

NOTES & QUOTES

UCF 97 BYU 84

FEBRUARY 24, 2026

MARRIOTT CENTER

PROVO, UTAH

TEAM NOTES

PERFECT NO MORE

After posting a perfect 4-0 record against UCF, the Knights earned their first win over the Cougars, winning by 13 points, which was the most BYU has lost at home since a 15-point loss to UVU in 2022.

NOT IDEAL

Through the first six minutes of the game, the Knights went 81.8 percent from the field and 83.3 percent from beyond the arc, all while notching three steals, which pushed a 23-8 lead. During UCF's spurt, BYU shot 33.3 percent from the field.

THE KNIGHT SHIFT

The 52 points put up by the Knights in the first half was the most points the Cougars surrendered in a first half at home this season, coming one point shy of the 53 points the Kansas Jayhawks recorded on Jan. 31. It also marks the largest deficit the Cougars have faced at halftime all season, as they were down 24.

GOOD, (K)NIGHT

UCF became the sixth team since 1980 to connect on 10 or more 3-pointers in a first half against the Cougars as the Knights went 11-of-16 from behind the arc.

SECOND HALF SQUAD

BYU outscored the Golden Knights 56-to-45 in the second half, which helped them cut the deficit to 13 at the final whistle.

The Cougars scored 50 or more points in the second half for the 12th time.

THIRD TIME THE CHARM

For just the third time during the Kevin Young era, BYU never held a lead as UCF lead for 39 minutes, 14 seconds.

PLAYER NOTES

MRUS BUS

Tyler Mrus played 18 minutes on Tuesday knocking down his only 3-point attempt while going 4-of-4 from the free throw line. He also had a season-high three rebounds, two blocks and a steal.

COAST-IC

Aleksej Kostic made an impact off the bench in the opening frame, knocking down two threes. Kostic posted a conference play high 14 points, alongside three rebounds, two steals and one assist.

MOVING UP THE RANKINGS

Tuesday marked the 21st time this season that AJ Dybantsa has scored at least 2 points, tied for the ninth-most in a single season in program history. It was also his seventh straight 20-point game, the second-longest streak of his career.

THE 700 CLUB

AJ Dybantsa became the sixth player in program history to score 700 points in a single season as the freshman's 29 points give him 702 on the season. He also moved into a tie for 14th in field goal makes, 11th in free throw makes and 10th in free throw attempts.

SEASON HIGHS

Field Goals: Aleksej Kostic (5)

Field Goal Attempts: Robert Wright III (21)

Free Throws: Tyler Mrus (4)

Rebounds: Aleksej Kostic (3), Tyle Mrus (3)

Steals: Aleksej Kostic (2)

Blocks: Tyler Mrus (2)

Minutes Played: Aleksej Kostic (27)

CAREER HIGHS

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HEAD COACH KEVIN YOUNG

On defensive issues

"I don't know. I got to watch the film. I mean, we were sleepwalking out there, so I don't pretend to pinpoint it. I didn't expect that in the slightest. Super disappointed in our guys, super disappointed in myself and our coaches. Just was a night that was not good all around. So, there was just every breakdown you could possibly imagine. But you have to give all the credit to Central Florida. They played a great basketball game. They were the way hungrier team, and they pumped us, and they deserve all the credit."

On if he feels he knows what went wrong

"I'm a 'why' guy. I don't like not knowing why. Like, why did that happen, right? And so I don't have a lot of answers for that other than, like I said, you give Central Florida credit. They played a good basketball game. Our approach and why we were so asleep at the wheel, I don't know. It's my job to figure that out, and we will before our next game."

On UCF successful shooting

"I think there was probably two of them that I think I contested at a rate that I would have been pleased with. I'm looking at things that we did as a staff and things like that, but we didn't approach this game with any less vigor than we have any other game this year. So we'll have to figure that out with the players in a pretty candid film session tomorrow. But again, shot-making is what makes the game challenging because it's hard to overlook it when you're not making shots and they feel like they're making everything. But you got to make a miss, right? That's why their players deserve credit for stepping up and knocking shots down."

On fans booing

"You hope there's a level of embarrassment and just unacceptable. I wasn't upset with the fans. Our fans are incredible, and they deserve to see a product that has a lot more effort than what our guys showed tonight. So hopefully that never happens again."

On missing Richie Saunders

"I don't know if I'd say to the three-point part of it, but yeah, his intensity you miss. He's a guy that wakes up ready to just get after it every day in life. So we miss his intensity for sure. And so that's where guys like — really, that's where Rob and AJ have to grow. They don't have it in them naturally to be hair-on-fire type guys, but I think when you're not naturally that way, you're not naturally a vocal leader, I think you have to learn how to lead sometimes. And I think that's a challenge that they're going through right now, and it's a growth process for both of them. I think AJ has it in him a little bit more naturally. Rob's got to kind of get out of his comfort zone a little bit more, because that's really where we miss Richie more than anything."

On any positives tonight

"Seeing the ball go in. I think Alex — he's a tough kid. I thought he stuck his nose in there. So did Tyler. We're going to need those guys to make shots and provide spacing, which they did. Obviously, we went small, and that's how we were able to sort of claw back into it. So they allow us to play a little bit differently. There's no substitute for seeing the ball go in the basket."

On UCF shutting down Dybantsa

"They did a good job, like most teams, where they just crowded. I thought AJ — he has not been good this year. I mean, he's just been incredible across the board, right? I think the times where he gets himself in trouble are where he's trying too hard to get fouled. I thought that kind of put him in a space of frustration tonight, and I thought he started forcing the issue. For as good as he was against Iowa State with making the extra pass, getting guys shots, I thought tonight just wasn't there."

On making adjustments being without Saunders

"From a scheme standpoint — to your question about Richie — I got to make sure that I'm doing everything that I can to put AJ in the spots that he can get to. That's going to continue to have some examination by myself and my staff. Teams were loading up on him quite heavily. Maybe there were some things we could have done better to get him off to a better start. But at the same time, guys have to figure it out on their own. You can't let a game get away from you like that and then try to crawl back. So we've got a lot of learning to do."

AJ DYBANTSA

Stepping up as a leader with Richie out

"Richie was definitely the vocal leader on our team and he led by example as an upperclassman. Since he has been out, Coach Young has challenged me to step into that role. It is new for me, but I am trying to do a better job being more vocal with the guys and having better body language."

Second half UCF run

"I think it was just a lack of effort. We got lazy and they took advantage of it. We tried to blitz a couple times and they got a couple of dunks early. We just have to be better coming out of halftime."

Confidence level heading into March

"My confidence is extremely high. We have a tough road trip coming up with Cincinnati and West Virginia, two really good teams. If we can win those games and come back home and take care of Texas Tech, I think we will be in a good spot heading into March."

ALEKSEJ KOSTIC

Late run spark behind three

"We tried to forget the scoreboard and just focus on finishing the game the right way. We wanted to end the game on a positive note and not go out the same way we started the second half. I just try to do whatever I can to get the energy up."