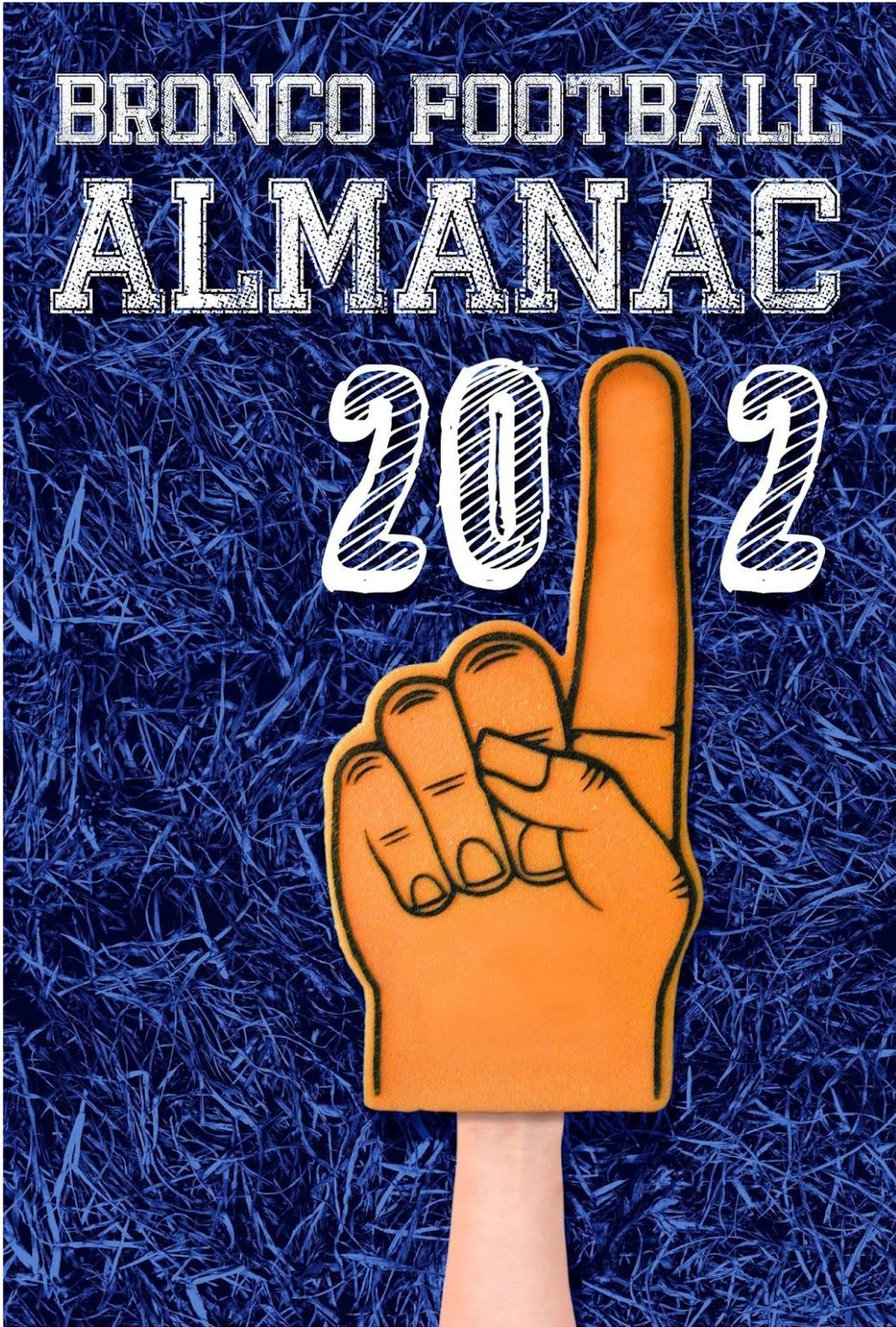


BRONCO FOOTBALL
ALMANAC

202



Bronco Football Almanac 2012

by Kevan Lee

To football

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Foreword

First came a child with something rudimentary clenched in his fist: a rock or branch, or something of his own making. For sake of competition, to prove dominance, that child challenged another to a game. Games evolved, players chose teams, and men became coaches. Brutal games, like football, gained popularity. Crowds formed to cheer in dedicated unions. Colors and Alma Maters, with blue boasts and beers, the game grew bigger.

Be glad, good Broncos. Your future is bright under God. Your Nation is Strong. And still, you are not vindicated. Two schools have a better all-time winning record than Boise State's 0.720: Michigan 0.736 and Notre Dame 0.731. You still feel slighted, as if we are far from the mountaintop. Keep climbing ye stately steeds!

I own season tickets, and I reside one block from campus. Bronco Stadium towers in my skyline. Stueckle reflects the growth beneath the Boise sun. I saw the hole dug to anchor the new North End Zone, saw the river seep in under the table. The school is building two new fields: Dona Larsen Park and the new Student Recreation field on Lincoln and Belmont. Dona Larsen is for track and field and high school football. The second field is for the lacrosse and soccer clubs and many other student groups, intramural participants, and Frisbee friends campus wide.

This is a matter of faith. It is your duty to heap praise. I remember that game against Oregon, when the decibel reached heaven with ease. Your Blue God demands equal bombast on all six occasions. Give it to him, or don't dare call yourself a citizen of the nation.

Make sure you get a fresh roster. You need to get to know some sparkling new names. The 2012 Boise State Broncos play six home games. Here's the lineup: Miami (Ohio), Brigham Young, Fresno State, UNLV, San Diego State, and Colorado State. Be there, every blessed seat. Be there, and beat your chests. Never cede your position. Don't give an inch.

If you relinquish one inch to the opponent, he will never be satisfied with one inch. He will fight for another, and another. That is the nature of the game. Two teams, engaged in contest, wrought with physical desire to be named victor. Teams, and their loyal fanatics, contaminated by such rabid desires entwine their fates. This symbiotic connection cannot waver, especially in hard times. If it does, if the horde turns its back against the squad, the fissure could cause irreparable damage.

Rather, this Idaho country poet begs you stand and face the season ahead, a season that may sadly be blemished by moments of loss, hardship and defeat. But, if our collateral courage runs its course, we will ultimately discover victory, glory, and gain.

We pray for faith and brotherhood, passion and prestige, domination and deliverance. Dear God, grant us strength in blue rags and orange banners. Remind us why children choose to play the game, and why we chose to cheer ... why we win.

Dustin Lapray is a former Boise State football reporter. He earned his MFA in Poetry from BSU and is currently copy editor at Bodybuilding.com. His future careers may include biographer of sunrises and auteur of rainbows.

Introduction

The future of Boise State football is in Joe Southwick's hands.
Or is it Nick Patti's hands?

D.J. Harper's legs?

Michael Atkinson's gut?

Jake van Ginkel's sports psychologist's steno pad?

Come to think of it, I do not know where the future of Boise State football lies. But I do know that someone at some point during the 2012 season will have to grab this team by the shoulder flair and declare, "This is the way! I'm 80 percent sure of it! Follow me!"

Whether that person is Matt Miller or Jamar Taylor or Lee Hightower or Token Offensive Lineman remains to be seen. I do know that Chris Petersen expects someone to step up and to carry the flag, if you will. There just happen to be a lot more flags to carry this year. Like a United-Nations-amount of flags.

The biggest flag is obviously that of Kellen Moore, and while some new person will be carrying it, that person will not be carrying it as effectively as Moore did. How could he? Moore's flag-carrying was downright divine, and the newbie who steps into his holy footprints will have his work cut out for him.

Who that person will be is a topic of hot debate, but it's not just debate for debate's sake. It's debate as coping. We talk and blog so fervently because we're all trying to suppress the fact that Joe Southwick or Nick Patti or Grant Hedrick or Jimmy Laughrea isn't Kellen Moore, and this terrifies us. Also terrifying, deep water. Breaking in a new Boise State quarterback is at least as scary as a fish touching your foot in deep water.

The Big Question of starting quarterback gives way to other, less capitalized questions. Boise State's roster holes include a ravine at safety, a crater at offensive tackle, a pockmark at running back, a cave at linebacker, and the ever-loving Marianas Trench at defensive line. (If it seems like the sky is falling it's because all the sky got drafted by the NFL.)

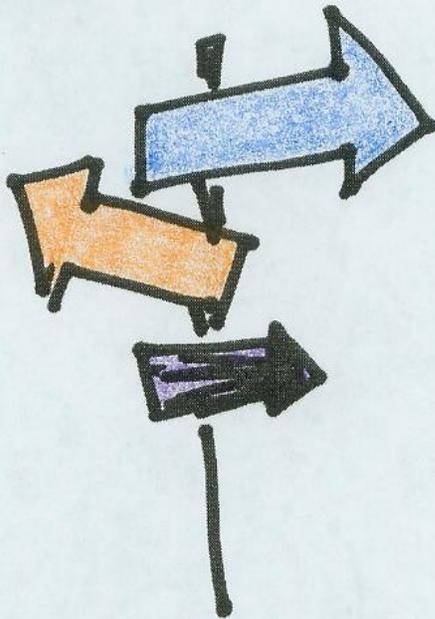
The 2012 Boise State football team will look little like the 2011 version.

Well, yes and no.

The parts and pieces for the Broncos may be brand new or inexperienced, but the culture and the tradition and the head coach remain the same (not to mention that teacup-pig-soft Mountain West schedule). The Broncos are going to be all right. They will win nine games if they're awful, 10 if they're good, and 11 or more if everything comes together and the bounces and field goals go their way. The newness of the personnel will be mostly canceled out by the constancy of the program. And if I'm wrong, then you and I will burn Boise to the ground because no one should have to live with an "Armed Forces Bowl or Bust!" worldview.

Second life begins for Boise State on August 31 at Michigan State. And as the hopeful blind men say, "We'll see."

**CHOOSE
YOUR
OWN
ADVENTURE**



Choose Your Own Adventure

Congratulations, you.

Chris Petersen has entrusted you with the Boise State football team for the 2012 season. You break it, you bought it! Ha, just kidding. But seriously, don't break it.

Pete will be spending the season fundraising for the new football complex, coaching his son's Optimist Football team to the greatest Optimist season ever, and maybe even running for President of the United States, depending on how his weekends look. He chose you to take his place because he trusts your inscrutable judgment and football mind, and because he owed you a favor from that one time you bought Bronco Stock and then Boise State dissolved Bronco Stock.

Your first order of business as head coach is to decide what to do about the NCAA penalty of three fewer practices this fall.

If you cut Dan Paul's three requested Crossfit days, [turn to page 59](#).

If you send the team to Sleepover Awareness Training in lieu of practice, [turn to page 22](#).

Page 8.

D.J. Harper gets the ball for the next 12 consecutive plays, gains 150 yards, and scores two touchdowns. He gets tired once, so he rides on Drew Wright's back for a carry or two somewhere in the middle.

By this time, Southwick has regained his composure. He completes his next pass. And his next one. And his next one. You fist pump on the sideline to congratulate yourself.

Final score: Boise State 28, Michigan State 17.

The next day, you find out that the Broncos have climbed from No. 21 in the polls up to No. 17. The city of Boise loves you.

If you have a churro to celebrate, [turn to page 20](#).

If you celebrate by studying film of your next opponent, [turn to page 9](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 9.

Your next opponent is Miami (OH), so you obviously skip film study for them and go straight to film study for BYU. You beat Miami (OH) by 50 points. Don't tell anyone, but you spent the game at the new Big Al's video game complex in Meridian and had a doppelganger take your place and throw out the occasional "atta boy" and fist pump.

