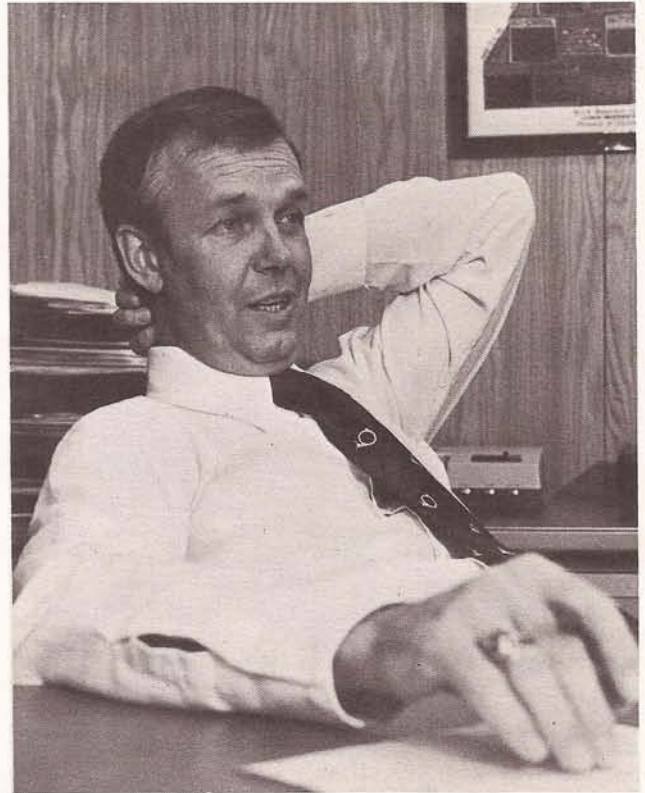


Arnold Interview:

Good Recruiting Year, Shy on Experience



- **It would appear BYU had an excellent recruiting year. How would you evaluate the talent?**

There is no question we have been fortunate enough to sign some outstanding young basketball players. I feel very strongly that we now have, in our last two recruiting classes, some very fine young talent. Before we can become nationally prominent, however, we must have at least two more highly successful recruiting years. The players we now have in our program have enabled us to build a very solid foundation for the future, but we must now continue our momentum by following up with equally as successful, if not even more successful, this year and next. All of our players this coming season will be first- or second-year men. They are players who are highly dedicated, who are very compatible with one another and who believe strongly in what we are trying to do. For these reasons, there should be no problem building them into an efficiently operating unit.

- **Do you see this year's team as being a contender for the WAC title?**

Optimistically, I would like to say yes, we could be; but realistically, I must say that it will be a very difficult task for us. Of the 14 players we have on grant-in-aid, six have only one year of major college varsity experience and eight have none. We very possibly are the youngest, least experienced major college team in America today. The toughness of our pre-season schedule will, however, enable us to grow up very rapidly. We will more than likely take some lumps early in the season, but it will be valuable for us to play this type of competition to prepare us for the WAC Conference.

- **To what extent are you improved from a year ago?**

We have taken a significant step forward in the areas of speed and quickness; because of this, I believe that our fast break will be much better as well as our defensive play. Interestingly enough, we can put two different types of basketball teams on the floor. One would be a very big basketball team with a front line of 6-9, 6-10, and 7-0, and guards at 6-4, 6-5. On the other hand, we could come back with a club of three perimeter people at 6-1, 6-2, 6-4, with the two inside people at 6-6 and 6-10. Obviously, the style of play would be affected by the physical size of the people that would be on the court. Our goal, of course, is to establish a balance between size, speed and quickness that will be to our best advantage.

- **What do you regard as the team's strengths?**

On paper we are well off at both the guard and center positions. The players we have in those positions come to us with very prestigious credentials. Runia, Anderson, and Taylor all proved themselves as potentially fine young players. We fully expect them to be better this year. The forwards that we have returning from last year's squad have had very little playing experience, but have qualities that can be of great value to us. Our incoming freshmen have also been very successful at the high school level, but the jump from high school to major college basketball is indeed a great one. We are hopeful that our junior college transfer, Keith Rice, will give us the explosive jumping ability and speed that we have been lacking.

● **What areas concern you most?**

As I have previously mentioned, the inexperienced and physical size of our forwards is of concern to me at this time.

● **Do you plan any changes in strategy?**

About the only change we plan to make this year will be in our offensive motion. It is our intention to have a little bit more motion in our offense that would include freedom of movement by the players themselves. We continue to believe in the quick strike type of offense with full court man-to-man pressure defense as our main thrusts. We feel that the type of players that we have been able to recruit these past two years now enable us to do this effectively.

