

The Salt Lake Tribune

college football

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Phases & Stages

Veteran Kyle Whittingham, rookie Kalani Sitake and middleman Matt Wells lift the cover on what it's like to lead their programs



Taysom Hill
The BYU senior who doesn't know the word 'quit'



Troy Williams
QB will be under spotlight as fans hope to see production that equals the hype he had coming to Utah



Kent Myers
The USU quarterback gets to have starting spot all to himself

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What they've learned

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The columnists' views

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Utes on the offensive

It's all about the passing attack for the Utes, whether it be at quarterback with Troy Williams, the wide receivers with Tim Patrick, the offensive line with newcomer Garrett Bolles or the tight end rotation; meanwhile, Andy Phillips keeps on kicking and the much-renowned defense is led by Ute legend Morgan Scalley; what Utah needs to do to succeed this season and team roster plus depth chart and schedule analysis, and a Pac-12 breakdown of every team with in-depth analysis by Tribune staff writer Kyle Goon.

So much new at BYU

So much newness surrounds the BYU program with a coaching staff that has deep connections to the team; Kalani Sitake has been preparing for the chance to lead a major program for a long time; Taysom Hill gets another chance to finish out his senior season; Jamaal Williams returns to BYU with added perspective; more information on BYU's search for reliable performers at wide receiver, tight end and defensive back; a new formation in defense allows for multiple opportunities to create havoc; Fred Warner has the look of a future star at linebacker; what BYU needs to do to succeed this season and team roster plus depth chart and schedule analysis.



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Breaking down USU

Utah State enters the year knowing the margin between success and failure is razor-thin; Kent Myers gets the chance he's been waiting for to be the undisputed starting quarterback; the Aggies linebackers are inexperienced and have big spots to plug; the renovations at Maverik Stadium are expected to make a big splash for fan satisfaction and recruiting; Travis Seefeldt returns to the defensive line after being told he may never play again; what Utah State needs to do to succeed this season and team roster plus depth chart and schedule analysis, and previewing the Mountain West, in which San Diego State is the favorite.

High hopes at Weber

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Around the country

A series previewing the other Power Five Conferences: The SEC, Big Ten, ACC and Big 12. Plus a look at the Heisman Trophy prognostications, plus schedules for every Football Bowl Subdivision team.

Clockwise from top left: Utah's Troy Williams, Utah State's Braelon Roberts, Weber State's Eric Wilkes and BYU's Taysom Hill.

FILE PHOTOS | The Salt Lake Tribune and The Associated Press

AROUND THE STATE

The things they've seen

Kyle, Kalani and Matt lord over their coaching kingdoms, different though they may be.

By **GORDON MONSON**

The Salt Lake Tribune

Three schools. Three teams. Three situations. Three stages. Three coaches.

All of them different, all of them at different places in the head coaching cycle: Kyle Whittingham, Kalani Sitake, Matt Wells.

Whittingham has been the lead dog at Utah for 11 seasons now, going on 12. Sitake is the neophyte, entering his first season driving the boat at BYU. Wells hovers in the middle, having won 25 games over his opening three seasons.

Sitake, who is 40 and was born in Tonga, and Wells, born in South Carolina 43 years ago, are coaching at their alma maters. Whittingham, 56, born in California, is at his alma mater's rival. All of them feel at home.

Whittingham has taken on the challenge of coaching in the Pac-12. Sitake is coaching an independent team that wishes it were in the Big 12. And Wells is attempting to make his name and stake his claim in the Mountain West.

Wells replaced the man who changed the direction of Utah State football — Gary Andersen. Whittingham replaced the man who bumped up the possibilities of Utah football — Urban Meyer. Sitake replaced the man who hauled BYU football out of a temporary mess and then kept it in a kind of holding pattern for the better part of a decade — Bronco Mendenhall.

The veteran

Whittingham's trajectory is classic: Young coach takes over, learns some hard lessons, masters his domain, takes on a new one, and steadily builds from there.

When he emerged as

Meyer's follow-up in 2005, Whittingham struggled at first, absorbing information as he went. Early on, his players wanted to strangle him because his old school ways were a bit too rigid. He got the message and started listening to them, and winning, a process that culminated in that unblemished record in 2008. Those are lessons, changes made, that have bolstered him through the transitional years from the Mountain West to the Pac-12.

"I hope I'm farther down the road, a better coach than when I first started," he says. "You're never a finished product. There's always a better way to do things. I'm still in that category and always will be. But I'm hopeful that I'm a better coach than when I first started this thing."

Whittingham says he now understands how critical it is to have a good rapport with his players. "I probably underestimated that when I first got the job," he says. "It was just, hey, let's go out and let's go. I don't care what you're thinking, how you're feeling, let's just go to work and get it done."

"But you've got to be part psychologist to do this job the right way," Whittingham adds. "And I think that's something that's definitely been impressed upon me, the second half of my tenure. My theory is, if you've got 10 guys in the room who all think the exact same way, you don't need nine of them. I like new ideas. I like coaches to defend what they believe in. The key is, when you leave the room, they all have to be on the same page. But I love to hear differing opinions. What they're thinking."

Defensive coordinator Morgan Scalley calls



Whittingham



Sitake



Wells

Whittingham a "strict and disciplined football guy, a man's man," but he says there's a flipside to him, too: "The great thing about Kyle is how humble he is. His attitude is that he and we don't have all the answers. We'll never have all the answers."

Adds quarterback Tyler Huntley: "He's a cool guy. He knows how to engage with the players. He knows how to talk to us and how to teach us."

The rookie

Sitake, who counts Whittingham as a mentor, having worked for him as Utah's defensive coordinator, came to BYU from Oregon State. His transition to the Cougar head coaching job has been, he says, rather seamless: "There's been nothing here that's really surprised me."

Through the first few weeks of his first fall camp as BYU's coach, Sitake says he's all right: "I love what I'm doing, the people I'm with and I'm grateful for the preparation that got me here. I thought I'd be more on edge, more ornery, but I've found myself at peace because of the players and coaches I'm with ... you know, being a first-time head coach, and it's comforting. Now, all I've got to do is win."

Sitake is fully aware of that last part. With all the excitement stirred by his hiring, and the arrival of former Cougar great Ty Detmer as offensive coordinator, he knows that, regardless of the good feel

surrounding the program, positive results are what really matter. To that end, he's warmed up the BYU environment, made it demanding but comfortable for his assistants and his players.

"I believe in what our coaches are doing and the players have all bought in," he says. "It's not all fun and games, but when you're able to be happy, be who you are, you can work hard. The guys feel comfortable, and so do I. It's all working well right now. I'm not panicked at all ... but the season hasn't started, yet. I saw how Kyle and Gary [Andersen] and LaVell [Edwards] looked over everything. I'm trying to do all of that. I'm a collection of other people, borrowing from all of them. And leaning on guys like I. Tuiaki, Ty Detmer and Ed Lamb."

The man on the spot

Matt Wells is a smart, detailed coach who is now in a weird place, teetering back and forth, having made Utah State's program his, going 25-16 over his time as head coach and continuing much of the momentum from Andersen's reign. His early success — the Aggies went 9-5 and 10-4, despite numerous injuries at key positions — stirred speculation that Wells might head elsewhere. He went on to sign two contract extensions, but everyone knows what those are worth when bigger schools with bigger wallets call.

After signing the second one, Wells released a statement that said: "I am extremely honored to coach here at my alma mater and I'm as motivated as ever to reset the culture daily that has been established here at Utah State in

our football program."

And then ... last fall USU fell backward, finishing at 6-7. During this offseason, Wells lost six assistants to other programs. Although he says he feels no more pressure now than he ever has, 2016 is a significant year for him and his Aggies. With new facilities in Logan and fan expectations, he has to come through with something better. Think about it this way: What happens if USU has another sub-.500 season?

Cache Valley wouldn't be a happy place.

"I'm very happy with what our program has accomplished — the wins, the bowl wins, the player graduations," Wells says. "But there's a major sense of urgency that it's not good enough. There's a trophy still missing in our trophy case."

What Wells has learned over his first three seasons is this: he has more to learn.

"I know that every day is a new day," he says. "Every day I walk in, there's something unexpected that I had no idea about. It might have to do with football, it might be off the field, something in a kid's life. When you have 113 players and other staff members, you plan everything out and then you get thrown curveballs. I don't have all the answers. Sometimes, there are no answers. Sometimes, it's just life. I'm always looking for more knowledge, more wisdom."

In Utah, then, there's the established coach, trying to kick down the door to a Pac-12 title, the new coach, excited about his opportunity on a team without a home, and the coach trying to reestablish his position, attempting to win a league championship.

All in different places, all under pressure to do what every coach must: win.

COMMENTARY

It's all about the Williamses



Utah's Troy Williams, left, and BYU's Jamaal Williams, right.

FILE PHOTOS
| The Salt Lake
Tribune



**KURT
KRAGTHORPE**

Williams & Williams & More Williamses will have a lot to say about the success or failure of the 2016 college football season in Utah.

Much like the law firms, real estate experts, nametag manufacturer and funeral home named Williams & Williams around the country, a bunch of players named Williams will play valuable roles in their programs. Will they fulfill the promise of "superstar service," like Williams & Williams Realtors of Denton, Texas? Will they remain "committed to your satisfaction," like Williams & Williams Funeral Home of Savannah, Ga.?

Fans sure hope so. As the season unfolds, the most interesting Williams & Williams to watch in this state will play for rival schools: Troy, the Utah quarterback, and Jamaal, the BYU running back.

That's partly because Marcus, the Utah all-conference safety, and Joe, the Ute run-

Tennessee on Nov. 1, 2014 — a week after Troy Williams' 24-10 loss to the Sun Devils.

The struggles of Utah's passing game in five years of Pac-12 membership were not entirely Travis Wilson's fault. Yet the new T.W. in town is expected to give the Utes the kind of quarterback play

Colorado and BYU after Devontae Booker was injured last year, projecting to 1,729 yards over a 13-game season. Maintaining that pace is unlikely, because Utah wants more offensive balance and Troy McCormick and other backs will get some carries. But as long he avoids fumbling, Joe Williams will get a lot of work.

So will Jamaal Williams. BYU's quarterbacking will be more than adequate, with Taysom Hill backed up by Tanner Mangum. The variable is Williams, who withdrew from school prior to the 2015 season. Offensive coordinator Ty Detmer wants to run the ball, and Williams is the featured back. The ability of Williams and BYU's offensive line to thrive against Power 5 opponents is critical to the Cougars.

Joe Williams and Jamaal Williams would do well to match the 2012 performance of Utah State running back Kerwynn Williams, who rushed for 1,512 yards during an 11-2 season on his way to the NFL. The asterisk is that Williams was running against

Utes, Cougars hope these most common of names yield some exceptional results this season.

ning back, proved enough last season to answer any questions about their potential impact in 2016.

Troy and Jamaal are different stories, at the moment. The Utes' new QB has one game of starting experience in the Pac-12, and his debut for Washington against Arizona State in the rain in Seattle in 2014 did not go well. BYU's running back should become the school's career rushing leader sometime in November, but he has not carried the football in a game since injuring his knee at Middle

they've lacked since the middle of the 2010 season, when they were unbeaten until Jordan Wynn's shoulder problems initially surfaced.

Troy Williams has made a very good impression with his throwing ability and leadership, and he just might be the dynamic QB who elevates Utah's offense in the Pac-12. If that happens, Joe Williams will become even effective, with opposing defenses no longer preoccupied with stopping the run.

He ran for 399 yards in his three starts against UCLA,

defenses in a weakened Western Athletic Conference, in the last season of WAC football competition.

Williams' brother, Kennedy, is now an Aggie receiver and Anthony Williams is a USU linebacker. So that adds up to six Williamses playing for Utah's three FBS schools. Williams is by far the most common name in Utah Jazz franchise history, dating to the New Orleans era: Aaron, Deron, Duck, Elliot, Freeman, Marvin, Mo, Nate and Rickey.

Deron was the only All-Star in a Jazz uniform, among those nine players. The Utes and Cougars need Troy, Marcus, Joe and Jamaal to perform at D-Will's level — or at least meet the standards of the "exceptional and cost-efficient" Williams & Williams law firm in Bakersfield, Calif., and the "respected, responsive" work of the Williams & Williams attorneys in Orangeburg, S.C.

Those are the expectations for all of the football-playing Williamses in Utah, as they try to live up to the advertising.

kkragthorpe@sltrib.com
Twitter: @tribkurt

COMMENTARY

Looking into my crystal ball ...

There are always expectations in the preseason. Will they be realized in the regular season?



**GORDON
MONSON**

That great thinker/philosopher/receiver Terrell Owens once said: “If you align expectations with reality, you will never be disappointed.”

The problem comes in that correct alignment.

Setting expectations at the start of any season is complicated. Place them too low and self-fulfilling limitations shadow everything. Place them too high and disappointment is barreling your way. Maybe the answer is to aim high and take whatever you get. Optimists supposedly live longer than pessimists, so dealing with the disappointment, or looking at it under the glow of substantial sunshine, might be a goal worth shooting for.

After all, somebody not named Terrell Owens once said, “It’s better to shoot for the stars and land in the trees than to shoot for the trees and land in the mud.”

With that in mind, then, we glance at the coming seasons for BYU, Utah and Utah State:

BYU

The only sure thing about the Cougars is they are starting in on one of the toughest schedules the program has ever faced. And they’re doing it with a new head coach — Kalani Sitake — and a new offensive coordinator — Ty Detmer — and a new defensive coordinator — Ilaisa Tuiaki. And there’s more newness throughout the coaching staff.

No problem, says Sitake: “I completely trust these men. They are smart football guys who know what they’re doing.”

That may be true. Who can question the brain of Detmer, a former quarterback who not only won the Heisman at BYU but spent 14 seasons in the NFL, where coaches counted on him as a player/coach to help train other quarterbacks? Nobody. But even he acknowledges that, at the major college level, he’s never coordinated and formulated a game plan, never called all the plays, never done what he’s about to do.

Can he pull it off?

“We’re gonna find out,” he says.

He laughs when he says it, believing, of course, that it’s within his considerable reach.

Under Sitake’s watch, Detmer will take the Cougars back to a pro offense, having junked the go-hard-go-fast mantra from past seasons, favoring instead an attack meant to take advantage of what defenses put in front of it. And the quarterback selected to do the reading and decision-making is Taysom Hill, a bright fifth-year senior who certainly seems equipped to lead that specific kind of offense, although, again, he’s never before actually done it.

That’s a good bet, that he will master it. Still, facing this schedule will require everything Hill’s got — most significantly, adequate health — and maybe some of what Tanner Mangum can bring, too. It will also require a defense with some questions surrounding it to answer those questions positively and definitively.

Utah

The Ute defense might be one of Utah’s best ever. Kyle Whittingham has already made a major statement that, in his view, this defensive front — led by Lowell Lotulelei, Hunter Dimick, Kylie Fitts and Filipo Mokofisi, among others — could be the best he’s had. Add into that the back end, a seasoned group projected to be one of the better secondaries in the Pac-12, and the only uncertainty on that side is the linebackers.

Coordinator Morgan Scalley is more than willing to shoot for the stars with this defense, expecting it to be an intelligent, physical bunch: “It will be fun to watch,” he says.

That, naturally, leaves the offense to do better than finish at the bottom of the Pac-12 standings, as has been its habit in recent seasons, especially the beleaguered passing attack. Quarterback Troy Williams has looked good in camp, and a newly confident group of receivers seems to believe that its best days are ahead. Joe Williams is a speedy, gifted running back, and the offensive line appears to be a better-than-solid collection.

“We’ve made huge progress in the passing game this camp,” co-offensive coordinator Aaron Roderick says. “The receivers are better, and Troy has separated himself at quarterback. To win a championship, we have to have more explosive plays. It’s hard to score always going 13-, 14-play drives. We’re aiming for bigger chunks. You’ll see more play-action passes. It looks good.”

Utah State

Coming off a 6-7 season, the Aggies are eager to regain the positive momentum of Matt Wells’ first two seasons at the head of the program, when they won a total of 19 games. Offensive inconsistency hurt Utah State last season, and many of those starters will be back. It raises the classic question: Is that a good or a bad thing?

With Kent Myers back, it’s a good thing. He’s a quarterback who can be accurate and can move. And with the pile of running backs, including Devante Mays, in the fold and some vets up front, that offense should be better.

On defense, which was, with only a few exceptions, stellar last season, the Aggies lost almost everybody. They have three starters returning.

What does that mean? It means winning a Mountain West title, Wells’ main goal every season, will be difficult. “I haven’t gotten that, yet,” says Wells, now starting his fourth season. “The focus this year is on chemistry and leadership. There are some positions where we are playing new guys. We have to play our very best.”

The Ags likely will have a steady team, just not a great one.

GORDON MONSON hosts “The Big Show” with Spence Checketts weekdays from 3-7 p.m. on 97.5 FM and 1280 AM The Zone. Twitter: @GordonMonson.

UTAH UTES



Passing grade

Quarterback Troy Williams and his receivers must come through if Utah is to take next step in the Pac-12.

By **KYLE GOON**

The Salt Lake Tribune

Kyle Whittingham said it best in Los Angeles last month: "We haven't done anything yet — we haven't won a championship."

The Utah football program is long finished with its "adjustment period" from the Mountain West era. It has gradually morphed from its role as a Pac-12 expansion team to legitimate contender in the South that finished in the Top 25 the last two seasons. But the one thing that remains for a program that has depth, experience and a chip on its shoulder is to actually start hanging conference championship banners.

As the Utes have learned painfully the last two years, the difference between contender and champion is being able to pass the ball. And that's where Utah will have to make its biggest strides to deliver on its promise.

Over the last two seasons, the Utes are 11-7 in conference play — a relatively strong showing in perhaps the nation's most cannibalistic league. But tucked in those seven losses are a series of one-score heart-breakers — Washington State and Arizona State in 2014, and UCLA and Arizona in 2015 especially — in which the Utes could have prevailed by either building on an existing lead, or simply being able to score points in the fourth quarter.

With the ascension of newcomer Troy Williams to starting quarterback and an overhauled receiving corps, there is rising hope internally that Utah will have the passing attack it takes to win those games.

"Expect a competitor," senior receiver Tim Patrick said of Williams. "He's ready to lead us to a championship. I'm

Please see PASSING, PAGE 7

SCOTT SOMMERDORF | *The Salt Lake Tribune*

Utah quarterback Troy Williams carries the mantle of being expected to energize the Utes' passing game.

UTAH UTES

Passing

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going to be right there with him catching passes.”

While the Utes themselves may be confident, others aren't so sure. Utah narrowly missed the Associated Press' preseason Top 25, finishing third in the "others receiving votes" category. But if Utah can find a passing game that can finish better than ninth in the league (Utah's best ranking), the rest of the program is built to win now.

On defense, the Utes return two first-team all-conference players in defensive tackle Lowell Lotulelei and safety Marcus Williams. Six other starters are back, and the unit is particularly in good hands up front (with Hunter Dimick and Kylie Fitts as ends) and in the back (with Reggie Porter, Dominique Hatfield and Justin Thomas as multi-year defensive back starters). The main question mark is at linebacker, where a mix of Sunia Tauteoli, Cody Barton and Kavika Luafatasaga will be given the tough task of replacing a pair of great seniors — Gionni Paul and Jared Norris.

Assuming Williams is ready to sling it, the Utes front line is set to protect him. Led by senior J.J. Dielman, a tackle-turned-center, the offensive line has four returning starters. The one newbie is expected to be Garrett Bolles, a five-star junior college prospect. The tight end group is deep, as are the running backs, led by senior Joe Williams who took over starting duties at the end of 2015.

A buzzsaw of a schedule awaits in conference play, starting at home with another contender in USC. The Utes don't get a bye until November, which could mean they'll be beat up for key games at UCLA and against Washington. But as another Whittingham saying goes: "No one cares about excuses."

They only care if you win.



CHRIS DETRICK | The Salt Lake Tribune

Utah is counting on this being the stuff of quarterbacks' nightmares: defensive tackle Lowell Lotulelei bearing down on them.

kgoon@sltrib.com
Twitter: @kylegoon

UTAH UTES



LEAH HOGSTEN

Picking himself back up

A troubled adolescence gives way to family, stability — and marriage — for Utes offensive lineman Garrett Bolles.

By KYLE GOON

The Salt Lake Tribune

They met for the first time last March, minutes before midnight.

Garrett Bolles, a lumbering 6-foot-5, 300-pound goliath of a man, approached Natalie Williams and asked her for a kiss. It was True Badger Night, an annual tradition at Snow College in Ephraim when such bold requests are not just innocent and part of a campus ritual, but charming.

She accepted. He had a wide, goofy smile. His baritone sounded like the earth rumbling from some deep, secret place. They kissed, and made plans to meet later that week.

At that time, Natalie didn't know much about Garrett — not that he was an offensive lineman for the Badgers, on his way to becoming a five-star recruit who would play at the University of Utah the next year. She decided to Google him.

The first picture that came up was a mugshot.

Please see BOLLES, PAGE 9

Garrett Bolles at a glance

- » Slated to start at left tackle for the Utes this fall.
- » Rated a 5-star lineman by Scout in 2016 recruiting class.
- » First-team NJCAA All-American in 2015 for Snow College.
- » Played at Westlake High as a defensive lineman.

UTAH UTES



SCOTT SOMMERDORF | The Salt Lake Tribune

Utah offensive lineman Garrett Bolles writes lots of motivational messages on his shoes.

Bolles

» Continued from PAGE 8

On their first date, she asked Garrett about his life, hoping an explanation would arise. Over the next hour and a half, he told her everything — making her weep and changing both their lives forever.

'The whole package'

To look at Bolles is to see his potential. He's tall, wide, strong — everything anyone could want physically out of an offensive tackle. From his second day in Utah fall camp, he's taken repetitions with the first-string offense and not looked back.

"He's got the whole package," coach Kyle Whittingham said. "He's got the height, the length, the feet, the hips, he's flexible, he can bend, he's strong, he's athletic.

"He lacks nothing."

His gifts were evident when he was growing up in Lehi, a fast-growing football and lacrosse player.

But a troubled and stressful home life from a young age translated to problems for Bolles, who was suspended or kicked out of five schools as a teenager. His lacrosse coach, Greg Freeman, formed a group of neighborhood families who would host him and

help him finish classwork.

As Garrett got older, his habits and problems got worse. He used drugs, cut class and ran afoul of the law. As a senior at Westlake High, he was arrested for vandalizing Lehi's campus in 2010, and as an adult, he had to spend time in jail.

"I was a lost kid," he said. "I was confused, angry, like 'What am I doing in here? This isn't who I really am.'"

It came to a head in 2011, when his father, Grove Bolles, kicked him out of the house. He was on the street with a few bags of clothes to his name when Freeman found him and picked him up.

The Freemans, Greg and his wife Emily, laid out strict rules for Garrett to live under their roof: He couldn't hang out with his old friends. He had to go to church. He had to pay tithing (and therefore had to work). If he broke any rule, he could be kicked out without warning.

"I remember going to bed that night, and my husband and I talked about it," Emily Freeman said. "I thought he would last a few weeks. Greg thought he would make it three days."

Honest work

For about two years, Garrett was in the garage repair

business. He still likes the idea of tinkering on garages to this day.

But what he really loved were the car rides he had with Greg. While he usually slept through them in the mornings, they talked a lot during the year-and-a-half when they worked together.

"We talked about life, how to be better person," he said. "I'm just super grateful and honored that I had him and my mom [Emily] in those years as mentors. I miss that job."

He took a break from the working world to serve an LDS Church mission in Colorado Springs, which he credits with steeping him in his faith. Coming back to Utah, he wanted to give football another shot, and he found one at Snow College.

Emily said she worried at how Garrett would take to college — would he cut corners in classwork and lose himself again? But she was relieved when coach Britt Maughan, in one of his first meetings with Garrett, laid down the law.

"He said, 'This is not whether you can play football — this is whether you can cut it at college,'" she recalled. "He said school was going to come first."

For the first time in his life, Garrett took school seriously. He pasted up posters of Michael Oher, the hero of "The Blind Side," as an idol, and

took the same spirit to his school work. He went to class, and was spending late hours at the library.

"I had to do those things," he said after a recent practice, "otherwise I wouldn't have been able to be here."

Coming around

After learning about Garrett's life, Natalie was taken with the big-hearted giant who had laid out his flaws on their first date. It took nine months from their first meeting to their wedding day, but "when you know, you know."

He structured their courtship carefully. Though Natalie noticed that football coaches called him constantly, Garrett set up blocks of time just for school, and just for her. Though he was nasty on the football field, he was gentle when he was around her. He made her feel safe.

Shortly after getting married in December, Garrett made his decision to come to the Utes in January — the highest-rated recruit in Utah's class, and less than an hour away from his hometown and both his families: the Bolles and the Freemans.

Through time and lots of difficult conversations, Garrett, now 24, said he's repaired his relationship with the father who once kicked him to the

curb. Grove now is a regular guest of Garrett and Natalie's, and a frequent presence at Garrett's games.

And yet, he holds the Freemans close, and calls Emily Freeman his mom. They gave him a chance when he was a troublesome teenager, gave him guidance, beckoned him to the church, and celebrated the painstaking steps he took to get to Utah.

He writes a number of sayings and inspirational phrases on his cleats in black marker, among them: "Bolles and Freeman — Family Forever." Whenever he looks down, he's reminded of their bond.

He couldn't be more excited about another generation to come: He and Natalie are expecting a son to arrive in January, which Emily proudly calls "my first grandbaby."

The Freemans still worry at times. Is there any chance that Garrett could revert? Could he stumble back into his old, bad self, and make a mistake? But even if he does slip up someday, Emily said, Garrett's capacity to better himself gives her hope.

"A champion picks himself up everytime he falls," she said. "Every single day I worry for that kid, but I don't worry that he won't pick himself up."

kgoon@sltrib.com
Twitter: @kylegoon

Student of the game



CHRIS DETRICK |
The Salt Lake Tribune

Junior QB Troy Williams has inspired — and won big — everywhere he's played.

By KYLE GOON

The Salt Lake Tribune

Post-practice media availability at Santa Monica College is a low-key affair. There might be a reporter or two on hand, but most practices end with a slow trickle into the locker room out of the California sunshine.

Last summer, Troy Williams started running wind sprints as the rest of his teammates were walking off the field. Not long after, three teammates were running with him. Then five.

"Pretty soon, it's 20 little ducklings following Troy on these wind sprints," said Tim Kaub, Williams' former offensive coordinator. "That's

what he is. And he's not doing it to show off to his teammates. It's just that Troy never wants to lose, and he never wants to waste a moment."

In only eight months, the Utes have picked up on Williams' ambition as well. The 6-foot-2 junior quarterback has ascended to starter and team captain without playing a game in a Utah uniform. The team's success is widely understood to hinge on how Williams will lead — or fail to lead — the Utes' passing game back to respectability.

Williams' fast rise in the program implies a certain kind of demeanor. Kaub calls him "a total alpha." Former teammate Marquis Lomax calls him "a grinder." Utah

offensive coordinator Aaron Roderick calls him a "pure football junkie."

At just about every stop he's made, he's had teammates ready to follow him to the brink — including at the school where he's only just arrived. He's consistently proven himself, in the eyes of peers and coaches, with a relentless work ethic.

"I feel like I've been through a lot," Williams said after a recent practice. "My dad always tells me hard work pays off, so I've just tried keeping up with that."

Becoming 'the best'

The Williams family is the kind that when they are out

in front of their house, they stop passers-by to chat. Troy Williams Sr. — aka "Big Troy" — is an affable man who can still be found outside the stadium at Narbonne High School on Friday nights, offering chicken, ribs and burgers hot off the grill, and has a job at the school opening the gym to let neighborhood kids practice and play. There is a family that believes in community.

But the tenet of hard work runs just as deeply. When Troy Jr. was growing up, his sleep was interrupted by his father waking up at 3 a.m. to go to his job as a receiver at a grocery store. Kim Williams would make her son

Please see WILLIAMS, PAGE 11

Utah quarterback Troy Williams, recently named the starter, spends much of his time watching game footage at the Spence and Cleone Eccles Football Center.

The Williams record

When Utah quarterback Troy Williams has gotten a chance to start for a whole season, wins have stacked up:

2011, Narbonne HS » 11-3, won LA City Section DI title, threw for 3,247 yards, 34 TDs

2012, Narbonne HS » 14-1, won LA City Section DI title, lost in CIF SoCal Regional Open Division final, threw for 2,886 yards, 39 TDs, 6 INTs

2015, Santa Monica College » 11-0, threw for 2,750 yards, 31 TDs, 4 INTs

UTAH UTES

Williams

» Continued from PAGE 10

breakfast and drop him off at school before heading off to her job as a courtroom stenographer. Troy Jr. spent a lot of time with his grandmother who lived down the street when his parents were busy, and he learned to work on homework early when his father drew out his old report cards and challenged him to be an even better student.

“I guess he just saw the hours we put in,” said Big Troy. “We kind of showed him by example.”

Troy Jr. quickly channeled his energy into sports: He earned the nickname “sporty” by showing up around town in full gear, but also playing with older kids in football, basketball and baseball. He excelled in everything he tried.

It didn’t take long for Troy Jr. to start getting attention for his quarterback play. When he arrived at Narbonne, he practiced with the varsity. Then-Washington head coach Steve Sarkisian offered him a scholarship in 10th grade, and after Williams committed, he remained steadfastly loyal — even after he was rated the No. 1 dual-threat quarterback in the country by Rivals and other offers poured in.

He inspired the same kind of devotion from teammates. The Gauchos were 25-4 under Williams as a quarterback, and former teammate A.J. Richardson said Williams was the unquestioned leader on and off the field.

Perhaps his finest hour came in the toughest game of his career. In the 2012 Southern California Regional Open Division final against powerhouse Corona Centennial, the Gauchos fell to a 27-8 halftime deficit. Frustration boiled in the locker room. Williams, who had sprained his shoulder the week before, blamed himself.

“Things wasn’t going our way,” Richardson remembered. “Troy came out and said, ‘This is our last game. Let’s go out with a bang.’”

Narbonne didn’t win that day, but they made it a game worth remembering. Williams accounted for 367 yards and three touchdowns through the air, and added 105 on the ground. Kaub told him to run read-option, and Williams’ decision-making led the Gauchos all the way back to a 34-all tie in the final minute before Corona Centennial won in the closing seconds.

“He took the game over,” Kaub said. “I’ve never seen any of that from a quarterback. I coached him for a long time, but I didn’t make Troy: He made me. I knew that day he was the best I had ever been around.”

Starting over in Santa Monica

If Williams was such an unflappable winner, how come it didn’t work out at Washington?

It’s hard to pry the story out completely, in part because both sides have moved on so cleanly. Aside from saying he looks forward to playing the Huskies on Oct. 29, Williams doesn’t talk much about his days in Seattle. A preseason darling with a promising sophomore quarterback, the Huskies don’t have much to say either.

In one sense, it can be viewed as a perfect storm: Williams was hurt when Sarkisian left for USC, and then never quite seemed to fit in to Washington’s plans. In 2014, when both passers ahead of him struggled, Husky fans started growing an interest in seeing the touted recruit play.

He got his shot against Arizona State: a 24-10 loss that was, by several accounts, an unwinnable situation in



We have to kick him out. Literally have to kick him out, ‘Go home, go to bed, get some rest. Go to the cafeteria, get something to eat.’

AARON RODERICK

Utah offensive coordinator, on QB Troy Williams’ long hours spent studying film of opponents

which heavy wind gusts and the Sun Devils blitz doomed him from the start. Even after he left, some Huskies faithful were left with the feeling that Williams never truly got a shot.

He ended up back at home in Carson, getting a reunion with Kaub at Santa Monica. Still, it was hard not to stew over leaving the program.

“It was a humbling experience for him,” Big Troy said. “But we taught him when things get tough, you gotta dig deep. I can tell he was a little down, but if you’ve got 90 percent negativity and 10 percent positivity, hang on to the positivity and run with it.”

It wasn’t an easy drop from Division I to junior college. After two years of dining at the UW training table, Williams learned to subsist on peanut butter-and-jelly sandwiches.

The Corsairs’ intimidation factor was undermined when many of their jerseys didn’t match as they took the field. Even his commute from his parents’ home to school was challenging.

Williams made the best of it. Despite the long drives, he would arrive at 5 or 6 a.m. to lead the team in workouts.

“Troy don’t play,” said Lomax, a linebacker who played with Williams at Narbonne and Santa Monica. “He makes practice so much harder than it has to be. Troy was always prepared.”

With Williams at the helm, Santa Monica cruised through an 11-0 year. Williams threw for 2,750 yards and 31 touchdowns against four interceptions — a clear cut above his competition. Kaub estimated that Williams played in the fourth quarter only three games during

the run.

But the biggest transition Kaub saw was in Williams’ mindset. When he started at Santa Monica, he still was stewing. By season’s end, all of his fear, his uncertainty, his doubt were completely erased.

“First week or so, he wasn’t having fun, then something just switched,” he said. “Troy was Troy again. I’m sure there was a point where there was that fear where he was operating without a net. But after that switch, there was no doubt that he was going to get right back to where he belongs.”

Another shot

Roderick does have a problem with his starting quarterback: Williams spends too much time watching film.

“He’s in there for hours and hours and hours,” Roderick

said. “We have to kick him out. Literally have to kick him out, ‘Go home, go to bed, get some rest. Go to the cafeteria, get something to eat.’”

But the coaching staff hasn’t had any problem getting Williams up to speed, or to work harder in practice. He’s often found doing push-ups or running wind sprints after Utah’s sessions, squeezing every minute out of the time he has on the field. That’s something he learned from junior college: It’s not guaranteed that he can be on that field forever, so he uses the time he has.

Teammates seem to appreciate it. Of Utah’s five team captains, Williams is the only one who hasn’t yet played a down for the Utes. Roderick isn’t surprised.

“He’s earned the kind of respect from me that if I had a vote, I would’ve voted for him too,” he said. “It says a lot about how much respect he’s earned from his teammates in a short amount of time.”

Those who know Williams from his Narbonne or Santa Monica days said Utah has landed a winner, someone who has the potential to fundamentally shake up what has been a stagnant passing game. His mere presence has bred confidences in his teammates that the Utes’ offense will finally earn its keep.