BYU is one of the toughest remaining games on the schedule. If you get past the Cougars, you could go undefeated. Lou Holtz on College Gameday Live just said that he sees national championship potential in your team. Mark May hit him over the head with a ham.

If you buy into what Lou Holtz is saying, [turn to page 58](#).

If you keep your head down, focus on what you can control, and see how things shake out, [turn to page 61](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 10.

Nick Patti is your starting quarterback, and when pressed by the media for your reason why, you mumble something about four-year starters and potential and peer pressure and then point at the back of the room and yell, "PAUL J SCHNEIDER IS HAVING A HEART ATTACK!" and slip out the back while no one is looking.

You would like to think you made the decision to start Nick Patti because he was better than the other quarterbacks. You would also like to be king of Australia.

Reality is, there was little way of knowing who was the better choice because the competition was so close. This does not help you sleep better at night, necessarily. That's what passionflower tea is for.

In the first quarter of the Michigan State game, Patti looks rattled. He scrambles at the first sign of pressure and leaves the pocket like it's on fire and he's wearing a jersey made of fireworks. During one particular "yakety sax" scramble, you consult the NCAA rulebook to gauge the legality of dropping the Michigan State game mid-game and replacing it with a Sunday morning affair against someone more cupcakier like Weber State or Lewis and Clark or the football fetus of College of Idaho. You cannot do this. You are stuck in East Lansing purgatory.

Midway through the first half, Patti begins to settle down, probably due to Robert Prince calling screen passes exclusively. Then, when a screen pass breaks down and Patti is forced to improvise, he does something so athletic and creative that you think the ghost of 49er Steve Young has indwelled him. The next play, Patti fumbles the snap from center.

It goes like this for much of the game. Patti makes a great play followed by a bad one followed by an okay one followed by a handoff to D.J. Harper. As the third quarter ends, you trail Michigan State 21-7. Patti has 200 yards of total offense, 198 of which have come on four really cool plays. You entertain the idea of changing things up and giving Grant Hedrick a series at QB.

If you let Hedrick take a series, [turn to page 28](#).

If you keep Patti in the game, [turn to page 34](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 12.

You have angered the football gods. On the next play, D.J. Harper bursts through a gaping hole in the line, breaks free into the secondary, and blows out his knee.

Fortunately, you have planned ahead for just such a situation. In the preseason, you grew a D.J. Harper leg from Harper's stem cells, and the leg is here in Reno, chilling in a cryogenic ziploc in Bob Kustra's stadium suite.

Your foresight is remarkable, but is it ethical?

If you slap the lab leg onto D.J. Harper, [turn to page 96](#).

If you sub Drew Wright for D.J. Harper, [turn to page 111](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 13.

KTVB newsman Mark Johnson flips the coin and declares Jimmy Laughrea to be the starting quarterback, either because Johnson thinks Jimmy Laughrea is the name of Joe Southwick or because Johnson was confused at why he was flipping a coin in the first place.

The coin flip result is immutable. Laughrea will start the season opener against Michigan State. You quickly come up with a plan to un-bulk him from his tight end weight.

Congratulations! You are ranked No. 21 in the preseason AP poll. Andy Staples picks you to be the best mid-major team in the country. Pat Forde thinks you have a realistic shot at a BCS bowl. Mark May finds you to be garbage - hot, smelly garbage.

The season opener approaches, and you feel nervous about the season ahead. Will Demarcus Lawrence be the defensive difference maker you need? Will your lack of depth at running back come back to bite you? Why is your two-deep corner depth chart only one-and-a-half deep?

Anxiety about the big game is too much for you to handle. You need a reprieve. Mark Johnson is still nearby, flipping coins and calling out made-up Bronco names. You interrupt him mid-"Geraldo Burroughs."

If you let Johnson flip a coin to decide between turning in for the night or soaking in the nightlife of East Lansing, [turn to page 27](#).

If you choose to calm yourself by studying up on Big East early withdrawal penalties, [turn to page 89](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 14.

The trainers rush over to tell you it is a Grade Four high ankle sprain. You have no idea what this means, but you seem to remember Byron Leftwich playing on one leg once, and you think that would make a cool story if Southwick could pull it off.

You tell the training staff to find the largest air cast they have and to glue it to the second-largest air cast they have and slap the ensuing monstrosity on Southwick's ankle.

Southwick plays with a thigh-high ankle cast for the remainder of the game. It limits his mobility but not his handoff skills. D.J. Harper carries the ball 45 times in the second half and grinds some valuable time off the clock to preserve your lead.

The Bronco defense rises to the occasion and holds Florida State to three field goals. You lead by two points in the waning moments of the game. The final chance for the Seminoles comes on defense when they have a chance to stop Boise State on a 3rd and 1. Southwick takes the snap and lunges forward, fumbling the ball ahead where Faraji Wright falls on it for a two-yard gain. You have your indelible Southwick image.

When the final seconds tick off the clock, it hits you that you have just completed an undefeated season, capped by a BCS bowl win. You are the man, you think to yourself. Time to get paid!

Michigan offers you a head coach position the next day. You accept on the condition that churro machines are installed in Michigan Stadium and you are given a golden churro card that can be redeemed for free churros anytime you want one. Michigan obliges because you are the hottest coach in America.

THE END

[Start over.](#)

Page 16.

Congratulations! You are one of only two undefeated teams in the entire country.

Not congratulations. You are neither No. 1 nor No. 2 in the final BCS standings.

Despite losses by No. 1 Ohio State (to a 7-6 Iowa team) and No. 2 Florida (big-time to Texas A&M), you have gained nothing in the polls. In fact, you fell one spot after your win against Nevada because the BCS is stupid like that.

Here is the final regular season BCS Top Ten:

- No. 1 West Virginia (12-0)
- No. 2 Ohio State (12-1)
- No. 3 Florida (11-2)
- No. 4 USC (11-2)
- No. 5 Boise State (12-0)
- No. 6 LSU (8-4)
- No. 7 Alabama (8-4)
- No. 8 Georgia (7-5)
- No. 9 Louisiana Tech (11-1)
- No. 10 Auburn (6-6)

(ESS-EEE-CEE footbaw!)

The Sugar Bowl has chosen you with the second-to-last pick in the BCS bowl selection process. The final pick went to the Orange Bowl who got stuck with 6-7 Big East champion Syracuse.

Your opponent in the Sugar Bowl will be the Florida Gators and former Bronco offensive coordinator Brent Pease. This will save you loads of time on actually studying the Florida offense on tape since you basically run the exact same thing in Boise. You use the extra free time to hold your significant other's spot in line for the final Twilight movie.

When you arrive in New Orleans for the game, you become taken by the city. What a wonderful place, you think to yourself. Jambalaya on every corner! You want your players to have a memorable experience in New Orleans and to live a little. Bowl games are meant to be fun, right?

If you decide to cut loose, divvy out the entire swimming and diving team's athletic budget, book Emeril Legasse as all-time chef for the week, get rid of curfew, and let the players WRITE WHATEVER YOU WANT ON TWITTER, I TRUST YOU, [turn to page 97](#).

If you decide to cut loose by moving curfew from 7:30 to 8:30, [turn to page 63](#).

[Start over.](#)

Page 60.

It is now Week Three. Laughrea has shown signs of improvement, or was that just Miami (OH)? You expect to find out more about him this week when BYU comes to town.

You are correct. You do find out more about him. He likes listening to old school rap, hanging with friends, Thai food, and *Adventure Time*. He also throws the ball really deep, which is good for long touchdown bombs to speedy Dallas Burroughs and always-open Matt Miller, and throws it really hard, which is bad for missile-guided touch passes through Geraldo Boldewijn and Chris Potter.

Against BYU, Laughrea goes 4-for-15 for 197 yards and three touchdowns. Boise State loses 31-28.

You are now 1-2 on the year.

An Internet website that shall remain nameless but, hint, rhymes with SnobRUG begins a grassroots campaign to get you fired. They succeed. Sorry about that.

Mark Johnson just figured out what the coin flipping thing was about. He meant to say "Nick Patti." His bad.

THE END

[Start over.](#)

Page 19.

“Broncos Go South by Southwick,” blares the Idaho Press-Tribune. No wait. They came up with a better one. “Southwick is the Pick.” There. Better.

Pleased with your decision for a starting quarterback, Southwick comes into your office, scoots aside the churro machine, and tells you to your face how well he is going to play for you this year and how he won't let you down. The conversation makes you feel better about things, or you may just be feeling better because you have a churro machine in your office. At the least, his confidence is reassuring.

That confidence is put to the test early on when Southwick, high on adrenaline and a case of PowerBar energy gels, comes out firing blanks against Michigan State. It is midway through the second quarter, and the offense has yet to cross midfield. You trail 10-0 and feel the game slipping away.

New offensive coordinator Robert Prince thinks you should go with 12 straight running plays to D.J. Harper.

If you follow Prince's advice, [turn to page 8](#).

If you panic, regret your decision to choose Southwick in the first place, blame the media, grab Nick Patti off the bench, and throw him in there to quote-unquote make some magic, [turn to page 45](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 20.

You choke on your churro!

If you wash the churro down with a Blizzard, [turn to page 24](#).

If you speed dial the Boise State AD for help, [turn to page 50](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 21.

OK, you may not be a bad person for wanting to play for overtime, but you are definitely a strange ranger for choosing to go on offense first. Joe Tessitore and Rod Gilmore are right when they post a graphic of your college coaching resume and point out that the resume includes NCAA Football 09 Gamecube stats and a letter of recommendation from the a teammate on your B league, city flag football team.

On your possession in overtime, Patti drives the ball inside the 15-yard-line but no farther. You are faced with a 4th and 4 from the 14. Should you kick the field goal and take the points? Or do you try for the touchdown and put the pressure on Nevada? Consumed with the enormity of the decision, you panic and choose to go for the touchdown. Patti finds a wide open Kirby Moore in the back of the end zone, but in doing so, he scrambled over the line of scrimmage, resulting in an illegal forward pass. Your drive is over, and you got zero points. This is why you play defense first.

Nevada kicks a field goal after gaining zero yards on three plays. It's good. You lose.

The Vegas Bowl awaits.

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Page 22.

During Sleepover Awareness Training, you bring everyone Subway for lunch. This is illegal, per the NCAA. The entire Boise State football team is ruled ineligible for the year.

Meanwhile, the sanctions for Miami's litany of improper benefits, cash handouts, dishwasher freebies, and sex boats are pending.

THE END

[Start over.](#)

Page 23.

You leave your starters in, which goes against everything that Chris Petersen believes in. One of the inherent risks in letting your starters play past the point where the outcome is no longer in doubt is the risk of injury. And sure enough, you lose a starter due to injury.

Fortunately for you, the starter is kickoff specialist Dan Goodale.

You go on to win the game 42-0. You finish the season undefeated with a Mountain West championship and a spot in a BCS bowl or better.

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[Start over.](#)

Page 24.

A Blizzard has saved your life.

[GO TO PAGE 9.](#)

[Start over.](#)

Page 25.

Your inability to decide on a starting quarterback has rendered your team into shambles. Everyone doubts their job security. You make a brief appearance in ESPN's Bottom Ten where the author compares you to a Britney Spears song, and not a good one like "Hit me baby one more time." A bad one like "Toxic."

Your quarterback merry-go-round has yielded the following stats.

