall to DiLuigi--has crossed my mind. I'm hoping that DiLuigi develops into a similar role.

Forget about Latu.

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Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by McGregor - 2007/12/29 12:25

CougarPeasant wrote:

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First, you make a great point: BYU recruits pass blockers. I hope people understand this. We will NEVER be a Georgia or run the stretch. That's not our identity.

Bronco wants our pass blockers to enhance their run blocking in order to keep us from being one-dimensional. That means getting our pass blockers to be able to run block when necessary.

So, Cougar fans should always expect that, until we recruit a Jamal Charles, we will never see a 300 yard rushing game against a BCS team (at least not this decade).

Weber was brought in to make a minor adjustment. He still needs one more off-season to do it.

Another point--Size does make up A LITTLE for lack of speed. It's just simple geometry: It takes less time to get around a 280 lb OL than a 320 lb one. I think we will look to trim a few lbs on our OL in order to get a little quicker, but I don't expect an identity change.

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Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by sjcougfan - 2007/12/29 13:12

Good stuff.

I hope we see JJ returning punts next year, I really think he could excel at that, he and Collie would make a nice combo returning kicks as well.

I hope Fui drops 15 or 20 lbs before next year, if he does that, he and Unga will be quite a challenge for other teams to have to deal with.:)

Has anyone heard if Bright will be able to recover fully before next season? I heard he suffered a compound fracture in the bowl game.

I'm already stoked for next season!

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Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by Gymcoug318 - 2007/12/29 14:06

McGregor wrote:

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JL McGregor
Cleveland OH

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Another person that everyone needs to watch out for is Luke Ashworth! As long as he can do what Collie did. By getting back into football shape. I'm so excited for next year! Go Cougars! :lol:

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Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by McGregor - 2007/12/29 15:20

Gymcoug318 wrote:

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To keep it going,

1) Bronco's defense. Central to Bronco's defense is the ability to Zone Blitz. I think as he defense fills out you will see more blitzing. Also, Bronco is a disciple of speed.

2) Mike Reed. I think he's maxed out on speed. Unfortunately, I think athletic CB's can cover him in man. His best attributes are his size, which lets him get the jump balls, and he's a heck of a blocker. I would like to see him have a better year next year.

3) Luke Ashworth. I've heard former players mention his name as a future contributor. That's certainly likely. But I'm not sure he makes it onto the field too much in 2008. I'm not sure. I just think we'll have a deeper WR corps, and I'm not sure he's in it. As I see it:

Starters:

Mike Reed
Austin Collie

2nd String:

Jordan Smith
?

Those vying for that other spot will be Luke Ashworth, Spencer Hafoka (who is already back and working hard to get into shape, and joins the team in January), Daniel Tervort (although I doubt it), Bryce Mahuika, and possibly a true freshman. And I've heard from at least one person that should Chambers come to BYU, he's probably good enough to crack the two-deep his first year.

Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by CougarPeasant - 2007/12/29 15:56

McGregor wrote:

1) I don't know if Tia will be 100% by fall. His injury was significant. But I think Foketi, among others, or perhaps a new recruit like Mauga, will fill in just fine.

2) Yes, Nixon will come back. I hope he works on his technique. I'm concerned that against quick and strong TE's and OT's he does not break free fast enough.

3) The thing that will save us next year are two great corners. We need to be able to stack the box with little worry. This will prove true against Washington's Jake Locker. We need to contain him. That's hard to do, but not nearly as hard when you have corners that can both play man coverage.

Thanks for the reply. B)

We have alot of JC talent coming in this season. Most of it is on defense and were JC AA or all conference. I really think since Bronco has been here for 7 seasons, the defense is totally in reload mode.

The most important game next season will be the Washington game. Locker is Tebow West, but not as accurate. If Locker could throw a better ball this year, Washington would have gone bowling and beaten Hawai'i. BYU beats Washington if Locker is off on his accuracy and BYU is prepared for his scrambling. Since many of his runs were by design, I really think Bronco will have the team prepared. If Hill has the secondary ready, I really don't see how Locker can beat BYU. If BYU does win, then I think going into Utah, TCU, and Air Force will be same as usual.

