

1972-73 review

Ask any BYU basketball fan and he will tell you that there was a lot of could-have-been wrapped up in the 1973 season.

The Cougars weren't alone, however. There are four or five other teams in the Western Athletic Conference who are experiencing the same kind of reflections.

The WAC championship with within the grasp of four teams right up until the final basket of the final game on the schedule. Only Arizona State came up smiling.

When the dust had finally settled, the Cougars found themselves tied for second place with two other schools. And overall, BYU was 19-7 for the season, which is a respectable mark for any team.

For the Cougars, at least, the race down the stretch was marred by a ruling imposed by the NCAA tournament committee. Even if Coach Glenn Potter's team had won the title, the Cougars would have been a champion with no place to go.

The NCAA committee ruled that BYU would not be eligible for post-season participation in the regional playoffs because of an eligibility hassle involving All-American Kresimir Cosic, even though his eligibility had been cleared with the WAC.

Even as a second-place team, the National Invitational Tourney in New York was out for BYU. The championship game in that cage classic was scheduled for a Sunday.

Everything taken into consideration, however, the Cougars added a lot of spice to the hottest league race in the history of the WAC. In terms of excitement they were expected to provide, the Cougars gave full measure.

According to statistics compiled at the end of the season, the Cougars

- out-scored opponents by nearly five points per game (79.5 to 74.6)
- out-rebounded opponents by nearly nine rebounds per game (47.7 to 38.8)
- scored 72% compared to opponents' 65% from free throw line
- and outscored opponents 48% to 45% from the field.

Coach Glenn Potter's Cougars also hit a hot streak during the 1972-73 campaign, winning nine in a row in a mid-season stretch. The team's 9-4 record on the road was also a reflection of BYU's stability. And of the three defeats on the home court of the Marriott Center, two were very close; a two-pointer to Santa Clara, and an overtime loss to Colorado State.

A BALANCED ATTACK

While the Cougars may have fallen short of their expectations, there is no doubt they had strength in

balanced scoring. All five starters finished the season with averages in double figures; **Cosic** (20.2), **Richards** (15.9), **Anderson** (13.0), **Sarkalahti** (11.7), and **Ambrozich** (10.7). Moreover, six different players were high point for the Cougars at one time or other during the season. Rebounding honors were cornea by **Cosic**, **Sarkalahti**, **Ambrozich**, and **Bunker**.

The starters averaged 34 minutes per game during the season. **Doug Richards** had the highest average: 35 minutes per game. **Moni Sarkalahti** had the best shooting percentage from the field, 54%, and **Cosic** was the most consistent free throw shooter, 81%.

Cosic's 36 points against Arizona in the Marriott Center was a season high for BYU, and **Brian Ambrozich's** 22 rebounds against Mil. Wisconsin was tops for a Cougar player during the season.

OFFICIAL ALL-CONFERENCE

For the third year in row, **Kresimir Cosic** was named to the official all-WAC team. It marked only the fourth time in the 11-year history of the conference that a player made first-team as sophomore, junior, and senior.

Junior guard **Doug Richards** was placed on the second team selected by the WAC basketball coaches, and **Brian Ambrozich** was honorable mention.

Two other members of the varsity, forward **Moni Sarkalahti** and guard **Belmont Anderson**, were first-team Academic all-conference.

ATTENDANCE

The attendance figure for the 1972-73 season was up on a total basis, but down on a per game basis. In all, the Cougars played before a total of 263,523 surpassing last year's home figures by about 2,000. But the home average of 18,823 was below the NCAA-record high set in the Marriott Center last season.

Interest in this year's club really warmed up during the heat of the WAC race, and a single game record was set during the Utah-BYU game in Provo, 22,987; just 13 short of 23,000.