Joe Southwick - 6 1/2 appearances, 1,001 yards, 4 TDs, 14 INTs

Nick Patti - 4 appearances, 850 yards, 5 TDs, 5 INTs, 30 delay of game penalties

Grant Hedrick - 2 appearances, 20 fumbles

Jimmy Laughrea - 2 appearances, 8 timeouts called in confusion

Faraji Wright - ¼ appearances, no stats, just handoffs

Your final record for the year is 3-9.

Idaho governor Butch Otter makes you move out of state.

THE END

[Start over.](#)

Page 26.

Your faith in Nick Patti pays off, and he finishes the regular season by tearing through the Mountain West undefeated. Matt Miller wins conference POY for his 24 touchdowns and 1,600 yards. Blake Renaud wins DPOY because everyone is afraid not to give it to him. You finish third in the Coach of the Year category behind Colorado State's Jim McElwain who won four games with smoke and mirrors and the CSU debate team and behind Air Force's Troy Calhoun who everyone loves.

Boise State finishes the year 9-3 and accepts an invitation to the Las Vegas Bowl.

[GO TO PAGE 99.](#)

[Start over.](#)

Page 27.

The coin comes up tails. You head out for a night on the town. David Augusto picks you up in a rented Matrix. Yours is a night of bad decisions. You don't remember the next four months. You wake up to find you have been chosen to lead Idaho into the glorious future of Big Sky football.

THE END

[Start over.](#)

Page 28.

You have shot Nick Patti's confidence. Hedrick looked no better than Patti, so you undo what you just did, let Patti play when you get the ball back, and hope no one noticed.

The next series, Patti throws a pick-six and very nearly does a Jason Street trying to tackle the defender. The rest of the game, he audibles to running plays every single play, which is good in that D.J. Harper scores twice and gains 200 fourth quarter yards but bad because all those running plays ate clock and your final, game-tying drive stalled at midfield as the clock hit zero while Patti was pointing to D.J. Harper and shouting to the defense, "Never mind my throwing it. I'm handing off to him!"

The game ends, and you confront the rabid local media at the postgame press conference. Brian Murphy wants to know what stupid thoughts were going through your head when you pulled Nick Patti for a series. Chadd Cripe wants to know if you regret your decision deep down in your soul. Dave Southorn wonders if you have a headline pun idea involving the word "choose." Never mind. He got it. "You choose, you lose."

Most importantly, everyone wants to know who will be your quarterback for the next game.

If you opt for Nick Patti, [turn to page 83](#).

If you opt for Grant Hedrick, [turn to page 53](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 29.

You join Hefty Cat Enterprises as their chief financial officer. It is a meaningless title as all your underlings do your work for you while you rake in the money and play Snood all day on your PC. Life is good.

THE END

[Start over.](#)

Page 30.

The following week, you install a two-QB system, and it goes swimmingly against UNLV because they are UNLV.

But then things start to unravel.

Patti and Southwick develop an intense hatred for each other and refuse to attend the same meetings or use the same lockerroom. When Southwick has to tell Patti something, he tells Grant Hedrick to tell Patti and then Patti tells Hedrick to tell Southwick to go climb a tree. It's all very confusing.

You are confused, too, about how a two-QB system is supposed to work. Who starts? How often do they switch? What if one of them is on a hot streak? You buy a Magic 8 ball and everything is better for awhile, but then Zee the tee retrieving do steals it out of your hands, thinking it is a Kong treat. Things are confusing again.

The strife and confusion carries over onto the field. You lose games to Wyoming, San Diego State, and Nevada and finish 6-6. Fortunately, the New Mexico Bowl takes pity on you and invites you to play against Oregon State. During the pre-bowl festivities, Patti and Southwick get in a shoving match, not unlike the ones you see at heavyweight weigh-ins, and the media writes it off as a scripted publicity stunt by the New Mexico Bowl promoters. Nevertheless, Bronco Nation takes sides in the argument and attends the New Mexico Bowl in two distinct tribes - one wearing blue for Patti and the other wearing orange for Southwick. Boise State marketing passes it off as their idea for a color scheme.

You lose to Oregon State and finish 6-7 on the year. Joe Southwick transfers to Idaho State in the offseason and Nick Patti transfers to the new College of Idaho football team. You are left with Grant Hedrick as your starting quarterback for 2013. A small part of you wonders if Hedrick would mind splitting snaps with Jimmy Laughrea.

THE END

[*Start over.*](#)

Page 32.

During your flight to Hattiesburg, your phone rings. It is Craig Thompson prank calling you, then messing up the prank call, then crying softly into the phone while he tells you how much he loves you and wishes you would never leave. The rest of the Mountain West is a combined 3-36 through four weeks of the season. You block his number.

The humidity of southern Mississippi makes for a rough game. The Golden Eagles take confidence seeing you sweat through four polo shirts, assuming you are sweating because you are nervous and not because you sweat any time the heat index is above 74.

Fortunately, you have Matt Miller. Fresh off his third Mountain West Offensive Player of the Week award, he goes for 200 yards and two scores, including the go-ahead touchdown early in the fourth quarter.

The final score is Boise State 35, Southern Miss 21.

America does not get ROOT Sports SoMiss, so they did not catch the game, only highlights of Miller doing crazy Miller things and Blake Renaud running an interception back for a touchdown while carrying five offensive linemen, three receivers, and an side judge on his back. Boise State ascends in the polls to No. 12.

[GO TO PAGE 108.](#)

[Start over.](#)

Page 33.

Patti begins his Bronco career by fleeing the pocket almost immediately after he receives the snap. You decide to permanently move the pocket 15 feet to his right.

The Bronco offense goes in spurts with Patti at the helm, and the true freshman makes a couple costly mistakes. His first career interception is a pick-six, but he threw it to a D-linemen because he knew you love seeing fat guys score touchdowns. His second career interception came in the red zone, costing the team six points but saving it from the potential embarrassment of a wayward extra point try. There is always a silver lining with this kid.

As the clock winds down in the fourth quarter and Florida State holds a 24-21 lead, Patti completes a 30-yard pass to Matt Miller that puts the ball in field goal range inside the Seminole 25-yard-line. You call your final timeout with three seconds left.

The field goal team comes onto the field to attempt the game-tying 42-yarder. Jake Van Ginkel steadies himself, waits for the snap, and turns to the sideline and winks. Why is he winking? That's uncomfortable.

If he's winking because you called a fake field goal, [turn to page 36](#).

If he's winking because he's confident he'll make the kick, [turn to page 106](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 34.

Energized by your faith in him, Patti leads the team to 14 straight points and a tie game with two minutes left. Your sideline is brimming with enthusiasm even though Michigan State's in-stadium fourth quarter entertainment was a ceremonial cutting of Kellen Moore from the Detroit Lions practice squad. The Spartans thought this would demoralize you, but it has actually energized you. Sidenote: The Buffalo Bills sign Moore off the waiver wire and win the Super Bowl.

With the game tied at 21, you send Lee Hightower on a blitz on Michigan State's next play. Hightower gets a 20-yard running start, like in arena football, and explodes through a running back and directly into Spartan quarterback Andrew Maxwell who, upon seeing Hightower coming, tosses the ball backward in hopes of avoiding painful, painful contact. Michael Atkinson lands on the loose ball, killing it. The ball was two years old.

Ninety seconds remain on the clock. You have zero timeouts left, since you used all three earlier in the half to ice the Michigan State punter - a new strategy you are hoping will catch on but one that Twitter immediately hailed as "incredibly stupid." You need to score and leave no time left for Michigan State. With the ball on the Spartan 30-yard-line, you are at the edge of field goal range. You develop an acute stomach ulcer at the thought of "field goal range."

If you call running plays to take time off the clock and center the ball for a game-winning kick, [turn to page 66](#).

If you let Nick Patti do Nick Patti things and go for the touchdown, [turn to page 79](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 36.

It's a fake!

The ball is snapped to holder Matt Miller who rolls out to his right and looks downfield. As he rolls to his right, Dan Paul slips behind the line to Miller's left, and Miller shovels the ball to him. The Florida State defense is fooled, and Paul rumbles into the end zone for the game-winning touchdown. In the commemorative book later written about your season, you will reveal that the fake field goal was a play called Ant Man, an ode to the comic book names of past Bronco gadget plays. You were keeping Aquaman in your bag of tricks.

You have won the Orange Bowl!

You have finished the season undefeated!

When the final polls come out, your Boise State football team is ranked No. 3 in the country behind a couple of SEC teams. A Bronco blog writes an article demanding a shared national championship. It gets 3,500 views, which isn't quite enough to make anything official.

Your decision to burn the redshirt of Nick Patti looks like a genius move, but it creates a quarterback controversy in camp next year. This leads to years of two-QB systems at Boise State, which does not work out nearly as well as people think it should. Not too many people blame you for this until 15 years later when Boise State media law professor emeritus Chadd Cripe writes a guest op-ed piece in the Idaho Tribuneman about your fateful decision in the 2012 season.

The scrutiny and public outcry from that article leads you to live the life of a hermit in your 10,000-square foot Boise foothills home paid for by a buyout of your contract you requested after the Orange Bowl win. You fear people will recognize you when you are at the store. You get plastic surgery to look more like Ron Swanson from Parks and Rec. People like you again, even if they don't know who you really are.

THE END

[Start over.](#)

Page 38.

Hedrick appreciates the vote of confidence and goes out the following week and shreds New Mexico with 500 yards of total offense. You are thrilled, and you declare Hedrick your starting quarterback from this day to forever, forgetting that 500 yards against New Mexico converts to about 225 yards against normal FBS competition.

Hedrick jerseys fly off the shelves. His hometown of Independence, Oregon, erects a theater so that the community can watch his games. The Idaho Press-Tribune goes nuts with “Hedrick grants Broncos a new life” headlines. (Get it? Hedrick “grants”? “Grant” Hedrick?)

The Southern Miss game goes much worse than the New Mexico game. The trip to Hattiesburg ends in a loss. The Mountain West schedule begins the following week with a narrow loss to Fresno State when Hedrick, during the final drive, sees Joe Southwick throwing a pass on the sideline and gets all self-conscious when really all Southwick was doing was having a catch with Dustin Lapray. Hedrick’s insecurity leads to an interception.

Your record stands at 2-4. A number of communities in Boise have reported riots. Bob Kustra has written you a letter imploring you to stop sucking up the joint. You have noticed improvement in Hedrick’s play, but you can’t help but feel the burden of carrying the hopes and dreams of an entire state on your shoulders.

If you stay with Hedrick as your starting quarterback, [turn to page 42](#).

If you change your quarterback to Joe Southwick, turn to page 57.

[Start over](#).

Page 40.

In comes the second team offense and defense and special teams (Mike Atkinson = punter), and the score promptly goes from a 35-0 snoozer to a 35-35 tie. Someone reminds you that this is awful similar to the Boise State - Nevada game from two years ago prior to the final sequence of missed field goals and middle fingers.

You hyperventilate.

If you eat a Blizzard, [turn to page 70](#).

If you let the paramedics take you to the local hospital, [turn to page 54](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 41.

The OBNUG editorial team means well, but in promoting Patti for Heisman, they unknowingly break 50 NCAA rules and make him ineligible for the rest of the season.

You must change quarterbacks to Joe Southwick. On behalf of the OBNUG editorial team, I am sorry for the OBNUG editorial team being morons.

[GO TO PAGE 108.](#)

[Start over.](#)

Page 42.