Now that UCLA has a new HC not named Walker, we will be facing him either at Washington, which wants him badly, or he stays at UCLA. I think he leaves for Washington since he can step in for Willingham as HC if Willingham doesn't get it done. SO if UCLA has a new DC, then I think BYU beats UCLA more certainly than if Walker remains.

Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by CougarPeasant - 2007/12/29 16:04

McGregor wrote:

I think Urban's circumstances were much different than Bronco's. In his last to moves he walked into excellent recruiting classes. Bronco has had to build from the ground up.

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I didn't mean to overlook that Urban walked into situations with excellent talent, but good that you point that out. I think the 2004 Utah team was one of the 3 best teams in the country. Yet, I also think that the MWC was at perhaps its lowest point in a long time as the other teams were just plain awful, which made Utah look that much better.

My point is that Bronco and Urban are exceptional coaches that were able to turn around their programs very quickly. I am with you. I think BYU can compete for an NC. The formula is there, get to and win a BCS bowl then play a challenging schedule and go undefeated again. Many have heard me say this before, but a BCS title game is not the only road to a NC championship. I think if BYU plays the best football in the country, even with their schedule and are the only undefeated team left, the AP voters would love to stick it to the BCS and vote a team like BYU the NC. I'll take a split title any day.

=====

Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by cruiser - 2007/12/29 16:26

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Interesting thought, one I hadn't entertained. Currently, AP and the other polls that are voted on have us at 19. Only the BCS, which factors in computer rankings, has us ranked 17. It seems that the computer gives us more respect than coaches and writers. I believe this is at least partially a result of our limited television coverage. Will this change next year? Is it possible that coaches and writers will give us more respect even without being able to watch many of our conference games?

However, I like your thinking. If we can beat Washington and UCLA on national TV, then keep winning, I believe the road to #1 is potentially available outside the BCS. But it will mean winning consistently and convincingly--a tall order.

=====

Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by PO_POcoug - 2007/12/29 17:19

"6) The secondary. I love the guys we have this year. BUT. Expect to see much, much more speed in the secondary. I'm repdicting G Pittman as the next Morgan. Howard has already proven that he's quite capable--I have no worries about him. I think the CB position will be every bit as strong as it was this year, but a LOT quicker. Just think--If Coach Hill can compensate for lack of athleticism with our current DB's by teaching them the fundamentals, think what that teaching could mean to someone with more athletic ability. Crazy.

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McGregor do you think that Brandon Bradley will finally get some PT this year be it at corner or safety?

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Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by McGregor - 2007/12/29 17:57

PO_POcoug wrote:

McGregor do you think that Brandon Bradley will finally get some PT this year be it at corner or safety?

I expect that he will be moved to FS. The question will be whether he can learn the position in enough time.

It's hard to predict who his competition will be. As I said earlier, Jordan Pendleton looks to be a contender. Also, you have Chris Warner coming back off injury. I'm not sure Fowler will be able to fend off the competition. I'm also not sure where Andrew Rich will fit in.

I guess athletically, I'd like to see Bradley and Pendleton as starters. I'm confident that whomever Coach Hill puts out there will be the best.

Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by Florwood - 2007/12/29 19:42

A wild card I wonder about is how well players will return from injuries. A case in point is Vakapuna, who appeared to have lingering effects from last year's ankle injury most of the season.

Specifically, is Harvey's ankle sprain more than the team will admit to, and will it affect him in '08? And I wonder the same about Hall's shoulder separation. Will it have a continuing effect next year?

By the way, excellent posts McGregor. One sign that there's no immediate justice in the world is that you only have three times as many karma points as me...when it should approach infinity more.

Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by CougarPeasant - 2007/12/29 22:44

I am sure you meant to respond to me and not McGregor on the AP title option. I know the human polls show less respect for BYU this season than the computer polls, which is usually opposite. BYU would have to dominated most every game and there can be no undefeated teams in the BCS. BYU has had back to back 11-2 seasons so if they run the table and beat a quality BCS opponent in a BCS bowl, I can see the AP voters giving it to BYU. It would take a perfect storm, no doubt, but it is possible.

cruiser wrote:

McGregor wrote:

Many have heard me say this before, but a BCS title game is not the only road to a NC championship. I think if BYU plays the best football in the country, even with their schedule and are the only undefeated team left, the AP voters would love to stick it to the BCS and vote a team like BYU the NC. I'll take a split title any day.

Interesting thought, one I hadn't entertained. Currently, AP and the other polls that are voted on have us at 19. Only the BCS, which factors in computer rankings, has us ranked 17. It seems that the computer gives us more respect than coaches and writers. I believe this is at least partially a result of our limited television coverage. Will this change next year? Is it possible that coaches and writers will give us more respect even without being able to watch many of our conference games?

However, I like your thinking. If we can beat Washington and UCLA on national TV, then keep winning, I believe the road to #1 is potentially available outside the BCS. But it will mean winning consistently and convincingly--a tall order.

Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by K9Cougar - 2007/12/29 23:55

McGregor wrote:

1) In general, we need to be careful about asking Anae to "open it up." Essentially, we're asking for Gary Crowton. He opened it WAY it. It achieved the goal of keeping the defense off guard, but at the same time, we had players on the field that were not confident about their assignments. Anae, on the other hand, hates risks, and hates anything less than 100% execution. So over the past few years, there have been plays that the team has worked on in order to get those plays to be predictably safe to where all team members know their assignment.

I will say this: I think Anae is more in favor of keeping the play book thin, but using various formations to run the same play. That's why you've seen odd formations, or at least guys you did not expect to see there (like So'oto as a fullback).

I agree with you and I really like Anae and miss the podcasts from the 2005 season when he would come on and field caller's quesitons. I really could see philosophy and was completely on board with him.

I do have to say that sometimes I feel like there is no magic though. Bronco and the defense have magic against whoever we play. Not so much for the offense. You could quote the 4th and 18 (didn't Max call that one at the line?) and some of the other close plays, but where were the adjustments at half time in Vegas. Hard to describe, it seems like Bronco makes the adjustments (I wish they would have switched Dulan and Jan up a little bit or put Moses in there for Jan on some of those runnig plays to the left side) and our offense just keeps banging their heads. Robert Anae...show me some magic!!

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Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by WACoug - 2007/12/30 01:10

McGregor,

I am sure I can speak for all of cougarblue when I say thank you for this thread. We all respect your decision to not post so in depth per Bronco's wishes. I for one feel like a crack junkie who just got a fix after a long hiatus. :lol: B)

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Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by Gymcoug318 - 2007/12/30 01:18

WACoug wrote:
McGregor,

I am sure I can speak for all of cougarblue when I say thank you for this thread. We all respect your decision to not post so in depth per Bronco's wishes. I for one feel like a crack junkie who just got a fix after a long hiatus. :lol: B)
Ditto! I completely agree!:lol:

=====

Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by Mars - 2007/12/30 04:31

McGregor wrote:

1) Anae. First of all, I think a lot of the complaints about Anae are unwarranted. Uniformly there are football answers to all complaints I see, but I will save that discussion for another thread. But in 2008, you will see a more "open" BYU. Robert has been here long enough that he can comfortably run some plays within his system and style that we maybe haven't seen before. I know I've seen some plays in practice that have never made it to the game field. My main concern with Anae is in-game adjustments. For example, how long he took to run the ball against UNLV and SDSU. Also, how he doesn't go with the hot-handed runner (like how he stuck with Curtis over Fui/Tonga/Unga for the first part of last year, and Fui/Tonga over Unga the first part of this year). Also his tendency to get extremely conservative when milking a lead (see: 0 points against UCLA in the 2nd half in Vegas, letting TCU and Utah back into the games in Provo). Sure, I'm very happy with him, but why not strain at gnats as long as I have an opportunity to ask "the man"? ;)

