BYU MEN'S BASKETBALL NOTES & QUOTES

November 12, 2026
No. 23 BYU 86, Montana State 71
Provo, Utah (Marriott Center)

TEAM NOTES

GET LOW WHEN THE WHISTLE BLOWS
The Cougars defense held Montana State to the fewest points in a half this season, allowing just 29 points in the first half. BYU also held the Bobcats to a first half shooting percentage of just 40.7.

"PUT IT IN REVERSE TERRY"
After their game against Omaha where the Cougars shot 60% from three in the first half and only 30 percent in the second half, the Cougars hit reverse against Montana State. BYU shot only 40 percent from three in the first half against the Wildcats, then in the second half shot 70%. The hot second half shooting for BYU was led by Colin Chandler who went 2-3 and Bruce Branch III who shot 2-of-2.

A PICKPOCKETER'S DREAM
BYU racked up 11 steals on the night, their highest total of the season. Leading the way for the Cougars was guard Robert Wright III who swiped five of his own, a career high. Colin Chandler followed him up with two on his statline.

SHARPSHOOTING COUGS
BYU shot a season high 58.2 percent from the floor going 32-for-55. The Cougars have not shot under 50 percent through four games.

KEEPING THE STREAK ALIVE
The Cougars have won 29 straight non-conference home games which is the eighth-longest in the country after former assistant coach Kahil Fennell led Western Michigan to a win over Indiana Purdue Fort Wayne ending their 30-game streak.

SHOPPING AT THE GAP
BYU is 7-0 under third-year head coach Kevin Young when leading between 11-15 points at halftime. The Cougars also won their 79 straight game when leading with 5 minutes left in regulation.

PLAYER NOTES

PICKEN UP VETERAN STATUS
Nate Pickens played in the 100th game of his collegiate career Thursday night against the Bobcats after not playing a minute for the Cougars during the 2025-2026 season.

BAKER IS BACK
Dawson Baker saw his first minutes since tearing his ACL on November 27, 2025 against Miami. The seventh year player in his fourth season with the Cougars has now appeared in 126 games over his collegiate career. Baker notably grabbed two rebounds in his return to surpass 300 total boards over his eight total minutes played.

BAHR BERATES THE BOBCATS
In his 10 minutes played the freshman earned the first steal of his career in his fourth game. Bahr scored five points while adding an assist off the bench.

STEADY AS AN OAK BRANCH
Bruce Branch III has now scored double figures in all four of his collegiate appearances including multiple made three pointers in three straight games. The freshman tied his career high 17 points against Montana State.

ALWAYS IN THE WRIGHT PLACE
Robert Wright III scored in double figures for a 12th straight game dating back to February 24, 2026 against UCF, the longest streak of his career. His previous streak of 11 games started in the NCAA tournament against Mississippi State while he was at Baylor and ended in his ninth game with the Cougars during the 2025-2026 season. Wright III also recorded seven assists in the game, the most of any Cougar this season.

QUOTES

Head Coach Kevin Young:

Opening Statement
"We're playing a team picked to win their league. If it all came to a head right now they'd be in the tournament. The game is hard because they aren't a household name but they're very well coached and have a distinct style of play. I love the way they play, it's hard to guard. You make a mistake, you chase the ball and they make us pay. But I thought we did a decent job of settling down in the second half. It took us a minute to adjust but we made some tactical adjustments. I was proud of our guys for figuring things out and getting the win."

On Dawson Baker's return
"Thrilled to see him back out there. It's a tough hand he's been dealt but he's put a lot of work in to get his body right and his mind right as well. He's got a good team around him. A special thanks to the guys at Intermountain Health who've really facilitated things for him. I was proud to see him out there. It took him a minute to get some oxygen in the lungs and get downhill. We'll be slow with him, because when he gets to full strength that's a weapon we can deploy."

On Robert Wright III's performance
"I thought Robert Wright III had a mature game tonight because all we talked about was getting to the rim…given our shooting we felt like we could live at the rim. Wright III did a good job at getting downhill… I think he's really put a stamp on the level of play that we expect from him night in and night out this season. I'm proud of the seven assists as much as anything else. He had a career high 5 steals. We've been all over him defensively so it was good to see some activity on that end as well."

On winning the rebound battle tonight
"That's a huge point of emphasis but it's really about winning the possession battle. How do you do that? You don't turn it over, you turn teams over and you win the rebound battle, or some combination of that so there's not a deficit in the possession battle. That's something that quite frankly could be the key to our season. I think we are going to take high value shots as a team, whether that's rim or threes. If we're taking high value shots and winning that possession battle every night, that's our recipe to win basketball games."

On the transition defense this season
"I would have to say I'm very impressed with it. But more than anything, I think our ability to push tempo on our end, I think it gets into teams legs. We're pushing tempo, we're picking up full court, it's hard for teams to want to push back at you unless it's their M.O. I think on a nightly basis, particularly when it's in conference play, it can be a real benefit to us. We feel like we can be different from a lot of teams in the Big 12 because of that."

Bruce Branch III

On how he felt the team did executing the scout
"We didn't execute it how we wanted to. Our scout for today was to limit their threes, they had a lot of three point shooters. It was a battle, it was a battle with ourselves, and with the other with the opponents. We're gonna go and watch a film and get better."

On the biggest thing he has learned through his first four games
"The biggest thing I've learned is the speed of the game and just getting used to that. Coming from high school, obviously reclassing, the speed is a lot different, a lot faster, a lot stronger. I'm having a blast though with the process, and I'm looking forward to the future but I'm happy with where I'm at right now."

On what parts of his game he is working on right now
"My free throws. I'll definitely be in the gym tomorrow morning, at least 500 free throws because that was rough."

Dawson Baker

On being back after being out for a year due to injury…
"It was a crazy feeling being back out there again, and it's like riding a bike. I've had a bunch of practice time, got a bunch of good reps in, so I felt really comfortable with everything going into the game."

On what it meant to have Cougar nation cheering for him in his return…
"Huge. I've been here for a while, and I feel like they've been with me this whole journey so it meant a lot to me."

On the phrase "weather the storm" written on his shoes…
"I feel like the past couple years of my career have kind of felt like that, just weathering the storm and getting through it and battling that."

On where Jackson Kohler ranks among bigs he has played with…
"I've probably only played with two or three bigs that can really pop and shoot the three ball, and so that opens up so much for an offense. It's super fun to have Jackson who can do that, and his ability to rebound and all those things that he does as a big man."

On how he feels about BYU's offense right now…
"I think it's gonna get there. This team reminds me a lot of that Sweet 16 team, and just having a lot of guys that can shoot, dribble, and pass, and that's what KY likes. We got some stuff to work on, but offensively, you see it, the numbers that we put up is super impressive. We have so many guys that can do a lot of special things, and so it's got the potential to be one of the best here."

On playing eight minutes and what his workload will be in the coming games…
"It's going to go up from there. I think the big thing is just seeing how I react, see how that feels on my knee and we'll go from there."