You were right to stick with Grant Hedrick. He kept steadily improving, and it showed during the remainder of the Mountain West conference schedule. He developed a security blanket in Matt Miller and threw to him pretty much all the time whether he was covered or not. Your defense was emboldened by your decision-making and did not allow an opponent more than 14 points the rest of the year. You fell out of the Top 25, but good news, someone took all those fake For Sale real estate signs off your front lawn.

The season ends, and your record is 7-5. Craig Thompson, thinking he's playing a cruel joke on you, pulls some strings so that you can get into the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl where you play Bowling Green to a 15-14 win, capped by a gutsy two-point conversion call that puts Robb Akey's H-Bowl two point conversion to shame (you call a Statue of Liberty London Bridges, which is so complicated I cannot even begin to explain it here).

After the bowl game, you are fired. What did you expect? You can't go 7-5 at Boise State and keep your job.

You are a little relieved. You take up journaling.

THE END

[Start over.](#)

Page 43.

You decide to attempt a field goal from 28 yards out because you are kind of a masochist who has learned nothing from history. You have four kickers who can attempt the kick: Jake Van Ginkel, Michael Frisina, Dan Goodale, and Sean Wale. You long for the days of Kyle Brotzman, which you find kind of ironic.

If you decide to choose a kicker based on a winner-take-all game of Settlers of Catan, [turn to page 51](#).

If you go with your gut, [turn to page 46](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 44.

Your decision to only kick field goals as a last resort proves to be a good one. Jake Van Ginkel goes 1-for-1, kicking a 28-yarder on fourth and goal from the 18-yard-line (penalties, sheesh).

However, you have a bigger problem on your hands.

Nick Patti is shaken from his game-losing turnover against Michigan State. He plays cautiously in a win against Miami and even more cautiously in a loss to BYU. He doesn't want to make a mistake again and have you yell "Turds" like you did. It hurt his feelings.

You begin to wonder if Patti is the right man for the job.

[GO TO PAGE 83.](#)

[Start over.](#)

Page 45.

As Nick Patti jogs onto the field to the Bieber-fan screams of the Bronco faithful, your guardian angel, having spirit-hijacked the body of sideline reporter Rob Stone, streaks the field, forcing a television timeout and providing you a chance to rethink your decision. You realize you nearly made the worst decision of your life, even including that time you signed a five-year DirecTV contract just so you could get The Mtn. channel.

You call Patti back to the sideline, redshirt still in tact.

[GO TO PAGE 8.](#)

[Start over.](#)

Page 46.

Your gut chooses Sean Wale because your gut saw what the other guys did during spring practice and did not like what it saw.

Wale trots out onto the field for the game-winning field goal attempt.

A hush falls over the Nevada crowd because there are 10 of them and eight of them left early because they have tickets to the Beach Boys reunion show.

The snap is good.

The hold is good.

The ball sails through the neon Reno night sky, tumbling end-over-end toward the left goal post. Just then, a cloud in the shape of Pokey Allen descends upon the end zone. The ball disappears for a moment. You hear a thud behind the goal posts. The referees turn to find the football, singed with the score of the 1996 Idaho - Boise State game and the words "Never Forget."

The kick is good!

You have won the Mountain West championship!

You have finished the season undefeated!

In the postgame celebration, you propose to a Boise State cheerleader. Todd Harris hugs you. Bob Kustra names Boise State's new education building after you (prompting a firestorm of Idaho Statesman comments). Rod Gilmore and Joe Tessitore invite you back to their Air BnB rental loft for late nite crepes.

Early the next morning, you arrive in Boise to a hero's welcome. Brian Murphy pens a column about Boise being an event town.

Bowl prep begins.

[GO TO PAGE 100.](#)

[Start over.](#)

Page 48.

Kellen Moore agrees to pull double duty as Matthew Stafford's insurance policy and your new quarterback sensei. Moore's first order of business is to help Joe Southwick explore his innermost feelings and find the quarterback within. Southwick explores, and he finds that he was meant to run a Silicon Valley web startup that puts an image of an overweight cat on every photo you take. The business makes billions, and he becomes the next Mark Zuckerberg.

You are now without a quarterback.

If you choose to replace Southwick with Nick Patti, [turn to page 112](#).

If you choose to join Southwick at his cat app empire, [turn to page 29](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 49.

Eschewing the field goal, you send the offense back out onto the field. Jake Van Ginkel, Dan Goodale, Michael Frisina, and Sean Wale look at you with puppy dog eyes, and you look the other way. Tough love, people!

You call a pass play to Matt Miller because there has never been a time this season where that has failed. Miller shakes his man at the line of scrimmage and sprints toward the back corner of the end zone. The safety closes as a perfect spiral comes wafting down. Just before the ball arrives, the safety grabs Miller by the shoulder pads, wraps Miller's arms in duct tape, puts pizza oven mittens on his hands, and the pass falls incomplete. There is no flag on the play. The back judge is from Winnemucca.

In overtime, a series of bad referee calls leads to zero points by you on the opening possession. Nevada responds with a 42-yard field goal on 1st and 10 for the win and the outright Mountain West championship.

Dejected, you make plans for the Poinsettia Bowl but take heart knowing it is not the New Mexico Bowl.

Bow prep begins.

[GO TO PAGE 107.](#)

[Start over.](#)

Page 50.

You forgot to change the Boise State AD on your speed dial from Gene Bleymaier to Mark Coyle. Bleymaier is busy. And in San Jose.

You are dead.

If you want to remain dead, okay then. THE END.

If you want to LIVE(!), [turn to page 24](#) and experience the life-restorative power of a Blizzard.

[Start over.](#)

Page 51.

A game of Settlers of Catan takes, like, forty-five minutes. You get a delay of game penalty.

Jake Van Ginkel wins by hoarding sheep (never a bad Catan strategy). He trots out onto the field for the game-winning field goal attempt.

A hush falls over the Nevada crowd because they are either asleep or in the casino next door or sleeping in the casino next door.

The snap is good.

The hold is good.

The ball sails through the crisp Reno air, wobbling side-to-side like an inebriated whirlybird. A gust of wind turns the ball, earmarked for the northeast end zone parking lot, straight for the right goal post. Clank. Clank. Clank-clank. The ball hits both posts and the crossbar - twice - coming to rest on the ESPN goal post camera. The football gods laugh a hearty laugh, and their guffaws shake the earth, causing the ball to teeter over the crossbar.

It's good!

You have won the Mountain West championship!

You have finished the season undefeated!

In the postgame celebration, you run in circles around the field, waving your polo shirt above your head and singing Journey songs at the top of your lungs. You take, like, 10 Mountain West championship hats because they're free. Your postgame press conference consists of you telling everyone in the room you love them, individually. Rod Gilmore and Joe Tessitore take you out to dinner at Reno's finest restaurant, the Outback Steak House. You order apps and zerts because Rod and Joe are paying.

Early the next morning, you arrive in Boise to a hero's welcome. David Augusto has knitted you a two-person Snuggie.

Bowl prep begins.

[GO TO PAGE 100.](#)

[Start over.](#)

Page 53.

Hedrick gets the start in your next game against Miami (OH) and plays well enough that you don't spend the next week questioning your worth as a person. This is a great feeling.

At 1-1, America is cutting you some slack. Pat Forde thinks your decision to start Grant Hedrick might pay off. Stewart Mandel calls the Hedrick switch a turning point. You still cling to a No. 24 ranking in the AP poll. There is a light at the end of the tunnel.

Then Grant Hedrick goes out and lays a giant egg against BYU.

Hedrick's 3-for-30 performance lands you right back in the same predicament you were in after the Michigan State game. Do you stay with Hedrick? Or do you switch to another quarterback? An Internet sports blog with an obsession for King of Queens writes an article titled, "Make up your mind already." It gets 5,000 comments.

If you keep Hedrick as your starting quarterback, [turn to page 38](#).

If you switch to Jimmy Laughrea, [turn to page 55](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 54.

The paramedics rush you to Reno Medical Brought to You By Harrah's. The doctors hand you a paper bag and an IV and nurse you back to health. As a departure gift from the hospital, you receive home care instructions and 10 slot tokens. You slip a token into the Baron Von Bacon slot machine in the hotel lobby and win \$10 million. You quit football coaching forever and become a scholarship magnate, awarding full rides to kids with good grades and encyclopedic knowledge of Heavyweights.

THE END

[Start over.](#)

Page 55.

Jimmy Laughrea throws three interceptions and fumbles twice the next week, and you beat New Mexico by a final score of 8-2 (all safeties).

If you change your quarterback back to Nick Patti, [turn to page 57](#).

If you change your quarterback to Joe Southwick, [turn to page 57](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 56.

The black cat brings you immediate bad luck. Your phone rings. It is your training staff informing you that Jerrell Gavins has sprained his knee playing beach volleyball with a troupe of Top Gun reenactors. Jamar Taylor has torn a shoulder labrum high fiving people around campus. Joe Kellogg went to a local taco bus and got giardia.

Things get worse. Charles Leno has declared, midseason, for the NFL Draft. Dan Paul has donated his body to science so that scientists can answer the question, "How does Dan Paul look like that?" Jeremy loane is the new senator of Hawaii. His term started yesterday.

Your roster is in shambles, and you finish the season 3-9. No one blames you, except for those people who saw you look at that black cat. They still don't get why you did that.

THE END

[Start over.](#)

Page 57.

STOP CHANGING QUARTERBACKS!

[Go to page 25.](#)

[Start over.](#)

Page 58.

Oh! Why did you ever let Lou Holtz's sweet words into your brain? You are drunk on yourself. "Never listen to what outsiders say about your program," reads the Coach Pete coaching manual.

Because of your sin of self-aggrandizing, you lose to BYU by four touchdowns. You also lose to Southern Miss and you beat New Mexico by 14 points which is basically like losing to New Mexico.

You are 2-2 and out of the Top 25. Internet website OBNUG has just written a post about how you are destroying the joy of the earth. They are irrational and jump to conclusions, but correct.

How are you going to turn things around?

If you change quarterbacks to Nick Patti, [turn to page 112](#).

If you hire Kellen Moore for your new QB coach as a PR stunt, [turn to page 48](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 59.

No Crossfit! Michael Frisina rejoices!

Even without the three missing Crossfit days, practice is going great. The team looks good, the offense looks crisp, the defense looks talented, the wider goal posts seem to be helping.

This football coaching thing is easier than you thought, until someone reminds you that you do not have a starting quarterback. On a related note, who let KTIK listeners into practice?

Fortunately for you, Grant Hedrick has offered to be a change-of-pace running threat instead of a bona fide starting quarterback. He calls it the Tim Tebow Path and has taken to writing 3:16 on every bit of clothing he owns as a reminder of God's love for mankind and also Hedrick's goal of three carries per game for 16 yards.

Jimmy Laughrea has decided to be a tight end. He calls it the Nick Lomax Alternate Reality. His only request is that you let him throw a double pass at least once a game. You agreed to this, by the way. I'm not sure what you were thinking.

Your choice, therefore, is down to Joe Southwick and Nick Patti.

Southwick has the edge in experience and self-idolization. Patti has the edge in youthful exuberance and popularity. How do you choose between the two?

If you flip a coin, [turn to page 13](#).

If you judge by the results on the field and in the film room and find that, while the two quarterbacks are too close to separate, the experience of Southwick will be better for this team right now, [turn to page 19](#).

If you just plain like Nick Patti better, [turn to page 10](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 61.