“He came in with the right mindset, knowing everything is a business and that everything had to be on point about his game and hisamentals,” said receiver Tyler Cooperwood, one of Williams’ roommates. “I see him as a young Cam Newton, just because of the swag he’s got, the way he commands the offense, the way he’s built — real strong and powerful.”

It’s perhaps an unwieldy comparison, given what Williams has left to accomplish.

But wherever he has gone so far, his teammates have been willing to follow. And Utah is hopeful that success might just follow this time, too.

kgoon@sltrib.com
Twitter: @kylegoon

UTAH UTES

He promises WRs will be 'something special' this year.

By KYLE GOON

The Salt Lake Tribune

Receivers coach Guy Holliday recently called senior Tim Patrick "the complete package" at wideout.

Apparently, that package includes some big talk. When asked about what stood out about the receiving group this fall, Patrick said, "our dominance."

If "dominance" seems like a strong word for Utah's passing attack, you're probably looking back at the record book. The Utes haven't finished better than ninth in Pac-12 passing since joining the league, and have only one 1,000-yard receiver in that time (Dres Anderson in 2013).

But Patrick isn't about to let a little thing like history cramp his vision of what Utah's receivers could be this year.

"It's all about confidence being a receiver," he said. "You can have all of the tools but you need confidence."

Sure, the fans say, but what about catches?

Utah's receiving corps entered camp as perhaps the biggest question mark position outside of quarterback — a mix of unproven (and some oft-injured) veterans with a few new faces in the mix. With new coach Holliday, much is expected to change, and many of those expectations fall squarely on Patrick, who has been talked up as the top receiver in the group.

"He's got length, but for as long as he is, he's very quick-twitch," defensive coordinator

Patrick: Utes are not some passing fancy



Morgan Scalley said. "After that, his strength — he's able to push smaller corners off the ball. He's able to go over the top of your shorter corners. He just presents a lot of issues because of how big and explosive he is."

On one hand, Patrick seems an unlikely leader. He missed the latter half of 2014 after breaking his leg against Oregon, and missed all of last year in recovery from the injury. Entering the third year of his Utah career, he has a grand total of 16 career receptions for 177 yards.

And yet, of all the returners at the position, he only trails sophomore Tyrone Smith (18 catches) in production. He's spent the last year-and-a-half working on his strength (he's gained 20 pounds since 2014), waiting for his moment to arrive again.

"I could dominate the Pac-12," he said. "When I first got here, everything was so fast, I was just trying not to do stuff wrong. That Oregon game was when I started to get a handle on the speed."

Then? Snap.

Patrick's injury made him more appreciative of his opportunities for football. Sophomore receiver Raelon Singleton, one of Patrick's roommates, said he sees Patrick's determination daily.

"He works every day," Singleton said. "He does extra work, everything. He makes us better, because he helps us compete, and he's the oldest of the group."

Now 22, Patrick is more aware of his senior status in the program. By the time his career is up, he wants to leave an impression.

He knows that fans and critics alike have skepticism about Utah's passing game. But if things go the way he believes they'll go, it won't matter.

"I know people might say we've said it before," he said, "but I'm telling you, we're going to be something special this year."

The Tim Patrick file

» Played football and basketball at Grossmont College (Calif.).

» Had 16 catches for 177 yards as a junior in 2014.

» Listed on top of depth chart at Z-receiver.

SCOTT SOMMERDORF | *The Salt Lake Tribune*

kgoon@sltrib.com
Twitter: @kylegoon

Tight ends ready to step up

Moeai and Handley will carry the load after Fakailoatonga goes down.

By **KYLE GOON**

The Salt Lake Tribune

On the first drive, on his first catch, Evan Moeai went down as his left ankle buckled and gave way beneath him in Utah's season opener against Michigan last September. He wouldn't play again that year.

The next day, even before word was out on the severity of the senior tight end's injury, Samantha Moeai, his wife, tweeted: "I bet no one hates football more than me."

A year later, Evan remembers the tweet and laughs a little uncomfortably about it. Back for his sixth year after

getting a waiver over the summer, he talked over the decision with his wife at length.

"She has mixed feelings about football, of course. It's understandable out of concern for my well-being," he said. But at the end of the day, a big part of my decision was knowing I would regret it if I didn't."

After another devastating injury to one of his fellow tight ends, the Utes need Moeai as much as ever.

Senior Siale Fakailoatonga has torn his ACL for a second straight season, putting him out for the year. The loss puts the onus on Moeai and junior

Harrison Handley to stand out at the position, particularly since the Utes want to use more two-tight-end sets this year.

Returning as Utah's leading receiver from last year (21 catches, 286 yards, four TDs in 2015) Handley had a mission in mind: become a better blocker. He's up from 240 pounds last year to 255 this year, and he said he's worked on his blocking technique and mechanics ad nauseum — which makes him well-positioned to help replace Fakailoatonga's contribution.

At a recent practice, Handley showcased his added bulk by shaking off defenders after a catch.

"Blocking is definitely still a big emphasis for me," he said. "But I think every single day

we're out here in pads, I get better and better."

What Moeai is working on is a little more intangible.

He spent the spring rehabbing his ankle and getting in shape, but his confidence took longer to heal. Tight ends coach Fred Whittingham noticed on the first day of fall camp that Moeai looked "tentative" on the field.

"I talked to him a little bit about it, and the best thing he can do is just let it rip and not think about anything other than playing football," Whittingham said. "He's done that. You've seen him get better and better, and now he's playing really good ball."

At his best, Moeai is a crafty receiving threat. Offensive coordinator Aaron Rodrick said Moeai prominently

figured into Utah's offensive game plan each of the last two years before he was injured. Safety Chase Hansen said Moeai is one of the hardest receivers to cover, deceptively quick and shifty in the open field.

He changed his number — from 84 to 18 — in case the old one was giving him bad luck.

Each day and each practice inches Moeai closer to where his head needs to be. He's talked with Fakailoatonga — who now joins Moeai with two season-ending injuries in two years — and offered his support, but he has his own progress to continue.

"You can't help but feel bad that you haven't been able to be out there and produce on the field like you hoped to, and the coaches hoped you to," he said. "But then again, you can't plan for an injury. There's nothing you can really do. I'm just out here to work hard and do my best."

kgoon@sltrib.com
Twitter: @kylegoon

Utah's tight end depth chart

Senior Evan Moeai » Coming off consecutive season-ending injuries in 2014, 2015; Snow College alum in sixth year of eligibility.

Junior Harrison Handley » Utah's leading returning receiver from 2015 (21 catches, 286 yards); added 15 pounds in the offseason.

Freshman Chad Hekking » Former HS quarterback joined team in spring; had seven catches for 63 yards in spring game.

Freshman Bapa Falemaka » Judge Memorial standout walked on to team; state champion shot putter in high school.



FILE PHOTOS | *The Salt Lake Tribune*
Utah tight ends Evan Moeai, left, and Harrison Handley

UTAH UTES

Kicker Andy Phillips' experience in sports and life is invaluable for teammates.

By KYLE GOON

The Salt Lake Tribune

No, he doesn't have a Social Security number in single digits. No, he doesn't keep a jar full of butterscotch candies at home.

And no, Utah kicker Andy Phillips doesn't mind if you want to make another "old man" joke at his expense.

"There are times after a long conditioning session or a long lift, I think, 'Man, if I was 18, I'd be doing a lot better,'" he laughed. "But 27, that's just my prime."

The internet has recently picked on BYU starting quarterback Taysom Hill (26) for being old, but Phillips has him beat. He's the only player on Utah's roster born in the 1980s; runner-up Sunia Tauteoli, 25, is nearly two full years younger.

Phillips lives an older man's life with an older man's experiences: He's already left his skiing career behind. He went on a two-year LDS Church mission to Norway. He's been married for several years. He has a son, Max, who is about to turn 2 years old — and Megan Phillips is soon due to deliver their second son next month.

But like a wine or a painting, he's gained respect with his years. He was selected to ESPN's preseason All-American list on Monday, a sign of being both Utah's most prolific field goal kicker ever, as well as a three-time Lou Groza semifinalist.

Perhaps most telling of Phillips' maturity: He said it makes no difference.

"I learned that lesson from Tom [Hackett]," he said. "The last couple years, he's been on that list. Preseason accolades are just that: While it's great to be recognized, you have a season to play. That's the bottom line."

As a senior, Phillips finds himself in a different position. He's without Hackett, one of his best friends, and adjusting to a new holder in Mitch Wishnowsky. He's working on his graduate degree. After serving two years as a special teams captain, there was a changing of the guard this year: Safety Jason Thompson was elected.

And yet, that hasn't stopped his teammates from going to him for advice. Junior tackle Garrett Bolles said Phillips has been one of his closest

confidants since Bolles learned his own wife was pregnant. Phillips tweeted public support of senior receiver Cory Butler-Byrd after his recent criminal charges: "We all make mistakes, can't wait to see how you bounce back!"

Senior guard Isaac Asiata said Phillips accompanied him this summer when he went to the Salt Lake Temple for the first time in four years.

"He's been there for me in times when I thought nobody else was," Asiata said. "That guy is a captain to me. That guy is Utah football. I don't think anyone cares more about the team than Andy does."

But Phillips does care about a great many other things besides football — particularly the NCAA. Among the Utes, no one is more critical of what he sees as a hypocritical structure. As a skier, his likeness was a potential source of income. As a football player, Phillips is bothered by the idea that the athletes don't get the same opportunities.

Last year, Phillips tweeted directly to the NCAA, "Dear @NCAA My teammates and I would also like to profit from our hard work and support our families," and he hasn't backed down — tweeting to the NCAA since with additional criticism.

While he said he's learned to temper his voice, he isn't about to clam up. Much of his stipend goes to paying for wipes, diapers, doctor's visits and more for his son. With another on the way, it's often on his mind.

"We don't really get a crash course on how our likeness is used, and how we don't benefit from that," he said. "I might be more frustrated than the next guy who isn't worried about paying for a wife and kids."

But don't picture Phillips as standing around with his palm sticking out: He spent four months this summer interning with Full Circle Group, a consulting firm.

Why come back at all? Phillips said it made sense to get his master's degree in business, help the Utes win, and play another guaranteed year of football.

"NFL scouts told me age doesn't really matter," he said. "They told me why don't I go out and show I can be as consistent as I've been over the last three years."

It's a nice thought: At least someone out there is telling Phillips that being old isn't a bad thing.

kgoon@sltrib.com
Twitter: @kylegoon

Aging like a fine wine



CHRIS DETRICK | *The Salt Lake Tribune*

Kicker Andy Phillips has packed two athletic careers into one stay at Utah.

UTAH UTES

Luafatasaga gets to show his gifts, grit

The four-star juco linebacker has made a big impression early on.

By **KYLE GOON**

The Salt Lake Tribune

Over Kavika Luafatasaga's left brow, a patch of purple skin was rising — an unsightly souvenir from incidental helmet-to-helmet contact with an offensive lineman.

"I love battle scars," he said. "It's all good. I'm going to take it."

More accurately, perhaps, the 20-year-old, 6-foot-4 linebacker loves battle. While Utah's four-star addition from Arizona Western was working on his conditioning after arriving in mid-July, he already made an early impression with his hits, his length and his ability.

In practice, he stands about five inches taller than stocky counterpart Sunia Tauteoli when the two line up side-by-side. The Utes didn't have a linebacker with Luafatasaga's size before he arrived.

"He's blessed in a lot of areas," Tauteoli said. "You see the size, the speed. He's got a lot of good attributes as a linebacker."

The Utes saw that promise when linebackers coach Justin Ena went to Arizona Western last year to scout a running back, but was quickly taken in by Luafatasaga.

He was a force for the Matadors' defense last year, leading the team in tackles (93) and adding sacks and a blocked kick for good measure.

Luafatasaga's fluidity comes from his days as a high school cornerback. He has the hips of a player in the

About Kavika Luafatasaga

» A four-star recruit by Scout, picked Utes over Ole Miss

» 93 tackles, two forced fumbles, INT, blocked kick as a sophomore at Arizona Western

» All-conference honors in 2015 for Mata-dors

» Played football and basketball at Farrington High in Hawaii

secondary, Ena said, but has grown into a prototypical linebacker.

The Utes were eager to flip him from his Ole Miss commitment in the winter. While Luafatasaga told Tauteoli (his host) on his official visit that he wanted to come to Utah, the decision wasn't made until Signing Day itself.

"I liked Ole Miss, but it just didn't feel like the right place for me," Luafatasaga said. "I really loved the guys I met here, and how they talked to me and how they said they needed me. The Ole Miss coaches were kinda salty about it, but they understood."

The Rebels had poured a lot of investment into Luafatasaga, but the culture at Utah has enabled him to fit in snugly, particular the "jam sessions" with other Polynesian players on the team. Luafatasaga, Tauteoli and others can often be found singing Common Kings or Bob Marley in their free time, they said.



SCOTT SOMMERDORF | *The Salt Lake Tribune*

While he was one of Utah's top-rated additions in the 2016 signing class, it wasn't that long ago that Luafatasaga had no apparent future in football.

Born in Samoa, then living in Hawaii and Seattle, Luafatasaga moved around in his youth. It may have played a role in being disinterested in school: While he played at Farrington High in Hawaii for his senior year, he dropped out before graduation.

While Luafatasaga did end up earning his G.E.D., he said he sat out "for about a year looking for a job." He didn't have many prospects, and certainly wasn't being considered to play for a football team.

That changed, he said, when he attended a football camp in Hawaii. He got the attention of someone from Arizona Western, but still ended up begging for a chance. There was little to go off of from the coaching staff's perspective, only that Luafatasaga was a mobile, 6-foot-4 athlete.

"I would email the coach and everything, and tell him 'I'm going to work hard for you,'" he said. "If I get an offer, I will do my best."

Luafatasaga delivered, adapting quickly and becoming a steady player as a freshman. As a sophomore, he turned into a tackling



monster being fought over by the Utes and Ole Miss.

Utah hopes he can have a similar impact at this level and help replace the production of departed backers Gionni Paul and Jared Norris. The coaching staff had to sweat out some last-minute academic catch-up before Luafatasaga could officially join, but exhaled when he finally made it.

"It's always scary when you're dealing with academic guys, but he's very driven and knew what he wanted to do," Ena said. "He came a little later than most, but he's done a good job with the three or four weeks he's had to train with the guys and get better."

He's working on getting used to the elevation, and coach Kyle Whittingham said he'd like to see Luafatasaga's conditioning improve. If he tackles it the way he has the past few years, he's hard to count out. It helps to have Tauteoli at his side — another junior-college linebacker who can understand where he came from.

"We've got a great bond," Luafatasaga said. "He pushes me a lot when I'm at my breaking point. He picks me up on a tough day, and says, 'We've gotta make it.'"

kgoon@sltrib.com
Twitter: @kylegoon

He is a Utah man



SCOTT SOMMERDORF | The Salt Lake Tribune

Utah defensive coordinator Morgan Scalley, center, will call the plays for a defense regarded by many as one of the best in the country.

First-year defensive coordinator Morgan Scalley has roots that germinated in the Utes program more than a decade ago.

By **KYLE GOON**

The Salt Lake Tribune

He's taking his hard knocks now in NFL training camp, but so far, the toughest night Jared Goff ever had on a football field was at Rice-Eccles Stadium last October.

The man who would be the first overall NFL draft pick the next year couldn't stop throwing to the other team. With a career-high five picks against the Utes, the Cal quarterback fell back to earth in a 30-24 win for the home team. He never threw more than two interceptions in any other game.

That victory — in front of a sold-out home crowd — rightly belongs to the players who picked off those passes: Gionni Paul, Marcus Williams and Justin Thomas. It belongs to Dominique Hatfield, who had a pair of interceptions.

But the man pulling the strings of Utah's secondary that night, the architect behind the grand plan that flummoxed the top-rated quarterback in college football: That was Morgan Scalley.

"People always say it's [Kyle Whittingham's] defense, and basically, they're right," former defensive coordinator John Pease said. "But the

misdirection, the disguises, the in-nuendo and bringing guys out of the box — that's Morgan."

By now, Scalley's stubbled, firm-jawed mug is a familiar one to Utah fans, both those who know him as the hard-hitting safety from Highland High School who was a leader on the 2004 Fiesta Bowl team, or those who know him more recently as one of Utah's young coaches. This year, the 36-year-old has taken on a role for which he's been long groomed: defensive coordinator.

On the practice field, the shift has been a subtle one. There's no great

Please see SCALLEY, PAGE 17

UTAH UTES

Scalley

» Continued from PAGE 16

schematic or organizational shifts — Scalley is as much apart of the fabric of the program as the turf on which he sweats and shouts. But even before the Utes kick off a game, it's clear to those within the program that he's as prepared as anyone who has ever taken the job, and he started putting his stamp on the vaunted Utah defense long before he took its reins.

"The most important thing is he hasn't missed a beat," coach Kyle Whittingham said. "No drop-off in effort, intensity, focus and concentration. He's got those guys playing hard, and that's 90 percent of it."

As a player, that effort and intensity defined Scalley. When Urban Meyer arrived in 2003, he quickly learned that if there was a problem with a player — someone was missing class, or wasn't getting in the film room — Scalley was a teammate who would fix it.

He was a coach's dream in every way: the conference defensive player of the year on the field, and a 3.96 GPA student off of it. Weber State coach Jay Hill, who was a graduate assistant when Scalley was a player, said Scalley's self-motivation was unique.

"When Morgan made a mistake, Urban wasn't really extra hard on him," Hill said. "You knew Morgan was already going to be hard on himself."

What stood out then was also what stands out now: Scalley is a stickler for being prepared and organized. That plays into how he studies game film and notices tendencies, but also how he recruits. Hill recalled seeing pages and pages of information Scalley would collect before recruiting visits, more than anyone else on staff.

Similarly, he forces players to try to rise to his level. At the beginning of defensive meetings, Scalley will often post questions about situational football on the meeting room board and call out individual players to answer them. Those who don't want to be publicly stumped had better study their playbooks.

"He wants all of his defensive players to be the smartest players on the field," cornerbacks coach Sharrieff Shah said. "Scalley says it all the time: 'I didn't run 4.3, I wasn't the biggest, but I put myself in position to make plays by being smart.'"

Scalley's smarts have been a tool for the coaching staff since he joined 10 years ago. Always a film rat, he built credibility as a coach for studying tendencies.

Against UCLA in 2011, Scalley suggested the staff install a safety blitz that would require leaving a tight end uncovered. Not all the coaches were on board, Hill said,



SCOTT SOMMERDORF | The Salt Lake Tribune

Morgan Scalley is Mr. Utah

- » Born in Salt Lake City, and attended Highland High
- » Four-year letterman as a safety and returner for the Utes
- » 2004 co-Mountain West defensive player of the year and second-team AP All-America
- » Captain on 2004 12-0 Fiesta Bowl-winning team
- » Graduated magna cum laude from Utah with degree in business in 2004/master's in business administration in 2006
- » Joined the Utes as an administrative assistant in 2006
- » Has since served as a graduate assistant, safeties coach, special teams coordinator and defensive coordinator

but the play was called in the game, resulting in a sack by Eric Rowe.

In another game against Oregon State, the Utes faced third and short. Scalley had noted one of the Beavers tendencies, shallow crossing routes, and determined that a Cover 2 would stop them in that situation. Right before the snap, Whittingham asked then-defensive coordinator Kalani Sitake why they were running the scheme.

"Kalani said, 'Hey, it's OK, Morgan scouted it out,'" Hill said. "So they ran the play, they didn't get [a first down]. Those were some of the moments early in Morgan's career when Kyle really started to trust him."

When Sitake left after the 2014 season, many observers figured Scalley's time to ascend had arrived. But Whittingham, still wanting to wait to give him the nod, surprised by pulling Pease out of retirement.

While his colleagues said Scalley never let it show at work, he was disappointed.

But one of the first calls he got was from Pease, who called to tell him about how he was passed up three times in his NFL career for a defensive coordinator job before he finally got one.

"I told him, 'If you learn something from me, I'm 72 and not going to be around forever,'" Pease said. "You will be the guy. I think he knew that. That's probably a credit to how smart he is."

By many accounts, Scalley learned a lot in that year, which he later called "invaluable."

He coached up in the box and learned how to place some emotional distance between himself and what was happening on the field. He grew his knowledge base, including some tricks of Pease's NFL tenure.

This past offseason, it was natural for Pease to retire, and for Scalley to assume the role he's long been slated for.

"Not only did it teach him patience, but it was amazing to learn from Coach Pease," said Shah. "It's something to have now, to be able for Morgan to keep that calm while still having a motivational edge."

The transition has been smooth. Scalley shouts less on the field than he used to — Pease said he's become "more of an assassin, more selective with it." He's left a part of the exuberant, emotional player behind to become the grounded, confident coach.

Players say it suits him.

"He's like a father on the field: Tells you the things you need to be doing, and makes you feel comfortable on the field," junior safety Marcus Williams said. "He encourages me. He never gets me down. He just keeps me grinding."

Scalley, too, will continue to grind. That's what's gotten him here. He's not changing now.

"I love Utah, I want to stay here, I've always loved it here," he said. "As long as we keep doing what we're doing, it will bear out."

kgoon@sltrib.com
Twitter: @kylegoon

'We're all ready to go'

Linemen Tupai, Fotu and Anae draw raves.

By KYLE GOON

The Salt Lake Tribune

He's used to the gawking stares by now. At 6-foot-5, 300 pounds, 17-year-old Leki Fotu knows how unbelievable his age sounds to people. Even his own teammates don't believe him.

"During rugby season last year before our state game, they asked twice for my birth certificate," said the long-maned teenager, who is built like a refrigerator. "Everyone's always surprised. But I'm just here, like anybody else."

However, Fotu and two of his freshmen teammates in camp — Bradlee Anae and Maxs Tupai — aren't your run-of-mill newcomers. Despite arriving at Utah to compete for playing time at the team's deepest position, they've created a buzz, thanks to both their size (a combined 18-and-a-half feet and 800 pounds) and their hype (combined 10-star rating).

Boasting offers from all around the country, the trio decided to come to Utah. And while they might have limited action this year behind a group of potential All-Americans, it's been tough for even coaches to contain their excitement about a potentially special class of linemen.

"I see a lot of upside," coach Kyle Whittingham said.

The three have each gotten plenty of reps on the defensive line's second unit, with Fotu at tackle and Tupai and Anae at either end spot.

The other place they spend a lot of time together: their dorm room, which they share with Utah lineman Tucker Scott. Common activities include watching TV together, ordering a small tower of pizzas for themselves or fighting over what's playing on the stereo speaker.

"It's actually a really expensive Bose speaker that's pretty big, and it belongs to me," Anae said. "[Fotu] always tries to steal it."

And Anae isn't afraid to stand up to Fotu?

"Of course," he said. "I got him any day. But he's got big ol' legs."

But the forces that bind them are much stronger than their divisions. The three share many of the same

traits that drew Utah's attention in the first place: Incredible athletic gifts, soft-spoken humility and drive for the game.

Tupai, the most-heralded of the three and the last to commit, had an unconventional recruiting process by any measure. When other recruits of his stature were holding Signing Day news conferences, he was still weeks away from making his choice. Former Murray coach Mike Richmond said the recruiting trip that Tupai spoke most favorably about was the one where he and his host spent Friday night lifting weights.

But that's Tupai, Richmond said. He's the same player who, during a game against Tooele, slipped past a running back he was attempting to tackle, turned around and ran 50

yards down field to pull him down before he scored.

"People who watch his tape don't understand how many plays he made in the fourth quarter after playing in every snap of the game," Richmond said. "We didn't take him off the field, and he still played hard all the time."

A similar motor helped Fotu lead state champion Herriman with 85 tackles and 9.5 sacks as a senior only a year after skipping football in favor of rugby. And while there were jokes in the Mustangs' coaching room on how huge Fotu was for his age, coach Dustin Pearce thinks that wasn't what made him great.

"Honestly, his work ethic in practice was the most impressive thing," he said. "I never had to get [on] him about chasing down the ball or not finishing

the play."

The trio now has the benefit of being under the wing of all-conference linemen, including Lowell Lotulelei and Hunter Dimick. Defensive line coach Lewis Powell said his job is easy this year — he shows the freshmen film of the upperclassmen to teach technique.

Tupai said he doesn't have any expectations for playing time this year, something both Fotu and Anae echoed. But he is excited to see where his group — and his fellow newcomers — go from here.

"Bradlee and Leki, they're funny, they're goofy," he said. "But when we're on the field, we're all ready to go."

kgoon@sltrib.com
Twitter: @kylegoon



AL HARTMANN | *The Salt Lake Tribune*

Utah freshman defensive linemen Leki Fotu and Bradlee Anae, inset

UTAH UTES

Utah breakdown

The Utes will succeed if ...

Troy Williams, right, and his receivers are the real deal. The junior-college transfer needs to show both the promise he had in high school, and the consistency he showed in camp. If he can, opponents won't be able to stack the box against running back Joe Williams. The secondary will need the same ballhawking ability it had last year, and the pass rush needs to get home more often.



SCOTT SOMMERDORF | The Salt Lake Tribune



CHRIS DETRICK | The Salt Lake Tribune

The Utes won't succeed if ...

There's more of the same on offense. If Utah's conservative mode of ball control continues and erases the threat of the passing game, then Utah will struggle to win against high-scoring teams, especially on the road. Linebacker is an obvious question mark on defense, and if the players aren't ready for prime time, there will be holes in the scheme.

The bottom line

You don't need to be told: It's the passing game. Williams needs to be good. Tim Patrick, Tyrone Smith, left, and Kyle Fulks, right, need to be good. The Utes have proven talent in virtually every area of the team except the passing game. It's what has separated — and could continue to separate — Utah from its goal of finally winning the South and getting a shot at the Pac-12 title.



DEPTH CHART »

OFFENSE

- LT** » Garrett Bolles, Jr., 6-5, 300; Jackson Barton, Soph., 6-7, 310
- LG** » Isaac Asiata, Sr., 6-3, 323; Johnny Capra, 6-6, 300
- C** » J.J. Dielman, Sr., 6-5, 300; Lo Falemaka, Jr., 6-5, 300
- RG** » Salesi Uhatafe, Jr., 6-5, 315; Nick Nowakowski, Sr., 6-1, 295
- RT** » Sam Tevi, Sr., 6-6, 305; Jackson Barton, Soph., 6-7, 310
- TE** » Harrison Handley, Jr., 6-5, 250 OR Evan Moeai, Sr., 6-2, 235
- QB** » Troy Williams, Jr., 6-2, 200; Tyler Huntley, Fr., 6-1, 190
- RB** » Joe Williams, Sr., 5-11, 205; Troy McCormick, Jr., 5-9, 178
- WR** » Tyrone Smith, Soph., 6-4, 205; Caleb Repp, Soph., 6-5, 210
- SR** » Kyle Fulks, Jr., 5-9, 178; Demari Simpkins, Fr., 5-10, 184
- WR** » Tim Patrick, Sr., 6-5, 210; Raelon Singleton, Soph., 6-3, 215

DEFENSE

- LE** » Kylie Fitts, Sr., 6-4, 265; Bradlee Anae, Fr., 6-3, 243
- DT** » Filipo Mokofisi, Jr., 6-3, 278; Pasoni Tasini, Sr., 6-3, 295
- DT** » Lowell Lotulelei, Jr., 6-2, 310; Alani Havili-Katoa, Soph., 6-3, 295
- RE** » Hunter Dimick, Sr., 6-3, 272; Pita Taumoeopenu, Sr., 6-1, 245
- LB** » Sunia Tauteoli, Jr., 6-0, 226; Donovan Thompson, Fr., 5-10, 230
- LB** » Cody Barton, Soph., 6-2, 232 OR Kavika Luafatasaga, Jr., 6-4, 237
- CB** » Dominique Hatfield, Sr., 5-10, 175; Tavaris Williams, Soph., 5-11, 185
- CB** » Reginald Porter, Sr., 5-11, 185; Brian Allen, Sr., 6-3, 205
- NB** » Justin Thomas, Sr., 5-8, 180; Boobie Hobbs, Jr., 5-10, 180
- FS** » Marcus Williams, Jr., 6-1, 195; Andre Godfrey, Jr., 5-10, 191
- SS** » Chase Hansen, Soph., 6-3, 216; Jason Thompson, Sr., 6-2, 208

SPECIAL TEAMS

- P** » Mitch Wishnowsky, Soph., 6-2, 220
- K** » Andy Phillips, Sr., 5-10, 210
- LS** » Chase Dominguez, Sr., 6-5, 240
- PR** » Boobie Hobbs, Jr., 5-10, 180
- KR** » Joe Williams, Sr., 5-11, 205; Troy McCormick, Jr., 5-9, 178



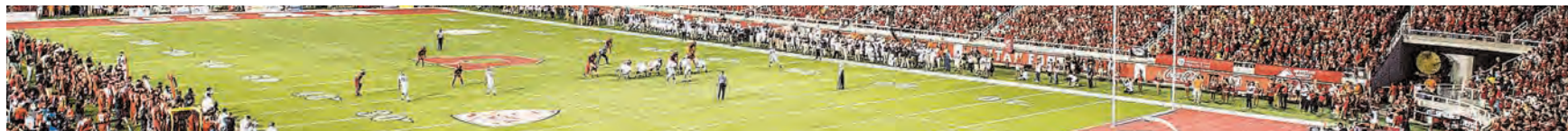
Utah running back Joe Williams

Associated Press file photo

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS »

- Sept. 1 vs. Southern Utah, 6 p.m.**
The T-Birds gave Utah State a run last year, but Utes shouldn't expect trouble.
- Sept. 10 vs. BYU, 5:30 p.m.**
The rivalry resumes with Kyle Whittingham taking on his one-time protege.
- Sept. 17 at San Jose State, 8:30 p.m.**
Spartans' passing attack should give Utes a trial run for Pac-12 offenses.
- Sept. 23 vs. USC, 7 p.m.**
A prime-time home game should set the tone for Utah's expectations this season.
- Oct. 1 at Cal**
With a new quarterback, can Golden Bears pay back the Utes for GameDay loss?
- Oct. 8 vs. Arizona**
Rich Rodriguez always seems to be able to move the ball against Utah's defense.
- Oct. 15 at Oregon State**
The Beavers are rebuilding, but figure to improve in Gary Andersen's second year.
- Oct. 22 at UCLA**
Another premier battle against Josh Rosen and company with South title implications.
- Oct. 29 vs. Washington**
If the Huskies live up to preseason hype, this could be the biggest home game of the year.
- Nov. 10 at Arizona State**
The Utes have been bedeviled in Tempe in the past, but ASU might be caught rebuilding.
- Nov. 19 vs. Oregon**
The Ducks have a lot of motivation after Utah dismantled them in Eugene last year.
- Nov. 26 at Colorado**
Could be a make-or-break game for Mike MacIntyre, as Buffs try to climb from the basement.