● **How do you hope to benefit from this year's schedule?**

Our schedule is the most demanding of the three years that I have been at BYU. We feel pleased to have scheduled UCLA in our opening game at Pauley Pavilion in Los Angeles, we have drawn the University of North Carolina in the first round of the Rainbow Classic in Honolulu and in mid-January we play the Soviet Union National Team, one of the truly great "amateur" teams in the world today. Because we are

so very young and inexperienced, our challenging pre-season schedule will enable us to mature rapidly. It is my desire to continue to schedule nationally prominent teams.

● **How do you see the other teams in the Western Athletic Conference?**

Based on the fact Utah won the Conference championship and has four returning starters, they certainly must be considered as the number one team. Arizona State finished the season very strongly; I feel that they had a wealth of talent that just started to mature as the season completed and have recruited a great 6-11 junior college transfer to go along with them. I would, therefore, have to pick USU among the top two or three teams in the conference. New Mexico has virtually everyone returning, and Arizona continues to have super talent in its program. They should rank among the top four. UTEP had a highly successful recruiting season, but is in the same boat we are, having a very young group of players. I expect Colorado State to be as tough as ever, being coached by a great coach in Jim Williams with a majority of their starters returning. From what I understand Wyoming had a highly successful recruiting season as well, and has upgraded its program in both size and quickness. What it all adds up to is another great WAC season.

Personnel Outlook

LETTERMEN LOST (7)

| | Ht. | 1977-78 Class | Scoring Average | Rebounding Average | Scoring Position |
|-----------------------|-----|---------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|
| ****Jay Cheesman, F-C | 6-9 | .. | 15.9 | 8.3 | 1st |
| **Verne Thompson, F | 6-6 | .. | 15.2 | 5.4 | 2nd |
| ****Mark Handy, C | 6-8 | .. | 11.5 | 6.8 | 3rd |
| ***Vance Law, G | 6-2 | .. | 9.3 | 1.3 | 4th |
| **Misho Ostarcevic | 6-7 | .. | 3.8 | 3.1 | 9th |
| *Nick Nakic, F | 6-8 | .. | 3.1 | 2.3 | 10th |
| ****Veryl Law, G | 6-2 | .. | 2.2 | .3 | 12th |

LETTERMEN RETURNING

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|------|-----------|-----|-----|------|
| *Scott Runia, G | 6-1 | Sophomore | 5.8 | 1.8 | 5th |
| *Alan Taylor, C | 6-10 | Sophomore | 5.5 | 3.8 | 6th |
| *Mike May, G | 6-1 | Senior | 4.0 | 2.1 | 8th |
| *Greg Anderson, G | 6-1 | Sophomore | 4.1 | .8 | 7th |
| *Glen Roberts, F | 6-5 | Junior | 2.8 | 2.5 | 11th |
| *Larry Cheesman, F | 6-6 | Senior | 2.0 | 1.3 | 13th |

TRANSFERS (1)

| | | | | | |
|---------------|-----|--|--|--|--|
| Keith Rice, F | 6-6 | Junior - Mt. Hood Community College (23.8, 11.0) (Portland, Oregon) | | | |
|---------------|-----|--|--|--|--|

FRESHMEN (7)

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|------|---|--|--|--|
| Danny Ainge, G-F | 6-4½ | Eugene, Oregon (North Eugene) 24.5, 8-7 | | | |
| Steve Anderson, G | 6-6 | Rancho Palos Verdes (Rolling Hills) 25.2 | | | |
| Greg Ballif, G | 6-4 | Provo, Utah (Provo) 22.0, 6.0 | | | |
| Dave McGuire, C | 7-0 | Valinda, California (Workman) 22.0, 16.0 | | | |
| Kevin Nielsen, F | 6-7 | Provo, Utah (Provo) 18.0, 9.0 | | | |
| Mark Stroud, F | 6-9 | Pocatello, Idaho (Highland) 15.4, 8.0 | | | |
| Paul Vos, C | 7-0 | Waalare, Netherlands (Eindhoven) 14.0, 12.0 | | | |

The Outlook:

Hopeful Cougars

Good Bet

For Future

What can you say about a basketball team whose players' average age is 19.3 years per player?

Perhaps it would be best to say nothing, since it is known that youth are typically unpredictable. But one thing seems sure—there is great talent to be found on the Cougar roster.

With only two seniors on the entire roster (Larry Cheesman and Mike May), and a total of eight newcomers, there is no way of gauging how the team will fare. Not even the coach and his assistants can get an accurate reading as to overall team performance. The club is that new.

All of the new players came to BYU with healthy scoring averages, but the transition to college is never easy.