Your focus on football is paying off. On a nationally televised Thursday night game against BYU, you rock the Cougars to the tune of 42-14. Joe Southwick plays lights out, D.J. Harper rushes for 100 yards, and Jerrell Gavins and Jamar Taylor combine for three interceptions and 12 minutes worth of complicated hand jive celebrations. You try to participate in their hand jive at one point, but you end up poking yourself in the eye.

You are now ranked No. 15 in the country. Your next challenge is against Southern Miss in two weeks.

If you look ahead to Southern Miss and completely forget about New Mexico, [turn to page 86](#).

If you take it one game at a time and believe that any team on the schedule can beat you on any given week, you are cute for thinking so, but come on. New Mexico? [Turn to page 32](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 62.

Your new campaign manager is paying dividends, but the pressure of a Heisman campaign and a football season is a lot to handle. You begin to crack during the Miami (OH) game when you call a punt on second down and a timeout in the middle of halftime. You beat Miami by 35 points, but still. People are starting to get concerned.

Their concerns are even more valid the following week against BYU when you forget to put together an offensive gameplan. When the Boise State offense takes the field for the first time, you shout “vertical integration” into your headseat, which is something you had been meaning to tell your campaign intern and not actually a football play that people can run.

Fortunately, Nick Patti makes up for your three-hour-long brain fart by throwing for 350 yards, rushing for 80, and leading the Broncos to a 28-14 win over the Cougars.

After the game, the media clamors to speak to Patti. Your policy so far this season is the same one that Coach Pete often employs on freshmen and quarterbacks. They are off limits.

But the media is giving you puppy dog eyes!

If you let Nick Patti speak to the media, [turn to page 71](#).

If you don't let Nick Patti speak to the media, [turn to page 77](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 63.

You survive bowl week in New Orleans with no problems. Florida suspends its entire two-deep linebacking corps for attending a non-sanctioned bender with Todd McShay.

As you prepare your team for the Sugar Bowl, you remind them of Hawaii's experience in the game back in 2008. Your team is terrified at the thought of "pulling a Hawaii" (their words, not yours). From the opening kick, Boise State stays even with Florida. The two offenses are so similar that the game literally transforms into a reenactment of Tecmo Super Bowl. The referees hand out NES controllers and you take turns guessing the exact plays from each other's playbooks.

Nick Patti scores a rushing touchdown. New Tim Tebow scores a rushing touchdown. You return a punt for a touchdown. Florida returns a punt for a touchdown.

The pressure builds heading into the fourth quarter, and you begin to overthink every decision. When Nick Patti throws an ill-advised interception in the red zone, your overthinking reaches critical mass.

If you pull Patti and insert Joe Southwick, [turn to page 98](#).

If you stick with Patti, [turn to page 82](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 64.

The past two months have been a blur.

Nick Patti is regularly mentioned as one of the best freshmen in the country, and his exciting style of play has made him a fan favorite and a media darling. He is dating Erin Andrews.

Lee Hightower leads the nation in interceptions and Police Academy references.

Matt Miller topped 1,500 yards. He has 20 touchdowns and won the Montana gubernatorial election as a write-in candidate. His term begins in January.

Charles Leno tops every NFL expert's draft list for next spring. Joe Kellogg has his own line of cologne. You're not sure which is cooler.

Boise State has yet to attempt a field goal. You are perfectly fine with this.

Best of all, your team is ranked No. 4 in the country and is one of only three undefeated teams left. The Top Five looks like this:

- No. 1 Ohio State (12-0)
- No. 2 Florida (11-1)
- No. 3 West Virginia (12-0)
- No. 4 Boise State (11-0)
- No. 5 USC (10-2)

If the dominoes fall just right, you could be in the national championship game provided the dominoes are rational, fair dominoes with no hidden agendas against mid-major teams with questionable strength of schedule.

The regular season finale against Nevada is your final obstacle. You have a lot riding on this game, including the collective psyche of Bronco Nation who still remembers that unmentionable night two years ago that they have tried so hard to scrub from their minds with therapy.

Your Boise State players recognize the seriousness of this game after you bring in Kyle Brotzman's food tester to tell tales of the life he's lived since that fateful day. Your players are amped up. Dan Paul runs through an actual wall on his way to the field.

D.J. Harper opens the scoring with a 50-yard touchdown run, and Nick Patti follows on the next series with a TD toss to Gabe Linehan. You take a 21-0 lead into the halftime lockerroom. What could possibly go wrong now? you wonder, like an idiot.

There is a television set in the visiting lockerroom, turned to ESPN's college football highlights show. Mark May just called you "numbnuts" for reasons that aren't immediately clear. The Top 25 scoreboard segment is next.

If you watch the scores, [turn to page 75](#).

If you change the channel to Top Chef, [turn to page 85](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 66.

You gain eight extra yards by running the ball, and D.J. Harper gets tackled in the middle of the field on the final carry. Your field goal team comes on to attempt a 40-yard kick. Dan Goodale, winner of an Idaho Statesman online poll you used to determine your starting kicker, lines up to kick. Michigan State calls its last timeout to ice the kicker. You sub Jake Van Ginkel for Dan Goodale because you realize you probably should do the opposite of whatever an Idaho Statesman online poll tells you.

Van Ginkel performs meditative yoga on the Michigan State midfield logo during the timeout. A white dove lands on his shoulder and poops. Apparently, this is a good sign.

Van Ginkel's kick sails straight and true, through the uprights, caressing the field goal net with a sweet, supple thud hug. The game is over. You have won!

The next day, you rise from No. 21 in the rankings to No. 15. America loves you and your plucky new starting quarterback. Patti Mania sweeps Boise.

After your big win over Michigan State, you are on cloud nine, which is a new Red Bull patch that sends caffeine straight into your bloodstream. You have caught Patti Fever, too. He's just so likable and when you look at him in a certain light, he almost looks like Kellen Moore or maybe that's just a bad reaction to the caffeine patch.

At any rate, your Patti Fever is causing you to think hasty, irrational things. Do you act on them?

If you decide to begin a Nick Patti for Heisman campaign, [turn to page 68](#).

If you take something for your Patti Fever (Zabransky Tonic) and choose to focus on gameplanning for Miami Ohio, [turn to page 87](#).

[Start over.](#)

Page 68.

Work begins on your Nick Patti for Heisman campaign. A 60-foot banner is erected in Times Square. The banner features Nick Patti looking into a mirror at his reflection, which is Kellen Moore. You have initiated an online media blitz in which you create a meme where Patti's head is placed into various hamburgers because Patti = patty, get it? You start a chain letter about Patti's Heisman qualifications and tell everyone that if they don't forward it to 10 people in the next 10 minutes that Dan Paul will come to their house, rifle through their pantry for protein powder, and leave without cleaning up.

A straw poll on the Heisman Pundit website shows Patti is currently in fifth place in Heisman voting thanks to your efforts and to a generous anonymous donation to the author of the Heisman Pundit website.

The Heisman campaign is going better than expected, but it is more work than you anticipated. You need to hire an intern.

If you hire the editorial team at OBNUG, [turn to page 41](#).

If you hire an actual campaign manager, [turn to page 62](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 69.

Nick Patti takes the snap from shotgun and fires a pass to Gabe Linehan who pitches to a streaking Mitch Burroughs. Burroughs takes off down the sideline toward the end zone. The Nevada defense is so confused and scared that it falls over like those fainting goats. The play is completely wide open such that every Bronco player touches the ball before it reaches the end zone. Joe Kellogg, the touchdown scorer, spikes the ball.

You have won the Mountain West Championship!

You have finished the regular season undefeated!

In the postgame aftermath, you get a Gatorade shower except instead of Gatorade it's 7up because the team knows that's your favorite. You tell Todd Harris you love him during a postgame interview, and you miss out on shaking hands with Chris Ault because you cannot find him among all the five-foot-and-up people on the field. The next day, the Idaho Press-Tribune headline blares, "Broncos hook themselves a win, climb the ladder to undefeatedsville." It has been a long season for IPT headline writers.

[GO TO PAGE 16.](#)

[Start over.](#)

Page 70.

The Blizzard does the trick, and you are back to normal, albeit staring into the abyss of the worst deja vu imaginable. With 30 seconds left on the clock, the Bronco offense drives down to the 10-yard line in two plays and two amazing Matt Miller catches. Three seconds remain. You call your last timeout.

You have not attempted a field goal all season, so you have a choice to make: Go for the game-winning kick or try for the game-winning touchdown.

If you kick the field goal, [turn to page 43](#).

If you try for the touchdown, [turn to page 49](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 71.

High on life and the thrills of being an 18-year-old with a Heisman campaign and Erin Andrews' phone number in his iPhone, Patti begins the interview by telling everyone who can listen that he is the greatest quarterback in college football and all you haters better recognize. He has been watching a lot of MTV lately.

The postgame interview continues, and Patti takes credit for the win while forgetting the names of every single teammate. He promises a national championship and takes his shirt off halfway through the interview for no apparent reason.

You have a problem on your hands. Nick Patti is getting out of control, and you fear that his overconfidence will bring your team to ruin.

Sure enough, two weeks later against Southern Miss, the team turns on Patti on the plane ride to Hattiesburg. The players conspire to keep the ball out of Patti's hands by having center Cory Yriarte snap sideways to guard Joe Kellogg and letting Kellogg do whatever comes to him in the moment.

Kellogg finishes the Southern Miss game 1-for-21 for minus-2 yards and 38 yards rushing on 38 carries. Nick Patti does not touch the ball except when trying to pull it from Kellogg's beefy arms. Boise State loses 9-0.

After the loss to the Golden Eagles, you fall in the rankings from No. 10 to unranked because pollsters are seriously beginning to question whether or not you have control of your team. Their fears are valid. You do not have control. Building up Nick Patti's ego and setting the ego loose on the world was a very bad idea. You screwed the pooch on that one, and it has cost you dearly.

Patti is now running a solid 168th in Heisman voting behind an LSU punter and a Conference USA offensive tackle. Your Heisman campaign intern has taken up drinking.

In the following weeks of Mountain West competition, your team continues to fight amongst itself and not share. Patti has the occasional moments of brilliance followed by the occasional tantrums when you call running plays to D.J. Harper. You go 5-3 in conference because even a dysfunctional team like yours can still go 5-3 in this year's Mountain West.

At 8-4, you accept an invitation to the Armed Forces Bowl - a formal affair that Nick Patti shows up to with a face tattoo and a parrot, having skipped the previous month of bowl prep to go on a European concert tour with Katy Perry. You lose to East Carolina by four touchdowns because no one decides to block for Patti the entire game.

On the plane ride home, while ignoring text messages with many exclamation marks from Bob Kustra, you think back on the decisions that got you to this point. You have regrets. Your Heisman campaign has ruined a perfectly good kid, and your failure to control the situation has made you a punch line for all of college football (and a candidate for the next University of Idaho head coach). If only you could go back in time and never begin the Patti Heisman campaign in the first place.

Hey, look! A time machine in the overhead storage bin!

If you use the time machine to go back and right your wrongs, [turn to page 77](#).

If you fear time travel, [turn to page 74](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 74.

Your fear of time travel is understandable. You saw what it did to those guys on LOST.

THE END

[Start over.](#)

Page 75.

Your scoreboard-watching causes football god great sorrow. As you turn toward the television set, so do all of your players, and they find out that Florida is losing to Texas A&M by 14 points in the SEC championship game and Ohio State is tied with Iowa in the Big Ten championship game. Immediately, your players begin thinking thoughts about the BCS and national titles and how they may never have to pay for a Sonic milkshake in Boise ever again.