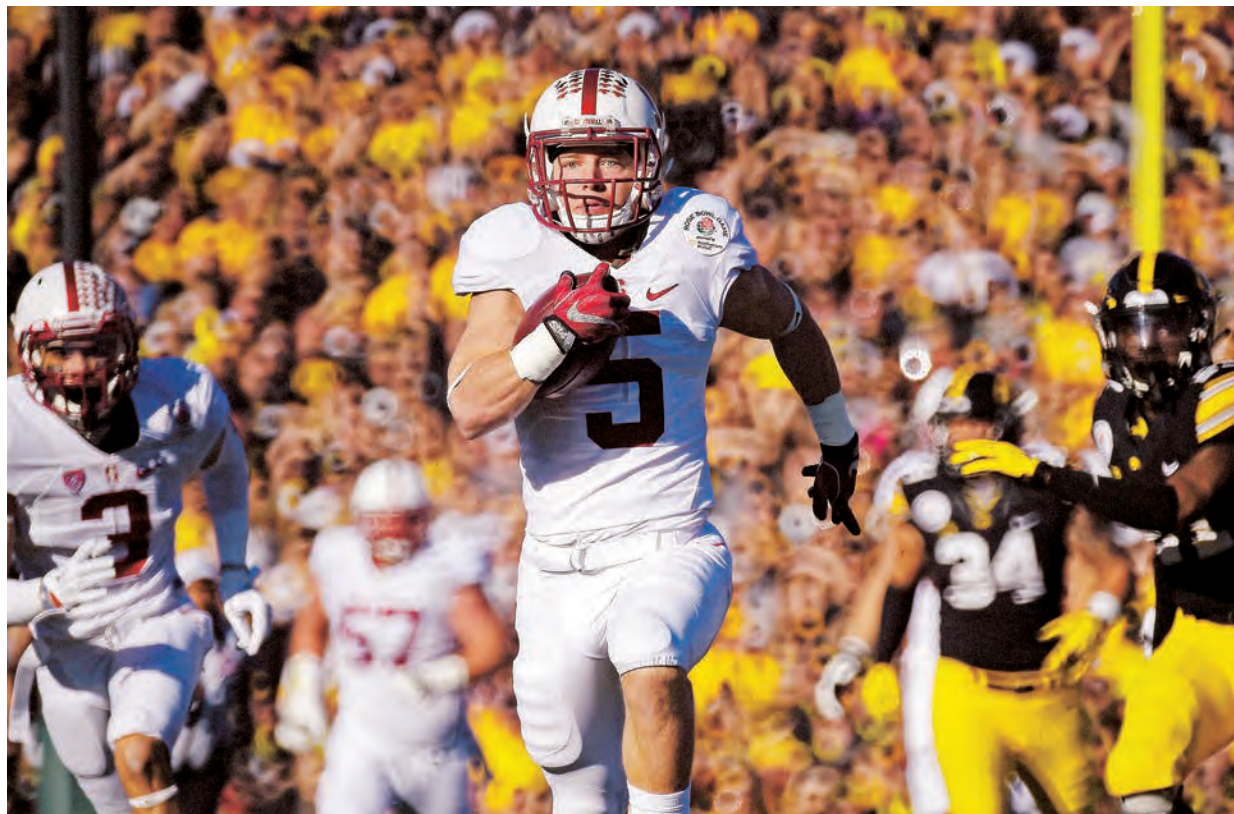
UTAH UTES



No.	Name	Yr.	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown/Previous	No.	Name	Yr.	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown/Previous
1	Boobie Hobbs	Jr.	DB	5-10	180	New Orleans, La./Landry-Walker	37	Christian Drews	Jr.	LB	6-1	230	Ramona, Calif./Ramona
1	Tyler Huntley	Fr.	QB	6-1	190	Dania, Fla./Hallandale	38	Sam Whittingham	Fr.	LB	5-10	210	Folsom, Calif./Folsom HS
2	Philip Afa	Fr.	DB	6-1	195	Chino Hills, Calif./Ayala	39	Andy Phillips	Sr.	K	5-10	210	Draper/Winter Sports School
2	Zack Moss	Fr.	RB	5-10	213	Hialeah Gardens, Fla./Hallandale	40	Kendall Huey	Jr.	DE	6-4	245	Tacoma, Wash./Pima CC
3	Donavan Thompson	Fr.	LB	5-10	230	Miami, Fla./Miami Central	41	Hauati Pututau	Fr.	DT	6-3	275	Salt Lake City/Cottonwood
3	Troy Williams	Jr.	QB	6-2	200	Carson, Calif./Santa Monica CC	42	Marcus Sanders-Williams	Sr.	LB	5-11	236	Las Vegas, Nev./Durango
4	Troy McCormick	Jr.	RB	5-9	178	Katy, Texas/Mayde Creek	43	Tyson Doman	Fr.	DB	6-0	192	Alpine/Lone Peak
5	Tavaris Williams	So.	DB	5-11	185	Fort White, Fla./Fort White	44	Jake Jackson	Fr.	LB	6-3	230	Encinitas, Calif./La Costa Canyon
6	Tyson Cisrow	Fr.	DB	5-10	190	Fort Lauderdale, Fla./St. Thomas Aquinas	45	Filipo Mokofisi	Jr.	DT	6-3	278	Woods Cross/Woods Cross
6	Kyle Fulks	Jr.	WR	5-9	178	Katy, Texas/Blinn CC	46	MacKay Dunn	So.	DB	5-10	182	Draper/Alta
7	Andre Godfrey	Jr.	DB	5-10	191	Miami, Fla./Miramar	46	Connor Haller	Fr.	DB	6-3	185	Salt Lake City/Olympus
7	Devonta'e Henry-Cole	Fr.	RB	5-8	192	Boca Raton, Fla./St. Thomas Aquinas	46	Tyler Bell	Jr.	TE	6-4	242	Fountain Valley, Calif./Fountain Valley
8	Alec Dana	So.	WR	6-2	186	Rancho Cucamonga, Calif./Chaffey CC	47	Caleb Repp	So.	WR	6-5	210	Rancho Cucamonga, Calif./Los Osos
9	Davir Hamilton	Fr.	LB	6-2	223	Compton, Calif./Long Beach Poly	48	Gerrit Choate	Fr.	LB	5-11	225	Dallas, Texas/Parish Episcopal School
8	Chris Hart	Fr.	DE	6-2	245	Fort Lauderdale, Fla./St. Thomas Aquinas	49	Hunter Dimick	Sr.	DE	6-3	272	Syracuse/Syracuse
10	Jason Thompson	Sr.	DB	6-2	208	Renton, Wash./Wyoming	50	Pita Taumoepenu	Sr.	DE	6-1	245	Provo/Timpview
10	Riley Richmond	So.	WR	5-7	169	Salt Lake City/Snow CC	52	Hayden Clegg	Sr.	DE	6-1	235	Laguna Nigel, Calif./Neb-Omaha
11	Kylie Fitts	Sr.	DE	6-4	265	San Bernardino, Calif./UCLA	52	Sam Tevi	Sr.	OT	6-6	305	Eules, Texas/Trinity
11	Raelon Singleton	So.	WR	6-3	215	Crosby, Texas/Crosby	53	Alani Havili-Katoa	So.	DT	6-3	295	Stansbury Park/Stansbury
12	Tim Patrick	Sr.	WR	6-5	210	San Diego, Calif./Grossmont CC	53	Tucker Scott	Fr.	OL	6-4	292	San Clemente, Calif./San Clemente
12	Justin Thomas	Sr.	DB	5-8	180	Orange, Texas/West Orange-Stark	54	Isaac Asiata	Sr.	OL	6-3	323	Spanish Fork/Spanish Fork
13	Bapa Falemaka	Fr.	TE	6-3	239	Grantsville/Judge Memorial	55	Kavika Luafatasaga	Jr.	LB	6-4	237	Honolulu, Hawaii/Ariz. Western
13	Jordan Fogal	Jr.	DB	5-10	186	San Leandro, Calif./San Mateo CC	56	Bradlee Anae	Fr.	DE	6-3	243	Laie, Hawaii/Kahuku
14	Brian Allen	Sr.	DB	6-3	205	La Marque, Texas/La Marque	57	Justin Tatola	Fr.	LB	5-11	211	South San Francisco/Junipero Serra
14	Drew Lisk	Fr.	QB	6-1	202	Draper/Jordan	58	Vaha Vainuku	Fr.	DT	6-3	295	Salt Lake City/East
15	Logan Bateman	Fr.	QB	6-1	190	Simi Valley, Calif./Royal	59	Pasoni Tasini	Sr.	DT	6-3	295	Ephraim/Snow College
15	Dominique Hatfield	Sr.	DB	5-10	175	Los Angeles, Calif./Crenshaw	62	Aaron Amaama	So.	OL	6-1	332	Kearns/Bingham
16	Cory Butler-Byrd	Sr.	WR	5-10	180	Compton, Calif./Los Angeles Harbor College	63	John Aloma	Fr.	K	6-0	200	Simi Valley, Calif./Simi Valley
17	Conner Charles	Fr.	DB	5-11	175	Boise, Idaho/Bishop Kelly	64	Mark Kruger	Fr.	DT	6-2	295	Orem/Pleasant Grove
17	Demari Simpkins	Fr.	WR	5-10	184	Carol City, Fla./Hallandale	65	Paul Toala	So.	OL	6-4	324	Burien, Wash./Dixie State College
18	Nygel King	Fr.	DB	6-0	171	Tomball, Texas/Klein Oak	66	Kyle Lanterman	Fr.	OL	6-2	280	Long Beach, Calif./Woodrow Wilson
18	Evan Moeai	Sr.	TE	6-2	235	Provo/Snow CC	67	Nick Carman	Fr.	OL	6-3	276	Tempe, Ariz./Mountain Pointe
19	Tyler Cooperwood	Sr.	WR	5-9	163	Long Beach, Calif./East L.A. CC	68	J.J. Dielman	Sr.	OL	6-5	300	Ahwatukee, Ariz./Desert Vista
19	Sunia Tauteoli	Jr.	LB	6-0	226	Salt Lake City/Snow CC	69	Lo Falemaka	Jr.	OL	6-5	283	West Valley City/Cottonwood
20	Marcus Williams	Jr.	DB	6-1	195	Corona, Calif./Eleanor Roosevelt	70	Jackson Barton	So.	OL	6-7	310	Salt Lake City/Brighton
20	Lahi Kautai	So.	WR	5-8	195	Eules, Texas/Trinity	71	Daniel Heller	Fr.	OL	6-2	290	Las Vegas, Nev./Palo Verde
21	Tyrone Smith	So.	WR	6-4	205	Fresno, Calif./Edison	72	Garett Bolles	Jr.	OL	6-5	300	Lehi, Utah/Snow College
22	Chase Hansen	So.	DB	6-3	216	Highland/Lone Peak	73	Johnny Capra	Fr.	OL	6-6	300	Auburn, Calif./Placer
23	Julian Blackmon	Fr.	DB	6-1	180	Layton/Layton	74	Salesi Uhatafe	Jr.	OL	6-5	315	Eules, Texas/Trinity
23	Armand Shyne	So.	RB	5-11	214	Oakland, Calif./American River CC	75	Nick Nowakowski	Sr.	OL	6-1	295	Castaic, Calif./West Ranch
24	Kenric Young	Jr.	WR	6-1	189	Gainesville, Fla./Gainesville	76	Scott Peck	Fr.	OL	6-6	310	Spokane Valley, Wash./Central Valley
25	Casey Hughes	So.	DB	5-11	195	North Las Vegas, Nev./Legacy	77	Darrin Paulo	Fr.	OL	6-5	310	Sacramento, Calif./Grant
26	Terrell Burgess	Fr.	DB	6-0	182	San Marcos, Calif./San Marcos	78	Jake Grant	Fr.	OL	6-3	290	Scottsdale, Ariz./Horizon
26	Jordan Howard	Jr.	RB	5-10	209	Redlands, Calif./Riverside CC	79	Keven Dixon	Fr.	OL	6-5	277	Buena Park, Calif./Buena Park
27	Marcel Manalo	Fr.	RB	5-11	220	Rio Linda, Calif./Rio Linda	80	Siaosi Wilson	Fr.	WR	6-2	188	Tustin, Calif./Tustin
27	Nick Mika	So.	DB	6-2	190	Katy, Texas/Cinco Ranch	81	Dimitri Salido	Jr.	WR	5-11	190	Pleasant Hill, Calif./Diablo Valley CC
28	Joe Williams	Sr.	RB	5-11	205	Allentown, Pa./ASA CC	82	Ken Hampel	Sr.	TE	6-3	250	Mountain View, Calif./Mountain View
29	Reginald Porter	Fr.	DB	5-11	185	Amite, La./Amite	83	Jameson Field	So.	WR	5-11	185	Long Beach, Calif./Mater Dei
29	Gage Cook	Fr.	WR	5-11	192	Kaysville/Davis	84	Dakota Baker	Fr.	WR	6-2	175	Idaho Falls, Idaho/Idaho Falls
30	Cody Barton	So.	LB	6-2	232	Salt Lake City/Brighton	85	Andrew Santiago	Sr.	WR	6-0	195	Provo/Plano West (Texas)
30	James Gray	So.	RB	5-9	174	Tokyo, Japan/Waseda University	86	Wallace Gonzalez	So.	TE	6-5	255	San Gabriel Valley, Calif./Bishop Amat
30	Quinn Meier	Fr.	RB	5-11	188	Salt Lake City/Olympus	88	Harrison Handley	Jr.	TE	6-5	250	Sandy/Alta
31	Evan Eggiman	Jr.	LB	6-2	215	Hillsboro, Ore./Liberty	89	Chad Hekking	Fr.	TE	6-4	240	Vacaville, Calif./Vacaville
32	Ty Murrell	Fr.	RB	5-8	175	Cornelius, N.C./William Amos Hough	90	Pita Tonga	Fr.	DT	6-1	256	Taylorville/Highland
32	Sharrieff Shah Jr.	Sr.	LB	6-1	225	Sandy/Utah State	92	Hayes Hicken	Fr.	K	5-11	185	Salt Lake City/Highland
33	Mitch Wishnowsky	So.	P	6-2	220	Gosnells, Australia/Santa Barbara CC	92	Maxs Tupai	Fr.	DE	6-1	257	Taylorville/Murray
33	Damian Greene	Jr.	DB	5-8	182	Sammamish, Wash./Santa Monica CC	93	Lowell Lotulelei	Jr.	DT	6-2	310	South Jordan/Bingham
34	Alex Whittingham	Jr.	LB	5-10	208	Salt Lake City/Brighton	94	Chase Dominguez	Sr.	SN	6-5	240	Orange, Calif./Lutheran
35	Samson Nacua	Fr.	DB	6-3	182	Provo/Timpview	95	Trace Hobbs	Fr.	TE	6-2	180	Anaheim, Calif./Canyon
35	Jordan Howard	Jr.	RB	5-10	209	Redlands, Calif./Riverside CC	96	Nick Heninger	Fr.	DE	6-2	229	South Jordan/Bingham
36	Mackay Dunn	So.	DB	5-10	182	Draper/Alta	99	Leki Fotu	Fr.	DE	6-5	300	West Valley City/Herriman

PAC-12 PREVIEW

PLAYERS AND COACHES TO WATCH » BY KYLE GOON



MARK J. TERRILL | The Associated Press

Stanford running back Christian McCaffrey will be one of the most celebrated players in college football this year.

COACH OF THE YEAR » CHRIS PETERSEN, WASHINGTON

Despite losing several NFL first- and second-round draft picks in 2015, the Huskies still had one of the league's

best defenses and a winning record. They had a prolific freshman quarterback, and a 1,000-yard freshman running back. They bring back most of their playmakers.



The fact that many football observers expect a 7-6 team to step into contending for the league title is a sign of how Coach Pete has groomed this program.

COACH ON THE HOT SEAT » MIKE MACINTYRE, COLORADO

Most agree that Colorado is much better than it was after the disastrous Jon Embree era, and the program has taken forward leaps in talent and facilities. But at the end of the day, Coach Mac is 2-25 in Pac-12 games, which isn't good enough.

MVP » RB CHRISTIAN MCCAFFREY, JR., STANFORD

I mean, come on. Could it be anyone else? The nifty-footed running back took the league by storm last year as a rusher, receiver and returner. WildCaff torched the competition to smash a hallowed record: Barry Sanders' yards from scrimmage, which he bested by more than 600 yards (3,864). The only thing he couldn't manage was to snag was the Heisman Trophy, which West Coast observers will tell you is thanks in part to SEC bias. No one affected a game in more ways than McCaffrey, who made kick and punt returns must-see TV. His line will be weaker this year. His quarterback will be new. But the son of an NFL receiver and a college soccer star is still fast, still shifty in the open field, and still sure-handed. He has arguably the best coach in the Pac-12, who trusts him explicitly to handle whatever he gets thrown at him. While Stanford may depend more on McCaffrey this year to produce wins on the field, it's hard to see him not being ready for it.



JAE C. HONG | The Associated Press

FUTURE HOUSEHOLD NAME » QB MAX BROWNE, USC

Once best known as Jake Heaps' successor at Sammamish, Wash., the top-graded prospect finally beat out freshman Sam Darnold for the Trojans' starting job. Browne has always had arm talent and an ability to find open receivers. Now he'll be working with weapons that include JuJu Smith-Schuster and Darreus Rogers. He'll have a backfield with stellar runners Justin Davis and Ronald Jones III. He'll be playing behind a line seen as the best in the league, and with a head coach who helped groom him. The environment is completely right for him to be a star — all he must do is perform.

MOST UNDERRATED PLAYER » HUNTER DIMICK, UTAH

While Lowell Lotulelei and Kylie Fitts have dotted Pac-12 and even All-America preseason lists, has the world forgotten about Snacks?

When he last played a full season, he had 10 sacks. He has 15.0 for his career, as well as 24.0 tackles for a loss, and he also



RICK EGAN | The Salt Lake Tribune

does his share in the run game. While it helped in 2014 that he was paired with Nate Orchard on one side, does he not have a chance to thrive with Lotulelei, Fitts and Pita Taumoepeu rushing the passer as well? A team captain and a senior leader, expect a bounce-back season from Dimick, assuming he can stay healthy.

MOST OVERRATED PLAYER » DAKOTA PRUKOP, OREGON

Can lightning strike twice with an FCS transfer coming in at quarterback? The Ducks are about to find out. They'll be stacked on offense, built around Royce Freeman and a couple ridiculously fast weapons (Devon Allen literally just ran in the Olympics). They'll put up some points for sure. But it's hard to see Prukop replicating what Vernon Adams did at his best (and healthiest) last year. It's the second straight riverboat gamble for Oregon, which needs to start developing quarterbacks within its own program. Wasn't there a guy named Mariota there just a few years back?

PAC-12 PREVIEW

TEAM BREAKDOWN » BY KYLE GOON

TEAM TO BEAT » STANFORD

OK. They've graduated their starting quarterback, their offensive line, some key receivers and defenders. And yet: Stanford has won three of the last four conference championships, going on a run of dominance in the league that rivals only USC. There's a reason for that, and not just that they have a Heisman runner-up. David Shaw consistently gets his team reloaded and ready to compete at the highest level. The Cardinal have some tough games early on against USC, UCLA and Washington. If they finish 3-0 in that stretch, watch out.

DON'T SLEEP ON » WASHINGTON STATE

With their passing attack alone, the Cougars are a threat. Logan native Luke Falk returns after throwing for over 4,500 yards and connecting on 38 touchdowns against eight interceptions. He's got a candidate for best receiver in the country in Gabe Marks, as well as numerous other weapons. But the real improvement here may be on defense, where there are several key returning starters in the secondary and newcomers who will bolster the front.

TEAM YOU DON'T WANT TO PLAY » UCLA

Next to USC, no team has better athletic talent than the Bruins, who are consistently in the upper tier of the conference but just shy of winning it. While they lost a ton of receiving weapons, Josh Rosen is viewed as probably the best sophomore quarterback prospect in the country, and showed brilliance in flashes last season. The defense returns some hard-hitting players like DL Eddie Vanderdoes and LB Jayon Brown. There are holes to fill, sure, but UCLA can battle with anyone.

TEAM WITH NO CHANCE » OREGON STATE

Gary Andersen had a rough first year, and here's a guess that the second will be tough, too. He replaced both coordinators (Kalani Sitake left for BYU, and Dave Baldwin got demoted). He probably has a better starting quarterback with Utah State transfer Darell Garretson, but he's got to replace some key players in both trenches. From a talent perspective, the Beavers are still a long way from competing even with other low-end Pac-12 teams. Maybe he didn't have it so bad in Madison.

KYLE GOON'S PREDICTIONS »

NORTH DIVISION ORDER OF FINISH

- 1. Stanford** » The best player, the best coach, and the best recent history of winning the league.
- 2. Washington** » The hype is not without merit: The secondary might be the best in the country.
- 3. Washington State** » Luke Falk will lead a prolific Cougar offense, brimming with confidence after last year.
- 4. Oregon** » Always an explosive threat, but have the Ducks improved defensively after losing DeForest Buckner?
- 5. Cal** » Replacing the No. 1 NFL draft pick, but also receivers, coaches — and still lackluster on defense.
- 6. Oregon State** » Rebuilding in Corvallis will take more than one season.

SOUTH DIVISION ORDER OF FINISH

- 1. UCLA** » If Rosen matures in Year 2, he could help the Bruins break through their recent ceiling.
- 2. Utah** » As long as passing improves, Utah is built to win in the trenches and the secondary.
- 3. USC** » Always a threat with the conference's top talent, but still rebuilding at key positions.
- 4. Arizona State** » Sun Devils' fiery preseason rhetoric has been toned down considerably this year.
- 5. Colorado** » The Buffs have a lot of veterans and might finally start winning some close ones.
- 6. Arizona** » They've got a lot to iron out after turning over a lot of defensive staff.

Pac-12 Championship Game: Stanford over UCLA

COLORADO »

Spot under center a concern of Buffs

Spurned by Webb, the Buffs hope Liufau is healthy.

Boulder, Colo. » Davis Webb's change of heart might lead to a change of fortunes for the Colorado football team and coach Mike MacIntyre in 2016.

The Texas Tech quarterback spurned the Buffs at the last minute when the graduate transfer decided to play his final season at Cal instead. Without Webb, there's added urgency for senior Sefo Liufau to come back from the season-ending foot injury he sustained Nov. 13.

"He's made all of his benchmarks and done everything he's been asked. He even trimmed down some more. He lost a little more body weight and gained a little more muscle," MacIntyre said. "He's taken advantage of the situation. We've had no issues so far, but I need to knock on wood for sure."

MacIntyre is counting on Liufau coming back better than ever this year, however.

"I look for him to have an excellent year," MacIntyre said. "In his sophomore year, he threw the ball well. Last year, he was running the ball well. ... I think that this year he'll put all of it together and have a phenomenal year and walk out of here the way he should with what he's earned and the victories he needs to get."

MacIntyre's future could depend on it. Reaching a bowl game for the first time since the 2007 season could go a long way toward turning around the moribund program.

"I've heard that since the first year I got here. When you haven't gone to a bowl game in a while, that's always the first thing said. Our goal for our players is tomorrow's practice," MacIntyre said. "We want to win every game we play, we really do. I definitely feel like we have the opportunity to do that."

— *The Associated Press*



Associated Press file photo

Colorado quarterback Sefo Liufau

What you should know

DE-FENSE! DE-FENSE! Senior defensive back Chidobe Awuzie will lead a reinforced defense this season. "I expect to be really good on defense," coach Mike MacIntyre said. "Chido is definitely a leader on defense, he's what you would call a true playmaker on defense. People come up to me all the time and say, 'Golly, he's all over the field.' Well we put him all over the field and he also has the ability to make plays all over the field. He's a key ingredient in our defense and we definitely build things around him depending how we play certain teams."

KEY GAMES: Colorado State, Sept. 2; at Michigan, Sept. 17. The first is the big rivalry, the second a chance to kick-start the program against a perennial national power. "The opening game is always a lot of fun; there's always a lot of hype for the opening game anywhere in the country," MacIntyre said. "That's always exciting, but when you play a rival in the very first game at a neutral site, it's a unique experience and puts a little more hype and emotion on it. Playing that football game is a big deal. It's one that our players hear about for 365 days a year. You don't hear about every other game 365 days a year. That puts a little more of an emotional tie to the game than most games."

PREDICTION: 4-8. Although, this team does have that we'll-show-you look.

PAC-12 PREVIEW

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA »

Expectations high as always for USC

Helton takes over as the latest interim coach to be elevated.

Los Angeles » Although Clay Helton is beginning his first full season as Southern California's head coach, this transplanted Southerner has been around the West Coast's most glamorous college football program long enough to know it's already time to start winning again.

"At USC, the bar is set high," Helton said. "It's about championships. And if you don't like that bar, don't take the job."

After six years as a steadying influence on the Trojans during the tenures of fired coaches Lane Kiffin and Steve Sarkisian, Helton is finally in charge of a program that hasn't won a Pac-12 title since 2008.

That's the longest drought since 1968, and the Trojans' thirsty fans aren't eager to wait through another rebuilding season. Neither is new athletic director Lynn Swann — who took over after Helton had been given the permanent job by departing Pat Haden.

Luckily for them, USC already has plenty of pieces in place for a resurgent season. The Pac-12 South's lack of a clear favorite leaves the Trojans with reason to believe they can reach the Pac-12 title game — where Stanford routed them last year.

Helton doesn't have much of a rebuilding job to do. His offense is stocked with a veteran offensive line, JuJu Smith-Schuster's fleet of receivers, and tremendous tailbacks Justin Davis and Ronald Jones II.

Returning defensive coordinator Clancy Pendergast also has plenty of five-star pieces, but Pete Carroll was the last coach to turn all that talent into a powerhouse when it really mattered. Helton realizes he'll be compared to those dynastic teams of the past decade until he creates his own identity for the Trojans.

The clock is already ticking.

— *The Associated Press*



Associated Press file photo

USC coach Clay Helton

What you should know

CAM'S BACK: One breakout star on last season's defense was playmaking linebacker Cameron Smith, but the freshman missed the last four games with a knee injury. He returns to provide steady play on a unit that must replace several major parts, including a defensive line missing six of its top seven players from last year.

KEY GAMES: After losing his final two games last season as the Trojans' permanent coach, Clay Helton will continue his tenure on Sept. 3 with a trip to Arlington, Texas, to play defending national champion Alabama at the Dallas Cowboys' palatial stadium. September alone includes visits to Stanford and Utah, and the Trojans have back-to-back road games at Washington and UCLA in November before returning for the annual rivalry game with Notre Dame. "Play Alabama, play Notre Dame, play the Pac-12 schedule," Helton said. "It's what dreams are made of."

PREDICTION: After the tumult of the past six seasons, USC could benefit from a calm, sensible fall of steady growth, even if it doesn't culminate in a Pac-12 championship. Helton knows all about the Trojans' lofty expectations, and he realizes Lynn Swann will be looking closely at a coach he didn't hire. Given their sadistic schedule, it would be optimistic to expect more than eight wins — but that still might put USC in position to win its division.

UCLA »

With Rosen back, Bruins feel Rose-y

Star quarterback will be one of the nation's most watched players.

Los Angeles » From early injuries to a late-season flop, UCLA couldn't seem to catch a break last year.

Coach Jim Mora is hoping the Bruins' luck was just building up for this fall.

And the best reason to believe UCLA's fortunes will change is the sophomore behind center.

Josh Rosen is back to run a new-look offense for the Bruins, whose promising 2015 campaign was beset by injury woes and disappointing performances. UCLA still went 8-5, but lost two home games, two rivalry road games and its bowl game.

"We're coming off a season that was, in our estimation, a little bit disappointing to us, especially the way that it ended," Mora said. "We'd like to make amends for that."

The disappointment of last season, which was capped by dispiriting losses to USC and Nebraska, obscured the fact that Mora has built a durable winner in Westwood. UCLA hasn't won the Pac-12 since 1998, but the Bruins have been a contender for four straight seasons, which hadn't been true in the previous two decades.

The Bruins also have Rosen, who certainly seems to be the type of quarterback who can turn a good team into a powerhouse.

He passed for 3,670 yards and 23 touchdowns as a freshman, but he'll have to hook up with a largely new set of receivers this fall.

New offensive coordinator Kennedy Polamalu is building a run-based offense utilizing tight ends and fullbacks. The change will be significant, but it could mean big opportunities for Rosen, who will have the chance to direct the Bruins' approach to a greater degree.

— *The Associated Press*



Associated Press file photo

UCLA quarterback Josh Rosen

What you should know

HEALTHY AND HAPPY: UCLA never really recovered from losing three of its best defensive players to injuries early last season. Linebacker Myles Jack didn't even wait until the year ended before bolting for the NFL, but the other two are back: run-stuffing defensive lineman Eddie Vanderdoes and cornerback Fabian Moreau. They rejoin a defense already returning eight starters, although their 2015 unit was porous at times.

TAILBACK TRIO: Paul Perkins bolted early for the New York Giants, but three gifted tailbacks are still in uniform. Soso Jamabo, Nate Starks and Bolu Olorunfunmi all showed star potential last season while combining for 923 yards. They'll compete aggressively for carries — and there should be plenty, if the Bruins' new offense is running properly.

KEY GAMES: Stanford visits the Rose Bowl on Sept. 24, giving Jim Mora his next chance to stanch his 0-5 record against David Shaw; Washington State, which beat UCLA last season, hosts the Bruins on Oct. 15; and USC visits for the 86th crosstown showdown Nov. 19.

PREDICTION: Given how many important things broke poorly for the Bruins last season, perhaps it's time for things to run in the other direction this fall. With Josh Rosen at the controls, anything seems possible for the new offense. If the defense can avoid last season's ridiculous injuries, UCLA is capable of a trip back to the Pac-12 title game.

PAC-12 PREVIEW

CALIFORNIA »

New QB is under a bright spotlight

Bears hoping that transfer Webb eases Goff's departure.

Berkeley, Calif. » Davis Webb made an immediate impression when he arrived at California this summer with his tireless work ethic.

He was usually the first player in each morning and last to leave. Webb organized frequent throwing sessions with teammates and was more than willing to adjust his schedule to make sure all his receivers got involved.

That kind of leadership helped him quickly win over his teammates and earn the starting quarterback job after joining the Golden Bears as a graduate transfer in May. The task doesn't get any easier as Webb must now master the offense and build a rapport with his teammates as he replaces No. 1 draft pick Jared Goff.

"I feel like I've been here for more than two months," Webb said. "I feel like it's been a couple of years, the way we bonded on and off the field throughout summer workouts. I feel really comfortable with this team."

Webb's transition is helped by the fact he ran a similar offense at Texas Tech, where he threw for 5,557 yards and 46 touchdowns while making 14 starts and playing 23 games.

Cal coach Sonny Dykes said he wasn't seeking a grad transfer but made the move to add Webb when his former player and current Red Raiders coach Kliff Kingsbury called Webb one of the hardest-working players he had been around. That quickly became evident once he enrolled at Cal when he brought his receivers in for long film-watching sessions and hours of throwing before fall practice even started.

"He's elevating everybody's game to a higher level," receiver Raymond Hudson said. "It's crazy the confidence that he has where he comes in and takes control. He knows what he wants and everybody has bought in."

— *The Associated Press*



Associated Press file photo

Cal transfer QB Davis Webb

What you should know

CATCH THE BALL: The Bears lost their top six receivers from last season, meaning Davis Webb will have to break in a new set of pass catchers. The group definitely doesn't lack talent. Five-star freshman Demetris Robertson is Cal's most heralded recruit in years and early enrollee Melquise Stovall impressed in spring ball. Raymond Hudson and Chad Hansen have some experience and will likely start in the spread-out Bear Raid offense.

HOLD THE LINE: Cal returns four starters on the offensive line, which should make the job easier for Webb. Senior guard Chris Borrayo leads a talented group that should help the Bears run the ball with a trio of backs led by Vic Enwere, Tre Watson and Khalfani Muhammad.

KEY GAMES: If the Bears want to return to a bowl game, they better pile up some wins early because the second-half schedule is brutal. Cal faces five teams picked to finish in the top three in their division in the final six games, although four of those games come at home against Oregon, Washington, Stanford and UCLA. Logistics were the biggest challenge in the opener when the Bears traveled more than 7,000 miles to take on Hawaii in Sydney, Australia on Aug. 26. Cal left a week early to try to lessen the effects of the long travel and will have a week off to recover after the return home.

PREDICTION: Four wins would be a capable benchmark for the Bears.

STANFORD »

QB is an issue, but RB? Not a problem

McCaffrey will help whomever the Cardinal play at QB.

Stanford, Calif. » Stanford heads into the season with questions about which player will touch the ball first after the snap. Where it ends up from there is less in question.

While Keller Chryst and Ryan Burns battle it out to replace four-year starter Kevin Hogan at quarterback, the Cardinal offense will again revolve around Heisman Trophy runner-up Christian McCaffrey.

After shattering Barry Sanders' record for all-purpose yards with 3,864 yards last season, McCaffrey is back for his junior season as a faster, stronger and more knowledgeable player, coach David Shaw said.

He also has plenty of other playmakers to help. Dynamic back Bryce Love is expected to get significantly more time alongside McCaffrey than he did as a freshman when he was used mostly as a spot replacement.

Michael Rector and Frances Owusu give the Cardinal two talented senior receivers and Dalton Schultz is the latest in a line of dangerous tight ends for the Cardinal.

"The quarterback's job is to deal the cards," Shaw said. "Don't make it any more complicated than that. How fast can I get the ball out of my hands into somebody else's hands. The guy, or guys, who do that the best will play."

Shaw said he's in no hurry to pick a starting quarterback. The two have 10 career combined passes as Hogan led the team to three Rose Bowls in four seasons as he became the winningest QB in school history.

"Their job is not to compete with the other guy," Shaw said. "Their job is to play the best they can play and let us make the decision beyond that. If we play two guys, great. If we play one guy, great. If we play one guy a lot and have a role for the other guy, that's fine, too."

— *The Associated Press*



Associated Press file photo

Stanford coach David Shaw

What you should know

STAYING IN SCHOOL: Michael Rector's decision to return for his fifth year and wait for the NFL gives the Cardinal offense a big boost with a deep threat on the outside. Rector has averaged 18.3 yards per catch for his career and has become more than just a vertical receiver. "Looking at the team we were going to have I saw it could be a special team," Rector said. "I wanted to be a part of that."

IN THE TRENCHES: The Cardinal lost plenty on both lines this past off-season and return just two starters in Casey Tucker and Johnny Caspers on the offensive side. The defensive line lost stalwarts Aziz Shittu and Brennan Scarlett but gets talented Harrison Phillips back from a serious knee injury to team with returner Solomon Thomas to anchor that group.

KEY GAMES: A tough stretch to end September featuring a home game against USC and trips to UCLA and Washington will determine whether the Cardinal will be able to stay in the hunt for the playoff. The schedule also includes tricky road games against Notre Dame and Oregon, as well as a visit to rival California in the Big Game. The two-quarterback system should get a fairly tough test to start the season when Stanford hosts Kansas State. The Wildcats were a bowl team last year and have four defensive players who were selected to the preseason all-Big 12 team.

PREDICTION: 10 wins is doable.

PAC-12 PREVIEW

OREGON »

A big hole left to fill for the Ducks

Oregon prepares for season with a QB competition.

Eugene, Ore. » The quarterback competition at Oregon will sort itself out sooner rather than later.

Oregon coach Mark Helfrich says he hopes to have a decision before the team's season opener against UC Davis at Autzen Stadium on Sept. 3.

Although many have looked to graduate transfer Dakota Prukop to lead the way, Helfrich said the job is far from sewn up. Redshirt freshman Travis Jonsen and freshman Terry Wilson are also in the mix.

"You want it to be obvious and glaring and everybody kind of looks at each other and goes, 'Yeah.' Like last year was a unanimous vote," Helfrich said. "No question about that."

Prukop came to the Ducks from Montana State, where he passed for 3,025 yards and 28 touchdowns with 10 interceptions last year. He also rushed for 774 yards and 11 touchdowns for the Big Sky's Bobcats, who finished 5-6.

He looks to follow Vernon Adams, another graduate transfer who started for the Ducks last season but was hampered by injuries.

Jonsen is a dual-threat quarterback from Anaheim, Calif., who injured his toe last fall and required surgery. Wilson enrolled early last spring at Oregon to get a head start.

Taylor Alie and Jeff Lockie, who both saw playing time at quarterback last season when Adams was hurt, were moved to receiver in the spring game.

Oregon went 9-4 last season, the first time the Ducks finished with fewer than 10 wins since 2007. The season was capped by a triple-overtime loss to TCU in the Alamo Bowl.

— The Associated Press



Associated Press file photo

Oregon coach Mark Helfrich

What you should know

GREAT EXPECTATIONS: Royce Freeman is understandably getting some preseason Heisman buzz. As a sophomore last season he broke LaMichael James' single-season rushing record with 1,836 yards. He's 1,881 yards away from James' career record (5,082) at Oregon.

BEST EXCUSE EVER: Wide receiver Devon Allen missed fall camp. But he had a good excuse: He was at the Rio Olympics competing in the 110-meter hurdles.

NEW COACHES: Oregon has several new coaches making their Duck debut this fall, including new defensive coordinator Brady Hoke, who was head coach at Michigan from 2011-14, and new offensive coordinator Matt Lubick, who was promoted from wide receivers coach after Scott Frost took the head coaching job at Central Florida. Also among the newcomers is quarterbacks coach David Yost, who coached receivers at Washington State under Mike Leach.