Of the former squad members returning, several saw some action in 1976-77. Scott Runia (6-1) and Mike May (6-1), both guards, played in all but one of the games last year. And center (6-10) Alan Taylor and forward Glen Roberts (6-5) saw action in 24 contests.

Transfer forward Keith Rice (6-6) brings a wealth of talent with him and could emerge as a power forward which may have been lacking in recent years at BYU.

And then there's Dan Ainge (6-4½), who some regard as the best prep athlete to come out of Oregon since Richard Washington. Washington now stars with the Kansas City-Omaha Kings after playing at UCLA. Ainge was high recruited in basketball, football, and baseball by the top schools around the country. And in fact, the pros did sign the 6-4½ swingman to a baseball contract.

During the off-season, Ainge will be fulfilling a contract for over \$60,000 with the Toronto Blue-Jays. But he expects to make a lasting four-year contribution on the hardwoods at BYU, too.

Two of the best basketball players to come out of Provo High have been recruited for the Cougar cage club this year, too. Kevin Nielsen (6-7) is a ray of hope, and Greg Ballif has great scoring potential.

Of the two seven-footers added to the roster, Dave McGuire seems to have an edge. He's not as

muscular as Paul Vos, a Dutchman who needs to become more familiar with the American style of basketball.

Mark Stroud (6-9) adds height to the forward position, and will likely rebound from an average senior year in high school to bigger things at BYU.

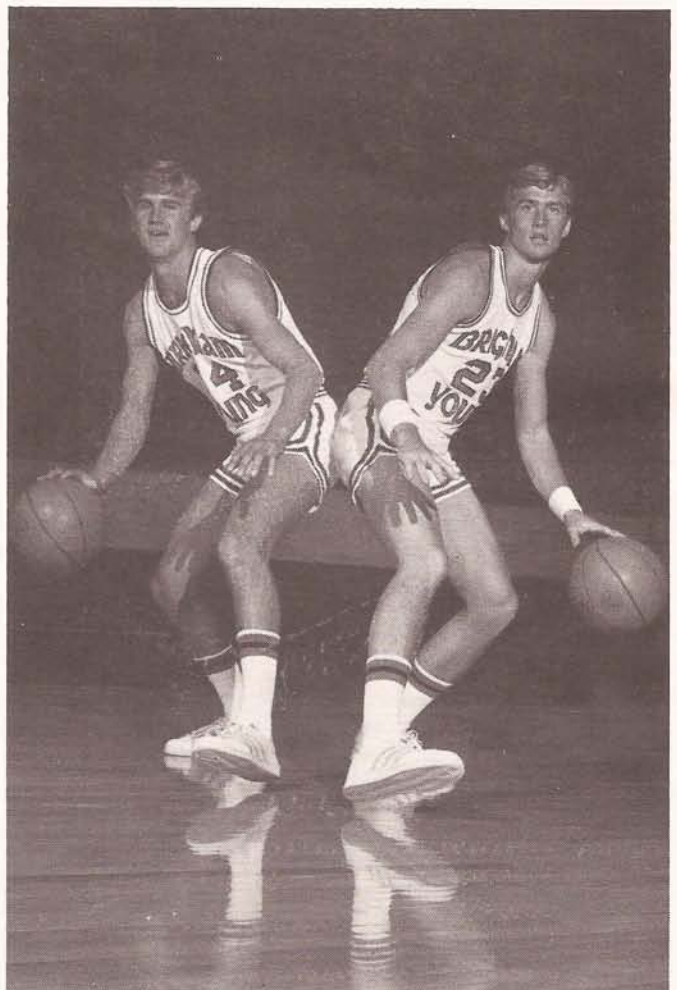
Guard Steve Anderson (6-6) is a steady player who could also fit into a swingman's role.

Two major basketball tournaments and a game against the national team from Russia highlight Brigham Young University's 30-game basketball schedule.

Although the Cougars may not swing from coast-to-coast during the 1977-78 season, they will cover a lot of territory with the busiest schedule a BYU team has had in recent years. The team is also scheduled for two television appearances during the Western Athletic Conference part of the season (Jan. 14 at Colorado State and Jan. 21 against Arizona State).

For the opener the Cougars will travel to UCLA for a clash with the Bruins, the first between the two schools in many years. Two nights later BYU will host Long Beach State at home, then travel to Reno for a game with Nevada-Reno. BYU will meet NCAA regional finalist Idaho State in Pocatello on Dec. 3.

This year's Cougar Classic on the nights of Dec. 9-10 will feature William & Mary, Montana, and Cal State-Fullerton.



Sophomore guards Scott Runia and Greg Anderson