This distraction proves costly on the field. Nevada scores 21 unanswered points in the third quarter - one touchdown while Jeremy loane checks his texts for Ohio State score updates and two other touchdowns while the entire defense turns to see in-game highlights of Florida and Texas A&M on the JumboTron. You find it hard to blame them. You were watching, too.

You enter the fourth quarter tied at 21. Hoping to keep your team focused on the final 15 minutes of the game, you collect all the players' cell phones and throw a giant sheet over the out-of-town scoreboard. There. You think you might have fixed things.

With a renewed focus on the game at hand, your team finds its footing and competes well over the final quarter of play. Boise State and Nevada trade touchdowns - a Nick Patti TD scramble for a Cody Fajardo "don't-throw-it-there!-ok-that-actually-worked-out-alright" touchdown.

The game is tied with time left for one more play. You have the ball at the 50-yard-line. What do you do?

HOOK AND LADDER, DUH! [turn to page 69.](#)

If you take a knee and play for overtime, [turn to page 93.](#)

[Start over.](#)

Page 77.

You decide to keep Patti off limits for media interviews, literally fighting off KTVB's Ryan Larrando with a stick at one point.

Patti appreciates your protection of him and rewards you by tearing through the Mountain West schedule, eviscerating opponents with his brand of throwing and running and throwrunning. Ahead of your season finale in Reno, the Broncos are 11-0 and ranked No. 4 in the country. Patti is neck-and-neck with USC QB Matt Barkley in Heisman polling. He is a phenomenon who seems to get better every week. America loves him almost as much as America loves Modern Family. If only Patti were a gay couple with an adopted Asian daughter ...

Unbeknownst to you, his popularity has weighed on his mind all season long. The Heisman campaign and the expectations of carrying an undefeated team are a lot for a true freshman to handle. Chris Petersen managed Kellen Moore well during his redshirt freshman year. You have made Patti a graven image for college football fans to worship, which is literally what Boise State bloggers have done. They call themselves Pattitologists.

Keeping Patti off limits from the media is the only thing that has saved him so far, but he is reaching his breaking point. You hope desperately that his breaking point happens after the Nevada game and preferably after a BCS bowl game because you will have cashed in at a different school by then.

But his breakdown cannot wait.

As Justin Bieber plays over the loudspeakers at Mackay Stadium during pregame stretches, Patti is taken back to his childhood days of freedom and irresponsibility and late night pajama parties with Ken Griffey's son. He longs to be a kid again.

When no one is looking, he bolts from the field to a nearby Toys 'R Us where he lives in hiding for the next two years. He feels reborn and returns in 2014 to lead the Broncos to the national championship in college football's first playoff.

Meanwhile, you turn to a rusty Joe Southwick to guide your team to a win. He gives it the old college try, but the cobwebs of pine riding for three months prove too much to overcome. You lose by a touchdown.

The Poinsettia Bowl extends an invitation. You accept.

[GO TO PAGE 107.](#)

[Start over.](#)

Page 79.

Who needs field goals anyway? You send instructions to Patti to “let it fly,” and he does so - “flying” “it” directly into the arms of a Michigan State defensive back. The play unfolds in slow motion before your eyes, giving you ample time to rethink your decision to not kick the field goal, to spot Jake Van Ginkel giving you judgy eyes on the sideline, and to scream a slow motion “T-u-u-u-r-r-r-d-d-d-d-d-ss-s-s--s-s” as the pass flies over Matt Miller and Chris Potter and Kirby Moore and Mitch Burroughs.

Michigan State returns the ball to the Boise State 40 yard-line, runs the clock down to three seconds, and kicks a game-winning 57-yard field goal, just to rub it in.

Heartbroken, you face the crazed local media in the postgame press conference. They demand you account for your lack of faith in your kicker. You remind everyone of the last two years of Boise State football, and everyone nods in silent agreement. There are no further questions.

Next week’s game is against Miami (OH), and you see it as an opportunity to rebuild the confidence in your kickers. You can kick field goals every time you cross into the red zone, your kickers will love you and love themselves, and you’ll still probably beat the RedHawks by 20. Or you could go 0-for-17 on field goals and lose again. What’s a guy to do?

If you decide to build up your kickers’ confidence with tons o’ field goals, [turn to page 81](#).

If you decide to only kick field goals as a last resort, [turn to page 44](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 81.

Just as you suspected, your field goal kickers go 0-for-17, and you lose to Miami (OH) 3-0, in overtime.

The media paints you as wishy-washy - having eschewed field goals against Michigan State and having overcommitted to field goals against Miami (OH) - and your own players begin to question your decision-making and critical thinking. Jamar Taylor gives you a book of logic puzzles for fun, but really to test your intelligence.

At 0-2, you drop out of the Top 25. An Internet website with an affinity for Blizzards nicknames you "Waffle House."

Fix things!

If you let Nick Patti save your season, [turn to page 83](#).

If you panic and replace Nick Patti with Joe Southwick, [turn to page 112](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 82.

Your faith in Nick Patti pays off on the next drive when he tosses a perfect pass 50 yards downfield into Matt Miller's outstretched arms. Brent Musburger calls it the most beautiful thing he's ever seen and quits broadcasting on the spot. Mark Johnson is nearby and fills in for the rest of the game.

Two plays later, D.J. Harper bulls his way into the end zone for a touchdown. Florida's last-gasp drive ends when Jerrell Gavins picks off a desperation pass.

You have won the Sugar Bowl!

Confetti rains down from the rafters, and you are carried off the field on the shoulders of your players. You forget to duck under the tunnel and knock yourself out but wake to find the Sugar Bowl trophy and a leering Holly Rowe standing over you in the lockerroom.

In the days that follow, you will appear on the Jim Rome show and get run for trying to have a take on women's basketball but sucking; you will sign a book deal with the authors of a Boise State blog to write your biography except as a vampire love story because those things sell better; people will high five you in the streets; you will have a burger named after you at The Ram.

Having made it through your first season of college football undefeated, you decide to retire on top. Boise State erects a statue in your honor. Students immediately T.P. it. You are fulfilled.

THE END

[Start over.](#)

Page 83.

Halfway through the season with Nick Patti running the show, you are 3-3 with the remainder of your Mountain West schedule ahead.

Having lost three games at this point, Bronco Nation is getting restless, and they are expressing their restlessness by burning effigies of you all across town. They are a rash people.

Your defense has played tremendously, holding opponents to an average of 14 points per game. Demarcus Lawrence is a revelation at defensive end, and Blake Renaud - who by the way gained 100 pounds over the summer and has been playing linebacker at 350 - is an early favorite for DPOY.

But your quarterback position is troubling.

Patti has played well in spurts, but he has yet to embrace the offense the way you would like. There is more potential there. Matt Miller should have at least double his 10 touchdowns by now.

One night, the ghost of late 1990's Bill Cowher visits you in a dream. He regales you with stories about his two-quarterback system of Neil O'Donnell and Kordell Stewart and encourages you to give it a try. What's the worst that can happen?

You wake up in a sweat, confused about what to do and eating a sandwich for some reason.

If you change to a two-QB system with Nick Patti and Joe Southwick, [turn to page 30](#).

If you dismiss the dream as a salsa-fueled nightmare and keep Patti as your starting quarterback, [turn to page 26](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 85.

Your players love Top Chef! Watching a James Beard Award winner flambé couscous gets them jacked up for the second half, and they come out and score two more touchdowns to push the lead to 35-0.

You feel comfortable with this lead because you obviously have never seen the movie Little Giants.

If you decide to pull your starters, [turn to page 95](#).

If you decide to leave your starters in, [turn to page 23](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 86.

TRAP GAME!

Overlooking New Mexico proves costly. You win by five touchdowns (because they are still New Mexico, after all), and Mark May scoffs at your “body of work.” America dismisses him as a doofus.

[GO TO PAGE 32.](#)

[Start over.](#)

Page 87.

Patti enters your office to tell you how relieved he is that there will be no Heisman campaign. He's still a teenager, mind you. Heisman campaigns can wait a couple years. For now, Disney Channel!

You and Patti decide on a plan for the rest of the season. You will manage Patti's workload, making sure that he takes on as much responsibility as he can from week-to-week and nothing more. There will be no media interviews, and you will chaperone any dates he wishes to go on. Girls poison football teams, or so you've heard.

Midway through the BYU game, with the score tied at 14 and Patti safely, albeit boringly, managing the game, the crowd rises to its feet and demands that you let Nick Patti throw the ball downfield. They are really belligerent about it - like The Wave times a hundred. You are tempted to divert from your plan.

If you take the reins off Nick Patti and just let him wing it, [turn to page 88](#).

If you stick with the plan, [turn to page 90](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 88.

Nick Patti throws four consecutive interceptions on his next four throws. He throws Nos 5 and 6 on ill-advised passes late in the fourth quarter. BYU wins by three touchdowns.

Crying at his locker after the game, Patti blames you breaking your promise and ruining his life. He transfers to UNLV and vows revenge.

Joe Southwick is now your quarterback.

[GO TO PAGE 112.](#)

[Start over.](#)

Page 89.

The Big East reading material helped. You'll have to pay \$5 million per non-Big East win for the rest of your life and legally change your last name to BEASTersen, but it's doable. You make a note to self to talk to Mark Coyle about this later.

Game day has arrived. Your new quarterback, Jimmy Laughrea, is nervous, so you tell him the story of past BSU quarterbacks but forget to leave out the part about Jared Zabransky versus Georgia.

Laughrea panics and goes 1-for-22 for 12 yards and four interceptions. Boise State loses 14-6 (three safeties, natch).

If you decide to change quarterbacks to Joe Southwick for the next game, [turn to page 112](#).

If you decide to let Laughrea figure things out, [turn to page 60](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 90.

You stick with your gameplan of handing the ball to D.J. Harper and throwing hitches and screens to Matt Miller, and you grind out a 21-20 win over BYU. At 3-0, people like what you are doing with this team. Lyle Smith even remembered your name when you ran into him in the hall the other day.

Ranked No. 12 in the country, your Boise State team is well-positioned for a run at an undefeated season. The only thing standing in your way now is something crazy like injuries or bad luck.

Hey, look! A black cat!

If you look at the black cat, [turn to page 56](#).

If you look away, [turn to page 64](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 91.

Bob Stoops would be proud.

You leave your starters in until every last second of the clock has expired even going so far as to onside kick a couple of times when you were up by a 40 burger. Final score: Boise State 56, Nevada 0. You put an exclamation point on your undefeated season and now await your bowl destiny.

[GO TO PAGE 100.](#)

[Start over.](#)

Page 92.

Though the season ended with a loss, you don't let it get you down. After all, you took a young, unproven team to a BCS bowl game on the strength of a true freshman quarterback, a brand new defensive line, and a Justin Bieber theme song. There are worse fates than losing to an SEC team in the Sugar Bowl. You could have beat a Pac-12 team in the Vegas Bowl, for instance.

THE END

[Start over.](#)

Page 93.

You are not a bad person for wanting to play for overtime. Don't let Joe Tessitore and Rod Gilmore tell you otherwise.

You win the overtime coin toss. Do you want to play offense or defense first?

If you choose offense, [turn to page 21](#).

If you choose defense, [turn to page 94](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 94.

On Nevada's first play in overtime, J.C. Percy bursts through a hole in the line and sacks Cody Fajardo for a 10-yard loss. The next two plays result in incompletions, leaving Nevada with a 52-yard field goal attempt.

