

# Polls Agree: BYU #



Steve Olsen Photo

LaVell Edwards is looking forward to the Holiday Bowl.

By MARION DUNN  
Herald Sports Editor

BYU football coach LaVell Edwards hung up the phone and looked out his office window at the stream of students walking past the Smith Fieldhouse early this morning. He rubbed his eyes and said: "Obviously the rankings are the most exciting thing that's ever happened to us. When you think that at the start of the year we weren't even ranked regardless of what we had done in the past, it's . . . well, it's like an Horatio Alger story."

Edwards was talking about the fact his BYU football team is ranked No. 1 by United Press International (coaches poll) and Associated Press (writers) for the second week in a row.

There is still one regular season poll remaining but there are no games to be played that should influence the Cougars' ranking in the regular season.

This means the Cougars are certain to take the No. 1 spot with them when they face Michigan in Holiday Bowl VII, Dec. 21.

The Wolverines are 6-5 compared to BYU's 12-0 record, but Michigan has one of the nation's long-time great football programs and BYU will have to play its best game to beat them.

But if that happens — if BYU beats the Wolverines by say 14 points — they stand an excellent chance of being voted national champions when the final polls are taken after the New Year's Day bowl games.

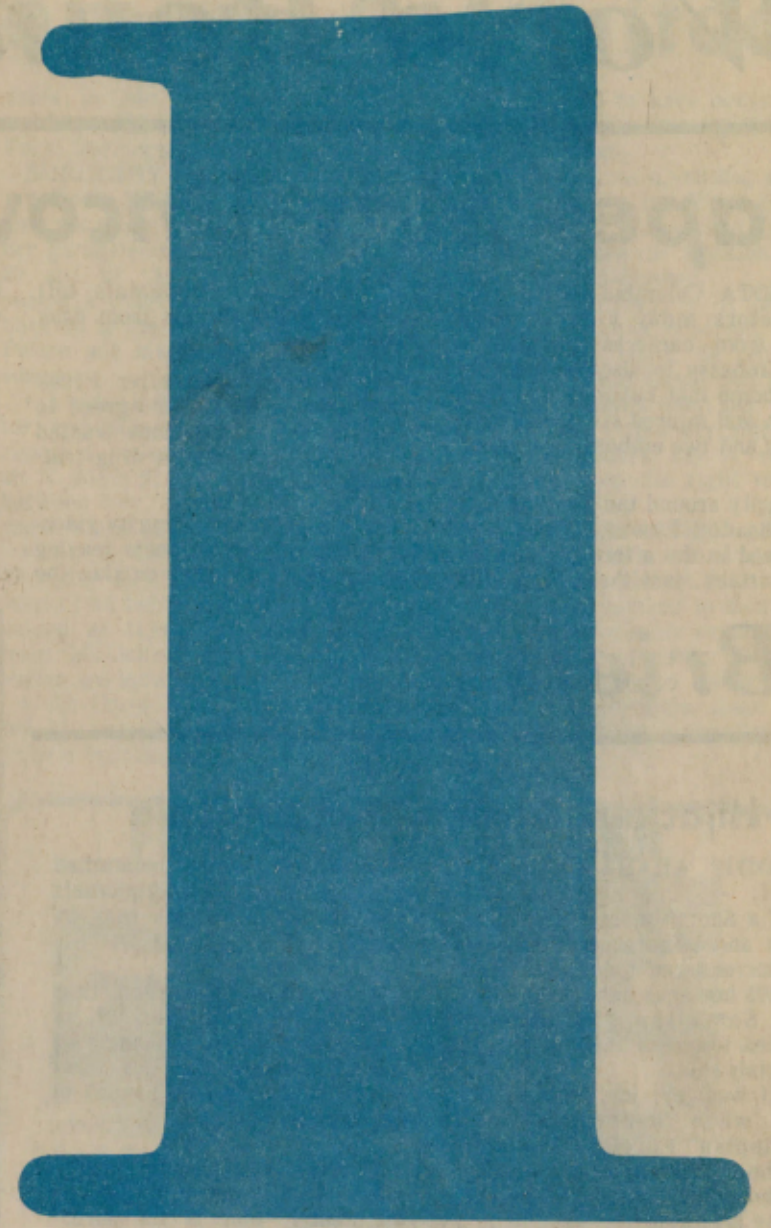
BYU is the only major college team to go through the season undefeated and untied. The Cougars have the nation's longest current winning streak at 23 games. This is the second week they have been ranked No. 1.

"You can't believe the interest the rankings have created in us," Edwards said. "Even the controversy over our schedule with people calling and visiting us to ask if we should or should not be number one, has added to the excitement.

"When you realize that we weren't ranked at the start of the season. That we never played a game on national television. That we are from a sparsely populated part of the country and in a small Utah city. The fact we are ranked number one at the end of the season is incredible, fantastic.

"I think it is not only a great thing for BYU and the WAC, I think it is good for the entire Intermountain region. I know that no other

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# BYU: Cougars Again No. 1

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WAC team has ever been ranked number one. I don't think Colorado has ever been ranked number one.

"I think it is good to have a team from the Rocky Mountains named number one. It speaks highly of the program at BYU and of the other programs in the conference and the area. It shows that the system works. That a team doesn't have to be from the East or the West Coast or the football hotbeds of the South and Midwest and Southwest to be ranked number one.

"I think BYU represents the . . . well . . . the little guys of the football world. If we can do it, then so can other schools in the Rockies do it.

"I really think it is a real-life Horatio Alger story."

Edwards has given the BYU players time off until Dec. 7 when they will start preparing for Michigan.

Meanwhile the coaches are busy recruiting and Edwards will attend the annual Football Foundation Hall of Fame banquet in New York City where his close friend, former Michigan State coach Duffy Dougherty will be honored.

Glen Tuckett, BYU athletic director, also commented on the ranking this morning:

"To be ranked number one at the end of the season is a great honor. I'm happy for LaVell, the coaches, the players, the university and I'm especially pleased for our loyal fans."