

Arnold Answers Questions on 1982-83 Team

Considering BYU's losses through graduation, how will this affect the Cougar offense?

We have lost, either by graduation and/or missions, five outstanding players who started for us at one time or another; Steve Trumbo, Fred Roberts, Greg Ballif, Craig Christensen and Mike Maxwell. Roberts and Trumbo were outstanding forwards, players with exceptional ability inside. Consequently, for the past two years our offense featured an internal game. This year we intend to move Greg Kite to the low post where we believe he will be more effective. Our present forwards will be considerably smaller than in the past.

On the other hand, I feel our present forwards will be better outside shooters and passers, so we will try to design an offense to take advantage of the particular skills of the players. Simply, this will mean a low post offense with perimeter players executing more driving and outside shooting.

How can BYU compensate for losses on defense and rebounding?

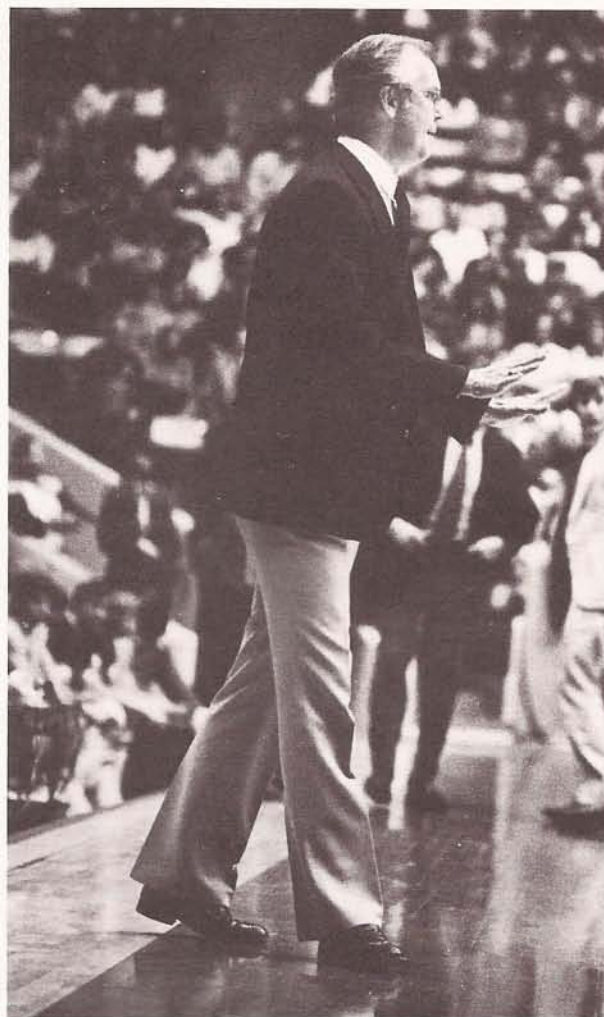
Last year our defense against the field goal was ninth in the nation, holding opponents to a .426 field goal percentage. Also, our rebound margin over opponents was ranked third in the nation with an 8.0 rebounding margin. We're proud of these marks, and must credit Roberts and Trumbo for our strength in both areas. Now, with the loss of those two, I have a concern for our defense and rebounding efforts this year. Since we will be smaller overall, this should enable us to play a little more man-to-man than in past seasons. We are also hoping that Greg Kite will pick up some slack in rebounding. Besides Kite, I feel that Devin Durrant, Gary Furniss and Brett Applegate can do a respectable job on the boards. As I see it, these two areas will be the key to our success this season.

What do you consider to be the team's strengths this year?

While defense and rebounding may be question marks, I feel our strengths will be our shooting and passing. I sense significant strides in these two areas, taking into account the players returning, plus the addition of our new recruits.

To what extent will the new personnel affect the Cougars' offensive attack?

As mentioned previously, we will be smaller but a bit quicker. Our attack, therefore, will be more perimeter oriented than inside. If we can get the ball off the defensive backboards reasonably well, we should be better on our fast break attack. Defensively, we will probably be more man-to-man oriented than in the past couple of years. That, of course, will be determined by the kind of opponent we will be facing in a given game.



Will the team's backcourt be stronger?

Our guard line, which consists of six players, all either freshmen or sophomores, are, overall, pretty good passers, dribblers and shooters. While young, they have better than ordinary talent. They will be very exciting players to watch.