PREDICTION: Oregon has too many question marks — the competition at QB and the adjustment to a new defensive scheme — to suggest they might overcome Stanford in the Pac-12 North. But the fact that the Ducks get both the Cardinal and Washington at Autzen Stadium goes in their favor, at least in terms of conference play. Oregon again plays a challenging non-conference schedule, including a visit to Nebraska. Look for the Ducks to finish 9-4 again.

OREGON STATE »

Garretson ready to take over at QB

Former USU player sat out last year, but now is healthy.

Corvallis, Ore. » After last season's quarterback carousel at Oregon State, Darell Garretson heads into this season as the established starter.

Garretson sat out last season under NCAA rules after transferring from Utah State. For the Aggies in 2014, he threw for 1,140 yards and eight touchdowns in five games when starter Chuckie Keeton was injured. Garretson himself missed seven games that season with a wrist injury.

Garretson emerged in the Beavers' spring game and coach Gary Andersen didn't waste time, naming him as starter shortly thereafter.

"On the field, I think he handled spring well. He's progressed. How good a Pac-12 quarterback is he going to be? We'll see. We're not real interested in talking about a lot of things, we're interested in getting out and executing and moving forward," Andersen said.

Garretson said he felt the year off learning the system was beneficial.

Seth Collins, Nick Mitchell and Marcus McMaryion all saw time at starter for the Beavers, who went 2-10 last season in Andersen's first with the team.

Mitchell has since transferred. Collins announced that he was leaving, too, but then returned to Oregon State. McMaryion remains, and looks to be Garretson's backup heading into the season.

Collins started at quarterback in seven games last season as a freshman but was hampered by injury. In the season-ending Civil War, he lined up at quarterback, receiver and running back. Collins is listed at receiver for the Beavers, although Andersen said he could fill a variety of roles.

— The Associated Press



Associated Press file photo

Oregon State QB Darell Garretson

What you should know

RECEIVERS: Jordan Villamin led the Beavers last season with 660 yards receiving and five touchdowns. Victor Bolden, now a senior, caught 46 passes for 461 yards and three touchdowns while also spending time on special teams, where he was Oregon State's go-to on kick returns with 580 yards and a score.

NEW STAFFERS: Gary Andersen has named Chuckie Keeton to his coaching staff, along with former Aggie offensive lineman Funaki Asisi. They're not the only newcomers. Oregon State's new defensive coordinator is Kevin Clune, while the new co-offensive coordinators are Kevin McGiven and T.J. Woods.

BIG REMODEL: This season will debut a \$42 million remodel of the Valley Football Center and the north end of Reser Stadium. The "Victory Through Valley" campaign expanded the locker rooms and other player and coach facilities, and created a new fan area called the Terrace which will highlight local food and drink. Because of the construction project, Oregon State moved the start of fall practice off campus for the first time ever to the central Oregon city of Bend, about 125 miles southeast of Corvallis. The Beavers had to get permission from the NCAA to hold the first six days of fall practice at Summit High School before returning to campus on Aug. 11.

PREDICTION: The Beavers were picked to finish last in the Pac-12 North in the preseason poll.

PAC-12 PREVIEW

WASHINGTON »

High expectations for UW this season

Huskies hope this is the year that they return to prominence.

Seattle » When Chris Petersen decided to come to Washington, there was no set timetable on returning the Huskies to prominence.

Headed into his third season, the Huskies seem poised — between talent and a favorable schedule — for a return to the top of the Pac-12 Conference and perhaps the national stage.

“We expect to win every game we play. And so the outside noise that might have changed their expectations, that doesn’t change anything,” Petersen said.

Gone is the patience of waiting for Washington’s potential. This is the year the Huskies should graduate from hovering around .500 and being stuck in the middle of the Pac-12 discussion. With a defense that could be among the better ones in the Pac-12 and a sophomore backfield combo of quarterback Jake Browning and running back Myles Gaskin, Washington at least has the pieces in place to potentially find itself in the national conversation.

No longer having that label means greater expectations for Browning to build on a solid freshman season. Browning threw for nearly 3,000 yards and 16 touchdowns last season, but improving on those numbers will rely heavily on the development of wide receivers slim on experience and another huge season from running back Myles Gaskin.

But Petersen will be the last person to buy into the hype.

“If we can slow this thing down and pay attention to building skill and getting better and getting our competitive spirit where it needs to be, then I think we’ll feel good about things,” Petersen said. “But that’s where we are. We’re in good shape. They trained hard. But we still have a lot of work to do.”

— *The Associated Press*



Associated Press file photo

Washington QB Jake Browning

What you should know

SECONDARY TO NONE: There may not be a deeper secondary in the country than Washington’s, led by safety Budda Baker, and cornerbacks Darren Gardenhire and Sidney Jones. They’re athletic, physical and have a knack for the ball. How successful that secondary is in the pass game may be predicated on whether Washington is able to find pass rushers to replace Travis Feeney and Cory Littleton and get pressure on opposing quarterbacks. It does help that the Huskies return middle linebacker Azeem Victor, who led the team with 95 tackles last season.

KEY GAMES: The only real test before the start of Pac-12 play comes in the Sept. 3 opener against Rutgers. All the focus will be on an eight-day stretch in late September and early October that will determine the arc of Washington’s season. The Huskies host Stanford on Sept. 30 then travel to rival Oregon on Oct. 8 having not beaten the Ducks in their previous 12 meetings. The end of Washington’s season isn’t easy either with USC and Arizona State at home, before facing rival Washington State in the Apple Cup.

PREDICTION: Washington may be a year away. Of their projected starters, there are only four or five seniors depending on training camp. But the schedule is favorable and if the Huskies can shake their 12-year losing streak to Oregon, this could be a special season.

WASHINGTON STATE »

Could Heisman be in Spokane, Wash.?

Falk’s ability to put up huge numbers leads to national visibility.

Spokane, Wash. » Washington State quarterback Luke Falk, a Logan HS graduate, could blossom into a bona fide Heisman Trophy candidate this season.

Coach Mike Leach thinks Falk should have won the award last year, when he threw for 4,566 yards and 38 touchdowns in leading the surprising Cougars to a 9-4 finish.

“There was a time when the Heisman went to the guy who had the biggest impact and effect on their team, and if that was the case, he probably would have won it last year or should have,” Leach said.

Despite their dramatic improvement last year, the Cougars are projected to finish just fourth in the Pac-12’s northern division, a prediction that is something of a surprise as Washington State returns most of last year’s key performers.

A major returnee to Pullman is receiver Gabe Marks, who is back for his senior year after catching 104 passes for 1,192 yards and 15 touchdowns last season.

Marks believes Falk is more than just Heisman material.

“I call him the ‘Messiah of the Palouse,’ and also the CEO of Washington State football, because he runs the show,” Marks said.

“Without a quarterback that people follow, and that’s a leader, you can’t win,” Marks said.

Falk, a junior, was an All-Pac-12 first-team selection last season after leading the country in passing at 380.5 yards per game. He completed 69.4 percent of his passes in Leach’s Air Raid offense as the Cougars won six more games than the season before.

“I guess one of his best qualities is he doesn’t have a glaring weakness,” Leach said. “But, like anybody, he needs to improve.”

— *The Associated Press*



Associated Press file photo

Washington St. QB Luke Falk

What you should know

DEFENSIVE STRENGTH: A big reason for the Cougars’ improvement last year was the defense. New defensive coordinator Alex Grinch oversaw a unit that went from allowing 38.6 points per game to just 27.7 points last year. Grinch was rewarded with a three-year contract extension after the season.

QB DEPTH: The Cougars have a legitimate star in Lucas Falk at quarterback, but not much behind him. Backup Peyton Bender, who played some last year when Falk was injured, transferred out of the program. That leaves untested Tyler Hillski if Falk is injured.

KEY GAMES: The Cougars host Eastern Washington of the Big Sky Conference on Sept. 3. The Eagles are no pushover, playing tough against Pac-12 teams in numerous games in recent years. Last year, Washington State opened the season with a shocking loss to FCS Portland State, a defeat that ultimately cost them a 10-win season. Washington State and Boise State square off on Sept. 10 in Boise in an intriguing non-conference matchup.

PREDICTION: The Cougars are picked by media to finish fourth in the Pac-12 North, behind Stanford, Washington and Oregon. Gabe Marks is not impressed by the athletic pedigree of the media panel. “I bet over three-quarters of the people that vote on this thing never even played football,” he said.

PAC-12 PREVIEW

ARIZONA »

Emotional season ahead for Wildcats

Arizona enters 2016 with heavy heart after lineman's death.

Tucson, Ariz. » Arizona went into preseason camp with numerous issues to address. There was a new defensive coaching staff installing a new system, a quarterback competition despite a returning starter and new faces on special teams.

All of that became secondary on Aug. 8 when the team learned of the death of offensive lineman Zach Hemmila. The senior died in his sleep, leaving a hole in the Wildcats' line and a much bigger one in their hearts.

"Everybody in our program is hurting," Arizona coach Rich Rodriguez said.

Hemmila's death came early in camp and is something the Wildcats will carry with them into what already had the potential to become a difficult season.

Anu Solomon has two seasons of experience as Arizona's starting quarterback, but Rodriguez was not ready to automatically hand him the ball. Solomon struggled with injuries last season and wasn't as effective as he had been as a freshman when he was healthy. Rodriguez went into spring football saying he wanted competition for the starting job and Solomon will have to beat out Brandon Dawkins and freshman Khalil Tate to get it.

Arizona has consistently been one of the nation's worst defenses, so Rodriguez fired coordinator Jeff Casteel and his defensive staff. He hired former Boise State defensive coordinator Marcel Yates to overhaul the defense. Arizona will abandon the 3-3-5 defense that Casteel installed and go to a more attacking defense in hopes of creating pressure and mistakes. Arizona will be relying on several inexperienced players on that side of the ball, so there could be a learning curve.

— *The Associated Press*



Associated Press file photo

Arizona coach Rich Rodriguez

What you should know

WILSON'S RETURN: Running back Nick Wilson had a strong freshman season, using his combination of power and speed to break Arizona's freshman rushing record with 1,375 yards and 16 touchdowns. Last season, he struggled with injuries and missed four games, finishing with 760 yards and nine touchdowns. Having Wilson healthy will force teams to play against the dive option in Rick Rodriguez's offense, opening up holes to the outside.

SPECIAL TEAMS: Arizona had to replace its kicker and punter from last season. One player could end up getting both jobs. Sophomore Josh Pollock is the only scholarship special teams player on the roster and could handle placekicking, punting and kickoffs. That's a lot to handle, so the Wildcats could use someone else to handle punting duties — if anyone steps up in camp.

UNUSUAL OPENER: Arizona starts against BYU on Sept. 3 at University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale. The Wildcats have had some relatively easy openers under Rodriguez, but this should be a test right out of the gate — physically and emotionally.

PREDICTION: The death of Zach Hemmila will likely weigh heavily on the Wildcats, though it could be a rallying point for the season. Working against them is a difficult schedule and still plenty of questions on the defensive side of the ball.

ARIZONA STATE »

More action and less talk expected

Sun Devils hoping to rebound after an underachieving 2015.

Tempe, Ariz. » Arizona State coach Todd Graham made bold statements before the 2015 season, touting the Sun Devils as national title contenders.

After those aspirations fell flat, Graham has changed the notes this season. No boasting, no bravado. Just play hard and do the talking with actions on the field.

"The key for us is getting back to playing Sun Devil football," Graham said.

Graham wasn't the only one to predict big things for the Sun Devils last season. Coming off consecutive 10-win seasons, Arizona State became a sleeper pick in the national-title conversation.

Those predictions disappeared by the fourth game and the season sputtered away with a three-game conference losing streak.

The Sun Devils could have had a completely different outcome to their 2015 season had they been able to finish games. Arizona State had a difficult time holding second-half leads last season and lost three games by a combined 11 points. Win those and it would have been nine wins, not six. The Sun Devils must do a better job closing out this season to have success.

This season could be as difficult.

The Sun Devils will start a quarterback — which one is still up in the air — who has never thrown a collegiate pass, have to rebuild their offensive line and have questions in the secondary of a defense that was wrecked by big plays a year ago.

Unless they come together quickly and get some breaks along the way, this could end up being a rebuilding season. Of course, Graham has found a way to win wherever he's gone, so don't count them out of a bowl game just yet.

— *The Associated Press*



Associated Press file photo

Arizona St. coach Todd Graham

What you should know

QBS IN FOCUS: Except for his first season in the desert, Arizona State has been steady at quarterback since Todd Graham's arrival. Taylor Kelly won the job and kept it for three years, then Mike Bercovi-ci took over last season after filling in for an injured Kelly the year before. This season, the Sun Devils have no quarterbacks on their roster who have thrown a collegiate pass. Arizona State started with a four-man race, but that could be down to two after an injury to redshirt freshman Bryce Perkins. Sophomore Manny Wilkins has worked with the first team in camp, but redshirt freshman Brady White changes things if he plays well.

DEFENSIVE STOPS: Arizona State has played an attacking-style defense since Graham arrived, using blitzes and pressure up front to create havoc in the opposing team's backfield. The Sun Devils' plan backfired last season as they were repeatedly hit for big plays, causing ASU to be the nation's worst pass defense, allowing 337.8 yards per game. Arizona State lost three starters in the backfield and Graham is hoping to get better pressure from a four-man front rather than blitzing so often. Defensive end JoJo Wicker could be the key to that with his explosiveness.

PREDICTION: 6-6. The Sun Devils have a lot of questions and an unproven quarterback. Playing in the difficult Pac-12, that could be tough to overcome.

BYU COUGARS



Great expectations

Excitement in Provo is palpable as a veteran team led by a new staff wades into a loaded, Power Five-type schedule.

Provo » Kalani Sitake wouldn't bite.

At BYU's football media day in June, the first-year head coach was asked what would have to happen for his inaugural season to be considered a success.

"Are you looking for me to say how many wins?" Sitake asked back. "Because I am not going to do that. I am not going into it with a limit. If you ask any coach right now, nobody is planning on losing any games." *Please see COUGARS, PAGE 29*

By JAY DREW

The Salt Lake Tribune

New head coach Kalani Sitake, right, brought in former BYU star Ty Detmer as his offensive coordinator.

PHOTO BY RICK EGAN | *The Salt Lake Tribune*

BYU COUGARS



Cougars

» Continued from PAGE 28

Tell that to a fan base that is hungry for more success than 11-year coach Bronco Mendenhall was able to deliver, as crazy as that may sound about a man who posted 99 victories before heading off to Virginia for a bigger paycheck and lower expectations.

Even BYU's athletic director, Tom Holmoe, is adding to the hype, telling an Education Week audience last week, "there is new hope. It is the dawning of a new day."

Offensive coordinator Ty Detmer says he can feel the excitement and optimism everywhere he goes, and almost always finds himself tempering expectations with that measured, Texas drawl.

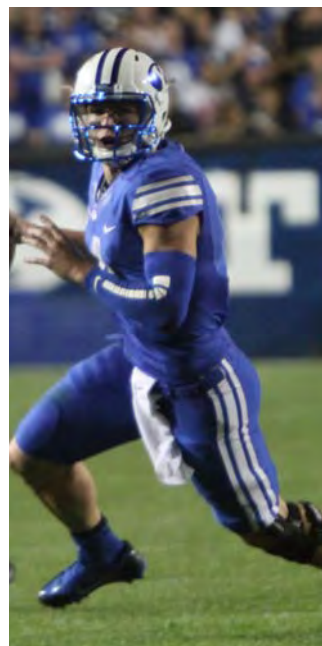
"We haven't won any games yet," the former Heisman Trophy winner

reminds anyone who will listen.

Nor lost any. Recognizing that, Sitake said in June that the honeymoon period is already over, that it was well past time to get down to business.

"I don't think it is anything I've done, to bring the excitement," said the former University of Utah and Oregon State defensive coordinator. "To be honest with you, there is always excitement in football. ... Coach Mendenhall did a great job when he was here with the program. We have a lot of guys coming back, really great talent coming back, and I think they are looking forward to getting on the field."

Certainly, this has the potential to be one of the most talented groups at BYU in the past decade. Trouble is, that might not be reflected in the won-loss record,



FILE PHOTOS | The Salt Lake Tribune

BYU's defense will be led by a group of returnees that include Kai Nacua, top. But the focus will be at quarterback with fifth-year senior Taysom Hill getting the start.

because the schedule is loaded with Power Five teams. The Cougars will likely be underdogs in seven of their first eight games.

"It doesn't scare me," Sitake said of the gantlet that begins Sept. 3 against Arizona. "We won't have to worry about getting our guys up for the games, even though that really wasn't an issue in the past. Walking into these stadiums and seeing these teams that have a lot of tradition, like we do, is going to be a lot of fun."

Offensively, Detmer inherited an experienced quarterback — senior Taysom Hill was named the starter this past week, with the seasoned Tanner Mangum behind him — and one of the most prolific running backs in school history, senior Jamaal Williams. They are a bit thin and inexperienced at receiver — especially if senior Nick Kurtz can't

answer the opening bell after fracturing his foot in June. An offensive line that was supposed to be solid looks less that way now due to lingering injuries and suspensions.

BYU is moving to a 4-3 defensive alignment up front, and will ask its corners to play more man-press and less zone than in the past. Nose tackle Travis Tuiloma, linebacker Fred Warner and safety Kai Nacua will give the defense some teeth, provided Tuiloma makes it back from a Lisfranc foot injury and Nacua from double shoulder surgery.

It could be a long season in the kicking department. One of two freshman walk-ons, or perhaps a kicker who won't join the team until school starts next week, will get the job.

drew@sltrib.com
Twitter: @drewjay

BYU COUGARS

The Cougars' new coach, Kalani Sitake, learned to take charge during a challenging but happy childhood that included a move from Hawaii to Utah.



BYU coach Kalani Sitake, center, while growing up in Hawaii.

Courtesy Photo

Born leader

By JAY DREW | *The Salt Lake Tribune*

About 28 years before he was named the 14th head coach in BYU football history last December, 12-year-old Kelaokalani Fifita Sitake walked the streets of Provo with a large, black plastic garbage bag slung over his shoulder filled with clothes. He was often followed closely by his three younger siblings — 10-year-old Toakase, 8-year-old Pamrose and 7-year-old T.J. — who were also carrying garbage bags. ¶ The Sitake kids weren't homeless, although Toakase (who goes by "Toa") Sitake surmises that some people might have taken a glance at them and figured as much. ¶ Rather, the family did not have laundry baskets, and the four children of Tongan immigrant Tomasi "Tom" Sitake, a single-parent divorcee who moved his four children from Laie, Hawaii, to Utah when Kalani was 9 or 10, would make the weekly, four-block trek along 500 East from their modest two-bedroom, one-bathroom apartment to do laundry at the Wash Hut. It was just blocks away from the BYU campus where one day Kalani would take the private school's most high-profile job and become the first person of Tongan descent to oversee a major college football program. ¶ "Kalani would make it a fun thing, a motivational thing, kind of a coaching thing, so

he didn't have to carry all the bags himself," said Toa, now a social worker in Utah. "He would make a game out of it, to see who was the strongest, or the fourth-strongest, or whatever. He would never say, 'you are the weakest,' or anything like that. It was always positive, encouraging words." ¶ Family members say it was moments like those that prepared Kalani Sitake, now 40, to take the reins from Bronco Mendenhall over a program that is at a crossroads, a program that desperately needs a strong leader to guide it through independence in a landscape that tilts heavily toward Power 5 conference schools. ¶ "He's ready. He's prepared," said his father, Tom. "But most of all he's grateful, and he's humbled by the opportunity."



RICK EGAN | *The Salt Lake Tribune*

Please see SITAKE, PAGE 31

BYU COUGARS

Sitake

» Continued from PAGE 30

Asked to name a trait that has carried his son to the top of his profession, Tom Sitake said it is Kalani's respectfulness to those who have gone before him, people such as his grandfather, Nafe, who migrated to the United States from Tonga many years ago, and his coaching mentors, most notably LaVell Edwards, Kyle Whittingham and Gary Andersen.

Kalani Sitake says he is in this position only because of the sacrifices made by those who went before him — his father, his grandfather, and many other Pacific Islanders and family members who rose from humble circumstances and paved the way. Sitake is just the third Polynesian to head up a Division I football team, joining Navy's Ken Niumatalolo and former Hawaii coach Norm Chow.

"I think a lot of things happen in your life that prepare you for this moment," he said. "Yeah, being the oldest [sibling] prepared me to have more responsibilities and stuff like that. I don't know how it prepared me, but I know I am the person I am because of the experiences I had. But more important is the sacrifices that others made towards my success. ... There are a lot of people that had it harder than me."

Another of Sitake's confidants, former BYU and NFL star Vai Sikahema, told The Salt Lake Tribune before his induction into the Polynesian Football Hall of Fame in January that Sitake's hiring was a great source of pride for Polynesians, and specifically Tongans, everywhere.

"I can't stop smiling about it," Sikahema said.

Toa Sitake, two years younger than Kalani, said it is common in the Tongan culture for the oldest child to assume a parenting role as the "second mother or second father," but Kalani's situation was made even more difficult because Tom Sitake was a

single parent who had to work long hours outside the home, mostly as a security guard. Many times Kalani had to cook and prepare meals, clean the apartment, and do other household chores when other kids his age were outside playing, she said.

"It was just what I knew, the only thing I knew," Kalani said. "I didn't see it as being difficult. That's just what you deal with, you know?"

Funds were so tight during those days in Provo that the family couldn't afford to send Kalani and T.J. to football camps, Toa recalled, so Tom Sitake — who slept on the couch in the living room — would buy little orange cones, jump ropes and other equipment at Deseret Industries and train his sons himself at a nearby junior high on weekends and after work. Or he would take them to the BYU campus and have them run the long gauntlet of stairs that connects the lower campus to the upper one.

"If there was an obstacle in the way, Pops and K [Kalani] always found a way to overcome it, make something good happen," Toa said. "I get reminded of how far K has come when I recall what we came from was a struggle — really humbling circumstances. We didn't have the nicest cars or the nicest homes, but we grew up with a whole bunch of love. My dad always instilled that in us."

He would also frequently tell Kalani that the reason he was born first was so he could take care of his three siblings when "Pops" wasn't around. Kalani also looked after others in unfortunate situations. The Sitake sisters tell a story about how they were walking home from school one day and 13-year-old Kalani noticed some bullies picking on an overweight, poorly dressed youngster. Kalani stood up to the bullies, despite being out-sized and outnumbered, and then told the bullied youngster to meet him at the same place every day after school so Kalani could walk him home safely.

"I just thought that was normal, growing up," Toa said. "It wasn't until my junior high years that I realized everyone's big brother wasn't like how my big brother was."

Speaking of cars, one particular beater's heater would not shut off, creating oven-like conditions in the summer. But the family dealt with it, and felt fortunate to just have a mode of transportation. Now, Sitake is making an estimated \$1.5 million a year to coach the Cougars.

"I am still in awe that he's the head football coach at BYU," Toa said. "But I'm not surprised."



RICK EGAN | The Salt Lake Tribune

Through it all, Kalani went out of his way to put his siblings first, a tradition he even carried on as a scholarship football player at BYU when he would send part of his scholarship checks home to pay for utility bills and the like.

"Kalani was always a conscientious, caring individual concerned for the welfare of those around him," said Tom Sitake, who shares a story of how Kalani would make sure every kid got a drink from the water fountain at school before recess ended, often standing at the back of the line and missing his own opportunity for refreshment because the bell would ring.

"As a kid, he was very, very kind to people," Tom said. "He was always willing to help. And I never heard him complain. Not once."

Tom Sitake worked as a security guard back then — many times through the night so he could spend time with his children during the day — but is now the director of vocational

rehabilitation at the Utah State Hospital. He stressed education first and foremost, insisting that the children do their homework before running out to play after school.

During the summer, Tom would often drop his children off at the library and instruct them to read a book and have a book report prepared when he picked them up later that day.

Toa said that routine drove her nuts at the time, but acknowledges now that the emphasis on education paid off: All four siblings earned college degrees, Toa in social work, Pamrose in nursing and T.J. in sociology. Kalani is a voracious reader, and his wife, Timberly, talks about the moving trucks being loaded with books when they arrived in Provo from Corvallis, Ore., where Kalani was the Oregon State defensive coordinator.

For his part, Kalani brushes off suggestions that he had a rough childhood and was forced to grow up fast.

"My childhood memories are all positive," he said. "My favorite [memories] are just basically playing pickup football. That's what I did my whole early life — in Hawaii, and over here. Not having all the gear, playing tackle football with no pads on — just playing ball."

"Those were the days that you would play until the sun went down and your parents would have to call you home. Everyone would be screaming for their kids to come home, and you would be playing until you literally could not see the ball anymore. We played everything — football, basketball, capture the flag, all that stuff. So yeah, those are my best childhood memories."

Attending BYU football games was also high on the list of memories, although Tom Sitake says there were times when the family could not afford tickets and would gather outside Cougar Stadium — now LaVell Edwards Stadium — and listen to the game on the radio until the gates were opened shortly after halftime.

"Kalani was always a huge BYU fan," Tom Sitake said. "He just loved BYU since he was little."

Kalani played for Timpview High his freshman and sophomore seasons, then the family moved to Missouri and he played his junior and senior seasons at Kirkwood High in the St. Louis area. Scholarship offers from major Midwest football powers such as Notre Dame and Iowa poured in for the athletic, well-built linebacker and fullback, but he chose BYU, he says, largely because of Edwards.

The legendary coach, who retired in 2000, remembers Sitake as a smart, studious player who was always willing to put his teammates before himself. Sitake had 83 carries and 62 catches as a Cougar, but scored just one touchdown, which came during his sophomore season in 1998. That's because he blocked for some of the most prolific ball carriers in school history: Jamal Willis, Hema Heimuli, Mark Atuaia, Marcus Whalen and Reno Mahe, to name a few.

"He was always really competitive and had a deep desire to succeed, to win," Edwards said. "I felt like if he ever got into coaching, he would make a great coach."

That happened after Sitake gave the NFL a try. A laundry list of injuries derailed those plans, and he "caught the coaching bug," he said, when he was offered a spot on the staff at Eastern Arizona College. From there, he was a graduate assistant at BYU for a year before moving on to Southern Utah University, then Utah. After 10 years at the U., Sitake joined Andersen at Oregon State as that school's defensive coordinator.

A year later, BYU came calling, and Sitake and his family were back home.

"Kalani bringing that family feel to BYU football is just an extension of what he learned in the home," Toa Sitake said.

drew@sltrib.com
Twitter: @drewjay

BYU COUGARS



Try, try, try and try again

Fifth-year senior Taysom Hill, after three season-ending injuries in a row, has won the Cougars' quarterback competition and will take to the huddle in the hopes of ending his career on the field, not on crutches.

By JAY DREW
The Salt Lake Tribune

Provo » Taysom Hill got his birthday present a few days early this year.

BYU's oft-injured fifth-year senior, who turned 26 on on Aug. 23, will be the Cougars' starting quarterback when BYU meets Arizona at University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale, Ariz., after five months of speculation regarding whom the coaches would pick — Hill or sophomore Tanner Mangum — was over.

"The best guy won," Sitake said, "and a great player was second place. So it is a great spot to be in, where we had two great ones competing for it, and it just felt like Taysom was the guy who earned the spot."

Hill's superior experience — he has played in 25 college football games as opposed to Mangum's 13 — was obviously considered but was not a

"major factor," Sitake said.

The Cougars went 9-4 last year in the games in which Mangum played, and beat Nebraska, thanks to Mangum's successful Hail Mary, in the only game in which Hill started.

"I felt like I got a lot better because of the [QB race]," Hill said. "I felt like the situation was handled really well, but it is nice to be able to look forward now and prepare for Arizona."

"Taysom has got the experience, and the leadership of the group, and so we feel real comfortable with him in there, and going full speed," Detmer said. "Tanner handled it great. He worked hard. He made it a tough decision, which is his job. So we feel really good with both those guys."

"Tanner is going to be ready to go when called upon," Detmer continued. "There is no doubt about that, so we are excited to know that we have

Career passing at BYU

	Year	GP	Comp.-Att.	Pct.	Yards	TDs	Effic.
Taysom Hill	Sr.	25	387-675	57.3	4,606	31	123.9

both of them, and both can go in and win games this season."

Sitake and Detmer both said Mangum will play some, but did not specify how much. Detmer stressed that it won't be a two-quarterback system.

"I have never been a fan of that," Detmer said. "Taysom is our guy, and he has done it every year. He has been a Heisman candidate the last couple of years. Last year he didn't get a chance to really do it. They are both great players, and Tanner is obviously a big part of the program going forward."

Sitake said he and Detmer "were on the same page" when it came to making the decision.

"Well, Ty is the offensive

coordinator, and the quarterbacks coach. He will have the first say in everything that we do with our quarterback position, and I will give my opinions."

Hill has received 80 percent of the reps in practices since the decision was made.

Mangum handled the news like a pro, said the coaches and Hill, who has thrown for 4,606 yards and 31 touchdowns in his career.

"Yeah, I spoke to Tanner afterwards and Tanner is super supportive," Hill said. "Tanner and I have been good friends all along, and I think he and I both were able to help each other get better as we went through this process.

... I have felt only love and



FILE PHOTOS | *The Salt Lake Tribune*
and *The Associated Press*

Taysom Hill has had season-ending injuries in 2013 and 2014 (top left) in games against Utah St., and in 2015 (top right) against Nebraska.

support from him through this whole thing."

Most observers of the battle that really began in March when Hill announced he was returning to BYU for his final season of eligibility have always believed that the senior would get the nod. A better passer than Hill, Mangum's chances hinged on him perhaps being a better fit in Detmer's pro-style offense.

But Hill says he's capable of flourishing in it, too.

"I would say this offense, when you think as a quarterback of an offense, growing up, this is what it is, right?" Hill said. "This is what I grew up thinking I was going to be playing as a quarterback. It is a very fun offense to be in. We have added some nuances to the offense that kind of fit my skill set, and will make us harder to defend."

drew@sltrib.com
Twitter: @drewjay

BYU COUGARS

He's back and even better?

Senior running back Jamaal Williams eyes school rushing record, role as mentor to Cougars' offense.

By JAY DREW
The Salt Lake Tribune

Provo » It remains to be seen if running back Jamaal Williams will break Harvey Unga's all-time career rushing record at BYU, but it is clear as the 2016 college football season approaches that the senior from Fontana, Calif., will never be forgotten.

"Yeah, I hope I've made my mark here, in a good way," Williams said.

Having missed the 2015 season for personal reasons, Williams is back in 2016, and still arguably one of the most popular players to ever pass through Provo, even if his

absence last year left the team a bit thin at running back, and without its biggest playmaker on offense.

One minute, he is teasing a reporter about getting shorter instead of taller; the next, he is sharing his nicknames for various members of the coaching staff.

Who else can get away with calling a former Heisman Trophy winner "Coach Big Belly?"

Williams is nothing if not passionate and entertaining. This year, he insists he is adding another word to the many he uses to describe himself.

"Maturity," he said.

"And I've learned to keep my temper. I still got my fight and everything," he continued. "It just grows more and more every time because I am so passionate about football. I am passionate about being out here with my teammates."

Fellow running backs Squally Canada and Algeron Brown say Williams' private persona is a bit different than his public one.

"He kind of keeps to himself in meetings," said Brown. "Just more low-key, but still really cool."

Noted Canada: "His locker is right next to mine, and I thought he wouldn't say anything to me at first, kind of act like he was so [famous] that he didn't need to. But it was the opposite; he was trying to talk to me, and we became really good friends once I opened up and started talking to him."

One thing Williams rarely talks about, Canada said, is the BYU career rushing record of 3,455 yards. Williams ranks sixth on BYU's all-time list, with 2,526, needing 930 to break Unga's mark.

"It is always on your mind, but you just can't think about that," Williams said. "Honestly, I am just thinking about the team, and us getting W's and having a great season."

Williams also thinks a lot about staying healthy — and eligible.

"Last year was a hard time for me, being away from the team," he said at BYU's media day in June. "I do want the record, but the team comes



BYU's all-time rushing leaders

Player	Yards
1. Harvey Unga	3,455
2. Curtis Brown	3,221
3. Jamal Willis	2,970
4. Lakei Heimuli	2,710
5. Jeff Blanc	2,663
6. Jamaal Williams	2,526

first. I won't let them down this year."

New coach Kalani Sitake described Williams as a "great leader" and a "fun guy" who has not given the new staff an ounce of trouble since it took over last January. Sitake said he doesn't feel like he has to "rein in" one of the biggest characters on the team.

"Well, I want them to feel comfortable in who they are, but also [realize] that the team is the most important thing," he said.

How will offensive coordinator Ty Detmer use Williams this season? Expect him to catch more passes out of the backfield, but still get around 20-25 carries per game.

"I am just here to, you know, cause trouble, be a rebel, run the ball, catch the ball, do some blocking," Williams said, laughing. "You know, just be a leader."

And just be Jamaal Williams — the mature one.

drew@sltrib.com
Twitter: @drewjay



RICK EGAN | The Salt Lake Tribune

BYU COUGARS

Cougars look for go-to guy

Wide-receiver corps has talent, but coaches want someone to 'step up.'

By JAY DREW

The Salt Lake Tribune

Provo » All four teams that made it to the College Football Playoff last season had "go-to" receivers, guys who entered the semifinal games with 85 receptions or more.

BYU, which finished 9-4, got it done by committee. The Cougars were led in catches by senior Mitch Mathews, who had 54 grabs for 737 yards and 11 touchdowns. Next best was fellow senior Devon Blackmon, who had 46 catches for 669 yards.

With Mathews, Blackmon and the club's fourth-leading receiver from 2015, Terenn Houk (37 catches, 490 yards, two TDs), having graduated, the search is on not only for a go-to guy, but three or four other reliable pass-catchers in new offensive coordinator Ty Detmer's pro-style offense.

"We have yet to have that guy who steps up and becomes the go-to guy," receivers coach Ben Cahoon said. "We are still looking for that."

The obvious candidate is 6-foot-6 senior Nick Kurtz, but the Cougars' third-leading receiver from last year is nursing a broken foot suffered in June, and is questionable for the opener on Sept. 3 against Arizona.

"It warms your heart to see him out here running around a little bit. But he's got a long way to go before he is ready to put all his weight on that foot while running at full speed and breaking and cutting. I have no idea if he will be ready for the first game," Cahoon said.