McGregor wrote:

2) Collie. I'm a Collie homer, I admit. But think about what he accomplished this year coming off a mission and on a sprained ankle. Expect this guy to shave a tenth, or more, from his 40 time, expect him to polish off his already

EXCELLENT route-running, and expect him to lean up a bit more. With all of this, and an entire off season building that connection with Max . . . Wow! I have it on pretty good authority that Collie expects that this coming year to be "Heismann-esque" (not that he will win it, but that at the end of the year, he will be able to fill a similarly-looking highlight reel). But will Collie continue to push-off his defender on so many plays with an obvious full arm movement? Collie could win up the offensive PI king if he doesn't fix that aggressive little habit. I also really want him to be healthy enough to field almost all of our punt and kick returns.

McGregor wrote:

3) Max Hall. I expect Max to increase the velocity of his throws a little, and I expect to see him work all summer at moving through his progressions. I also expect that he's going to work on his foot speed. How many interceptions will he throw? How many times will he fumble? Can he teach himself to look past Collie first, Pitta second, no one third (an over-exaggeration)?

McGregor wrote:

4) Jan Jorgensen. Favorite defender. Does anyone else need reminding that he's only a sophomore??? He will work on his technique, build a little more muscle mass, but work on his burst. While I'm at it, I think Denney will be the other DE. Add his development in, and I think we will have an amazing DL, almost regardless of who we plug into the DT. Also look for Steve Fendry to make some noise. I agree. But please remind me again how UCLA's backup running backs ate our D-line alive?

McGregor wrote:

5) Harvey The Unga. So no one is going to mistake Harvey as a track star, but it would not be a stretch to accuse his freshman play as "junior." I think he's two years ahead of the curve. I expect that next year he will block better and catch better. I do think he'll try to get a little faster, too. I think his main concern, though, should be learning the offense and blocking. That's the main thing we miss without Curtis Brown. If Harvey learns this, I expect better protection for Max, and more swing passes to Harvey. Unga is awesome. But how many yards will he have next season against Washington and UCLA?

McGregor wrote:

6) The secondary. I love the guys we have this year. BUT. Expect to see much, much more speed in the secondary. I'm predicting G Pittman as the next Morgan. Howard has already proven that he's quite capable--I have no worries about him. I think the CB position will be every bit as strong as it was this year, but a LOT quicker. Just think--If Coach Hill can compensate for lack of athleticism with our current DB's by teaching them the fundamentals, think what that teaching could mean to someone with more athletic ability. Crazy. I don't expect to see Tafuna, and I'm not sure Fowler will keep his job. I think before the season started there were freshman that were competing for the starting job. I just think Bronco wanted to keep these guys in the wings if he could. Young still means inexperienced. We may have seen no repeat of the Tulsa game because we played no other team with Tulsa's ability to pass. Washington can pass, and perhaps in a year UCLA will be able to as well.

McGregor wrote:

7) JJ DiLuigi. He hasn't touched the turf yet, but I'm excited. We could write pages of why we didn't see the slot this year, but suffice it to say, JJ will bump out the competition. He will be cross trained at slot and RB, but will add a dimension to this offense that will open things up again. I worry that J.J. will get buried by an O.C. that prefers to play upperclassmen first/more. Not a lot, but a little.

McGregor wrote:

8) No loss on the OL. Sete was great, but Sorenson will be NO drop off. Which reminds me- Why should we keep Weber as O-Line coach? To me, the outsider arm-chair fan, it seems like he did a terrible job this year. Our upperclass linemen couldn't stop causing penalties to save their team's life. And somehow even a Reynolds kid came out of games looking bad!

McGregor wrote:

9) LBers. We know Doman can play. So can Hooks and so can Bauman. I expect that Van Sweden and Nelson will also get some serious looks. Brian Kehl will be missed, but I think the collective speed at the LB position will be enhanced, with no toughness or mass lossed. Then again, Doman was hurt much of this year. Hooks had off-the-field problems, and never caught back up. Bauman was great of the bench, but what about the pressure of starting and the wear and tear of longer minutes? And who are the back-ups now? Also, you can't underestimate Poppinga's influence- he had more tackles than Kehl and was known to be the more vocal on-field leader.