It's a fake!

But not a very good one. Your special teams sniff it out, and Corey Bell strips the football from the Nevada kicker who was holding it up against his ear like a boombox. As Bell is being tackled, he pitches the ball to Ricky Tjong-A-Tjoe who chugs 50 yards for the game-winning touchdown.

Former special teams coach Jeff Choate smiles from his theater room in Pullman, Washington.

Your team has just completed an undefeated regular season, and you celebrate by giving yourself tennis elbow from all the fist pumping you've been doing all year long. Rehab takes three weeks, which will have you back to fist pumping by the time of your bowl game.

Speaking of which, it's time you found out where you'll be playing.

[GO TO PAGE 16.](#)

[Start over.](#)

Page 95.

You pull your starters and lose. It was really quite an incredible meltdown - a 35-point lead spirited away by a greedy Jimmy Laughrea and a supporting cast that mistook the low Nevada attendance as a sign that this was a scrimmage and not a real game that counted. You had to see it to believe it. Hopefully you get ESPN Classic.

You are going to the Vegas Bowl. Hooray?

[GO TO PAGE 99.](#)

[Start over.](#)

Page 96.

Your stroke of medical genius works. Harper misses one play while the training staff affixes the clone leg onto his torso. It looks a little weird, what with his having three legs and all, so you splint the bum leg into a permanent stiff arm position, and he's good to go.

Harper returns to the game and leads the Broncos down the field where the drive culminates in a Gabe Linehan touchdown catch. The score is now 28-0.

A defensive touchdown on the opening kickoff of the second half makes it 35-0, and you start to feel bad for Nevada. They were really looking forward to this game. They built a Colin Kaepernick float and everything!

Your conscience begins weighing on you. Your conscience went to the Coach Pete school of benevolence and became a sportsmanship extremist. It wants you to pull your starters out with 29 ½ minutes to play.

If you listen to your conscience, [turn to page 40](#).

If you ignore your conscience and keep your starters in, [turn to page 91](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 97.

The good news is that your players will never forget their time together in New Orleans. The bad news is everything else.

The entire defense slept a combined total of 18 hours over the five day run-up to the Sugar Bowl. You lost Lee Hightower. Like, lost him. You don't know where he is. The team arrived at the stadium bloated on Emeril food. The offensive line kept finding beads on their bodies, kind of like how you keep finding sand days after you go to the beach. Jay Ajayi sold his Twitter credentials to a carney for a piece of the Superdome. The following Tweet appeared the day before the game:

“Florida? More like Snore-ida! #carneypuns.”

Florida wins 45-8. You blacked out for a minute there so you're not sure how you managed to score the eight points.

[GO TO PAGE 92.](#)

[Start over.](#)

Page 98.

On the next series, Southwick enters to gasps from all over the stadium. Southwick responds by going three-and-out on the final three series of the game because, well, he hasn't played all season and what can you really expect? Florida kicks a field goal on its final drive for the win.

[GO TO PAGE 92.](#)

[Start over.](#)

Page 99.

The Las Vegas Bowl is happy to have you back, regardless of whether or not you are happy to be there. Pregame attention focuses squarely on your freshman All-American quarterback and your Top Ten defense, in no small part because the bowl is hoping to take attention off of your 6-6 opponent, UCLA, which does nothing right.

You and your players sleepwalk through much of the game, waking momentarily for three D.J. Harper touchdown runs, a 100-yard INT return touchdown by Jerrell Gavins, and a yeoman's 2-for-6 field goal kicking performance by Jake Van Ginkel. You win 34-0. It could have been more had you not let your players open their swag packs at the start of the fourth quarter and they realized there were iPads in there.

With the season over, Mark Coyle offers you an opportunity to stay on staff with Boise State. You ask to be Chris Petersen's "friends fly free" friend on all recruiting trips. Coyle agrees.

For the next 20 years, you criss-cross the country with Coach Pete, finding the next gems in the Bronco recruiting classes. Well, "finding" may not be exactly true. You more just "agree" with Coach Pete when he shows you someone. Nevertheless, you are pretty good at your job.

THE END

[*Start over.*](#)

Page 100.

Congratulations on your undefeated season. The scores from the final games of the college football regular season are now final, and there is good news. Undefeated USC lost to 8-4 Washington. Undefeated Ohio State lost big-time to Nebraska. You are the only undefeated team in the entire country. Well, except for the WAC's Louisiana Tech. LaTech remains unranked.

With the results of the weekend, you eagerly anticipate where you will land in the final BCS poll.

If you live in a world where things are fair and just, [turn to page 101](#).

If you live on planet earth, [turn to page 103](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 101.

The final regular season BCS standings are out. Here is the Top Five:

1. Alabama (12-1)
2. Boise State (12-0)
3. USC (12-1)
4. Ohio State (12-1)
5. LSU (10-2)

Incredible! You are playing for the national championship. The world makes sense! Huzzah and stuff!

You spend the next 30 days fastidiously preparing for Alabama. The Crimson Tide are good, but they are not as good as last year's team. Besides, there is a magical quality about your Boise State Broncos this year, maybe because you bought all the saint candles in Walmart before the season and light them all at once before every game. It was worth the fire insurance premiums.

When gameday arrives, a calm passes over your team. Destiny awaits. She is holding the door open for you as part of her internship requirement with the BCS. You lead your team out the door and onto the field where 90,000 screaming fans greet you, but no Alabama. Turns out, the NCAA is taking this oversigning thing seriously, and the roster of the Crimson Tide has been suspended one game, this game. The South Alabama Jaguars were not doing anything this weekend, so they have showed up in Alabama's stead. You win 56-0.

Congratulations on your national championship! Sports Illustrated features you on the cover of their next issue, and you do appearances on the Today Show, David Letterman, and Conan O'Brien over the next few days. Donald Trump brings you onto the next Celebrity Apprentice where you have it out with Milli Vanilli over manufacturing overhead.

The Los Angeles Bros (formerly the Jacksonville Jaguars) have offered you a job as their new coach. You accept.

You go 2-14 your first season because the NFL is hard. But you get better.

THE END

[Start over.](#)

Page 103.

As a resident of planet earth, you are showed the final Top Ten of the BCS rankings:

1. Alabama (12-1)
 2. USC (12-1)
 3. Ohio State (12-1)
 4. LSU (10-2)
 5. Boise State (12-0)
 6. Florida State (12-1)
 7. Georgia (9-3)
 8. Nebraska (9-3)
 9. South Carolina (8-4)
 10. Notre Dame (6-6)
- NR - Louisiana Tech (12-0)

Yes, you did drop in the polls despite winning your final game. The BCS is a jerk like that.

Fortunately, by courtesy of your being ranked No. 5 and the highest non-BCS team in the country, you get to go to a BCS bowl, even if none of them want you. The Orange Bowl begrudgingly draws the short stick and pairs you against Florida State. The game will receive the highest Orange Bowl ratings in the history of the Orange Bowl, just FYI.

During preparation for the game, the NCAA launches an investigation into your program, specifically your practice of going in on a group birthday card for player birthdays. The NCAA discovers that, when you split up the birthday card cost among everyone who signed it, you spent five cents per card and 10 cents for the cards that sing annoying songs when you open them. Per the NCAA, you have broken NCAA rules by being thoughtful.

The NCAA is willing to ignore the five-cent charges and only prosecute you for the singing birthday cards. Turns out you only sent one singing birthday card, to D.J. Harper, because he turned 30 (you thought, since he has been at Boise State for years now).

You wish to mitigate the penalties against your team by coming up with self-imposed sanctions.

If you forfeit your upcoming bowl game, vacate the past four years of wins and championships, and agree to harsher birthday-card-related oversight, [turn to page 110](#).

If you publicly apologize but with your fingers crossed, [turn to page 105](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 105.

The NCAA accepts your public apology, especially after Congress steps in and tells the NCAA it is being asinine.

This whole NCAA investigation has been a distraction, but you feel confident in your chances in the Orange Bowl what with your playing an ACC team and all. Sure enough, your confidence is met when you storm out to a 21-10 lead at halftime. Joe Southwick has two touchdown passes and the publicly exonerated D.J. Harper (turns out the card was addressed to Doug Harper, % Mark Johnson) has 50 yards and a score.

As you come out of the tunnel for the second half, a horse war breaks out between Willy, the Boise State horse, and Renegade, the Florida State horse. Joe Southwick gets caught in the middle. A horse hoof stomps his right ankle and he falls to the Orange Bowl turf. Trainers rush to his aid.

It does not look good for Southwick. Your defense takes the field first to start the second half, so you have extra time to decide what to do. Should you burn Nick Patti's redshirt and hope he can hold onto the lead and the Orange Bowl win? Or do you throw Southwick back out there and hope his ankle doesn't combust?

If you burn Nick Patti's redshirt, [turn to page 33](#).

If you keep Joe Southwick in the game, [turn to page 14](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 106.

Van Ginkel kicks the ball straight and true, but he was aimed about five yards too far to the right. The ball sails wide, and he immediately regrets winking because it's kind of creepy and because it didn't actually work.

You lose the Orange Bowl.

In the postgame press conference, you are asked about Nick Patti's redshirt and if you regret the decision. You say no.

Three years later, Patti puts the finishing touches on a fantastic season that ends with his being a runner-up for the Heisman Trophy. Everyone wishes that he could come back for another year, but he can't because you burned his redshirt for, what, 30 minutes of football during his freshman year?

You are nicknamed Fire Guy (for burning the redshirt; people can be cruel and clever). You move to Seattle and start a post hardcore band. You're not entirely sure what post hardcore is, but apparently it helps not to know.

THE END

[Start over.](#)

Page 107.

The Poinsettia Bowl matchup between you and Navy is billed as a battle of future Big East rivals - a tagline that is pulled soon after when someone points out that the Big East might not exist when Navy plans on joining in 2015. New tagline: "Boise State vs. Navy - Big East rivals skeptical question mark."

Your loss to Nevada in the regular season finale still stings, so you are not surprised that the team has come out with a purpose against Navy. J.C. Percy and the Bronco defense hold the Midshipmen to five yards rushing and -5 yards passing for the game for a grand total of zero yards of forward progress. Navy scores a safety when a Bronco field goal doinks so hard off the goalpost that it goes out the back of the opposite end zone. Joe Southwick finds Matt Miller for two touchdowns, D.J. Harper adds a pair of scores, and the second stringers go nuts in the fourth quarter. Final score 54-2.

After bowl season concludes, Mark Schlabach's way, way, way too early - I mean ridiculously early - Top 25 for 2013 puts you at No. 10. That's a lot of pressure to live up to, so you graciously quit football and open a cupcake shop. (You spell shop with two P's and an E.)

THE END

[Start over.](#)

Page 108.

The past two months have been a blur.

Joe Southwick is being praised in the media for the work he has done at quarterback. You get no credit because everyone thought he was going to be the starter anyway.

Lee Hightower is on everyone's short list for All-America.

D.J. Harper surpassed 1,000 yards. He has 20 touchdowns, which is great for your fantasy team and not at all a conflict of interest as your biggest fantasy competitor Just Winn Baby would have people think.

Pete Kwiatkowski was hired, midseason, to be the head coach at Cal and was replaced on staff by the Kwiatkowski robot, a sentient being created by the BSU robotics team that uses an algorithm to call blitzes every single play. It is the world's simplest algorithm.

Boise State has yet to attempt a field goal. You are perfectly fine with this.

