



the outlook:

feeling for success

Are you satisfied with your recruiting this first year?

Although it is rather difficult to recruit quality basketball players in such a short period of time we feel very satisfied with what we were able to do. A good portion of the success should be credited to the former staff, because they laid the ground work on two outstanding basketball players—**Verne Thompson** and **Steve Craig**. We were very fortunate to recruit a fine prospect in **Terry Gugat**, a junior college All-American from Mesa College in Colorado, as well as two other fine freshmen in **Craig Christensen** from Highland High School, whom we felt was the best guard in the state of Utah last year—and **Misho Ostarcevic**, who comes to us from Yugoslavia.

Do you plan any sweeping changes in the program, and if so, what will they be?

I am quite certain that the Cougar fans will see an entirely different system of play this year. We are making every effort to implement a fast-tempo style of game, which will include fast break and full-court pressure basketball. It is very unlikely that you will see the new team play any half-court zone defense. We will concentrate rather on a very aggressive, intense man-to-man defense.

Are you tailoring the system to fit the personnel, or will the two fit together pretty well?

We are definitely custom-making the offense to fit the personnel, as we will attempt to do each year.

On this year's squad, it appears as though we have several players at 6'4" to 6'9"—which will make it necessary for us to play with a one-guard front and four bigger fellows in the lineup. At the present time, we plan to begin the season with a deep double post, with one of the two flashing to the high post to put us, in effect, in a 1-3-1 offensive alignment.

Some observers feel the guard line will be the critical position this season. Do you see it that way?

I do not share the feeling that some of our pessimistic critics feel regarding our guard line. On the contrary, I feel that the guard position will be in good hands. We have some very fine players at that position who will be more than adequate to handle our needs. Outlook (cont'd) . . .

Of the lettermen and squad members returning, do you plan to switch any players to different positions?

It will be reasonable to expect **Mark Handy** to play more inside this year than last. He will, however, have some experience at the high post as well as the low post. We feel that his shooting is coming along quite well, and if we keep him within his range, he will do an outstanding job for us. **Jay Cheesman** on the other hand, will be playing more at the high post than at the low—although he has exceptional ability at the low post, and we do not want to take those opportunities away from him entirely. **Troy Jones** will see considerable action this year. His im-

provement has been significant, and we feel he has the potential to be an outstanding basketball player for us.

With some preseason practice behind you, what, generally, do you regard as the team's strengths and weaknesses?

After approximately three weeks of practices, I feel that one of the strengths of this basketball team will be shooting. It appears as though we have some very fine shooters on our squad. I wouldn't call this particularly a weakness, but it would be nice if we were to have a 6'11" - 7'1" post man. In today's major college basketball circles, it is very difficult to be a national power unless you have that dominant big man. We are blessed in having three outstanding 6'9" players, but none at the 7' level—which we could always use.

Looking at the schedule, what do you regard as the toughest challenge?

As I look at the schedule, one of the most difficult things that we have to contend with is the fact that we play four games in a six-day period of time during the exam week. That certainly is not conducive to outstanding basketball play. We feel very strongly that these young men are on this campus for an education first and that they must take time to prepare themselves adequately for their examinations. Therefore, that will mean our practices will not be fully attended, and briefer than normal. However, I would gladly trade this year's schedule for next—when we play eight games on the road in December and only three at home. We must, however, keep the preseason play in proper perspective. The most important thing to our basketball team is the conference play, and we will consider the preseason as simply a dress rehearsal in our preparation for the major performance—again being conference play.

How would you evaluate basketball played in the Western Athletic Conference?

Basketball played in the Western Athletic Conference is of exceptional caliber. There is no doubt that year-in and year-out the teams from top to bottom in the WAC perform at the highest level and will compete favorably with teams of any other conference in America. Unfortunately, we are not located in a major metropolitan area where we would receive a greater exposure and publicity. That in itself tends

to make teams higher ranked than those of us located in the Rocky Mountain communities.

Which teams in the WAC would you rank as contenders and why?

I am not really that familiar with the teams in the WAC Conference, but from the research that I have done and the personnel that I am personally familiar with, I would have to say that the four southern schools would all have a chance to win the championship. Arizona, perhaps, must be considered the most logical choice for a first place—simply because they have all five starters returning from a team that had the best win-loss record in the past many years at the University of Arizona. Texas-El Paso, on the other hand, took second place in our conference last year, and they have three starters and their first substitute, who played significantly, coming back. That will give them an outstanding nucleus. The University of New Mexico hired a basketball coach from Compton College, one of the strongest junior colleges in America last year—and he just happened to bring with him two 6'8" All-American basketball players. In addition, they were fortunate to recruit another 6'5" junior college All-American from the East Coast. That, then, gives them overnight an outstanding nucleus with which to build a power. Arizona State, on the other hand, lost a lot of their basketball players—but the average fan is not familiar with the outstanding substitutes and red shirts they had who will make up their ball club this year. They, too, will have outstanding talent. For any of the four northern schools to replace the four southern schools will be a difficult task, but one that is not out of reach.

What will it take for the Cougars to have a successful season?

I guess that depends on one's definition of success. To put it as briefly as I can, I feel strongly that success is very simply doing the very best you can with what you have. There is no question in my mind, on that basis, that our BYU basketball team this year will be successful. We have outstanding young men who have their fair share of basketball ability. I feel that, to date, our practices have been exceptional—that these young men are willing and eager to learn, and are working with a great deal of dedication and intensity in their approach to the season. I feel that we will certainly be competitive and entertaining, and that anybody that we play this year will know that they have been in a contest. I am not in a position to predict our win-loss record, simply because I do not have a comparison of our opponents to go on. I feel I can say, however, with all sincerity, that we will have a winning basketball season.

personnel outlook



Transfers Verne Thompson, Terry Gugat

LETTERMEN LOST: (4)

Name - Position	Ht.	1975-76 Class	Scoring Average	Rebound Average	Position Scoring
Brian Frishman, f (dropped from squad)	6-6		15.4	4.6	1
***Grig Clawson, g	6-3		8.5	2.5	5
***Greg Snow, f	6-7		2.5	2.7	10
**Gifford Nielsen, g	6-5	Jr.	8.7	3.6	4

RETURNING SQUAD: (8)

**Jay Cheesman, c	6-9	Jr.	14.6	6.6	2
**Mark Handy, f	6-8	Jr.	11.7	9.1	3
**Veryl Law, g	6-2	Jr.	7.6	2.7	6
**Troy Jones, c	6-9	Sr.	4.6	2.6	7
**Chris Williams, f	6-6	Sr.	4.4	3.3	8
*Vance Law, g	6-2	Soph.	3.0	.4	9
Reed Noble, g	6-3	Sr.	1.6	.5	11
Stu Walkenhorst, c	6-11	Sr.	.3	.4	12

TRANSFERS: (2)

Terry Gugat, f	6-6	210	Jr.	Mesa College (Colorado)
		(24.2 scoring average, 10 rebounds per game)		
Verne Thompson, f-g	6-6	200	Jr.	Bellevue Jr. College (Washington)
		(20.2 points per game, 12.7 rebounds)		

INCOMING FRESHMEN: (2)

Steve Craig, g	6-2	175 (All-CIF)	Fr.	Beverly Hills High (Calif.)
Craig Christensen, g	6-4	175	Fr.	Highland High (Utah)
		(21.0 scoring average, 10 rebounds per game)		

RETURNING STARTERS: Mark Handy, Jay Cheesman and Veryl Law were starters in the final games of the season.