McGregor wrote:

10) Special teams. I've talked about this elsewhere, but I think Sorenson beats out Payne. I think some of it will depend on Sorenson's mission plans, which I understand are not solid (but I've heard otherwise from reliable sources-- interestingly, I heard BOTH from reliable sources). As someone mentioned on another thread, I think Sorenson's field goal ability and the field position with added depth on kickoffs will earn us at least 3 points a game, if not more. I think it's safe to say he will get us an extra field goal, and give us field position for an extra touchdown per game. Also, Austin

Collie will be returning kicks. I expect that Bryce may not be returning punts, nor back with Austin returning kicks. G Pittman was looking like he may get that call. Also, if we land Chambers, he may have a shot. And finally, I think deep-snapping duties go to either Denney or Fendry, likely Fendry. I forget that we need a new deep-snapper. I heard Sorensen was leaving on a mission first. Wasn't Mahuika a senior this season? I don't think we have a shot at Chambers. And what about DiLuigi doing some returning?

McGregor wrote:

11) Remember, for what it's worth, Tonga and Vakapuna will both be back. Gaining how many yards per carry? Against non-MWC teams?

McGregor wrote:

12) Bronco. I think what is also EXTREMELY important to remember is that Bronco will be a senior. His 6-6 campaign was his freshman effort. He was still learning, and baking a cake without all the ingredients. 2006 was his sophomore year. Both he and the team finally had identity. That helped make a great class of seniors that much better. But he still had a lot to learn. In 2007, his junior year, he faced a monumental challenge: take an infant offense and make them compete. It didn't help that his secondary had a hard time staying healthy (or waking up). But he did it. He was able to make the results of the previous year, even if he didn't produce as much results. But he learned a lot. 2008 is Bronco's senior year. He knows how he wants to do things. He knows what makes HIS recruits tick. He knows his staff. He knows strengths and weaknesses. And most importantly, his players believe his word as gospel. But can Bronco prepare a BYU team to win tough OOC matches on the road, especially against BCS teams? Can he coach wins over Top 20 teams consistently? Can he beat 10+ wins squads? Can he call a player to kneel with 13-seconds left in the half? Can he not punt down 17 at home in the 4th quarter from midfield? Can he win 11 games? Can he go undefeated out of conference play? Can he get us a blowout win over Utah? Can he run up the score, and get his team to step on the opponents' throat? Can his team not give up TDs in the last 2 minutes of the 2nd and 4th quarters?

I love my Cougars. But if we want to talk BCS Busting, we should really talk it out. Are we good enough? Why? How can we do it?

Everyone but airdog has got to see that the future is bright.

GO COUGARS!

Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by McGregor - 2007/12/30 05:42

Mars wrote:

My main concern with Anae is in-game adjustments. For example, how long he took to run the ball against UNLV and SDSU. Also, how he doesn't go with the hot-handed runner (like how he stuck with Curtis over Fui/Tonga/Unga for the first part of last year, and Fui/Tonga over Unga the first part of this year). Also his tendency to get extremely conservative when milking a lead (see: 0 points against UCLA in the 2nd half in Vegas, letting TCU and Utah back into the games in Provo).

One thing we must always keep in mind is that there are always two teams making adjustments. I get the feeling that fans seem to think that, for instance, UCLA comes with a gameplan, and BYU comes with a gameplan. It takes us a drive to figure out what UCLA is doing, but takes the coaches until haltime. That's simply not the case.

What happens is that both teams come out with a gameplan. As each drive develops, ALL coaches are seeing what is happening, and communicate their observations. We call plays accordingly. BUT, that's exactly what the other team is doing. Soemtimes we make a change simultaneous with a UCLA change that turns out to be a bad fit for us. It happens. But I promise, coaches are playing the chess match all game long.

