

Cougar Outlook – Great Expectations

It's getting to the point where basketball fans are expecting the "Quiet One" (Stan Watts) to come up with a title contender every year—with or without the material. This year's club has a great potential for extending Stan's chain of good teams. But there are some obvious weaknesses in the Y squad that must be reckoned with before the Cougars can expect a fitting for the Skyline crown.

The most obvious shortcoming is a lack of tall timber. Most of the team's height is found at center where three players average six-five. The team average thereafter drops to uncertain sizes. The weakness was felt last year when the Gatos were rattled off the boards because of an inability to get the rebounds. Consistent sweeping of the bank-boards would brighten the BYU picture considerably.

There's a liberal amount of youth and speed on the 1952-53 roster, and the overall talent is good, but unseasoned.

Two old reliables, guard Harold Christensen and forward Joe Richey, will cinch two of the starting berths throughout the season. But the other three regulars are still pretty much in doubt. A working combination will be needed to form the nucleus for this year's team, and at this writing that combination is yet to be found.

Of course there are some likely candidates, but they'll have to prove themselves. Boyd Jarman and Nick Mateljan are the logical starters at the center post, and each does a commendable job. The advantages of each balance out.

Outside of Christensen, the guard line is young and inexperienced. Anyone of several players—Bob Cowser, Van Burgess, Stan Gleave, or Sherm Crump—could get the other post. Cowser, a six-five ex-Marine, could be used to great advantage because of his height. Burgess, who like Cowser, is a sophomore, can hit nicely from deep and is a choice ball handler.

Anyone of four players—Tom Karren, Neil Stephens, Dean Larsen or John Taylor—could get the call opposite Richey. All are either juniors or sophomores, and each has a particular advantage.

The problem of filling the vacancy left by guard Jerry Romney is one that quite naturally bothers Watts. Romney's two-handed swishers from the deep and his driving lay-ups were great scoring factors that kept the Cougars in the contention class last year.

The Y's first four games—two each with Idaho State and Los Angeles State—are admittedly warmups. The real test of the Cougar mettle will take place against St. Louis at Provo, December 22. Then the Cats journey to Richmond, Kentucky for a game with Eastern Kentucky, and from Richmond to Raleigh, North Carolina for the Dixie Classic. This should be the acid test.

Most crucial series the Cats will face will come near the tail end of the season when they meet Utah, Wyoming and Colorado A&M within a seven-day period, all games away from home.