Only three other receivers in camp — seniors Mitchell Juergens and Colby Pearson and sophomore Moroni

Laulu-Pututau — caught passes last season.

"It is definitely next man up," said Pearson, who had 22 catches for 210 yards and a touchdown. "Guys are just getting reps, and doing what they can with their reps, and we will see what happens."

New coach Kalani Sitake isn't all that concerned with the inexperience at the receiver positions, because of the experience at quarterback.

"The key is we have really good quarterbacks who can get them the ball, so I think they will be fine," Sitake said. "They are very capable receivers. They have been waiting for their time, and their time has arrived, so it is their time to shine, and they are looking forward to it."

Like Pearson, Juergens also started his career as a walk-on, but emerged as a playmaker last season when he caught 37 passes for 471 yards and two touchdowns. He is also slated to be the primary punt returner this season.

Because he is 6-4, Laulu-Pututau has been considered at tight end, but Cahoon says the sophomore is staying put, for now.

"He will definitely be used in the slot at some point in time," Cahoon said.

Like Sitake, Cahoon says the talent is there, and some guys will prove they can play at the Division I level.

"We would like to have more guys with game experience who have performed under the lights, but I think we've proved we have a good mix of youth and experience," he said. "I think they are very capable of making plays when the live bullets are flying."

drew@sltrib.com
Twitter: @drewjay



FRANCISCO KJOLSETH |
The Salt Lake Tribune

BYU's Mitchell Juergens

BYU COUGARS

Seeking: One starter

BYU coaches bringing tight end position back despite inexperience and converted players.

By **JAY DREW**

The Salt Lake Tribune

Provo » Almost from the time he was named BYU's new offensive coordinator last Christmas Eve, Ty Detmer has promised he will bring the tight end position back to the offense.

Eight months later and, sure enough, BYU is lining up with a tight end right next to a tackle, or even two tight ends, on occasion.

That's all well and good, until one considers that none of the five guys playing the position has ever caught a pass in a Division I college football game.

"Yeah, we are pretty inexperienced,"

new tight ends coach Steve Clark acknowledged.

But Clark is not deterred. He's confident that there is enough talent among the candidates vying to become the starting tight end that Detmer's promise will be fulfilled.

"Yes, it is coming back [to the BYU offense]," Clark said. "This is more of a pro-set offense, so yes. That's what we wanted to do. If they are holding us back, we are not going to be dumb. We will go with the 11 best players that we have on offense."

That's roughly what Detmer said when camp opened — that he won't use a tight end just for the sake of using one if he's not confident in that guy.

"We've got some guys who can do it," Detmer said. "It is going to take some time and some reps and continuing to work it. But if it doesn't [work], we will go to three receivers and we will make it work. We will have a plan for game time when it comes. We will do what we feel is best, get the best guys



BYU tight ends Solomone Wolfgramm, left; Tanner Balderree, right.

on the field and make it work, one way or the other."

So, who are the candidates?

Clark said junior Tanner Balderree, a converted defensive end, left spring camp as the starter on the depth chart and is still in the No. 1 spot. Behind him is junior walk-on Nate Sampson, recruited out of Pleasant Grove High as a linebacker four years ago.

A pair of TEs on last year's roster, Bryan Sampson and Steven Richards, have been forced to retire from football for medical reasons. Hybrid tight end Terenn Houk graduated, and one-time receiver Josh Weeks was dismissed from the team last spring after bulking up.

Former Davis High star Troy Hinds has moved from defense to tight end, while former Georgia Tech receiver Hunter Marshall, who played last year at Snow College, is also giving the position a shot, although he's on the smaller side.

Then there's Solomone Wolfgramm, a 6-foot-6, 270-pounder from California's Bay Area who played basketball at BYU-Hawaii last year after a church mission to Phoenix. Clark said head coach Kalani Sitake discovered Wolfgramm while recruiting in Hawaii last spring and couldn't ignore the young man's size and athleticism.

"He's a great basketball player, and he understands body position," Sitake said, noting that former great BYU TEs such as Chad Lewis, Jonny Harline and Dennis Pitta were good basketball players in high school. "So understanding body movement, being able to block people out, establishing position is good for a tight end."

Sitake said Wolfgramm got a lot bigger and stronger in BYU's offseason conditioning program.

"So we will have to see how it all comes together. Obviously, learning the game is going to be the hard part for him. The physical part, he understands," Sitake said. "All the other tight ends are doing a great job, too. Troy [Hinds] is doing great there, and we are seeing a lot of good things from the guys who were already here — Tanner and all the guys who are playing that position. So we are good."

Nate Sampson said the competition has been intense, but enjoyable.

"Right now, it is a battle, man," said Sampson, who redshirted last year. "We don't know who is leading, because none of us have played in a game. We are all just supporting each other and having fun."

drew@sltrib.com
Twitter: @drewjay



PHOTOS BY AL HARTMANN | *The Salt Lake Tribune*

New BYU assistant Steve Clark is working with a crowded field of tight ends.

BYU COUGARS

Move to a 4-3 front paying off



Associated Press file photo

By JAY DREW

The Salt Lake Tribune

Provo » Head coach Kalani Sitake said BYU's defense got the upper hand when the Cougars were fully padded for the first time in preseason camp.

It was a sign that players are adjusting well to the 4-3 defensive front that new defensive coordinator Ilaisa Tuiaki has installed.

Gone is Bronco Mendenhall's 3-4, although enough components of that front remain that Tuiaki says there will be plenty of games where the Cougars will line up in multiple fronts.

"I think the kids are starting to get it now, the techniques we are asking them to play," Tuiaki said. "They are starting to get the schemes. It is coming along well."

Although offseason shoulder surgery has kept him out of action early in camp, senior defensive tackle Logan Taele said the switch has been

welcomed by the veterans.

"For me, it is more simple," said Taele, who will line up inside, and next to fellow senior Travis Tuiloma when arguably the Cougars' best returning defensive player returns from a Lisfranc foot injury. "There are not a ton of plays to memorize. I can work on my technique more, which is nice."

One of the reasons Mendenhall favored the 3-4 is because he believed it was easier to recruit linebacker and tight end body-types to BYU than defensive tackles. Sitake doesn't necessarily subscribe to that notion.

"I think you just recruit what you need," Sitake said. "For us, I think BYU is always a place that has had big linemen on the offensive and defensive lines for a long time."

Back in his day as a fullback for BYU under LaVell Edwards, Sitake remembers the defense switching from a 3-4 to a 4-3 to take advantage

Shift from Mendenhall's 3-4 defense isn't totally new; BYU also used four linemen at times last season.

Defensive lineman Logan Taele, above right, approves of the formation.

of the skills of Shawn Knight, Jason Buck and others.

"It is about putting the best 11 on the field, and we are going to be mostly a four-man front, but if we need to we can play a three-man front also," Sitake said. "We have that ability."

Sitake said there were plenty of times when BYU used a four-man front last year.

"I can't sit here and say we are doing something that they are not used to," he said. "These guys have been coached really well before, and they have played in multiple fronts. ... We are just spending a little more time on some things that they didn't really major in."

It has helped that the lone holdover from Mendenhall's staff is defensive line coach Steve Kaufusi, who is coaching another son on this year's team, somewhat surprisingly. Bronson Kaufusi moved on to the NFL's Baltimore Ravens, so the tallest player is now

his younger brother, 6-foot-9 Corbin Kaufusi, the former basketball player who is giving football a try.

"He's fluid, and he moves really well for a guy that big," Sitake said.

Still, Kaufusi will have a tough time getting playing time because there are plenty of other talented defensive ends on the roster, including senior Sae Tautu and junior Tomasi Laulile.

Also, coaches are trying linebacker Harvey Langi at defensive end to take advantage of Langi's pass-rushing skills.

Tuiaki said they could give Langi a shot at defensive end because the middle linebacker position is deep. Currently, redshirt sophomore Butch Pau'u has filled the spot.

"Butch is a really savvy football player," Tuiaki said. "He is dynamite. He is explosive."

drew@sltrib.com
Twitter: @drewjay

BYU COUGARS



Associated Press file photo

Left wondering at CB

Michael Davis holds down one corner spot, but the other is up for grabs.

By JAY DREW

The Salt Lake Tribune

Provo » BYU senior Michael Davis can grin about it now, but it was no laughing matter on Nov. 23, 2013, in South Bend, Ind., when the receiver-turned-cornerback, a freshman, found himself standing across the line of scrimmage from one of Notre Dame's many wide receivers.

"I was really nervous, and I didn't have any confidence," Davis said of that brutally cold afternoon three years ago when he was sent on the field because Mike Hague was hurt and Robertson Daniel was ill. "I was pretty scared."

Fast-forward to 2016. Davis is the most-experienced player in the BYU secondary,

a three-year starter at cornerback who has put on nearly 15 pounds since spring camp and is being considered a possible NFL prospect.

"He's got a good chance, if he keeps improving," said BYU's new cornerbacks coach, former Cougar Jernaro Gilford.

So, the Cougars are set at right corner this season, barring injury. Left corner is a different story.

When BYU lines up against Arizona on Sept. 3, a freshman or sophomore with less college experience than Davis had in the eventual 23-13 loss to Notre Dame will line up across from one of the Wildcats' top receivers.

"It's not going to be easy for the young guy, whoever it

Top cornerbacks at BYU camp

Player	Yr.	Ht./Wt.	Previous school
Michael Davis	Sr.	6-2/190	Glendale (Calif.) H.S.
Akile Davis	So.	6-2/198	DeSoto (Texas) H.S.
Troy Warner	Fr.	6-1/192	Mission Hills (Calif.) H.S.
Isaiah Armstrong	So.	6-2/193	Riverside (Calif.) C.C.
Chris Wilcox	Fr.	6-2/175	Roosevelt (Calif.) H.S.
Dayan Lake	Fr.	5-11/200	Northridge H.S.

is," Davis said, and he should know.

Which of the 11 other cornerbacks in BYU preseason training camp will get the nod?

"There are five or six guys battling for that spot," Gilford said. "I told them I want to see one of them stand out and kind of take the lead, take the spot. I want somebody to show me out here on the field that they really want that spot — physically as well as mentally."

The Cougars are in this predicament at left corner — coaches have scrapped the

Mendenhall-era "boundary" and "field" corner monikers — because Micah Hannemann was moved to safety in the spring and Jordan Preator transferred to an FCS school, Portland State.

Coach Kalani Sitake said the leading candidates for the starting job are sophomores Akile Davis and Isaiah Armstrong, a transfer from Riverside (Calif.) College, and freshman Troy Warner. Freshman Chris Wilcox and former Northridge High star Dayan Lake — who was in the program last year but redshirted

because he did not meet NCAA eligibility standards — are also in the picture.

Sophomore Michael Shelton got two starts at corner/nickel last year, but was not mentioned by Sitake as being in the mix to start.

"We will see which one emerges," Sitake said. "It is like they have good days and bad days. The most consistent guy will start the year."

Akile Davis and Armstrong have seen the most reps with the first-string defense in scrimmages, but Warner — younger brother of starting linebacker Fred Warner — is making big strides, having graduated high school early so he could participate in spring camp in March and April.

"Troy is a smart football player and knows where to put his body to not get beat," defensive coordinator Ilaisa Tuiaki said of the four-star recruit from the San Diego area. "He is definitely pushing to get some playing time. We like the way he is coming along."

Other corners in camp include redshirt freshman Trevor Brent and junior walk-on Cody Stewart. Washington State transfer Kamel Greene and freshman Hiva Lee haven't been practicing due to injury.

Tuiaki said several corners will play, in addition to the starters, because BYU faces a lot of high-tempo offenses this fall.

"We have to have a reliable backup that is taking 20, 30 snaps from the starters," Tuiaki said.

They will also play more man-press coverage than corners at BYU have the past half-dozen years, Gilford said.

"We will try," he said. "That is our scheme, and that's what we do. The guys are taking it and running with it. All of them want to do it. It is the thing that we have been working on since spring. You will see more than you have seen over the last six or seven years, absolutely."

drew@sltrib.com
Twitter: @drewjay

BYU COUGARS

Cougars see a rising star in Warner

Junior already being compared to a former standout at the same position: Kyle Van Noy.

By JAY DREW

The Salt Lake Tribune

Provo » Before he was taken in the second round of the 2014 NFL draft by the Detroit Lions, former BYU linebacker Kyle Van Noy predicted that a young phenom who had just signed with the Cougars a few months before that had the potential to match his exploits in Provo, perhaps even surpass them.

Fred Warner isn't there yet, but he's making Van Noy sound like a genius.

The junior outside linebacker from San Marcos, Calif., is on the verge of a monster season if he can stay healthy and continue to learn the nuances of the new 4-3 defense, coach Kalani Sitake and defensive coordinator Ilaisa Tuiaki have said.

"He's got huge potential," Sitake said. "He's a big-time player. He doesn't waste a lot of steps, and the game is really natural for him. ... He's a great one. He is going to find himself in a really good position, especially in this defense, making a lot of big plays.

"We are going to give him some freedom and some ability to freelance a bit, because he has earned it," Sitake continued. "And he is trustable. I think now that he is a junior, he knows the risks to take. He will take some, and hopefully they work out."

Tuiaki is just as effusive in his praise for the 19-year-old rising star.

"Fred does everything," Tuiaki said. "Fred is a really good player. He does everything for us. We can put him out on coverage, man to man. We can zone drop him, blitz him, everything. He is the total package. ... Fred has the combination of size and speed in a guy you would like to play linebacker."

This season, Warner will be joined by his brother, freshman Troy Warner, who is in a battle for a starting cornerback spot. BYU's version of the Warner Bros. — yes, T-shirts are on the way — are both former four-star recruits out of Mission Hills High in the San Diego area who picked BYU over schools such as Oregon, USC and Washington.

"I just felt like this was the place that would make me a better man," Fred Warner said.

Raised by a single mother, Laura, Fred Warner added 15 pounds of muscle over the offseason and now checks in around 235. But the added bulk didn't slow him down, he insists, because he will be called on to cover receivers and running backs downfield in Tuiaki's scheme.

"We will put him in space and in a position where he can do his own thing," Sitake said. "He handles himself really well in space, but he is also good at the line of scrimmage and also in the box. He reminds me of a lot of others that I have coached, but as far as playmaking ability and potential, he has got a lot more. I think he is just scratching the surface of how good and dominating he can be as a player."

Last summer, Warner was still trying to overcome a broken wrist and a broken back suffered during his freshman season. This summer, fully healthy, he worked on getting in better shape, and often ran stairs at LaVell Edwards Stadium with his teammates.

"They just want me fast enough to where I can cover receivers and stuff, and that's not a problem," Warner said. "I am just focusing on whatever I can do to help the team."

Warner recorded 67 tackles (46 solo), four sacks and 11.5 tackles for loss last season. He had two interceptions and four fumble recoveries. He's taking Van Noy's praise in stride, though.

"I feel like I could better my game in so many ways right now," he said. "I am just trying to get better each and every day, just so when the games come I can be the playmaker that my team needs me to be."



Associated Press file photo

drew@strib.com
Twitter: @drewjay

BYU COUGARS

BYU breakdown

The Cougars will succeed if ...

Their definition of success does not include anything close to 12 wins. The goal against this schedule should be to make a 12th-straight bowl appearance. Probable underdogs in seven of their first eight games, and with a new coaching staff, six or seven wins is a realistic expectation in the first season for Kalani Sitake, right. Anything more is icing on the cake.



RICK EGAN | The Salt Lake Tribune

The Cougars won't succeed if ...

They become overwhelmed by a Power Five-type schedule and succumb to all the lofty expectations that have accompanied Sitake and new offensive coordinator Ty Detmer into Provo. There will be growing pains for both of those guys, as well as new defensive coordinator Ilaisa Tuiaki, right. Perseverance will be key when the honeymoon period ends.



RICK EGAN | The Salt Lake Tribune

The bottom line

Talent-wise, this looks like one of the better BYU teams of the past six years, but on-field results might not show. If the offensive line comes along and gives quarterbacks Taysom Hill and Tanner Mangum, left, time to do their thing, and gives Jamaal Williams holes to run through, the Cougars could spring some upsets because the defense looks solid and capable of keeping games close.

DEPTH CHART »

OFFENSE

- LT** » Ului Lapuaho, Jr., 6-7, 335; JJ Nwigwe, Soph., 6-5, 278
- LG** » Andrew Eide, Sr., 6-5, 301; Keyan Norman, Jr., 6-3, 305
- C** » Tejan Koroma, Jr., 6-0, 290; Quinn Ficklin, Soph., 6-3, 280
- RG** » Tuni Kanuch, Jr., 6-3, 335; Parker Dawe, Sr., 6-3, 307
- RT** » Austin Hoyt, Soph., 6-8, 295; Thomas Shoaf, Fr., 6-5, 275
- QB** » Taysom Hill, Sr., 6-2, 230; Tanner Mangum, Soph., 6-3, 215
- RB** » Jamaal Williams, Sr., 6-2, 220; Squally Canada, Soph., 5-11, 200
- FB** » Algernon Brown, Sr., 6-1, 250; Brayden El-Bakri, Soph., 6-0, 235
- WR** » Nick Kurtz, Sr., 6-6, 215; Mitchell Juergens, Sr., 5-10, 181
- WR** » Moroni Lualu-Pututau, Soph., 6-4, 215; Colby Pearson, Sr., 6-1, 201
- TE** » Tanner Baldersee, Jr., 6-3, 250; Nate Sampson, Jr., 6-4, 240

DEFENSE

- LE** » Tomasi Lualile, Jr., 6-4, 285; Moses Kaumatule, Soph., 6-2, 275
- NT** » Travis Tuiloma, Sr., 6-2, 295; Tevita Mo'Unga, Soph., 6-3, 340
- RE** » Logan Taelle, Sr., 6-2, 295; Kesni Tausinga, Jr., 6-1, 303
- STUD** » Harvey Langi, Sr., 6-3, 249; Sae Tautu, Sr., 6-4, 245
- FLB** » Fred Warner, Jr., 6-4, 230; Morgan Unga, Soph., 6-5, 210
- MLB** » Butch Pau'u, Soph., 6-0, 223; Austin Heder, Sr., 6-2, 240
- BO LB** » Francis Bernard, Soph., 6-1, 239; Johnny Tapusoa, Fr., 5-10, 225
- CB** » Akile Davis, Soph., 6-2, 198; Troy Warner, Fr., 6-1, 192
- CB** » Michael Davis, Sr., 6-2, 195; Dayan Lake, Fr., 5-11, 200
- FS** » Kai Nacua, Sr., 6-2, 215; Zayne Anderson, Soph., 6-2, 200
- SS** » Micah Hannemann, Jr., 6-0, 205; Eric Takenaka, Sr., 5-10, 210

SPECIAL TEAMS

- PK** » James Baird, Fr., 5-7, 171; Jake Oldroyd, Fr., 6-1, 170
- P** » Jonny Linehan, Sr., 6-0, 203; Rhett Almond, Soph., 6-4, 195
- KR** » Riley Burt, Soph., 6-1, 205; Trey Dye, Jr., 5-9, 181
- PR** » Mitchell Juergens, Sr., 5-10, 181; Garrett Juergens, Sr., 5-10, 184
- DS** » Matt Foley, Soph., 6-2, 210; Britton Hogan, Fr., 6-3, 220



Wide receiver
Nick Kurtz

TRENT NELSON | The Salt Lake Tribune

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS »

Sept. 3 vs. Arizona at Glendale, Ariz., 8:30 p.m.
Good thing this is indoors, because it'll be above 90 outdoors.

Sept. 10 at Utah, 5:30 p.m.
Storylines abound as Cougars visit Rice-Eccles for first time since 24-21 loss in 2012.

Sept. 17 vs. UCLA, 8:15 p.m.
Can BYU sell out LaVell Edwards Stadium for home opener vs. a big-time opponent?

Sept. 24 vs. West Virginia at Landover, Md.
First-ever matchup with Mountaineers carries Big 12 intrigue.

Sept. 30 vs. Toledo, 8:15 p.m.
Will Cougs be looking for first win in this Friday night special?

Oct. 8 at Michigan State
Huge task in East Lansing for BYU; Sparty ranked No. 12 in AP preseason Top 25.

Oct. 14 vs. Mississippi State, 8:15 p.m.
Rare visit to Provo for an SEC team; Cougars return the trip in 2017.

Oct. 20 at Boise State, 8:15 p.m.
Broncos will be bucking for revenge after 2015 last-second BYU win.

Nov. 5 at Cincinnati
At least one, or both, of these teams could be headed for the Big 12 in 2017.

Nov. 12 vs. Southern Utah, 1 p.m.
BYU assistant Ed Lamb faces his former team as T-Birds make first visit to BYU.

Nov. 19 vs. UMass
A November matchup of independents in Provo, but not the one the Cougars wanted.

Nov. 26 vs. Utah State
BYU took back the Old Wag-on Wheelon with a 51-28 romp last year in Logan.

BYU COUGARS



No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Pos.	Year	Hometown/Previous	No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Pos.	Year	Hometown/Previous
1	Akile Davis	6-2	198	WR	So.	DeSoto, Texas/DeSoto	41	Adam Pulsipher	6-1	227	LB	So.	Temecula, Calif./Temecula Valley
1	Moroni Laulu-Pututau	6-4	216	WR	So.	Hyrum/Mountain Crest	42	Austin Heder	6-2	240	LB	Sr.	Pleasant Grove/Pleasant Grove
2	Matt Hadley	6-0	205	DB	Jr.	Connell, Wash./Connell	43	Johnny Tapusoa	5-10	225	LB	Fr.	Laie, Hawaii/Kahuku
3	Isaiah Armstrong	6-2	193	DB	So.	Redlands, Calif./Riverside City CC	44	Troy Hinds	6-5	245	LB	So.	Kaysville/Davis
3	Colby Pearson	6-0	201	WR	Sr.	Blackfoot, Idaho/Blackfoot	44	Keenan Pili	6-2	196	LB	Fr.	Provo/Timpview
4	Beau Hoge	6-1	210	QB	So.	Fort Thomas, Ky./Highlands	45	Sam Baldwin	6-3	196	DB	Fr.	Rexburg, Idaho/Madison
4	Fred Warner	6-4	230	LB	Jr.	San Marcos, Calif./Mission Hills	45	Alema Pilimai	6-4	205	TE	Fr.	Tustin, Calif./Tustin
5	Nick Kurtz	6-6	215	WR	Sr.	El Cajon, Calif./Grossmont CC	46	Creed Richardson	6-1	238	RB	Jr.	Provo/Timpview
5	Dayan Lake	5-11	200	DB	Fr.	Layton/Northridge	46	Rhett Sandlin	6-3	245	LB	So.	Draper/Alta
6	Trey Dye	5-9	181	RB	Jr.	Abilene, Texas/Cooper	46	Morgan Unga	6-5	210	LB	So.	Ogden/Bonneville
7	Micah Hannemann	6-0	205	DB	Jr.	Alpine/Lone Peak	47	Scott Huntsman	6-4	227	LB	So.	Coppell, Texas/Coppell
7	Taysom Hill	6-2	230	QB	Sr.	Pocatello, Idaho/Highland	48	Tomasi Lauile	6-4	285	DL	Jr.	Westlake, Calif./Westlake
10	Koy Detmer Jr.	5-10	170	QB	So.	Somerset, Texas/Somerset	49	Moses Kaumatule	6-2	275	DL	So.	South Jordan/Bingham
10	Kamel Greene	5-11	189	DB	Jr.	East Palo Alto, Calif./Washington St.	50	Tevita Mo'Unga	6-3	340	DL	So.	Murrieta, Calif./Vista Murrieta
11	Troy Warner	6-1	192	DB	Fr.	San Marcos, Calif./Mission Hills	52	Sam Morell	6-1	223	LB	Fr.	Plano, Texas/Plano
12	Tanner Mangum	6-3	215	QB	So.	Eagle, Idaho/Eagle	53	Isaiah Kaufusi	6-2	216	LB	Fr.	Cottonwood Heights/Brighton
12	Kai Nacua	6-2	215	DB	Sr.	Las Vegas, Nev.Liberty	54	Parker Dawe	6-3	307	OL	Sr.	Pleasant Grove/Pleasant Grove
13	Francis Bernard	6-1	239	LB	So.	Herriman/Herriman	54	Merrill Taliauli	6-2	305	DL	So.	Salt Lake City/East
15	Michael Davis	6-2	190	DB	Sr.	Glendale, Calif./Glendale	55	Quin Ficklin	6-3	280	OL	So.	Mesa, Ariz./Red Mountain
15	Hayden Livingston	6-1	185	QB	Fr.	Rigby, Idaho/Rigby	56	Tejan Koroma	6-0	290	OL	Jr.	Allen, Texas/Allen
17	Chris Badger	6-0	197	DB	Sr.	Provo/Notre Dame	57	LeRoy Tanoai	6-4	315	OL	Fr.	Sherman Oaks, Calif./Notre Dame
18	Michael Shelton	5-8	175	DB	So.	Raleigh, N.C./Wakefield	58	Austin Chambers	6-4	270	OL	Fr.	Shawnee Mission, Kan./Shawnee Mission West
19	Trevor Brent	5-10	180	DB	Fr.	Balch Springs, Texas/West Mesquite	58	Uriah Leiataua	6-4	240	DL	Fr.	Compton, Calif./Dominguez
19	Micah Simon	6-1	189	WR	So.	Dallas, Texas/Bishop Dunne	59	Thomas Shoaf	6-5	275	OL	Fr.	Columbus, Ind./Columbus North
20	KJ Hall	5-9	175	DB	Fr.	Spanish Fork/Maple Mountain	60	Britton Hogan	6-3	220	DS	Fr.	Salt Lake City/Olympus
21	Harvey Langi	6-3	249	LB	Sr.	South Jordan/Utah	62	Logan Taele	6-2	295	DL	Sr.	Columbus, Ohio/Dixie
21	Jamaal Williams	6-2	220	RB	Sr.	Fontana, Calif./Summit	65	JJ Nwigwe	6-5	278	OL	So.	Rockwall, Texas/Rockwall-Heath
22	Phillip Amone	6-0	240	LB	So.	Orlando, Fla./Dr. Phillips	70	Jacob Jimenez	6-5	292	OL	So.	Pflugerville, Texas/Pflugerville
22	Squally Canada	5-11	200	RB	So.	Milpitas, Calif./Washington St.	71	Austin Hoyt	6-8	295	OL	So.	Ione, Calif./Argonaut
23	Garrett Juergens	5-10	184	WR	Sr.	Houston, Texas/Langham Creek	72	Addison Pulsipher	6-5	280	OL	Fr.	Temecula, Calif./Temecula Valley
23	Rickey Shumway	6-2	200	WR	Fr.	Provo/Timpview	73	Ului Lapuaho	6-7	335	OL	Jr.	West Valley City/Hunter
24	Algernon Brown	6-1	250	RB	Sr.	Magna/Skyline	74	Kieffer Longson	6-7	295	OL	Fr.	San Ramon, Calif./Dougherty Valley
25	Tanner Jacobson	5-10	185	DB	So.	Southlake, Texas/Texas Tech	76	Keyan Norman	6-3	305	OL	Jr.	Alpine/Southern Utah
26	Rhett Almond	6-4	195	P	So.	Valencia, Calif./Hart	77	Chandon Herring	6-7	270	OL	Fr.	Gilbert, Ariz./Perry
27	Austin McChesney	6-1	188	DB	Fr.	Highland/Lone Peak	78	Tuni Kanuch	6-3	335	OL	Jr.	South Jordan/Bingham
28	Sawyer Powell	6-1	200	DB	Jr.	West Richland, Wash./Richland	79	Andrew Eide	6-5	301	OL	Graduate	Orem/Southern Utah
29	Cody Stewart	6-3	191	DB	Jr.	Mesa, Ariz./Mountain View	80	Beau Tanner	6-0	188	WR	Fr.	Gilbert, Ariz./Scottsdale CC
30	Kavika Fonua	6-0	220	DB	So.	Syracuse/Syracuse	82	Talon Shumway	6-3	200	WR	Fr.	South Jordan/Lone Peak
30	Colby Hansen	5-11	195	RB	Jr.	Clarkston, Wash./Clarkston	83	Inoke Lotulelei	5-9	190	WR	Fr.	Midvale/Cottonwood
31	Jonny Linehan	6-0	203	P	Sr.	Auckland, N.Z./Takapuna Grammar	84	Jonah Trinnaman	6-0	190	WR	Jr.	Highland/Snow CC
31	Sae Tautou	6-4	245	LB	Sr.	Alpine/Lone Peak	85	Nate Sampson	6-2	240	TE	So.	Pleasant Grove/Pleasant Grove
32	Gavin Fowler	6-0	186	DB	Jr.	Kaysville/Davis	86	Mack Richards	6-1	190	WR	Fr.	Sandy/Alta
32	Chris Wilcox	6-2	175	DB	Fr.	Fontana, Calif./Eleanor Roosevelt	87	Mitchell Juergens	5-10	181	WR	Sr.	Houston, Texas/Langham Creek
33	Eric Takenaka	5-10	210	DB	Sr.	Salt Lake City/Snow CC	88	Aleva Hifo	5-10	180	WR	Fr.	Menifee, Calif./Heritage
34	James Baird	5-7	171	K	Fr.	Fort Dix, N.J./Northridge	89	Tanner Balderree	6-3	252	TE	Jr.	Sherwood, Ore./Sherwood
34	Riley Burt	6-1	205	RB	So.	Mantua/Box Elder	90	Corbin Kaufusi	6-9	270	OL	So.	Provo/Timpview
35	Brayden El-Bakri	6-0	235	RB	So.	Salt Lake City/Brighton	91	Travis Tuiloma	6-2	295	DL	Sr.	Topeka, Kan./Washburn Rural
35	Va'a Niumatalolo	6-2	238	LB	Jr.	Annapolis, Md./Broadneck	92	Handsome Tanielu	6-2	318	DL	Jr.	Waianae, Hawaii/Snow CC
36	Zayne Anderson	6-2	200	DB	So.	Stansbury Park/Stansbury Park	93	Kainoa Fuiava	6-5	295	DL	Fr.	Downey, Calif./Warren
36	Mitch Harris	6-4	215	DS	Fr.	Gilbert, Ariz./Perry	94	Kesni Tausinga	6-1	303	DL	Jr.	South Jordan/Bingham
37	Grant Jones	6-6	205	DB	Jr.	Concord, Calif./Ygnacio Valley	96	Hunter Marshall	6-3	242	TE	So.	Acworth, Ga./Snow CC
38	Butch Pau'u	6-0	223	LB	So.	Anaheim, Calif./Servite	98	Trajan Pili	6-1	225	LB	Fr.	Las Vegas, Nev./Centennial
39	BJ Fifita	6-0	203	DB	Fr.	Westlake Village, Calif./Oaks Christian	99	Solomone Wolfgramm	6-5	260	TE	So.	Menlo Park, Calif./BYU-Hawaii
39	Jake Oldroyd	6-1	170	K, P	Fr.	Southlake, Texas/Carroll							

UTAH STATE AGGIES

Bounce back from a setback

Wells says his team is playing with a chip on its shoulder after last season's 6-7 finish and a bowl game defeat.

By **STEVE LUHM**

The Salt Lake Tribune

Logan » Utah State coach Matt Wells raised his hand in front of his face. He positioned his thumb and index finger less than an inch apart. He squinted through the tiny opening at a group of reporters.

"The difference between good and great in this league

is about this much," Wells said. "... The little things are what makes a good team great."

Utah State was good last year, but not great.

The Aggies started 4-2 overall and 3-0 in the Mountain West Conference. After a 52-26 thrashing of Boise State, they controlled the Mountain Division championship race but let it slip away.

Utah State lost five of its

final seven games, including a 23-21 defeat to Akron in the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl, which ended the season in appropriately frustrating fashion.

"Everybody wants to see what we'll do after [going] 6-7," junior quarterback Kent Myers said. "We're mad about that and we're coming back, ready to go."

"We're hungry and we're ready," senior nose guard Travis Seefeldt said. "I'm excited to see us play."

Wells, too.

"This team has a chip on its shoulder," he said. "They have

something to prove. They have an edge."

Utah State's hope of winning the division and earning a spot in the conference's championship game depends on a number of factors.

Myers must emerge as a top quarterback, after playing effectively out of the bullpen in each of his first two seasons.

"I've been working hard for this and I'm doing what I've dreamed of," he said. "If I come out here and take care of what I can do without worrying about everything else, I think everything will play out."

The Aggies also need good health for running back Devante Mays and the players who form a versatile, experienced offensive line.

It's the Year of the Running Back in the Mountain West, but Wells says Mays belongs in a headline-making group that includes San Diego State's Donnel Pumphrey, Wyoming's Brian Hill, Boise State's Jeremy McNichols and Nevada's James Butler.

"I like my kid," Wells said. "He's strong. It's hard for the first guy to bring him down. He's doing a better job of catching the ball out of the backfield, too."

Despite some injury issues last season, Mays rushed for 966 yards and nine touchdowns. He averaged 5.9 yards per carry — more than Pumphrey, Hill, McNichols or Butler.

Another strength for Utah State is the secondary, where senior safety Devin Centers, junior cornerback Jalen Davis and BYU transfer Dallin Leavitt should enable an inexperienced group of linebackers to learn as they go early in the season.

"The leaders in the back end have played a lot of football here," Wells said. "They have played a lot of successful football, individually and as a group. I like our group. We are pretty talented and versatile."

Like its linebackers, Utah State's wide receivers haven't played much. Senior Andrew Rodriguez has made nine starts in his career — far more than anyone else in the group.

Still, Myers is comfortable with his wideouts.

"... Everyone can catch the ball," he said. "You're playing D-I football; you've caught the ball before. [But] what do you do with the ball in your hands? Are you breaking the tackle, making people miss? All of them have that ability."

luhm@sltrib.com
Twitter: @sluhm



JOHN ZSIRAY | *The Herald-Journal* via *The Associated Press*

Utah State's Devante Mays ran for almost 1,000 yards in his first season after joining the Aggies from junior college.

UTAH STATE AGGIES

No debate: Myers is No. 1



FILE PHOTOS | The Salt Lake Tribune and The Associated Press



For the first time in his career, he enters the season as starting QB.