What kinds of lineups—combinations of starters, etc.—are you contemplating?

At this writing, it appears the competition for positions will be tougher than last year. For example, a tremendous battle for the big forward spot involves Gary Furniss and Brett Applegate. Durrant, Saarelainen and Kevin Nielsen are scrapping for the small forward position. All six guards are in the thick of the battle for the two guard slots. Kite has the inside track at center, although he doesn't have it locked up. We're going to double Furniss in both the big forward and center positions.

At this writing, too, the starting lineup is wide open. If Devin and Timo, for example, play particularly well, and our guard play does not come up to expectations, we will consider using one of them at the big guard position. However, we will not even consider that eventuality until three or four weeks into the season. Whatever the lineup, I expect it will be smaller and quicker than last year's.

How would you evaluate the coming season?

Because we lost two all-conference players, plus three part-time starters, it is reasonable to conclude we're headed for a rebuilding year. We are young, but we are talented, and I have stated before that I would rather have talent than experience. However, our schedule is so demanding that I will feel very fortunate to win as many games (17) as we did last year. December could very easily take its toll in the win-loss column. It is conceivable UCLA, Iowa and St. John's will all be ranked in the top ten, and we play all three within the first 30 days of the season. If we can get through those first 30 days without too much trauma, I believe we'll be a respectable club by conference time.

How have some of the players progressed during the off-season?

Greg Kite, for one, spent 6-8 hours a day developing his overall game. With the change in our offense, and with the work he has done this summer, we fully expect Greg to show the most improvement on the club. Frankly, he is a key to the success we might enjoy this season. Marty Perry also had an outstanding summer, improving his shooting. With Marty's passing and dribbling ability, he's a legitimate candidate for a starting position. Scott Sinek had shoulder surgery, and at this writing is a bit behind the others. Gary Furniss had to work exten-

sively this summer to earn money to return to school. He also suffered a severe ankle sprain midway through the summer, and then was married in late summer. These three factors kept him from playing a great deal of ball. Timo Saarelainen had a good, full summer of basketball competing with the Finnish National team in tournaments worldwide. Devin Durrant returned from his mission in April. He, too, worked hard, and he is a bit ahead of most when they return.

What is your evaluation of the Cougars' traditionally tough schedule?

Our schedule affords us some of the best competition in the country. On paper, it appears the Western Athletic Conference will be up this year. As for our pre-season schedule, it continues to improve in the quality of competition with each passing year. As mentioned before, we may face three nationally ranked teams in the early going. In addition, our local fans will see teams like Providence and Princeton play in the Marriott Center. Mississippi, too, had a good club last year. Our road games will include Michigan State and either St. Joseph's or Wake Forest in the Holiday Festival. Utah State and Weber State both had fine recruiting years. So, overall, I can't remember a more difficult preseason schedule since I have been at BYU. As a result, we must be patient. In time the schedule will help us become a fine basketball team.

Personnel Picture

	Ht.	Scoring Average	Rebounding Average	Scoring Position
LETTERMEN LOST (5)				
***Fred Roberts, F	6-10	15.5	7.2	1st
***Steve Trumbo, F	6-8	13.2	11.5	2nd
***Greg Ballif, G	6-3	8.6	1.4	3rd
**Craig Christensen, G	6-4½	5.0	1.2	6th
**Mike Maxwell, G	6-1	2.3	.6	10th
LETTERMEN RETURNING (8)				
***Greg Kite, C	6-11	6.2	7.8	5th
*Scott Sinek, G	6-2	7.5	1.7	4th
**Devin Durrant, F	6-7	13.3	5.9	2nd (1980)
**Timo Saarelainen, F/G	6-6	4.4	1.6	7th
**Gary Furniss, F	6-8	3.2	2.6	8th
*Kevin Nielsen, F	6-7	1.1	1.4	11th
*Bob Capener, G	6-4	2.8	.6	9th
*Von Alleman, C	6-9	.6	.9	12th
TRANSFERS (2)				
Marty Perry, G	6-1	1.0	—	Univ. of Florida
Brett Applegate, F	6-7½	29.0	14.0	Snow College
FRESHMEN (5)				
Paul Drecksel, G	6-3	—	—	Skyline High School
Chris Nikchevich, G	6-2	17.6	4.0	Crespi High School
Alan Pollard, C	6-9	13.0	10.0	Mountain View High School
Brian Taylor, G	6-4	29.0	—	Davis High School
Jim Usevitch, F/C	6-9	21.0	10.0	Ocean View High School

1982-83 Outlook

One of the most difficult basketball schedules BYU has ever faced causes some concern for eighth-year Coach Frank Arnold. But he believes the changes, new personnel, and a few key developments could eventually lead the Cougars to success.