As for certain players: that's a position coach call. Reynolds tells an assistant on the sideline who should go in next. Remember, too, that sometimes a player is sent in not knowing what Robert will call. Harvey can't be in the game for every play, and sometimes it's the case that the plays he's in there for are passing plays, then he gets a breather on the run plays. I think the coaches are cognizant of this, but there are also a lot of calls changed at the line.

Re:2008 Predictions

Mars wrote:

How many interceptions will he throw? How many times will he fumble? Can he teach himself to look past Collie first, Pitta second, no one third (an over-exaggeration)?

I agree. But please remind me again how UCLA's backup running backs ate our D-line alive?

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Which reminds me- Why should we keep Weber as O-Line coach? To me, the outsider arm-chair fan, it seems like he did a terrible job this year. Our upperclass linemen couldn't stop causing penalties to save their team's life. And somehow even a Reynolds kid came out of games looking bad!

Then again, Doman was hurt much of this year. Hooks had off-the-field problems, and never caught back up. Bauman was great of the bench, but what about the pressure of starting and the wear and tear of longer minutes? And who are the back-ups now? Also, you can't underestimate Poppinga's influence- he had more tackles than Kehl and was known to be the more vocal on-field leader.

I forget that we need a new deep-snapper. I heard Sorensen was leaving on a mission first. Wasn't Mahuika a senior this season? I don't think we have a shot at Chambers. And what about DiLuigi doing some returning?

Gaining how many yards per carry? Against non-MWC teams?

The UCLA game was fought in the trenches. On offense, we played against a stacked box. If you have 5 lineman, it's tough to block 7 or 8 guys. No line is going to look too great. The way to combat that is effectively spreading out field. We were not able to effectively do that. But to blame it all on the line would be unfair. I do, however, realize that there were several missed assignments. Unfortunately, UCLA was a great defense with an excellent DC, with tons of time to prepare.

On the other side, Jan was doubled. They knew that Jan would cause problems. If you're an OC, you have two choices: run AWAY from Jan, using one man to block him. That's not the best idea, because is good enough to shed a blocker, and fast enough to catch up with the play. The other option is to run AT Jan. Then, you double up on him.

Jan will need to work on his technique to bust up double teams.

I'm not sure how much it matters that the CB's are inexperienced. Experience certainly helps, but plenty of freshman have walked into starting roles at CB. It should be the safety position that worries. But remember that neither of our two safeties began the year as starters, and neither had too much playing time (especially Kellen).

I expect that DiLuigi will have a shot at returning.

I do think we have a shot at Chambers.

Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by ammoncougar1 - 2007/12/30 22:33

McGregor, you are the man. Thank you for the update and optimism. I am optimistic and hopeful that the stars line up right and we see some pretty impressive things in the coming season. I guess now I need countdown calendars to NLOI day, Spring ball, Fall camp and Opening game for 2008!

Go COugs!!!

Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by byuwriter - 2007/12/30 23:00

Is Tonga's brother coming back?

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Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by McGregor - 2007/12/31 08:07

byuwriter wrote:
Is Tonga's brother coming back?

I believe so.

Also, scratch Jordan Smith from next year's two-deep.

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Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by PO_POcoug - 2007/12/31 16:50

McGregor wrote:
byuwriter wrote:
Is Tonga's brother coming back?

I believe so.

Also, scratch Jordan Smith from next year's two-deep.

Did something happen to him? Or is it you just dont think he will crack the two deep?

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Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by Hipsdamann - 2007/12/31 20:16

Sorenson is going on a mission. I go to BHS, and there is not doubt in my mind that the kid is on the right track. I have heard from his friends that he wants to play his freshman year and then go on his mission. He is going mark my words. SORENSON IS GOING!!

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Re:2008 Predictions

Posted by McGregor - 2008/01/02 10:36

PO_POcoug wrote:
McGregor wrote:
byuwriter wrote:
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I believe so.

Also, scratch Jordan Smith from next year's two-deep.

Did something happen to him? Or is it you just dont think he will crack the two deep?

He now has plans to serve a mission.

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