By STEVE LUHM

The Salt Lake Tribune

Logan » In his first two seasons, Kent Myers' playing time depended on injuries or the effectiveness of others.

No longer.

Myers is the No. 1 quarterback.

"Kent will take the first reps because he's earned them to this point," coach Matt Wells said at media day. "He's won a lot of games in the Mountain West [Conference] the last two years."

Myers admits this situation is different for him, even though he is 10-4 as a starter since joining the program.

"The last two seasons I've been thrown into the fire," he said. "So this season I'm more confident because I know what I was able to do," despite his week-to-week status on the depth chart.

Aggie Nation knows Myers' story.

As a freshman, injuries to three quarterbacks — Chuckie Keeton, Darrel Garretson and Craig Harrison — turned him from a redshirt into a starter.

"Everybody was scared to death, really," said Utah State co-offensive coordinator and quarterback coach Luke Wells. "They were wondering what would we be able to do and who's this guy? He started off as a fourth team guy but did really, really well."

In his first game, Myers completed 14 of 15 passes for 186 yards and three touchdowns in a win at Hawaii. By the end of the season, the Aggies were 5-1 with Myers at quarterback, including a 21-6 win over UTEP in the New Mexico Bowl. He was named the game's MVP after rushing 15 times for 70 yards, including a 48-yard touchdown.

"You don't have to do too much," Myers said. "That's what I learned my freshman

year. ... Worry about what you can control."

Last season, Myers overcame more uncertainty. Despite opening as the backup, he ended up starting eight games when Keeton was again sidelined by injuries.

In a 33-18 win over Colorado State, Myers rushed for 191 yards on 16 carries, the most



Myers » Has two years of bowl game experience.

yardage by an FBS quarterback all season. In a 58-27 victory over Wyoming, he completed 14 of 17 passes for 246 yards and three touchdowns. He also threw a pair of touchdown passes in Utah State's 23-21 loss to Akron in the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl.

Along with a solid performance in spring practice, Myers' bowl performance helped entrench him as the Aggies' starter.

"I've been working hard for this," Myers said. "This is what I've dreamed about. ... If I do what I can do, I think everything will play out."

Said co-offensive coordinator Luke Wells: "What I hope to see in camp is Kent making great decisions, leading this team, being confident and playing fast — just being a great executor when he's out there. Just taking ownership of the offense."

According to Matt Wells, Damion Hobbs, DJ Nelson, Cade Smith and freshman Jordan Love provide this year's insurance behind Myers. He believes all are capable and the competition will make quarterback a position of strength.

"I know the other quarterbacks in that room are hungry to compete," Wells said. ".... That's a good room. It's a talented room. You can only play one, but the good thing is there are a lot of good ones in there."

luhm@sltrib.com
Twitter: @sluhm

UTAH STATE AGGIES

Growing up quickly

Returning linebackers have one combined start between them.

By STEVE LUHM

The Salt Lake Tribune

Logan » Study Utah State's roster for the coming football season and one thing leaps out like a raging bull from a rodeo chute.

The Aggies, looking to replace their top four linebackers, are counting on a group of players who have made exactly one start during their college careers. One.

To make the situation even more tricky, Utah State must replace two linebackers — Kyler Fackrell and Nick Vigil — who were each selected in the third round of the NFL draft. They made 246 tackles last season, or 24 percent of all stops by the Aggie defense.

At this point, however, coach Matt Wells believes he can piece together an effective unit, although the process continues to evolve, with as many as 10 players in the mix for significant roles.

"... I need consistency," Wells said. "I don't need somebody to come in and be the Mountain West Defensive Player of the Year. I don't need that. I don't need somebody to come in and be a Nick Vigil or Kyler Fackrell.

"I need somebody to come in and be consistent, be tough, play hard and play smart. They need to be able to get lined up and make the calls that linebackers have to make. That way the defensive line can take over and play well and use their experience."

Junior Alex Huerta is one of the front-runners for a starting job at inside linebacker.

"Our hats off to the guys who left," he said, "but we've picked it up in camp and are going to get where we want to go. ... The guys up front have helped a lot. They showed us how things are supposed to be — how we're supposed to be running things — and we took it from there."

According to Wells, Huerta has played consistently during the first two weeks of practice. So have seniors Anthony Williams and Brock Carmen, sophomores Derek Larsen and Chase

Christiansen and true freshman Justus Te'i.

Others mentioned by Wells when discussing his linebackers are senior Leki Uasike, sophomore Chasen Andersen and redshirt freshman Dalton Baker.

Asked if he's worried about the position, Wells said, "... We don't have concerns. The guys just haven't played on Saturday."

Said defensive end Ricky Ali'ifua, "It's pretty hard to replace guys like Fackrell [and] Vigil. But we've done it before. It's nothing new to us. That's always been the mentality — next man up.

"So I'm not really worried about it, especially seeing some of the guys during the offseason. They're putting themselves in position to perform and be successful. ... They're going to be fine."

Huerta is from Mountain Crest High School in Wellsville. He played in 12 games last season and finished with four tackles.

Williams is the only current linebacker to start a game at Utah State. He did so in 2014 before redshirting last year.

Like Williams, Carmen is a former junior college transfer. He made 12 tackles in 13 games last season.

"We've made some big strides," new linebacker coach David Kotulski said. "... We lost six from a year ago. Then we had guys coming off injuries who didn't participate in spring and we had guys get hurt during spring.

"Now we have a good mix of players who have been in the program and new guys - freshmen and junior college guys — and it's a good group. We're excited about it and what they bring to the table."

Kotulski, who previously coached at Utah State in 2003-04, was especially encouraged after the first scrimmage of preseason.

"We played well," he said. "The thing is, when you're a little confused about what's going on, you can play slow. We made some mistakes we have to clear up, but we played fast. We were much more physical. They're understanding the physicality that we are asking them to play with."

luhm@sltrib.com

Twitter: @sluhm



Associated Press file photo

Utah State's Brock Carmen runs after an interception at Fresno State.

Need to know:

» Utah State must replace four starting linebackers, including third-round NFL draft picks Kyler Fackrell and Nick Vigil.

» Seniors Anthony Williams and Brock Carmen, along with junior Alex Huerta, could become the nucleus of the group.

UTAH STATE AGGIES

Maverik Stadium's face-lift gives Aggies a stadium to excite both the fan base and recruits.



CHRIS DETRICK | The Salt Lake Tribune

By STEVE LUHM

The Salt Lake Tribune

Logan » Not long ago, when Utah State coaches brought recruits to campus for official visits, they spent as little time as possible touring the school's woeful football facilities.

The locker and weight rooms were lacking. The medical areas were closet-like. Even the stadium, though functional, was showing signs of age.

For many young players seeking somewhere to prosper, the place was a football wasteland. For most of the head coaches who entered and left through a revolving door, it was a graveyard.

Fortunately for the Aggies, times change.

Home, new home

When Utah State opens its new season against Weber State on Sept. 1, a \$36 million renovation project to Maverik Stadium will be complete.

After 15 months of determined work, the school has finally reached the finish line in a decade-long trek to make its football facilities competitive.

"It's a whole body transformation, not just a facelift," Aggie coach Matt Wells said. "Any of us who have been around here for a long time, it's a tremendous thing. It shows commitment."

The construction project

added 24 luxury suites, 24 loge suites, 700 club seats and a new press box to Maverik Stadium. Total capacity is now 25,100. Also included: a rebuilt concourse, new concessions and restroom areas and two video scoreboards — one four times bigger than its predecessor.

Those who rebuilt Maverik Stadium like the way things turned out.

"It's been a fun one and we're very pleased with the outcome," said Okland Construction project director Jared Francom. "It's a great

looking building. ... It's astounding how it has transformed this whole area."

The work went smoothly, after one early roadblock.

"It was a complex project due to some up-front soil issues," Francom said. "We were restricted on some design elements. The soils were such that it created issues from a construction standpoint. We spent several months working with the design team on that."

Still, Okland completed the project on schedule and the

Please see AGGIES, PAGE 45

Renovation highlights

» Construction on Utah State's \$36 million renovation of Maverik Stadium is complete.

» The project, which began in May of 2015, took about 15 months to finish.

» Among the additions: suites, patio seating areas and two video scoreboards; capacity will be 25,100.

UTAH STATE AGGIES

PHOTOS BY CHRIS DETRICK | *The Salt Lake Tribune*

The new Maverik Stadium's capacity includes 700 club seats, 24 loge suites and 24 luxury suites that have all sold out, according to Utah State athletic director John Hartwell. It also has a rebuilt concourse, new concessions and restrooms, and two video scoreboards for fans to enjoy during games this fall.

Aggies

» Continued from PAGE 44

Aggies, who played around the construction last season, will have a remodeled home waiting for them when they face Weber State.

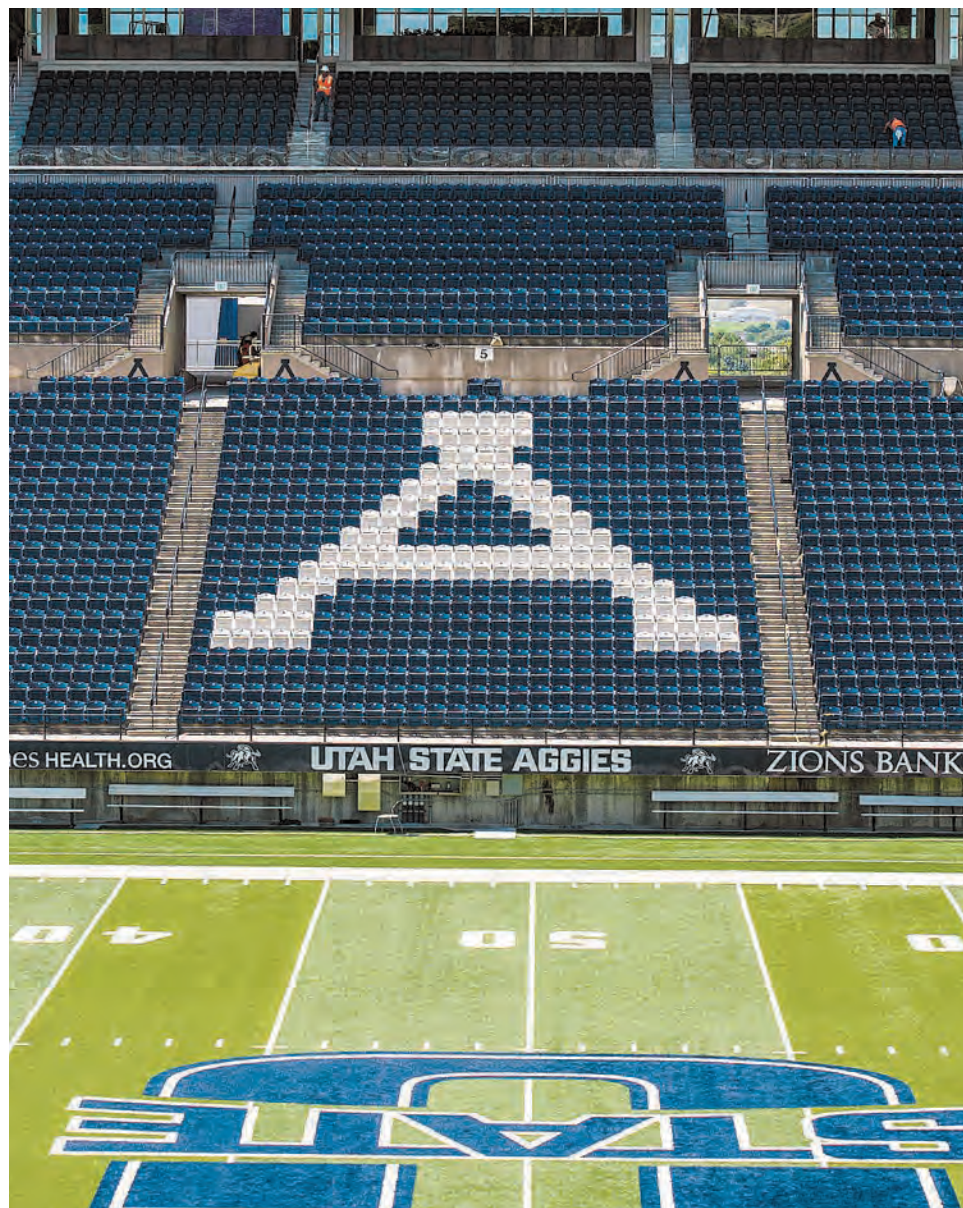
"For us as players, it's motivation," said junior linebacker Alex Huerta. "It's like, 'We need to go out and put a show on for the crowd and for all of Cache Valley — for everybody. We're blessed to be where we are. We realize that every day.'"

According to USU athletic director John Hartwell, the luxury suites are sold out. Only one loge suite remains and he expects it to be sold before the season opener. "Some inventory" remains on the ends of the new club seating section.

"It may not be the biggest premium seating area in the country, but I'd put our facility up against anyone as far as amenities and closeness to the playing field," Hartwell said. "... You are right on top the action."

The renovations will be a boost for Utah State's fans and coaches, who can recruit to a facility that is at least equal to any in the Mountain West.

"What it does is enhance the game-day atmosphere," Hartwell said. "The experience for our fans will be off



the charts. And it's important to note that won't be for just the ticket-purchasers in the suites and club seating areas."

He noted the new scoreboards, concession areas and restroom facilities will improve the Utah State football experience "for everyone."

And recruiting?

"It's what I refer to as the Wow Factor," Hartwell said. "To be a success consistently in recruiting you've got to have the Wow Factor going for you. This gives us the Wow Factor, in combination with our coaching staff and their commitment. ... This will allow us to go after any recruit in the country."

Linebacker coach David Kotulski was also a Utah State assistant in 2003 and 2004, when the Aggies went 6-17 and played in the far-flung Sun Belt Conference.

More than most people currently connected with USU's football program, Kotulski knows how far the Aggies have come.

"This is a Division I stadium — a facility everyone at Utah State and in Cache Valley can be proud of," he said. "I know our players are just thrilled about it. ... It adds a little more pride to what we have going on."

luhm@sltrib.com
Twitter: @sluhm

UTAH STATE AGGIES

Seefeldt all the way back after surviving car crash



He missed last season after his SUV was hit by a semi, but is now set to start at nose guard for Aggies.

By **STEVE LUHM**

The Salt Lake Tribune

Logan » Only days after his SUV was T-boned by a speeding truck loaded with 52,000 gallons of milk, Utah State nose guard Travis Seefeldt received a grim prognosis from his doctors.

Walking again, they said, might prove problematic.

Playing football, they told him gently, was out of the question.

Seefeldt remembers the discussion. He pinpoints it as the exact moment he knew the accident, which occurred on June 26, 2015, would not stop him.

“That was the motivation I needed,” Seefeldt recalled. “... I knew I could pull through it.”

Fourteen months later — after missing a season to recover from his injuries and rebuild his broken body — Seefeldt is back. He’s listed as Utah State’s No. 1 nose guard, three weeks before 2016 the opener against Weber State.

Those who witnessed his ordeal all use the same word to describe Seefeldt’s incredible journey.

“It’s a miracle,” said teammate Brock Carmen.

Coach Matt Wells agrees.

“I look at Travis, and that makes you appreciate life a little bit more,” he said. “It’s allowed all of us to appreciate life [and] love a little harder because ... it’s a miracle everybody is still alive.”

There were five people in the vehicle Seefeldt was driving when it approached what he incorrectly thought was a four-way stop at a rural

intersection 20 miles from home. His passengers included fellow defensive linemen Edmund Faimalo, Ade-wale Adeoye and John Taylor, as well as former Utah State softball player Sarah Vasquez.

According to witnesses, Seefeldt slowed to a near stop before starting to cross the highway. He expected the truck to stop, too. But its driver had the right-of-way and didn’t.

The Chevy Tahoe was hit on Seefeldt’s side and knocked 75 yards down the road, into the front yard of a residence. Nobody was wearing seat belts. Faimalo, Adeoye and Taylor were taken by ambulance to the hospital. Seefeldt and Vasquez were air-lifted.

At the time, Lt. Lee Perry of the Utah Highway Patrol said, “... They’re just lucky they’re alive.”

Seefeldt began a slow, exhausting recovering. In December, he got the news necessary for resuming his college football career. The NCAA granted him a sixth year of eligibility because his injuries were not related to athletics.

The 300-pounder from Peoria, Ariz., took it from there.

Once his injuries sufficiently healed, he began to work out, gain weight and reconnect with his football body. In the classroom, he graduated and began work on an advanced degree. He also got married.

By the time the Aggies began training camp last week, Wells told reporters Seefeldt was ready to play a huge role

on a defense that returns nine starters.

“I’m so proud of Travis,” Wells said, “... It motivates our guys a little bit, to see how hard he’s worked to get where he is.”

Two years ago — before the accident — Seefeldt played in all 14 games for the Aggies. He made two starts, finished with 35 tackles and recovered two fumbles, including one during a 35-20 win at BYU.

Last season, without Seefeldt, Utah State lost five of its last seven games and finished 6-7.

“We have something to prove and we’ve got something that we want to show — that this defense is the most dominant in the Mountain West [Conference],” he said. “... I wouldn’t call it a chip on our shoulder. But we’ve got something to prove.”

With Seefeldt in the middle, the defensive line is expected to be one of Utah State’s strengths.

“We’re the same group that we’ve always been,” he said. “We’ve always had that mantra of being the anchor of the defense. We’ve got to stop the run and make that known to opposing teams. That’s what we’re here to do.”

What will Seefeldt be thinking when he takes the field against Weber State — his first game in almost two years?

“It’s going to feel good to be back,” he said. “It will be good to feel those fans cheering, seeing my loved ones in the crowd and to be out there with my guys. It’s going to be great.”

luhm@sltrib.com

Twitter: @sluhm

“

I look at Travis, and that makes you appreciate life a little bit more. It’s allowed all of us to appreciate life [and] love a little harder because ... it’s a miracle everybody is still alive.”

UTAH ST. COACH
MATT WELLS

On the return of Travis Seefeldt from a car accident in June 2015 (seen in bottom photo)



UTAH STATE AGGIES

USU breakdown

The Aggies will succeed if ...

They play up to their potential on offense. Quarterback Kent Myers and running back Devante Mays will operate behind a versatile offensive line, led by seniors Austin Albrecht, right, Austin Stephens and Jake Simonich. An effective running game will take the pressure off a defense that returns only three starters.



CHRIS DETRICK | The Salt Lake Tribune



RICK EGAN | The Salt Lake Tribune

The Aggies won't succeed if ...

They struggle on offense because of injuries or inexperience at wide receiver. That could make controlling the football more difficult and possibly expose the defense, which lost linebackers Nick Vigil and Kyler Fackrell to the NFL. The field-goal kicking must also be more consistent than last season.

The bottom line

The Aggies appear capable of contending in the Mountain West Conference, but they must find playmakers capable of turning close games in their favor. That component was missing last year, when Utah State finished 2-4 in games decided in the fourth quarter. For Myers, left, and Mays, above, staying healthy is a key.



DEPTH CHART »

OFFENSE

- WR** » Kennedy Williams, Sr., 5-6, 160; Rayshad Lewis, Fr., 5-10, 165
- WR** » Andrew Rodriguez, Sr., 5-9, 185; Ron'Quavian Tarver, So., 6-3, 210
- LT** » Austin Albrecht, Sr., 6-5, 300; Cody Boyer, So., 6-5, 285.
- LG** » Jude Hockel, Sr., 6-4, 290; Brandon Taukeiaho, Jr., 6-2, 305
- C** » Austin Stephens, Sr., 6-3, 315; Demytrick Ali'ifua, Fr., 6-3, 305
- RG** » Jake Simonich, Sr., 6-5, 305; KJ Uluave, So., 6-4, 300
- RT** » Preston Brooksby, Jr., 6-5, 295; Sean Taylor, Jr., 6-5, 310
- TE** » Wyatt Houston, Sr., 6-4, 255; Dax Raymond, So., 6-5, 245
- WR** » Braelon Roberts, Jr., 6-3, 205; Zach Van Leeuwen, So., 6-0, 185
- RB** » Devonte Mays, Sr., 5-11, 230; Tonny Lindsey, Jr., 5-9, 195
- QB** » Kent Myers, Jr., 6-0, 200; Damion Hobbs, Jr., 6-1, 225

DEFENSE

- DE** » Ian Togiati, Jr., 6-2, 280; Edmund Faimalo, Sr., 6-2, 280
- NG** » Travis Seefeldt, Sr. 6-1, 305; Christopher 'Unga, Fr., 6-0, 295
- DE** » Ricky Ali'ifua, Sr., 6-2, 280; Siua Taufua, Sr., 6-0, 280
- OLB** » Brock Carmen, Sr., 6-3, 230; Logan Lee, Fr., 6-3, 245
- ILB** » Leki Uasike, Sr., 5-9, 230; Anthony Williams, Sr., 6-1, 245
- ILB** » Alex Huerta, Jr., 6-3, 240; Chase Christiansen, So., 6-1, 235
- OLB** » Derek Larsen, So., 6-3, 240; Justus Te'i, Fr., 6-2, 225
- CB** » Jalen Davis, Jr., 5-10, 185; Wesley Bailey, Jr., 6-1, 195
- S** » Dallin Leavitt, Jr., 5-10, 200; Gaje Ferguson, So., 6-0, 200
- FS** » Devin Centers, Sr., 5-9, 200; Jontrell Rocquemore, So., 6-1, 210
- CB** » Daniel Gray, Sr., 5-10, 185; Cameron Haney, Fr., 5-11, 180

SPECIAL TEAMS

- P** » Aaron Dalton, So., 6-4, 220; Jake Thompson, Sr., 6-0, 220
- PK** » Brock Warren, Sr., 6-2, 175 or Jake Thompson, Sr., 6-0, 220
- LS** » Emmett Odegard, Jr., 6-1, 220; Brandon Pada, Fr., 5-11, 220
- PR** » Andrew Rodriguez, Sr, 5-9, 185; Jalen Davis, Jr., 5-10, 185
- KR** » Kennedy Williams, Sr., 5-6, 160; Jalen Davis, Jr., 5-10, 185



Wide receiver Braelon Roberts

CHRIS DETRICK | The Salt Lake Tribune

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS »

Sept. 1 vs. Weber State, 6 p.m.
Aggies have won 13 of 14 games in the series.

Sept. 10 at USC, noon
In 2013, the Trojans escaped with a 17-14 win.

Sept. 16 vs. Arkansas State, 7 p.m.
Red Wolves have played in five straight bowls.

Sept. 24 vs. Air Force
Big game: Conference opener for both teams.

Oct. 1 at Boise State
Broncos out to avenge 52-26 loss last season.

Oct. 8 at Colorado State, 8 p.m.
Rams went 7-6 in coach Mike Bobo's first year.

Oct. 22 vs. Fresno State, 8:30 p.m.
Bulldogs allowed 38.1 points per game last season.

Oct. 28 vs. San Diego State, 6 p.m.
Handed Utah State its worst loss (48-14) in 2015.

Nov. 5 at Wyoming
USU has won four in a row vs. the Cowboys.

Nov. 12 vs. New Mexico
Lobos come off first bowl season since 2007.

Nov. 19 at Nevada
Utah State makes first trip to Reno in six years.

Nov. 26 at BYU
In-state rivals meet for the 86th time since 1922.

UTAH STATE AGGIES



No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Pos.	Yr.	Hometown/Previous
1	Alex Byers	6-2	185	WR	Jr.	Riverview, Fla./Antelope Valley
2	Dallin Leavitt	5-10	205	QB	R-Jr.	Portland, Ore./BYU
2	Kent Myers	6-0	200	QB	Jr.	Rowlett, Texas/Sachse
3	Marquan Ellison	5-11	200	FS	Sr.	Milwaukee, Wis./Bradley Tech
4	Tonny Lindsey	5-9	195	RB	Jr.	Long Beach, Calif./Cerritos JC
5	Jaren Colston-Green	6-1	175	WR	Jr.	Tallahassee, Fla./Ariz. Western
6	Cameron Haney	5-11	180	CB	R-Fr.	Los Angeles, Calif./Cathedral
7	Daniel Gray	5-11	190	CB	Sr.	Fort Lauderdale, Fla./Tennessee
8	Wesley Bailey	6-1	195	CB	R-Jr.	Huntsville, Ala./Eastern Ariz. CC
8	Cade Smith	6-0	200	QB	R-Fr.	Salem, Ore./West Salem
9	Rashad Lewis	5-10	165	WR	Fr.	Orlando, Fla./Bishop Moore
10	Chasen Andersen	5-11	220	LB	So.	Logan, Utah/Logan/Wisconsin
10	Jordan Love	6-3	200	QB	Fr.	Bakersfield, Calif./Liberty
11	Damion Hobbs	6-1	225	QB	Jr.	Cedar Hill, Texas/Cedar Hill/Oregon
11	David Woodward	6-2	210	LB	Fr.	Olympia, Wash./Olympia
12	Alex Huerta	6-3	240	LB	JR	Wellsville, Utah/Mountain Crest
12	DJ Nelson	5-9	195	QB	So.	Logan/Logan
13	Jalen Davis	5-10	185	CB	Jr.	La Mesa, Calif./Helix
14	Chad Artist	6-2	190	WR	R-Fr.	Logan/Logan
15	Hudson Conrad	5-10	175	WR	R-Fr.	Tooele/Stansbury
15	Baron Gajkowski	6-1	190	S	Fr.	Alpine/Lone Peak
16	Hartman Rector	6-2	190	WR	Fr.	Logan/Logan
16	Anthony Williams	6-2	230	LB	R-Sr.	Philadelphia, Pa./Pierce JC
17	Zach Van Leeuwen	6-0	185	WR	So.	Provo/Timpview
18	Makiah Gilmer	6-0	175	CB	Fr.	Kirkland, Wash./Juanita
19	Ron'Quavion Tarver	6-3	210	WR	So.	Belle Glade, Fla./Fort Scott CC
19	Ian Togiai	6-2	285	DE	Jr.	West Valley City/Hunter
20	Brock Carmen	6-3	235	LB	Sr.	Clovis, Calif./Riverside CC
21	LaJuan Hunt	5-8	200	RB	Jr.	Fort Lauderdale, Fla./University
22	Patrick Miranda	5-10	220	LB	Jr.	Pawtucket, R.I./Chabot JC
23	Gaje Ferguson	6-0	205	S	R-So.	Mendon/Snow CC
24	Dalton Baker	6-4	235	TE	R-Fr.	Payson/Payson
25	Gerold Bright	5-9	180	WR	R-Fr.	Pensacola, Fla./Escambia
26	Kevin Ogwu	5-10	175	CB	Jr.	Katy, Texas/Houston Baptist
26	Kennedy Williams	5-8	160	WR	Sr.	Las Vegas, Nev./Valley
27	Jontrell Rocquemore	6-1	200	FS	So.	McKinney, Texas/McKinney
28	Aaron Wade	6-1	200	SS	So.	Lithia, Fla./Newsome
29	Morian Walker, Jr.	6-1	210	RB	Fr.	San Jose, Calif./Valley Christian
30	Dayshawn Littleton	6-1	180	CB	Fr.	Carson, Calif./Carson
31	Jentz Painter	5-8	180	CB	Sr.	Riverton/Riverton
32	Braxton Gunther	5-10	180	S	Fr.	Woods Cross/Woods Cross
32	Devante Mays	5-11	230	RB	Sr.	Livingston, Texas/Blinn JC
33	Kevin Meitzenheimer	5-11	225	LB	Fr.	Moreno Valley, Calif./Moreno Valley
34	Justen Hervey	5-10	210	RB	So.	Beaumont, Texas/Westbrook
34	Chance Parker	6-1	200	S	Fr.	Kaysille/Davis
36	Jake Thompson	6-0	215	K	Sr.	Logan/Logan
37	Devin Centers	5-9	200	FS	Sr.	Chandler, Ariz./Chandler
38	Mason Gajkowski	6-2	215	LB	R-Fr.	Sandy/Jordan
39	Jay Brown	5-8	165	CB	Fr.	Chino Hills, Calif./Chino Hills
39	Connor McGuire	5-11	185	WR	Jr.	Roy/Snow CC
40	Austin Cheney	5-9	185	CB	Sr.	Boise, Idaho/Southern Virginia
40	Dionte Simon	6-0	190	RB	Fr.	Tacoma, Wash./Lincoln
41	Troy Murray	6-4	225	LB/DE	Fr.	Logan/Logan
42	Zach Swenson	5-11	195	S	Fr.	Salt Lake City/East
44	Landon Horne	6-2	245	TE	Sr.	Kaysville/Snow CC

No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Pos.	Yr.	Hometown/Previous
45	Joe Palange	6-1	250	TE	Sr.	Cleveland, Ohio/Oklahoma
46	Mason Tobeck	6-3	225	LB	R-Fr.	Puyallup, Wash./Cascade Christian
47	Logan Lee	6-3	245	LB	Fr.	Rexburg, Idaho/Madison
48	Chase Christiansen	6-1	235	LB	So.	Stansbury/Stansbury
49	Derek Larsen	6-3	240	LB	So.	Logan/Logan
50	Emmett Odegard	6-1	240	LS	Jr.	Greenwich, Conn./Massachusetts
51	Justus Te'i	6-3	230	LB	Fr.	San Marcos, Calif./Mission Hills
52	Sean Taylor	6-5	275	OL	Jr.	Vallejo, Calif./Valley/Laney College
53	Braden Harris	6-3	220	LB	R-Fr.	Gunnison, Utah/Gunnison Valley
54	Dustin Mathews	6-1	220	LB	Fr.	Bountiful, Utah/Viewmont
55	Adewale Adeoye	6-3	260	DE	So.	St. Louis, Mo./Ritenour
55	Andrew Chen	6-4	285	OL	Jr.	Calabasas, Calif./Chaminade Prep
56	Gasetoto Schuster	6-0	280	NG	R-So.	Long Beach, Calif./Long Beach Poly
57	Leki Uasike	5-10	225	LB	Sr.	Hurst, Texas/Cisco JC
58	Demytrick Ali'ifua	6-3	305	OL	Fr.	San Leandro, Calif./San Leandro
59	Austin Stephens	6-3	305	OC	Sr.	W. Des Moines, Iowa/Iowa Western CC
60	Colby Kerns	6-2	290	OL	R-Fr.	Paso Robles, Calif./Cal Poly
62	Dominik Eberle	6-3	175	PK	R-Fr.	Redondo Beach, Calif./Redondo Union
63	Brock Warren	6-2	180	PK	Sr.	Hyde Park/Sky View
64	Jarom Ioane	6-6	350	OL	Jr.	Bountiful/Bountiful
65	Austin Albrecht	6-5	300	OL	Sr.	Sandy/Alta
66	KJ Uluave	6-5	280	OL	Sr.	Laie, Hawaii/Kahuku
67	Brandon Taukeiaho	6-3	310	OL	Jr.	South Jordan/Bingham
68	Dalton Forsythe	6-4	300	OL	R-Sr.	Grapevine, Texas/Southern Utah
69	Roderick Smith	6-2	290	OL	R-Fr.	DeSoto, Texas/DeSoto
70	Travis Seefeldt	6-2	302	NG	R-Sr.	Peoria, Ariz./Liberty
73	Preston Brooksby	6-5	285	OL	R-Jr.	Peoria, Ariz./Glendale CC
74	Jude Hockel	6-4	290	OL	Sr.	Walnut Creek, Calif./Diablo Valley CC
75	Ty Shaw	6-4	285	OL	Fr.	South Jordan/Herriman
76	Jake Simonich	6-5	300	OL	Sr.	Danville, Calif./San Ramon Valley
77	Villiamu McMoore	6-5	295	OL	Fr.	Kapolei, Hawa'i/Kapolei
78	Cody Boyer	6-6	275	OL	So.	St. George/Pineview
79	Brandon Pada	5-11	220	LS	Fr.	Glendale, Ariz./Mountain Ridge
80	Tyler Fox	5-11	175	WR	So.	Layton/Layton
81	Jordan Nathan	5-10	170	WR	R-Fr.	Monrovia, Calif./Mt. San Antonio JC
82	Andrew Rodriguez	5-10	185	WR	Sr.	Allen, Texas/Allen/Houston
83	Wyatt Houston	6-4	255	TE	Sr.	Tualatin, Ore./Horizon Christian
84	Ethan Cortazzo	6-1	200	WR	Jr.	Mesa, Ariz./Red Mountain/Mesa CC
85	Derek Hastings	6-2	235	TE	Fr.	Lehi/Lehi
86	Matt Nelson	6-4	220	TE	So.	Mission Viejo, Calif./Orange Coast CC
87	Dax Raymond	6-5	235	TE	So.	Provo/Timpview
88	Braelon Roberts	6-3	200	WR	Jr.	Dallas, Texas/Bishop Dunne
89	Travis Boman	6-5	220	TE	Fr.	Henderson, Nev./Coronado
89	Aaron Dalton	6-4	220	P	So.	Bountiful/Viewmont
90	Ritisoni Fata	6-1	280	DE	Fr.	Redlands, Calif./East Valley
91	Siuu Taufa	6-1	280	DE	Sr.	Concord, Calif./Diablo Valley CC
92	Zach Lee	5-10	195	P	R-Fr.	Cleveland, Tenn./Cleveland
92	Jake Templeton	6-2	275	DE	So.	Boise, Idaho/Boise State
93	Jacoby Wildman	6-3	260	DE	R-Fr.	Logan/Logan
94	Caden Andersen	6-2	265	DE	Fr.	Logan, Utah/Logan
95	Ricky Ali'ifua	6-2	280	DE	Sr.	San Leandro, Calif./San Leandro
96	Christopher 'Unga	6-0	295	DE	R-Fr.	Rancho Cucamonga, Calif./Rancho Cucamonga
97	Jake Pitcher	6-3	225	DE	Fr.	Smithfield/Sky View
98	Edmund Faimalo	6-2	280	DE	Sr.	Riverside, Calif./Riverside
99	Mohelika Uasike	6-1	325	NG	Fr.	North Richland Hills, Texas/L.D. Bell

MOUNTAIN WEST

Aztecs are a cut above



MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ | The Associated Press

San Diego State running back Donnel Pumphrey ran for over 1,500 yards last season as the Aztecs won their last 10 games.