Arnold likens this year's team to that of 1978-79 when Danny Ainge was a sophomore and Devin Durrant was a freshman on a squad which lost to San Francisco in the NCAA tournament. Durrant, a two-year starter, is back with the Cougars after returning from an LDS mission to Spain. Also returning is center Greg Kite, another two-year starter, and guard Scott Sinek (starter most of last year), so there is plenty of starting experience.

But Arnold says all of the starting slots are open, although it may be difficult to dislodge someone of Kite's 6-11, 250 stature. Kite's success is one of the keys Arnold points to if the team is to be a success. Other key factors include, how much help Kite gets on the boards, the effectiveness of BYU's man-to-man defense, and how the Cougars fare during pre-season action.

BYU opens the season hosting one of the toughest back-to-back tandems in the nation, UCLA and Iowa (Nov. 26-27). Then the Cougars play difficult road games against Michigan State and a Holiday Festival field at Madison Square Garden beginning with St. John's. The other teams in the Dec. 27-29 New York tourney are St. Joseph's and Wake Forest.

The change to a man-to-man defense from several zones is a result of five lettermen lost, including All-Western Athletic Conference power forwards Fred Roberts and Steve Trumbo. A smaller, quicker lineup will replace Roberts and Trumbo, but offensively this means Kite will post up low while the other Cougars execute a perimeter, driving game.

"We are young and inexperienced, but we have talent and I have always said I would rather have talent than experience," says Arnold. "We have a fine passing and shooting team, but we will give up some in rebounding."

The rebounding assistance Kite needs could come from either Durrant (6-7), Gary Furniss (6-8), or junior college transfer Brett Applegate (6-7½). All of these players have good shooting range. Durrant has had multiple games in double figures, but the question is how well he performs after a two-year mission. Furniss has exceptional touch for a big man, according to Arnold, but he is recovering from knee, ankle and hand injuries suffered this past year. Applegate was the juco player-of-the-year while playing at Snow College (Ephraim, Utah), and gained more exposure with a collegiate all-star team in Asia this past summer.

Furniss and Applegate could battle for the big forward slot, while Durrant battles 6-6 Timo Saarelainen and 6-7 Kevin Nielsen for the small forward spot. Durrant and Saarelainen also have the talent to play in a big guard role, too.

But the backcourt competition centers around a six-deep unit of talented dribblers, passers, and shooters. Sophomores Sinek (6-2) and Bob Capeaner (6-4) are the most seasoned in BYU competition, but sophomore Marty Perry (6-1) learned

Arnold's system well as he redshirted last year after transferring from the University of Florida. Arnold says Perry is the quickest of the six backcourt players.

Freshmen Chris Nikchevich (6-2) or Brian Taylor (6-4) are slick ball handlers who could fit in the scheme easily, while freshman Paul Drecksel's (6-3) play depends on how he recovers from back surgery, plus the transition from prep frontcourt to college backcourt.

Among the big men vying for position on the team are squadman Von Alleman (6-9), and freshmen Alan Pollard (6-9) and Jim Usevitch (6-9).

"This is the first time I've had 15 players on grant-in-aid," says Arnold. "We hope to find seven or eight quality players who will be ready, but how soon we do that is the question."

Unfortunately, only eight of the 15 players have any varsity playing time. Among the things working in favor of the Cougars is that 15 of the 29 regular season games are in the 22,700-seat Marriott Center where BYU has a 110-35 (.759) win-loss record, including three seasons of undefeated home play (1972-79-81). In addition to the 2½-million fans who have pushed the Cougars in the 11-year history of the second largest on-campus basketball arena in the nation (Syracuse seats 28,000), Arnold has been successful as a coach.

In his eight years with the Cougars, Arnold has fashioned a 122-80 (.604) record and needs to win 17 of this year's 29 games to remain above .600. But he points out the difficulty of this year's schedule will make it difficult for the team to win 17 games like last season.