Led by star running back Donnel Pumphrey, San Diego State is loaded and should be the class of the league.

By **STEVE LUHM**

The Salt Lake Tribune

Logan » A month into last season, San Diego State was limping along with a 1-3 record, including a head-scratching overtime loss to South Alabama and a 28-point defeat at Cal.

The Aztecs were on the ropes.

So, it seemed, was coach Rocky Long.

Less than a year later, however, San Diego State is the toast of the Mountain West Conference.

The Aztecs are the overwhelming choice to win the Pacific Division and reach the league's title game. Long's job couldn't be more secure and those connected with the program are talking with

supreme confidence about 2016.

"Everybody thinks that ... we're going to be pretty good," Long said. "I think we have a chance to be pretty good, too. It's just a matter of us having the right attitude, staying away from injuries and playing well when we have to play well. Going into the season, we have a lot of enthusiasm and a lot of positive thoughts. We'll see how it goes."

Star running back Donnel Pumphrey is more optimistic. "We know, if we start fast, it could be a special year and possible undefeated season," he said. "... I feel like we deserve that kind of recognition. We play great and are one of the toughest teams in the nation."

After last season's slow

start, San Diego State won 10 straight games, including a 48-14 victory over Utah State. No team — not Utah or Washington or BYU — manhandled the Aggies like the Aztecs did on that lopsided evening at Qualcomm Stadium.

San Diego State returns 14 starters, including Pumphrey. He rushed for 1,653 yards and 17 touchdowns as a junior.

"He's as good as any running back in the country," Long said. "I also think the league we play in and being on the West Coast makes it very difficult for him to earn any national recognition."

Against Utah State last season, Pumphrey rushed 21 times for 183 yards and two touchdowns.

Some expected him to declare for the NFL draft, but Pumphrey didn't consider it.

"I've always known I was going to come back," he said. "I've always talked to my parents about graduating. I also committed to being for four

years and I told the coaches that when they first recruited me. That's been a big part of me wanting to stay here."

Another reason?

"Knowing that we have a great team coming back," Pumphrey said. "It could be a special year and I know that if everything goes right we can hopefully win another conference championship. That's our ultimate goal."

San Diego should once again own the Pacific Division, where Nevada and San Jose will likely battle for second place and bid to a higher-level bowl.

In the more balanced Mountain Division, Boise State is the preseason favorite. But defending champion Air Force, New Mexico, Utah State and Colorado State are all bowl-caliber teams which will be waiting if the Broncos to stumble.

luhm@sltrib.com
Twitter: @sluhm

Mountain West predictions

West Division

1. San Diego State
Starts the season on 10-game win streak.

2. Nevada
Pack doesn't play either Boise State or Air Force.

3. San Jose State
Spartans return 16 starters from last season's bowl team.

4. Fresno State
Is coach Tim DeRuyter on the hot seat?

5. UNLV
Since 1995, Rebels are 65-173 overall.

6. Hawaii
Nick Rolovich takes over for Norm Chow as head coach.

Mountain Division

1. Boise State
Broncos replace seven defensive starters.

2. Air Force
Plays New Mexico in Dallas on Oct. 15.

3. New Mexico
Beat Boise, Air Force, Aggies last season.

4. Utah State
Big questions at line-backer, wide receiver.

5. Colorado State
Five of first six games played in Colorado.

6. Wyoming
RB Brian Hill is one of the best in the MWC.



Associated Press file photo

Boise State sophomore QB Brett Rypien is a team captain.

AROUND THE STATE



JOSHUA POLSON | The Greeley Tribune via The Associated Press

Weber State's Eric Wilkes led the Wildcats with three 100-yard games last season and 662 yards overall.

High hopes in Ogden

All the pieces fit for Weber State to have a breakthrough season.

By ERIC BUTLER

Special to The Tribune

Ogden » If Weber State's offense were the wishbone, the Wildcats' fleet of quality running backs would be no problem.

Instead of a three-back set, though, Weber generally has only one rusher behind the quarterback — or none at all in its spread offense.

Still, it doesn't seem as if the current set of running backs has any real problem with the logjam, and, if that kind of attitude is emblematic of the team as a whole, Weber State might just be in for a solid and maybe even special season.

The Wildcats return nine offensive starters and eight defensive starters from a team that finished 6-5 overall last year and 5-3 in Big Sky conference play.

Though the 'Cats technically were seventh in the 13-team Big Sky, they were just two games out of first in what was a crowded and hotly contested championship race.

And one of Weber State's conference wins was an overtime victory against a Montana team that eventually earned an at-large berth into the 24-team FCS playoff.

"We have a lot of guys who played good football for us, even ones who

Weber State schedule

Sept. 1 » at Utah St., 6 p.m.
Sept. 10 » at So. Dakota, 1 p.m.
Sept. 17 » Sacramento St., 6 p.m.
Sept. 24 » at UC Davis, 7 p.m.
Oct. 8 » Portland St., 6 p.m.
Oct. 15 » Montana St., 1:30 p.m.
Oct. 22 » at So. Utah, 6 p.m.
Oct. 29 » at No. Dakota, Noon
Nov. 5 » No. Arizona, Noon
Nov. 12 » Cal Poly, Noon
Nov. 19 » at Idaho St., 2:30 p.m.
All times Mountain

haven't started in the past," said Weber State coach Jay Hill. "This is, by far, the most depth that we've had going into our first game.

"We've got every passing yard, rushing yard, receiving yard back from our team last year," he added.

That starts with senior quarterback Jadrian Clark, who threw for 1,875 yards in '15 but also had the wheels to gain to net 265 yards on the ground. His familiar returning targets at wideout include senior Cam Livingston, junior Darryl Denby, junior Drew Batchelor and junior tight end Tui Satuala.

As for those running backs, junior Eric Wilkes was the team's leading rusher with 662 yards and three times went over a hundred yards in a game. He wasn't the only Weber back to find the century mark, however. Returnees Treshawn Garrett

did it twice and senior Emmanuel Pooler accomplished it once.

And, after missing the 2015 season due to a knee injury, 2014 leading rusher Zach Smith returns for his junior year.

"It brings out the drive because we have so many good running backs," Smith said. "Everyone has to be at the top of their game. When you're out here, you're competing with friends and competing to be the legit No. 1 spot.

"We've got five running backs who are legitimate starters," he added.

Defensively, the entire linebacking corps is back for Weber, including junior Emmett Tela, who led the team in tackles a year ago. At outside linebacker, senior Tre'von Johnson is also back after tying for the team lead in solo tackles (35) last year.

"I remember coming up here as a freshman, I blinked my eyes and now I'm a senior," said Johnson, who played at Hunter High and added that the program has changed mightily in four years.

"Light years ahead," he said. "When I came in we were having 2-10 seasons, but this program has taken off."

For the coach, the numbers are there and the attitudes seem good. But Hill knows there will be obstacles to overcome — starting with the Wildcats themselves.

"This is a good enough team to be right there at the end," Hill said. "But they've got to respect the process and be ready each week."

Snow to start year at No. 1

By HAYDEN KIM

The Salt Lake Tribune

They're No. 1.

The Snow College Badgers are the top-ranked junior college football team in the nation entering the 2016 season, according to the Sport-News.

Why? How about a 10-1 campaign last year that included a 38-14 victory over Dodge City in the Salt City Bowl?

How about a bunch of returning starters, including junior quarterback Stefan Cantwell — last season's bowl MVP — and running back Stephen Shepard, who led the Badgers in rushing last season with 661 yards and 12 TDs?

That's a pretty good start.

Snow also returns one third of its top receiving production last season. With Jonah Trinnaman off to BYU and tight end Dalton Fackrell now with Colorado State, Alex Croyle — who racked up 656 yards on 39 receptions last season as a freshman — will be counted on to produce.

Defensively, the Badgers return six starters. Linebackers Dax Esinger and Nela Tuuhetaufa are both back; so is safety Braxton Winterton, who spearheaded a secondary that had 22 interceptions in 2015.

The Badgers have a home-friendly schedule. They were scheduled to open their campaign on Saturday with a tuneup against the Utah Shock, a St. George-based semi-pro team. Snow opens its college schedule on Sept. 3 against Tucson Tech, and Western States Football League play commences on Sept. 10 at Glendale (Ariz.).

Snow schedule

Aug. 27 » Utah Shock, 1 p.m.
Sept. 3 » Tucson Tech, 1 p.m.
Sept. 10 » at Glendale, 7 p.m.
Sept. 17 » Mesa, 1 p.m.
Sept. 24 » Air Force Prep, 1 p.m.
Oct. 8 » at Ariz. Western, 7 p.m.
Oct. 15 » Pima, 1 p.m.
Oct. 19 » at Eastern Ariz., 7 p.m.
Nov. 5 » Scottsdale, 1 p.m.
Nov. 12 » Phoenix, 1 p.m.

AROUND THE STATE

Up for a challenge?

T-Birds have undergone big changes since last season, but new coach Warren upbeat about team's chances.

By STEVE LUHM

The Salt Lake Tribune

Cedar City » Going into the 2016 football season, a few things have changed at Southern Utah.

Actually, quite a few things:

» The Thunderbirds are the defending Big Sky Conference champions, a role they've never previously played and one which eliminates any chance of opponents overlooking them.

» Southern Utah must replace NFL-caliber defensive players Miles Killebrew, Le-Shaun Sims and James Cowser. Killebrew and Sims were drafted. Cowser signed as a free agent.

» SUU must find a starting quarterback. Ammon Olsen is gone after throwing for 3,344 yards and 26 touchdowns during his senior season. He completed 61.1 percent of his passes.

» Former head coach Ed Lamb, who built the program virtually from scratch, left for BYU. Ex-defensive coordinator Demario Warren has been tasked to carry the torch.

» A pair of 300-pound starters on the offensive line decided to follow Lamb to Provo as graduate transfers, so Keyan Norman and Andrew Eide must be replaced.

Clearly, the Thunderbirds have work to do. But Warren sounds ready for the challenge.

"I'm having a blast," he said. "We have some great kids here and the coaches are doing a great job of keep them energetic. ... I'm really enjoying it."

Despite the personnel losses, Warren has a solid nucleus of returning players, including

SUU schedule

Sept. 1 » at Utah, 6 p.m.

Sept. 10 » Southeast Louisiana, 6 p.m.

Sept. 24 » Portland State, 6 p.m.

Oct. 1 » at Montana, 2:30 p.m.

Oct. 8 » Cal-Davis, 6 p.m.

Oct. 15 » at North Dakota, Noon

Oct. 22 » Weber State, 6 p.m.

Oct. 29 » at Idaho State, 2:30 p.m.

Nov. 5 » Montana State, Noon

Nov. 12 » at BYU, 1 p.m.

Nov. 19 » at Northern Arizona, 3 p.m.

All times Mountain

five who were picked on the Big Sky's preseason all-league team.

The group includes wide receiver Mike Sharp, tight end Steve Wroblewski, defensive lineman Chance Bearnson, outside linebacker Mike Needham and punter Tate Lewis.

According to Warren, the Thunderbirds' strengths will be at wide receiver and the defensive line.

Sharp, a converted quarterback from Dixie High School in St. George, caught 54 passes for 889 yards and 14 touchdowns last season.

"We're comfortable there," Warren said. "... We have a lot of guys who we think will make big plays for us."

Bearnson, a junior from Cedar City, made 46 tackles last season, including 3 1/2



LEAH HOGSTEN | The Salt Lake Tribune

Southern Utah wide receiver Mike Sharp is one of five players on the Thunderbirds picked on the Big Sky Conference's preseason all-league team.

quarterback sacks. Senior Si-one Fukofuka and junior Sefesi Vaa'ivaka are other key veterans.

"We have a very deep defensive line, deeper than ever before," Warren said. "We lost Cowser on the edge, but we're going to make up for it with a lot of guys who can play."

Sorensen's replacement at quarterback could be BYU transfer Colt McCoy, although Warren isn't ready to declare a winner of the all-important battle.

"We have some depth there," he said.

Whoever wins the starting job will operate behind an inexperienced offensive line, in part because Norman and Eide transferred.

"They are good kids and good players," Warren said. "They were older program guys, too, because they had been around awhile and could show the young guys how to do things."

"But we've adjusted. We moved a few guys around and moved a few young guys up. ... We're coming along. We've just got some guys who have never done it before in a game."

Dixie State sporting a new look

Team is playing in a new league with a new coaching staff, but it brings back 19 starters.

By HAYDEN KIM

The Salt Lake Tribune

The Dixie State Trailblazers are moving back into the neighborhood.

The Blazers are leaving the Great Northwest Athletic Conference to join the more geographical-friendly Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference in what is a football-only move.

"This is a terrific step forward for our football program," Dixie State athletic director Jason Boothe said last month when the move was announced. "Joining the RMAC gives our team a home in a league with amazingly rich tradition. We are grateful to the GNAC and the opportunities it has provided us over the years and look forward to our future."

Coming off of last season's 3-7 finish, Dixie State will also be looking for more wins on the field in 2016. And it could happen. The Trailblazers return 19 starters from last year's squad.

Leading the way for the Trailblazers will be sophomore quarterback Tyson Blackner, senior running back DeJon Coleman and sophomore quarterback Blake Barney who led the team in passing, rushing and total offense categories, respectively, last season.

On defense, it will be junior safety Colton Olson – reigning first team All-GNAC selection who led the team with 100 tackles and two interceptions – helping anchor the back end. Four returning linemen and two linebackers join Olson on an experienced defense.

While Dixie State returns most of its key players from last season, it will have a new leader on the sideline. Former Humboldt State defensive coordinator Shay McClure is Dixie's new coach. He brought eight newcomers with him to fill out his staff.

Dixie State schedule

Sept. 1 » N.M. Highlands, 6 p.m.

Sept. 10 » S.D. Mines, 6 p.m.

Sept. 17 » at Black Hills State (S.D.), Noon

Sept. 24 » at Central Washington, 1 p.m.

Oct. 1 » Western State (Colo.), 1 p.m.

Oct. 8 » at Chadron State (Neb.), 1 p.m.

Oct. 15 » at Colorado Mesa, 7 p.m.

Oct. 22 » Colorado School of Mines, 1 p.m.

Oct. 29 » at Adams State (Colo.), 1 p.m.

Nov. 5 » at Colorado State-Pueblo, 2 p.m.

Nov. 12 » Fort Lewis (Colo.), 1 p.m.

AROUND THE NATION

Slow Tide's roll

Alabama has host of challengers to its penthouse spot.

A postseason rampage put both Alabama and the Southeastern Conference back on top in college football last season.

Now, the trick will be staying there with three new coaches in the East and quarterback uncertainty across much of the league, including at 'Bama.

The Crimson Tide is again the team to beat in the league, and perhaps nationally, after claiming the SEC's eighth national title in 10 seasons. That broke a two-year drought for the league, which went 9-2 in the postseason counting the Tide's playoff wins over Michigan State and Clemson.

Alabama defensive end Jonathan Allen doesn't think coach Nick Saban will let



Associated Press file photo

Nick Saban's Tide has won four of the past seven national titles.

complacency set in.

"The biggest thing at Alabama is that if you don't have hunger," Allen said, "then you're not going to start this year."

It's a luxury afforded by a string of top-rated recruiting classes, even with an unproven backfield.

Tennessee and Mississippi, who have the SEC's most accomplished returning passers in Joshua Dobbs and Chad Kelly, are trying to continue

climbing the ranks.

Longtime Tide defensive coordinator Kirby Smart is now trying to get Georgia over the hump. Will Muschamp's back in the SEC East at South Carolina and Barry Odom is trying to lead a comeback to division contention at Missouri.

In the West, Auburn and Texas A&M are trying to bounce back while LSU aims for a stronger finish.

— *The Associated Press*

East Division favorite: Tennessee

Butch Jones has positioned the Volunteers, led by Joshua Dobbs, as front-runners for their first division title since 2007. They have 17 starters back from a team that went 9-4. Florida is the defending champion while three of the seven teams have new coaches. Unlike Tennessee, potential challengers Florida and Georgia entered fall camp without an established No. 1 quarterback.

West Division favorite: Alabama

The defending national champions, as usual, have talent all over the field. Cooper Bateman is the only quarterback with college experience, but Blake Barnett and David Cornwell were highly rated recruits. The division is typically loaded with coach Les Miles and Leonard Fournette trying to lead LSU backs. Chad Kelly helps make Mississippi — which has beaten the Tide two straight years — a threat, too.

SEC'S TOP PLAYERS »

Leonard Fournette, RB, LSU. Consensus All-American flirted with a 2,000-yard season and was a big Heisman Trophy favorite early last season. A more consistent passing game would help him out.

Cam Robinson, LT, Alabama. Started every game in his first two seasons and will be blocking for a new backfield.

Chad Kelly, QB, Mississippi. Sugar Bowl MVP had third-most passing and total yards of any SEC quarterback in a season.

Nick Chubb/Sony Michel, RBs, Georgia. Both are trying to return from injuries, and both have posted huge numbers when healthy.

Myles Garrett, DE, Texas A&M (below). In a league full of elite pass rushers, he may be the best. Has 24 sacks in two seasons.



NEW FACES »

Kirby Smart, Georgia. The standard was made crystal clear when Mark Richt was fired after winning double-digit games nine times in 15 seasons. Smart will be chasing his mentor, Saban.

Trevor Knight, QB, Texas A&M. The former Oklahoma starter could be the biggest on-field addition for any SEC team. Doesn't hurt that he led a Sugar Bowl win over Alabama.

Bo Scarbrough, RB, Alabama. He and fellow sophomore Damien Harris are vying to replace Heisman Trophy winner Derrick Henry. It's the first time Saban hasn't had an experienced back returning.



Smart » New coach of the Bulldogs.

ON THE HOT SEAT »

Gus Malzahn, Auburn. Three years removed from an SEC title, he's been unable to beat the top teams since. QB struggles held back his normally prolific offense last season.

Kevin Sumlin, Texas A&M. An 11-13 record in SEC games over the past three seasons and trouble holding onto quarterbacks could at least make it lukewarm.

Les Miles, LSU. Last year's groundswell of support and a talented roster make him secure — at least until the next three-game losing streak.

Derek Mason, Vanderbilt. Two SEC wins in as many seasons but 16 returning starters, including RB Ralph Webb.



Malzahn » Can he recreate magic?

AROUND THE NATION

Eastern power

Dominance in the league lies firmly in one division.

The big change in the Big Ten is the move to the nine-game conference schedule. What doesn't figure to change is the dominance of the East Division.

Ohio State, Michigan and defending champion Michigan State all are positioned to make runs at being national top-10 teams, if not College Football Playoff contenders.

Iowa's amazing 12-0 regular season in 2015 notwithstanding, this looks like another year when the West will play in the East's considerable shadow.

The Big Ten attempted to create balance when it split into divisions with Nebraska's entry in 2011. The Legends and Leaders monikers went by the wayside after



Associated Press file photo

Ex-Utes coach Urban Meyer has another stacked roster at Ohio St.

three years, replaced by the geographical East-West alignment.

Last season, Michigan State went to the playoff and was joined by fellow East members Ohio State and Michigan among the top 12 teams in the final Top 25. Iowa, at No. 9, was the only West team among the top dozen.

The year before, Ohio State won the national championship and Michigan State was

No. 6 in the final AP poll, with Wisconsin the highest West team at No. 13. The East won the last two Big Ten championship games, with the folks in Wisconsin still smarting from the 59-0 beat-down administered by Ohio State in 2014.

The Big Ten will join the Pac-12 and Big 12 in playing nine-game conference schedules. SEC and ACC teams each play eight league games.

— *The Associated Press*

East Division favorite: Michigan

Urban Meyer has a bevy of talented reinforcements ready to step to the fore. J.T. Barrett has the quarterback's job all to himself, finally, and can hurt defenses in a variety of ways and red-shirt freshman Mike Weber is ready to step in at running back. The receiving corps and offensive line are retooling. The strength of the defense is at linebacker, where Raekwon McMillan made a team-high 119 tackles.

West Division favorite: Iowa

Iowa turned into the darling of college football with its 12-0 regular season, and the Hawkeyes have the schedule and returning personnel to win the division again. Quarterback C.J. Beathard, most of the top running backs and several key receivers are back, and All-America cornerback Desmond King is among eight returning starters on defense.

BIG TEN'S TOP PLAYERS »

Jabrill Peppers, LB, Michigan. He is a fringe Heisman Trophy candidate. He's listed at linebacker after primarily being a safety in 2015, but he has proved he can play about any position on either side of the ball.

Desmond King, DB, Iowa. The defensive back is among the nation's top defenders after intercepting eight passes. **Malik McDowell, DL, Michigan State.** The defensive lineman goes into his junior season with 17 of his 56 career tackles having gone for losses.

Justin Jackson, RB, Northwestern. The Wildcats return a workhorse running back from a team that won 10 games despite averaging fewer than 20 points.

J.T. Barrett, QB, Ohio State (below). The quarterback also could get into the Heisman conversation. He won back the starter's job in the eighth game and is the Buckeyes' undisputed leader.



NEW FACES »

Chris Ash, Rutgers. The former Ohio State defensive coordinator, takes over a program that has lost 12 of 16 Big Ten games in its two years in the conference.

D.J. Durkin, Maryland. The former Michigan defensive coordinator, is in charge at Maryland, where facilities improvements and Under Armour money should enhance the Terrapins' chances of winning.

Lovie Smith, Illinois. Smith hasn't worked at the college level since 1995, but he brings fresh perspective and NFL cache to a program that has finished above .500 only twice since the 2007 team went to the Rose Bowl.



Ash » Making a splash for Knights.

ON THE HOT SEAT »

Darrell Hazell, Purdue. His three-year record is 6-30 overall and 2-22 in the Big Ten. He probably kept his job after last season only because the administration didn't want to pay \$6.6 million to buy out a contract that runs to 2018.

James Franklin, Penn State. With a 14-12 record through his first two seasons, Franklin is past the shadow of NCAA sanctions and pressure is on. Penn State has finished in The Associated Press' Top 10 only three times in the past 11 years.

Don Brown, Michigan. The coordinator put together one of the best defenses in the country last season at Boston College. He inherits much more talent with the Wolverines.



Hazell » In trouble with Boilermakers.

AROUND THE NATION

Two to tango

It's Clemson and Florida St., then everybody else.

Clemson's Deshaun Watson still thinks about carrying an unbeaten record into the final game of the season before losing to Alabama with a national championship on the line.

The Tigers and their star quarterback are the preseason favorite to win the Atlantic Coast Conference and be positioned to return to the College Football Playoff, but there's another team — Florida State — that enters the season with a playoff shot within reach.

In fact, it's not impossible that both teams could find themselves in playoff position coming out of a league where the balance of power is tipped heavily toward the Atlantic Division that includes both the Tigers and Seminoles.



Associated Press file photo

Jimbo Fisher and Florida State host Clemson on Oct. 29 this year.

"We know how to get there," Watson said of last year's title-game loss. "We've experienced it and we've got to start over this year and try to get back there."

Clemson (14-1) and Florida State (10-3) have combined to win the last five ACC championships. They've combined to go 57-3 against the rest of the league, while the last time either lost to a division opponent came nearly four years ago.

"We've been able to recruit well and have very good players and we've been able to coach them well," Seminoles coach Jimbo Fisher said of the gap between the Atlantic powers and the rest of the league. "Not that other guys haven't, but we've been able to be fortunate in certain games. I mean, we've created a culture that right now we're both playing pretty well."

— *The Associated Press*

Atlantic Division favorite: FSU

In what could be a coin flip between two talented teams, the Seminoles' home-field advantage for the Oct. 29 meeting with the Tigers could be the difference. The Tigers were the preseason pick by media members over the Seminoles. While Louisville is poised to make a leap in Year 3 under Bobby Petrino, it would be a shock if the Tigers and Seminoles don't finish atop the division.

Coastal Division favorite: UNC

The Tar Heels are breaking in a new quarterback but have several key pieces back from an offense that averaged 40.7 points and 486.9 yards per game. That could again provide cover for a questionable defense, though its matchup with Miami comes on the road. The Tar Heels are coming off an 11-win season and are trying to become the first repeat Coastal champion since 2011 in a wide-open division.

ACC'S TOP PLAYERS »

Deshaun Watson, QB, Clemson. Last season, he was ACC player of the year, third in Heisman Trophy voting and the Manning Award winner as the nation's top quarterback. All as a sophomore.

Elijah Hood, RB, North Carolina. The junior is a physical presence for the Coastal champions after running for 1,463 yards and 17 scores.

James Conner, RB, Pittsburgh. This is a welcome-back season for the running back and 2014 ACC player of the year who went down with an opening-game knee injury, then battled lymphoma.

Dalvin Cook, RB, Florida State (below). The Seminoles have their own Heisman candidate with a junior running back who ran for an ACC-best 1,691 yards and 19 touchdowns last year.



NEW FACES »

Mark Richt, Miami. He spent the past 15 seasons at Georgia but is now at his alma mater, trying to provide a jolt to a one-time power that has yet to win the Coastal title.

Dino Babers, Syracuse. The former Bowling Green coach takes over a program with seven wins in the past two years.

Bronco Mendenhall, Virginia. The Cavaliers have one winning season in eight years. Now it's up to the former BYU coach to turn things around.

Eli Drinkwitz, North Carolina State. Drinkwitz is the Wolfpack's new offensive coordinator after leading one of the nation's top offenses at Boise State.



Richt » No vacation on South Beach.

ON THE HOT SEAT »

Steve Addazio, Boston College. Addazio arrived after winning 13 games in two seasons at Temple. He started his tenure in 2013 and won seven games in each of his first two seasons, then dropped to 3-9 overall and 0-8 in the league.

Justin Fuente, Virginia Tech. The former Memphis coach is replacing longtime Hokies coach Frank Beamer, taking over a program that had gone from annual 10-win seasons to consecutive 7-6 finishes.

Bobby Petrino, Louisville. His second tenure with the Cardinals (17 wins in two seasons) has not yet been as successful as his first (41 wins in four seasons).



Addazio » No room for error at BC.

AROUND THE NATION

Action's off field

Expansion is overshadowing the on-field fun.

Oklahoma has a record nine Big 12 championships, and last season took the league into the College Football Playoff for the first time.

While the smallest Power Five conference could soon be expanding, the Sooners and Bob Stoops — now the longest-tenured FBS coach — seem to have everything in place to push for another playoff run out of the 10-team league.

Since their last national title in 2000, the Sooners made another BCS Championship Game in 2008 and last season played in the Orange Bowl, losing the CFP semifinal to Clemson after the Big 12 was snubbed for the first four-team playoff in 2014.



Associated Press file photo

Oklahoma's Bob Stoops is focused on another league title.

"I don't reflect back much on it," Stoops said of the national title in his second season at Oklahoma. "I look forward and try and continue to improve, and be a more powerful team is what I'm constantly preaching."

Big 12 leaders have to decide whether to add two, four or no teams. Even without expansion, the league is restoring its championship game in 2017, with a likely split into divisions again. For

now, the Big 12 remains the only Power Five conference with a round-robin league schedule.

"We've been in five different conferences, and we've done it about every way that you can," said TCU coach Gary Patterson, whose Horned Frogs go into their fifth Big 12 season. "I don't think there's any tougher way of playing it as when you have to play everybody."

— *The Associated Press*

Favorite: Oklahoma

Baker Mayfield is back for his second season as Oklahoma's quarterback, with the option for another year after this in Norman for the former Texas Tech walk-on freshman starter thanks to a Big 12 rule change about in-league transfers.

Next up: Baylor

Baylor still has plenty of talent. But the Bears lack depth in transition after the offseason dismissal of coach Art Briles following allegations that the program didn't properly handle sexual assault allegations against some players.

The darkhorses

Oklahoma State and TCU each won at least 10 games last season. QB Mason Rudolph is among a wealth of returners for the Cowboys. TCU has 13 starters back from last season, plus six other starters who had season-ending injuries a year ago.

BIG 12'S TOP PLAYERS »

Baker Mayfield, QB, Oklahoma. A legitimate Heisman Trophy candidate who threw for 3,700 yards and accounted for 43 touchdowns (36 passing, seven rushing) with only seven interceptions.

Malik Jefferson, LB, Texas. While starting every game as a true freshman and recording 61 tackles, Jefferson also became a key leader.

Josh Carraway, DE, TCU. Already one of the league's top pass-rushers (nine sacks), and with help with the return of fellow end James McFarland from injury.

James Washington, WR, Oklahoma State. A deep-ball threat who can outleap defenders, his 10 touchdown catches averaged 49 yards.

Samaje Perine, RB, Oklahoma (below). Quiet off the field, the junior already has 3,062 yards and 37 TDs in two seasons, just 1,056 yards shy of Billy Sims' school record.



NEW FACES »

Matt Campbell, Iowa State. At 36, Campbell is the youngest head coach of a Power Five school. The Cyclones have one winning record the past 10 seasons.

Jim Grobe, Baylor. The former Wake Forest coach came out of retirement for a one-year deal as acting head coach.

Kenny Hill, TCU. After initially thrilling Texas A&M when succeeding Heisman Trophy winner Johnny Manziel, Hill gets a fresh start near home.

Sterlin Gilbert, Texas. Gilbert brings a philosophy to be fast and physical, have fun and score points after initially balking at the job.



Campbell »
Young blood for Cyclones.

ON THE HOT SEAT »

Dana Holgorsen, West Virginia. The Mountaineers came into the Big 12 after sharing consecutive Big East titles, and a 10-3 debut season for Holgorsen. They are 26-25 since, 15-21 in league games.

Charlie Strong, Texas. The Longhorns haven't had three consecutive losing seasons since 1954-56. If they match that, Strong (11-14 so far) could be three-and-out in Austin.

Bob Bowlsby, Commissioner. BYU? Cincinnati? Houston? South Florida? Connecticut? Colorado State? Anybody else? The expansion debate has taken several twists and turns and little will escape the view of the media or fans.



Holgorsen »
Mediocre in Big 12 so far.

AROUND THE NATION

Strike a pose

Several established stars among the early favorites for this year's Heisman Trophy.

A handful of familiar faces could make this a Heisman race for the ages.

Four, count 'em, four of the top six finishers from last year's Heisman Trophy voting are back for another season. Clemson's quarterback Deshaun Watson is among them, along with a trio of stars that includes Stanford running back Christian McCaffrey, Oklahoma quarterback Baker Mayfield and LSU running back Leonard Fournette.

The scrutiny and hype for the foursome will be intense from day one. Watson says it comes with the territory.

"That's something I already knew before," Watson said. "I'm a confident player and I expect to be in this position. That's why I work, that's why I grind."

Though it's uncommon for so much Heisman-caliber talent to return for another season, it's not unprecedented.

A recent example is 2011, when Stanford quarterback Andrew Luck, Oregon running back LaMichael James, Boise State quarterback Kellen Moore, Oklahoma State receiver Justin Blackmon and Michigan quarterback Denard Robinson returned after finishing two through six in the voting behind Auburn's Cam Newton in 2010. Interestingly, none of them won. Instead, it was Baylor quarterback Robert Griffin III.

McCaffrey is an obvious Heisman front-runner since he was second last season. The 6-foot, 200-pound junior broke the NCAA single-season record with 3,864 all-purpose yards in 2015.

Stanford coach David Shaw said to expect more of the same this season.

"I think when you have a great player, the last thing you want to do is pump the brakes," Shaw said last month. "You want to push the accelerator."

THE FOUR FAVORITES »



LEONARD FOURNETTE

LSU's bruising runner was probably the favorite to win the Heisman midway through last season before his production slipped in the final month. The 6-1, 230-pound junior still finished with 1,953 yards rushing and 22 touchdowns. The Tigers return a talented team, and likely will play several high-profile games that can showcase his talent to a national audience.

BAKER MAYFIELD

The 6-1, 210-pound Mayfield started as a walk-on at Texas Tech before transferring to the Sooners. After sitting out a season because of NCAA transfer rules, he won the starting job last fall and completed more than 68 percent of his passes for 3,700 yards, 36 touchdowns and only seven interceptions.

CHRISTIAN MCCAFFREY

The Stanford star had one of the best overall seasons in college football history in 2015, finishing with 2,019 yards rushing, 1,070 yards on kick returns, 645 yards receiving and 130 yards on punt returns. He even threw two touchdown passes. McCaffrey might be hard-pressed to match those numbers, but another big season is certainly expected.

DESHAUN WATSON

The 6-2, 210-pound junior was fantastic as the Tigers made it to the national title game. He completed nearly 68 percent of his passes for 4,104 yards, 35 touchdowns and 13 interceptions while also running for 1,105 yards and 12 touchdowns. Clemson is expected to have a great shot at winning the ACC and making it to the College Football Playoff again.

SIX OTHERS TO THINK ABOUT »



Chad Kelly, senior quarterback, Mississippi. The strong-armed Kelly is the top returning QB in the SEC and listed high on NFL draft boards for 2017. The nephew of Jim Kelly led the Rebels to five victories over Top 25 teams, and they are expected to challenge in the SEC West.



Royce Freeman, junior running back, Oregon. Freeman's 3,201 yards rushing the past two years are the most by any player in a Power Five conference. He was the only FBS player to pick up more than 100 yards from scrimmage in every game.



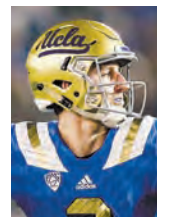
Greg Ward Jr., senior quarterback, Houston. He and Clemson's Watson were the only quarterbacks to rush for 1,000 yards and pass for 2,000 last season. He also was fifth in the nation with a school-record 21 rushing touchdowns.



Seth Russell, senior quarterback, Baylor. Russell led the Bears to six straight wins before a neck injury against Iowa State ended his season. He threw for 29 touchdowns and more than 2,100 yards in seven games and also ran for 402 yards.



Jabrill Peppers, sophomore linebacker, Michigan. The last two-way player to win the Heisman was the Wolverines' Charles Woodson in 1997. Peppers could be the next. He's moving from safety to a hybrid linebacker position.



Josh Rosen, sophomore quarterback, UCLA. Rosen threw for almost 3,700 yards and 23 touchdowns as a freshman and set a school record by going 245 consecutive passes without an interception. The Bruins are transitioning from the spread to a pro-style system that suits him better.

NATIONAL SCHEDULES

NEW MEXICO STATE

Sept. 3 at UTEP, 6 p.m.
 Sept. 10 New Mexico, 6 p.m.
 Sept. 17 at Kentucky, 2 p.m.
 Sept. 24 at Troy, TBA
 Oct. 1 Louisiana-Lafayette, 6 p.m.
 Oct. 15 at Idaho, TBA
 Oct. 22 Georgia Southern, 6 p.m.
 Oct. 29 at Texas A&M, TBA
 Nov. 12 at Arkansas St., TBA
 Nov. 19 Texas St., 2 p.m.
 Nov. 26 Appalachian St., 2 p.m.
 Dec. 3 at South Alabama, TBA

NORTH CAROLINA
 Sept. 3 Georgia, 3:30 p.m.
 Sept. 10 at Illinois, 5:30 p.m.
 Sept. 17 James Madison, 1:30 p.m.
 Sept. 24 Pittsburgh, TBA
 Oct. 1 at Florida St., TBA
 Oct. 8 Virginia Tech, TBA
 Oct. 15 at Miami, TBA
 Oct. 22 at Virginia, TBA
 Nov. 5 Georgia Tech, TBA
 Nov. 10 at Duke, 5:30 p.m.
 Nov. 19 The Citadel, TBA
 Nov. 25 NC State, TBA

NORTH TEXAS
 Sept. 3 SMU, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 10 Bethune Cookman, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 17 at Florida, 5:30 p.m.
 Sept. 24 at Rice, TBA
 Oct. 1 Middle Tennessee, 5 p.m.
 Oct. 8 Marshall, 5 p.m.
 Oct. 22 at Army, 10 a.m.
 Oct. 29 at UTSA, 5 p.m.
 Nov. 5 Louisiana Tech, 3:30 p.m.
 Nov. 12 at W. Kentucky, 1:30 p.m.
 Nov. 19 Southern Miss., 3:30 p.m.
 Nov. 26 at UTEP, TBA

NORTHWESTERN
 Sept. 3 W. Michigan, 10 a.m.
 Sept. 10 Illinois St., 1:30 p.m.
 Sept. 17 Duke, 6 p.m.
 Sept. 24 Nebraska, 5:30 p.m.
 Oct. 1 Iowa, 10 a.m.
 Oct. 15 at Michigan St., 1:30 p.m.
 Oct. 22 Indiana, 10 a.m.
 Oct. 29 at Ohio St., 3:30 p.m.
 Nov. 5 Wisconsin, TBA
 Nov. 12 at Purdue, TBA
 Nov. 19 at Minnesota, TBA
 Nov. 26 Illinois, TBA

NOTRE DAME
 Sept. 4 at Texas, 5:30 p.m.
 Sept. 10 Nevada, 1:30 p.m.
 Sept. 17 Michigan St., 5:30 p.m.
 Sept. 24 Duke, 1:30 p.m.
 Oct. 1 Syracuse, TBA
 Oct. 8 at N.C. State, TBA
 Oct. 15 Stanford, 5:30 p.m.
 Oct. 29 Miami, 1:30 p.m.
 Nov. 5 Navy, 9:30 a.m.
 Nov. 12 Army, 1:30 p.m.
 Nov. 19 Virginia Tech, 1:30 p.m.
 Nov. 26 at Southern Cal, TBA

OHIO
 Sept. 3 Texas St., 1:30 p.m.
 Sept. 10 at Kansas, 12:30 p.m.
 Sept. 17 at Tennessee, 10 a.m.
 Sept. 24 Gardner-Webb, TBA
 Oct. 1 at Miami (Ohio), Noon
 Oct. 8 Bowling Green, Noon
 Oct. 15 E. Michigan, TBA
 Oct. 22 at Kent St., TBA
 Oct. 27 at Toledo, 5:30 p.m.
 Nov. 3 Buffalo, 4 p.m.
 Nov. 15 at Cent. Michigan, 4 p.m.
 Nov. 22 Akron, 5 p.m.

OHIO STATE
 Sept. 3 Bowling Green, 10 a.m.
 Sept. 10 Tulsa, 1:30 p.m.
 Sept. 17 at Oklahoma, 5:30 p.m.
 Oct. 1 Rutgers, 10 a.m.
 Oct. 8 Indiana, TBA
 Oct. 15 at Wisconsin, 6 p.m.
 Oct. 22 at Penn St., 6 p.m.
 Oct. 29 Northwestern, 3:30 p.m.
 Nov. 5 Nebraska, 6 p.m.
 Nov. 12 at Maryland, TBA
 Nov. 19 at Michigan St., TBA
 Nov. 26 Michigan, TBA

OKLAHOMA

Sept. 3 at Houston, 10 a.m.
 Sept. 10 Louisiana-Monroe, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 17 Ohio St., 5:30 p.m.
 Oct. 1 at TCU, TBA
 Oct. 8 Texas, TBA
 Oct. 15 Kansas St., TBA
 Oct. 22 at Texas Tech, TBA
 Oct. 29 Kansas, TBA
 Nov. 3 at Iowa St., 5:30 p.m.
 Nov. 12 Baylor, TBA
 Nov. 19 at West Virginia, TBA
 Dec. 3 Oklahoma St., TBA

OKLAHOMA STATE
 Sept. 3 SE Louisiana, 1:30 p.m.
 Sept. 10 Cent. Michigan, 10 a.m.
 Sept. 17 Pittsburgh, 1:30 p.m.
 Sept. 24 at Baylor, TBA
 Oct. 1 at Texas, TBA
 Oct. 8 Iowa St., TBA
 Oct. 22 at Kansas, TBA
 Oct. 29 West Virginia, TBA
 Nov. 5 at Kansas St., TBA
 Nov. 12 Texas Tech, TBA
 Nov. 19 at TCU, TBA
 Dec. 3 at Oklahoma, TBA

OREGON
 Sept. 3 UC Davis, 3 p.m.
 Sept. 10 Virginia, 8:30 p.m.
 Sept. 17 at Nebraska, 1:30 p.m.
 Sept. 24 Colorado, TBA
 Oct. 1 at Washington St., TBA
 Oct. 8 Washington, TBA
 Oct. 21 at California, 8:30 p.m.
 Oct. 29 Arizona St., TBA
 Nov. 5 at Southern Cal, TBA
 Nov. 12 Stanford, TBA
 Nov. 19 at Utah, TBA
 Nov. 26 at Oregon St., TBA

OREGON STATE
 Sept. 1 at Minnesota, 7 p.m.
 Sept. 10 Idaho St., 3 p.m.
 Sept. 24 Boise St., TBA
 Oct. 1 at Colorado, TBA
 Oct. 8 California, TBA
 Oct. 15 Utah, TBA
 Oct. 22 at Washington, TBA
 Oct. 29 Washington St., TBA
 Nov. 5 at Stanford, TBA
 Nov. 12 at UCLA, TBA
 Nov. 19 Arizona, TBA
 Nov. 26 Oregon, TBA

PENN STATE
 Sept. 3 Kent St., 1:30 p.m.
 Sept. 10 at Pittsburgh, 10 a.m.
 Sept. 17 Temple, 10 a.m.
 Sept. 24 at Michigan, TBA
 Oct. 1 Minnesota, TBA
 Oct. 8 Maryland, 10 a.m.
 Oct. 22 Ohio St., 6 p.m.
 Oct. 29 at Purdue, TBA
 Nov. 5 Iowa, 5:30 p.m.
 Nov. 12 at Indiana, TBA
 Nov. 19 at Rutgers, 6 p.m.
 Nov. 26 Michigan St., TBA

PITTSBURGH
 Sept. 3 Villanova, 11:30 a.m.
 Sept. 10 Penn St., 10 a.m.
 Sept. 17 at Oklahoma St., 1:30 p.m.
 Sept. 24 at North Carolina, TBA
 Oct. 1 Marshall, TBA
 Oct. 8 Georgia Tech, TBA
 Oct. 15 at Virginia, TBA
 Oct. 27 Virginia Tech, 5 p.m.
 Nov. 5 at Miami, TBA
 Nov. 12 at Clemson, TBA
 Nov. 19 Duke, TBA
 Nov. 26 Syracuse, TBA

PURDUE
 Sept. 3 E. Kentucky, 10 a.m.
 Sept. 10 Cincinnati, 10 a.m.
 Sept. 24 Nevada, TBA
 Oct. 1 at Maryland, 1:30 p.m.
 Oct. 8 at Illinois, TBA
 Oct. 15 Iowa, 10 a.m.
 Oct. 22 at Nebraska, TBA
 Oct. 29 Penn St., TBA
 Nov. 5 at Minnesota, TBA
 Nov. 12 Northwestern, TBA
 Nov. 19 Wisconsin, TBA
 Nov. 26 at Indiana, TBA

RICE

Sept. 1 at W. Kentucky, 6 p.m.
 Sept. 10 at Army, 10 a.m.
 Sept. 17 Baylor, 6 p.m.
 Sept. 24 North Texas, TBA
 Oct. 1 at Southern Miss., 5 p.m.
 Oct. 15 UTSA, 5 p.m.
 Oct. 22 Prairie View, TBA
 Oct. 29 at Louisiana Tech, 5 p.m.
 Nov. 5 FAU, TBA
 Nov. 12 at Charlotte, Noon
 Nov. 19 UTEP, TBA
 Nov. 26 at Stanford, TBA

RUTGERS
 Sept. 3 at Washington, Noon
 Sept. 10 Howard, 10 a.m.
 Sept. 17 New Mexico, 10 a.m.
 Sept. 24 Iowa, TBA
 Oct. 1 at Ohio St., 10 a.m.
 Oct. 8 Michigan, 6 p.m.
 Oct. 15 Illinois, 10 a.m.
 Oct. 22 at Minnesota, 10 a.m.
 Nov. 5 Indiana, TBA
 Nov. 12 at Michigan St., TBA
 Nov. 19 Penn St., 6 p.m.
 Nov. 26 at Maryland, TBA

SMU
 Sept. 3 at North Texas, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 10 at Baylor, 1:30 p.m.
 Sept. 17 Liberty, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 23 TCU, 6 p.m.
 Oct. 1 at Temple, TBA
 Oct. 7 at Tulsa, 6 p.m.
 Oct. 22 Houston, TBA
 Oct. 29 at Tulane, TBA
 Nov. 5 Memphis, TBA
 Nov. 12 at East Carolina, TBA
 Nov. 19 South Florida, TBA
 Nov. 26 Navy, TBA

SAN DIEGO STATE
 Sept. 3 New Hampshire, 6:30 p.m.
 Sept. 10 California, 8:30 p.m.
 Sept. 17 at N. Illinois, 1:30 p.m.
 Oct. 1 at South Alabama, TBA
 Oct. 8 UNLV, TBA
 Oct. 14 at Fresno St., 8 p.m.
 Oct. 21 San Jose St., 8:30 p.m.
 Oct. 28 at Utah St., 6 p.m.
 Nov. 5 Hawaii, 5 p.m.
 Nov. 12 at Nevada, 8:30 p.m.
 Nov. 19 at Wyoming, 1:30 p.m.
 Nov. 26 Colorado St., 7 p.m.

SAN JOSE ST.
 Sept. 3 at Tulsa, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 10 Portland St., 2:30 p.m.
 Sept. 17 Utah, 8:30 p.m.
 Sept. 24 at Iowa St., 10 a.m.
 Oct. 1 at New Mexico, 2 p.m.
 Oct. 8 Hawaii, 2:30 p.m.
 Oct. 15 Nevada, 8:30 p.m.
 Oct. 21 at San Diego St., 8:30 p.m.
 Oct. 29 UNLV, 8:30 p.m.
 Nov. 4 at Boise St., 8:15 p.m.
 Nov. 19 Air Force, 8:30 p.m.
 Nov. 26 at Fresno St., 1:30 p.m.

SOUTH ALABAMA
 Sept. 3 at Mississippi St., 10 a.m.
 Sept. 10 Georgia Southern, TBA
 Sept. 17 Louisiana-Lafayette, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 24 Nicholls, TBA
 Oct. 1 San Diego St., TBA
 Oct. 15 at Arkansas St., TBA
 Oct. 20 Troy, 5:30 p.m.
 Oct. 29 Georgia St., TBA
 Nov. 5 at Louisiana-Monroe, 3 p.m.
 Nov. 19 at LSU, TBA
 Nov. 26 at Idaho, TBA
 Dec. 3 New Mexico St., TBA

SOUTH CAROLINA
 Sept. 1 at Vanderbilt, 6 p.m.
 Sept. 10 at Mississippi St., 5 p.m.
 Sept. 17 East Carolina, 2 p.m.
 Sept. 24 at Kentucky, TBA
 Oct. 1 Texas A&M, TBA
 Oct. 8 Georgia, TBA
 Oct. 22 UMass, TBA
 Oct. 29 Tennessee, TBA
 Nov. 5 Missouri, TBA
 Nov. 12 at Florida, TBA
 Nov. 19 W. Carolina, TBA
 Nov. 26 at Clemson, TBA

SOUTH FLORIDA

Sept. 3 Towson, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 10 N. Illinois, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 17 at Syracuse, 1:30 p.m.
 Sept. 24 Florida St., TBA
 Oct. 1 at Cincinnati, TBA
 Oct. 8 East Carolina, TBA
 Oct. 15 UConn, TBA
 Oct. 21 at Temple, 5 p.m.
 Oct. 28 Navy, 5 p.m.
 Nov. 12 at Memphis, TBA
 Nov. 19 at SMU, TBA
 Nov. 26 UCF, TBA

SOUTHERN CAL
 Sept. 3 Alabama, 6 p.m.
 Sept. 10 Utah St., Noon
 Sept. 17 at Stanford, 6 p.m.
 Sept. 23 at Utah, 7 p.m.
 Oct. 1 Arizona St., TBA
 Oct. 8 Colorado, TBA
 Oct. 15 at Arizona, TBA
 Oct. 27 California, 8:30 p.m.
 Nov. 5 Oregon, TBA
 Nov. 12 at Washington, TBA
 Nov. 19 at UCLA, TBA
 Nov. 26 Notre Dame, TBA

SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
 Sept. 3 at Kentucky, 5:30 p.m.
 Sept. 10 Savannah St., 5 p.m.
 Sept. 17 Troy, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 24 at UTEP, 6 p.m.
 Oct. 1 Rice, 5 p.m.
 Oct. 8 at UTSA, 10 a.m.
 Oct. 15 at LSU, TBA
 Oct. 29 Marshall, 5 p.m.
 Nov. 5 Charlotte, 1:30 p.m.
 Nov. 12 at Old Dominion, 1:30 p.m.
 Nov. 19 at North Texas, 3:30 p.m.
 Nov. 25 Louisiana Tech, TBA

STANFORD
 Sept. 2 Kansas St., 7 p.m.
 Sept. 17 Southern Cal, 6 p.m.
 Sept. 24 at UCLA, TBA
 Sept. 30 at Washington, 7 p.m.
 Oct. 8 Washington St., TBA
 Oct. 15 at Notre Dame, 5:30 p.m.
 Oct. 22 Colorado, TBA
 Oct. 29 at Arizona, TBA
 Nov. 5 Oregon St., TBA
 Nov. 12 at Oregon, TBA
 Nov. 19 at California, TBA
 Nov. 26 Rice, TBA

SYRACUSE
 Sept. 2 Colgate, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 9 Louisville, 6 p.m.
 Sept. 17 South Florida, 1:30 p.m.
 Sept. 24 at UConn, TBA
 Oct. 1 Notre Dame, TBA
 Oct. 8 at Wake Forest, TBA
 Oct. 15 Virginia Tech, TBA
 Oct. 22 at Boston College, TBA
 Nov. 5 at Clemson, TBA
 Nov. 12 NC State, TBA
 Nov. 19 Florida St., TBA
 Nov. 26 at Pittsburgh, TBA

TCU
 Sept. 3 S. Dakota St., 6 p.m.
 Sept. 10 Arkansas, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 17 Iowa St., 10 a.m.
 Sept. 23 at SMU, 6 p.m.
 Oct. 1 Oklahoma, TBA
 Oct. 8 at Kansas, TBA
 Oct. 22 at West Virginia, TBA
 Oct. 29 Texas Tech, TBA
 Nov. 5 at Baylor, TBA
 Nov. 19 Oklahoma St., TBA
 Nov. 25 at Texas, 1:30 p.m.
 Dec. 3 Kansas St., TBA

TEMPLE
 Sept. 2 Army, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 10 Stony Brook, 11 a.m.
 Sept. 17 at Penn St., 10 a.m.
 Sept. 24 Charlotte, TBA
 Oct. 1 SMU, TBA
 Oct. 6 at Memphis, 6 p.m.
 Oct. 15 at UCF, TBA
 Oct. 21 South Florida, 5 p.m.
 Oct. 29 Cincinnati, TBA
 Nov. 4 at UConn, 5 p.m.
 Nov. 19 at Tulane, TBA
 Nov. 26 East Carolina, TBA

TENNESSEE

Sept. 1 Appalachian St., 5:30 p.m.
 Sept. 10 Virginia Tech, 6 p.m.
 Sept. 17 Ohio, Noon
 Sept. 24 Florida, TBA
 Oct. 1 at Georgia, TBA
 Oct. 8 at Texas A&M, TBA
 Oct. 15 Alabama, TBA
 Oct. 29 at South Carolina, TBA
 Nov. 5 Tennessee Tech, TBA
 Nov. 12 Kentucky, TBA
 Nov. 19 Missouri, TBA
 Nov. 26 at Vanderbilt, TBA

TEXAS
 Sept. 4 Notre Dame, 5:30 p.m.
 Sept. 10 UTEP, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 17 at California, 8:30 p.m.
 Oct. 1 at Oklahoma St., TBA
 Oct. 8 Oklahoma, TBA
 Oct. 15 Iowa St., TBA
 Oct. 22 at Kansas St., TBA
 Oct. 29 Baylor, TBA
 Nov. 5 at Texas Tech, TBA
 Nov. 12 West Virginia, TBA
 Nov. 19 at UCLA, TBA
 Nov. 25 TCU, 1:30 p.m.

TEXAS A&M
 Sept. 3 UCLA, 1:30 p.m.
 Sept. 10 Prairie View, 10 a.m.
 Sept. 17 at Auburn, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 24 Arkansas, TBA
 Oct. 1 at South Carolina, TBA
 Oct. 8 Tennessee, TBA
 Oct. 22 at Alabama, TBA
 Oct. 29 New Mexico St., TBA
 Nov. 5 at Mississippi St., TBA
 Nov. 12 Mississippi, TBA
 Nov. 19 UTSA, TBA
 Nov. 24 LSU, 5:30 p.m.

TEXAS STATE
 Sept. 3 at Ohio, 1:30 p.m.
 Sept. 17 at Arkansas, 5:30 p.m.
 Sept. 24 Houston, 5 p.m.
 Oct. 1 Incarnate Word, 5 p.m.
 Oct. 8 at Georgia St., TBA
 Oct. 15 at Louisiana Monroe, 5 p.m.
 Oct. 22 Louisiana-Lafayette, 5 p.m.
 Nov. 5 at Appalachian St., TBA
 Nov. 12 Idaho, 2 p.m.
 Nov. 19 at New Mexico St., 2 p.m.
 Nov. 26 Troy, 2 p.m.
 Dec. 3 Arkansas St., 2 p.m.

TEXAS TECH
 Sept. 3 Stephen F. Austin, 6 p.m.
 Sept. 10 at Arizona St., 8 p.m.
 Sept. 17 Louisiana Tech, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 29 Kansas, 6:30 p.m.
 Oct. 8 at Kansas St., TBA
 Oct. 15 West Virginia, TBA
 Oct. 22 Oklahoma, TBA
 Oct. 29 at TCU, TBA
 Nov. 5 Texas, TBA
 Nov. 12 at Oklahoma St., TBA
 Nov. 19 at Iowa St., TBA
 Nov. 25 Baylor, 4 p.m.

TOLEDO
 Sept. 2 at Arkansas St., 7 p.m.
 Sept. 10 Maine, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 17 Fresno St., 1 p.m.
 Sept. 30 at BYU, 8:15 p.m.
 Oct. 8 at E. Michigan, 1 p.m.
 Oct. 15 Bowling Green, 1:30 p.m.
 Oct. 22 Cent. Michigan, TBA
 Oct. 27 Ohio, 5:30 p.m.
 Nov. 2 at Akron, 5:30 p.m.
 Nov. 9 at N. Illinois, 6 p.m.
 Nov. 16 Ball St., TBA
 Nov. 25 at W. Michigan, TBA

TROY
 Sept. 3 Austin Peay, TBA
 Sept. 10 at Clemson, 10:30 a.m.
 Sept. 17 at Southern Miss., 5 p.m.
 Sept. 24 New Mexico St., TBA
 Oct. 1 at Idaho, TBA
 Oct. 15 Georgia St., TBA
 Oct. 20 at South Alabama, 5:30 p.m.
 Nov. 5 UMass, TBA
 Nov. 12 Appalachian St., TBA
 Nov. 17 Arkansas St., 7:30 p.m.
 Nov. 26 at Texas St., 2 p.m.
 Dec. 3 at Georgia Southern, 11 a.m.

NATIONAL SCHEDULES

TULANE

Sept. 1 at Wake Forest, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 10 Southern, 6 p.m.
 Sept. 17 Navy, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 24 Louisiana-Lafayette, 6 p.m.
 Oct. 1 at UMass, TBA
 Oct. 7 at UCF, 6 p.m.
 Oct. 14 Memphis, 6 p.m.
 Oct. 22 at Tulsa, TBA
 Oct. 29 SMU, TBA
 Nov. 12 at Houston, TBA
 Nov. 19 Temple, TBA
 Nov. 26 at UConn, TBA

TULSA

Sept. 3 San Jose St., 5 p.m.
 Sept. 10 at Ohio St., 1:30 p.m.
 Sept. 17 NC A&T, Noon
 Sept. 24 Fresno St., 8:30 p.m.
 Oct. 7 SMU, 6 p.m.
 Oct. 15 at Houston, TBA
 Oct. 22 Tulane, TBA
 Oct. 29 at Memphis, TBA
 Nov. 5 East Carolina, TBA
 Nov. 12 at Navy, 10 a.m.
 Nov. 19 at UCF, TBA
 Nov. 25 Cincinnati, TBA

UCF

Sept. 3 SC State, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 10 at Michigan, 10 a.m.
 Sept. 17 Maryland, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 24 at FIU, 5 p.m.
 Oct. 1 at East Carolina, TBA
 Oct. 7 Tulane, 6 p.m.
 Oct. 15 Temple, TBA
 Oct. 22 at UConn, TBA
 Oct. 29 at Houston, TBA
 Nov. 12 Cincinnati, TBA
 Nov. 19 Tulsa, TBA
 Nov. 26 at South Florida, TBA

UCLA

Sept. 3 at Texas A&M, 1:30 p.m.
 Sept. 10 UNLV, 6 p.m.
 Sept. 17 at BYU, 8:15 p.m.
 Sept. 24 Stanford, TBA
 Oct. 1 Arizona, TBA
 Oct. 8 at Arizona St., TBA
 Oct. 15 at Washington St., TBA
 Oct. 22 Utah, TBA
 Nov. 3 at Colorado, 7 p.m.
 Nov. 12 Oregon St., TBA
 Nov. 19 Southern Cal, TBA
 Nov. 26 at California, TBA

UCONN

Sept. 1 Maine, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 10 at Navy, 1:30 p.m.
 Sept. 17 Virginia, 11:30 a.m.
 Sept. 24 Syracuse, TBA
 Sept. 29 at Houston, 6 p.m.
 Oct. 8 Cincinnati, 9:30 a.m.
 Oct. 15 at South Florida, TBA
 Oct. 22 UCF, TBA
 Oct. 29 at East Carolina, TBA
 Nov. 4 Temple, 5 p.m.
 Nov. 19 at Boston College, TBA
 Nov. 26 Tulane, TBA

UMASS

Sept. 3 at Florida, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 10 Boston College, 10 a.m.
 Sept. 17 FIU, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 24 Mississippi St., TBA
 Oct. 1 Tulane, TBA
 Oct. 7 at Old Dominion, TBA
 Oct. 15 Louisiana Tech, TBA
 Oct. 22 at South Carolina, TBA
 Oct. 29 Wagner, TBA
 Nov. 12 at Troy, TBA
 Nov. 19 at BYU, TBA
 Nov. 26 at Hawaii, 9 p.m.

UNLV

Sept. 1 Jackson St., 8 p.m.
 Sept. 10 at UCLA, 6 p.m.
 Sept. 17 at Cent. Michigan, 1 p.m.
 Sept. 24 Idaho, 7 p.m.
 Oct. 1 Fresno St., 8:30 p.m.
 Oct. 8 at San Diego St. TBA
 Oct. 15 at Hawaii, 9:59 p.m.
 Oct. 22 Colorado St., 3:30 p.m.
 Oct. 29 at San Jose St., 8:30 p.m.
 Nov. 12 Wyoming, 1:30 p.m.
 Nov. 18 at Boise St., 7 p.m.
 Nov. 26 Nevada, TBA



UTEP

Sept. 3 New Mexico St., 6 p.m.
 Sept. 10 at Texas, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 17 Army, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 24 Southern Miss, 6 p.m.
 Oct. 1 at Louisiana Tech, 5 p.m.
 Oct. 8 FIU, 6 p.m.
 Oct. 22 at UTSA, 5 p.m.
 Oct. 29 Old Dominion, 6 p.m.
 Nov. 5 Houston Baptist, 6 p.m.
 Nov. 12 at FAU, 4 p.m.
 Nov. 19 at Rice, TBA
 Nov. 26 North Texas, TBA

UTSA

Sept. 3 Alabama St., 5 p.m.
 Sept. 10 at Colorado St., 2 p.m.
 Sept. 16 Arizona St., 7:30 p.m.
 Sept. 24 at Old Dominion, TBA
 Oct. 8 Southern Miss., 10 a.m.
 Oct. 15 at Rice, 5 p.m.
 Oct. 22 UTEP, 5 p.m.
 Oct. 29 North Texas, 5 p.m.
 Nov. 5 at Middle Tennessee, 12:30 p.m.
 Nov. 12 at Louisiana Tech, 1:30 p.m.
 Nov. 19 at Texas A&M, TBA
 Nov. 26 Charlotte, 5 p.m.

UTAH

Sept. 1 Southern Utah, 6 p.m.
 Sept. 10 BYU, 5:30 p.m.
 Sept. 17 at San Jose St., 8:30 p.m.
 Sept. 23 Southern Cal, 7 p.m.
 Oct. 1 at California, TBA
 Oct. 8 Arizona, TBA
 Oct. 15 at Oregon St., TBA
 Oct. 22 at UCLA, TBA
 Oct. 29 Washington, TBA
 Nov. 10 at Arizona St., 7:30 p.m.
 Nov. 19 Oregon, TBA
 Nov. 26 at Colorado, TBA

RICK EGAN | *The Salt Lake Tribune*

New speakers and one of the largest video boards in the country will see their first game action when Utah hosts Southern Utah at Rice-Eccles Stadium at 6 p.m. on Sept. 1.

UTAH STATE

Sept. 1 Weber St., 6 p.m.
 Sept. 10 at Southern Cal, Noon
 Sept. 16 Arkansas St., 7 p.m.
 Sept. 24 Air Force, TBA
 Oct. 1 at Boise St., TBA
 Oct. 8 at Colorado St., 8 p.m.
 Oct. 22 Fresno St., 8:30 p.m.
 Oct. 28 San Diego St., 6 p.m.
 Nov. 5 at Wyoming, TBA
 Nov. 12 New Mexico, TBA
 Nov. 19 at Nevada, TBA
 Nov. 26 at BYU, TBA

VANDERBILT

Sept. 1 South Carolina, 6 p.m.
 Sept. 10 Middle Tennessee, 2 p.m.
 Sept. 17 at Georgia Tech, 10:30 a.m.
 Sept. 24 at W. Kentucky, 2:30 p.m.
 Oct. 1 Florida, TBA
 Oct. 8 at Kentucky, TBA
 Oct. 15 at Georgia, TBA
 Oct. 22 Tennessee St., TBA
 Nov. 5 at Auburn, TBA
 Nov. 12 at Missouri, TBA
 Nov. 19 Mississippi, TBA
 Nov. 26 Tennessee, TBA

VIRGINIA

Sept. 3 Richmond, 1:30 p.m.
 Sept. 10 at Oregon, 8:30 p.m.
 Sept. 17 at UConn, 11:30 a.m.
 Sept. 24 Cent. Michigan, TBA
 Oct. 1 at Duke, TBA
 Oct. 15 Pittsburgh, TBA
 Oct. 22 North Carolina, TBA
 Oct. 29 Louisville, TBA
 Nov. 5 at Wake Forest, TBA
 Nov. 12 Miami, TBA
 Nov. 19 at Georgia Tech, TBA
 Nov. 26 at Virginia Tech, TBA

VIRGINIA TECH

Sept. 3 Liberty, 10:30 a.m.
 Sept. 10 at Tennessee, 6 p.m.
 Sept. 17 Boston College, 1:30 p.m.
 Sept. 24 East Carolina, TBA
 Oct. 8 at North Carolina, TBA
 Oct. 15 at Syracuse, TBA
 Oct. 20 Miami, 5 p.m.
 Oct. 27 at Pittsburgh, 5 p.m.
 Nov. 5 at Duke, TBA
 Nov. 12 Georgia Tech, TBA
 Nov. 19 at Notre Dame, 1:30 p.m.
 Nov. 26 Virginia, TBA

WESTERN KENTUCKY

Sept. 1 Rice, 6 p.m.
 Sept. 10 at Alabama, 1:30 p.m.
 Sept. 17 at Miami (Ohio), 1:30 p.m.
 Sept. 24 Vanderbilt, 2:30 p.m.
 Oct. 1 Houston Baptist, 5 p.m.
 Oct. 6 at Louisiana Tech, 6 p.m.
 Oct. 15 at Middle Tennessee, 12:30 p.m.
 Oct. 22 Old Dominion, 5 p.m.
 Oct. 29 at FAU, 1:30 p.m.
 Nov. 5 FIU, 3:30 p.m.
 Nov. 12 North Texas, 1:30 p.m.
 Nov. 26 at Marshall, TBA

WESTERN MICHIGAN

Sept. 3 at Northwestern, 10 a.m.
 Sept. 10 NC Central, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 17 at Illinois, 2 p.m.
 Sept. 24 Georgia Southern, TBA
 Oct. 1 at Cent. Michigan, TBA
 Oct. 8 N. Illinois, 4:30 p.m.
 Oct. 15 at Akron, TBA
 Oct. 22 E. Michigan, TBA
 Nov. 1 at Ball St., 6 p.m.
 Nov. 8 at Kent St., 5:30 p.m.
 Nov. 19 Buffalo, TBA
 Nov. 25 Toledo, TBA

WAKE FOREST

Sept. 1 Tulane, 5 p.m.
 Sept. 10 at Duke, 1:30 p.m.
 Sept. 17 Delaware, 4:30 p.m.
 Sept. 24 at Indiana TBA
 Oct. 1 at NC State, TBA
 Oct. 8 Syracuse, TBA
 Oct. 15 at Florida St., TBA
 Oct. 29 Army, TBA
 Nov. 5 Virginia, TBA
 Nov. 12 at Louisville, TBA
 Nov. 19 Clemson, TBA
 Nov. 26 Boston College, TBA

WASHINGTON

Sept. 3 Rutgers, Noon
 Sept. 10 Idaho, 3 p.m.
 Sept. 17 Portland St., 6 p.m.
 Sept. 24 at Arizona, TBA
 Sept. 30 Stanford, 7 p.m.
 Oct. 8 at Oregon, TBA
 Oct. 22 Oregon St., TBA
 Oct. 29 at Utah, TBA
 Nov. 5 at California, TBA
 Nov. 12 Southern Cal, TBA
 Nov. 19 Arizona St., TBA
 Nov. 25 at Washington St., 1:30 p.m.

WASHINGTON ST.

Sept. 3 E. Washington, 6 p.m.
 Sept. 10 at Boise St., 8:15 p.m.
 Sept. 17 Idaho, Noon
 Oct. 1 Oregon, TBA
 Oct. 8 at Stanford, TBA
 Oct. 15 UCLA, TBA
 Oct. 22 at Arizona St., TBA
 Oct. 29 at Oregon St., TBA
 Nov. 5 Arizona, TBA
 Nov. 12 California, TBA
 Nov. 19 at Colorado, TBA
 Nov. 25 Washington, 1:30 p.m.

WEST VIRGINIA

Sept. 3 Missouri, 10 a.m.
 Sept. 10 Youngstown St., Noon
 Sept. 24 BYU, TBA
 Oct. 1 Kansas St., TBA
 Oct. 15 at Texas Tech, TBA
 Oct. 22 TCU, TBA
 Oct. 29 at Oklahoma St., TBA
 Nov. 5 Kansas, TBA
 Nov. 12 at Texas, TBA
 Nov. 19 Oklahoma, TBA
 Nov. 26 at Iowa St., TBA
 Dec. 3 Baylor, TBA

WISCONSIN

Sept. 3 LSU, 1:30 p.m.
 Sept. 10 Akron, 12:30 p.m.
 Sept. 17 Georgia St., 10 a.m.
 Sept. 24 at Michigan St., TBA
 Oct. 1 at Michigan, TBA
 Oct. 15 Ohio St., 6 p.m.
 Oct. 22 at Iowa, TBA
 Oct. 29 Nebraska, 5 p.m.
 Nov. 5 at Northwestern, TBA
 Nov. 12 Illinois, 1:30 p.m.
 Nov. 19 at Purdue, TBA
 Nov. 26 Minnesota, TBA

WYOMING

Sept. 3 N. Illinois, 8:30 p.m.
 Sept. 10 at Nebraska, 10 a.m.
 Sept. 17 UC Davis, 2 p.m.
 Sept. 23 at E. Michigan, 5:30 p.m.
 Oct. 1 at Colorado St., TBA
 Oct. 8 Air Force, 1:30 p.m.
 Oct. 22 at Nevada, TBA
 Oct. 29 Boise St., 5 p.m.
 Nov. 5 Utah St., TBA
 Nov. 12 at UNLV, 1 p.m.
 Nov. 19 San Diego St., 1:30 p.m.
 Nov. 26 at New Mexico, TBA