Best of all, your team is ranked No. 4 in the country and is one of only three undefeated teams left. The Top Five looks like this:

No. 1 USC (12-0)

No. 2 Alabama (11-1)

No. 3 Ohio State (12-0)

No. 4 Boise State (11-0)

No. 5 LSU (10-2)

If the dominoes fall just right, you could be in the national championship game. Imagine that. Actually, don't imagine that, you will jinx yourself. Imagine elephants instead.

It is now the regular season finale against Nevada. To motivate the team, you show the entire gamefilm from the 2010 meeting between the Broncos and the Wolf Pack, but at the start of the fourth quarter, you become so enraged at what you are about to see that you throw a chair through the TV and burn the DVD player to the ground. You have motivated everyone more than you know, which renders your make-up live-action retelling of the final scene in *Harry Potter 7* rather unnecessary.

Boise State comes out firing on all cylinders and takes a 21-0 lead behind two scores from D.J. Harper and a sack-fumble-fumble recovery-touchdown from Demarcus Lawrence. What could possibly go wrong now?

You spy the out-of-town scoreboard in Mackay Stadium (because Mackay Stadium has about 10 Nevada fans in it). An Ohio State loss or a USC loss or an Alabama loss sure would be nice. It might even put you in the national championship game.

If you take a peek at the scoreboard, [turn to page 12](#).

If you stay focused on the game, [turn to page 113](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 110.

Turns out you overreacted. The NCAA forgets about your case entirely when an exposé is revealed at the University of Idaho. Vandal players have been exchanging Humanitarian Bowl rings for tattoos - cheap, ugly tattoos. Also, every player on the roster is convicted of music piracy because they all just discovered Napster and think it is a game changer. Free Nickelback songs, you guys!

Still, your season is over. No takesy-backsies.

THE END

[Start over.](#)

Page 111.

Drew Wright enters the game for the injured D.J. Harper, and though fans have mini-heart attacks across the stadium at the remembrance of Wright's last crunch-time appearance, Wright does just fine. He is a much better back than people give him credit for, including those bloggers who wrote so many words about Jay Ajayi in the offseason.

Wright's running and not fumbling and Southwick's passing and not brainfarting lead to 21 more Boise State points and a huge Bronco win.

You have won the Mountain West championship!

[GO TO PAGE 100.](#)

[Start over.](#)

Page 112.

Deciding on a quarterback is a lot tougher task than you had imagined. You kind of regret not taking that expert decision-making course taught by Bart Hendricks. Argghh, why did it have to fall on the same weekend as the lavender festival!

Your latest quarterback change does not work. Every QB on your roster is now super anxious that you are going to get trigger happy and pull them after any little mistake, which makes it kind of ironic that their anxiety is causing them to make a ton of mistakes.

The losses mount, and Dan Hawkins' name gets floated as a possible replacement for you. What will you do?

If you change quarterbacks to Ryan Dinwiddie's cousin, [turn to page 57](#).

If you give up because "this is hard," [turn to page 114](#).

[Start over](#).

Page 113.

Though the scoreboard is tempting (it's so much bigger and readable than the one you have at Bronco Stadium!), you remain focused on the game, much to the dismay of Chris Ault who was really hoping for a break.

Southwick and Co. run up the score to 35-0 at the half. You know your mom is watching and she would appreciate it if you did not make the other team feel bad about themselves any more.

If you pull your starters and put in backups, [turn to page 40](#).

If you tell your mom, "No way, Mom, I'm living my own life now," and keep your starters in, [turn to page 91](#).

[Start over](#).

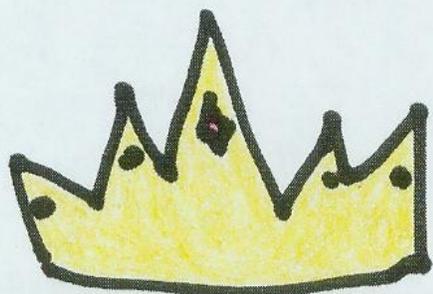
Page 114.

You had a nice run, which is what people say to your face when they don't want to tell you how they really feel about your coaching ability.

Now that you are done coaching, you throw all your energy into appearing on Wheel of Fortune.

THE END

[Start over.](#)



QB

PRE

VIEW

Quarterback

How do you replace the all-time winningest quarterback in college football history? A couple of options:

1. Cloning. Pros: Same guy, don't have to update media guide, Kirby not so lonely. Cons: Ethical dilemma, security wouldn't let me take a Kellen hair sample at a signing event at the Pro Image in the mall
2. Sign Peyton Manning. Opportunity missed.
3. You don't. You simply stop playing football because really what's the point now that you've seen someone do it to perfection?
4. Joe Southwick.

The fourth option is the one that Bronco Nation feared when Kellen Moore threw his last pass last December. *Joe Southwick has no pocket presence! Joe Southwick fumbles like it's going out of style! Joe Southwick is Facebook friends with Jared Zabransky!* These were all completely rational fears that Bronco fans shared in the buildup to spring practice and the opening salvo of The Quarterback Competition to End All Quarterback Competitions. But a funny thing happened on the way to our hating Joe Southwick.

Southwick was less awful than we remembered.

He played competently in the spring game - more than competently if your bar for competence was not fumbling snaps and not throwing interceptions and not leaving the pocket after one-Mississippi and the whisper of a D-lineman. He went 14-for-19 with 145 yards and a scrimmage-winning touchdown. "Those are good stats!" said everyone under their breath as they left the stadium.

The only thing that could stop the Southwick Train after the spring game was the Nick Patti Monorail. The true freshman from Orlando played well enough that the enormous contingent of Patti fans had reason to not stop believin' in a Patti-fueled offense. Kellen Moore started as a freshman. Nick Patti could start as a freshman. Life will be okay!

One summer later, Southwick and Patti remain the leaders in the QB race ... along with Jimmy Laughrea ... and Grant Hedrick ... so yeah we're really no closer to finding out who the starting quarterback is than we were in January. We may think we are, but Coach Pete has told us we are not. He will give the final answer before kickoff on August 31. Probably. Until then, all other answers are guesses.

If spring served to provide anything, it was reassurance. The Boise State offense will be okay with Southwick at the helm. Our personal lives might not be, but the offense will. Nick Patti would be great, Jimmy Laughrea would be interesting, Grant Hedrick would be fun.

Joe Southwick, previously terrible, is now allowable.

No matter who the quarterback is, the Bronco offense will be a more mobile version of itself this year. Each of the four quarterbacks can move in ways that Moore couldn't, specifically "quickly," "athletically," and "fast."

Hedrick is the best runner of the bunch and will likely factor into Wildcat packages regardless of where he falls on the QB depth chart.

Laughrea has the strongest arm, which Jamarcus Russell can tell you is not as helpful as it sounds. He may factor into Hail Mary packages.

Patti gets compared to Moore all the time because both are short and both can pass the lights out. Patti can move, too, so I'm not sure how the comparisons rationalize that.

Southwick does many things well. He doesn't run as well as Hedrick or throw as far as Laughrea or resemble Moore as well as Patti. But he has experience on his side, which is one of Coach Pete's favorite character traits.

All things being equal, I would expect Southwick to get the job based on his familiarity with the offense and his seniority. Those are qualities that Nick Patti cannot easily overcome, not this year at least.

Too bad we can't find a compromise. If I had things my way, I'd take Hedrick's legs and stick them on Nick Patti's eligibility with Jimmy Laughrea's right arm then let Joe Southwick mentor my creation. There are many reasons why I'm not a college football coach; this is one of them.

Patti Rankings

1. Hamburger
2. Nick
3. Chicken
4. Turkey
5. Crabby
6. Sandi
7. Hearst
8. Peppermint

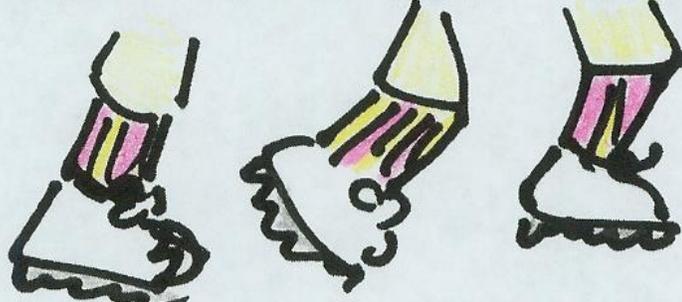
Catty rankings

1. Real Housewives
2. Kardashians
3. Mean girls
4. Corner

RB

PRE

VIEW



Running Back

The America's-Next-Top-Model thinness of the Boise State secondary stole the headlines as the Bronco D struggled down the stretch last year, but lest you get blinded by the is-that-George-Iloka-playing-corner depth on D, remember that the running back position was dangerously shallow when it mattered, too. Doug Martin missed the TCU game. D.J. Harper got nicked up on the final drive. The fates had their way with Drew Wright's ball security.

Boise State had one of the country's Top Ten backfields last season for all but two minutes.

Unfortunate two minutes.

I dredge up these memories to point out that no matter how good you have it at the running back position, you can always have it better. That is the modus operandi of the Boise State offense-builders going forward. Harper returns and will be the offense's Star 1A to Matt Miller's Star 1B. Wright returns as the primary backup, and he has yet to find his probably-very-high ceiling.

After that, the reinforcements arrive.

Redshirt freshman Jay Ajayi came to Boise as the best RB recruit ever for the Broncos. His career highlights have thus far included one torn ACL, several pairs of stolen WalMart sweatpants, and zero career yards or carries. But this year things will be different, says Jay Ajayi and me (me with reservations).

If Ajayi can't provide depth, then the depth will come from either true freshman Jack Fields, true freshman Devan Demas, or both. To oversimplify things, Fields runs like Doug Martin and Demas runs like Jeremy Avery.

If all else fails, 300-pound defensive tackle Michael Atkinson will get 15 halfback dives per game.

The point is Boise State has contingency plans in place this year should the unthinkable be thunk again. There's no way D.J. Harper tears a third ACL during his Boise State career, but if he does, Drew Wright will take a starring role. There's no way Wright contracts fumbleitis again - he took pills for that! - but if he does, Ajayi will have his turn in the backfield. There's no way Ajayi doesn't have enough sweatpants, but if he doesn't, then come on down, Jack Fields and/or Devan Demas.

Options abound for the Broncos in the backfield - solid, stellar, highly-recruited options.

The Broncos just hope they don't have to use too many of them.

D.J. Rankings

1. Harper
2. Roomba

3. Jazzy Jeff
25. Shockley

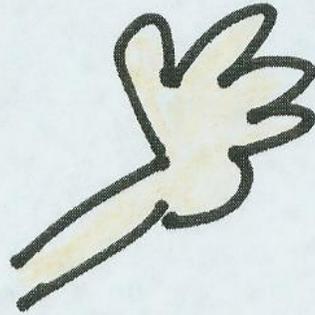
P.J. Rankings

1. Pajamas
2. Schneider
3. Pearl Jam
4. Harvey

B.J. Rankings

1. B.J.'s, the restaurant
2. Surhoff
3. Novak
4. ... and the Bear

WR



PRE

VIEW

Wide Receiver

Where would we be without Matt Miller?

As a redshirt freshman, the former Mr. Football Montana burst onto the scene last year to the tune of 69 catches, 692 yards, and nine touchdowns. He was the second coming of Austin Pettis that Bronco fans wondered would ever come.

Had he not arrived, I think we all would be feeling worse about the Bronco offense right now.

Receivers like Miller make life easier on quarterbacks, and they help well-oiled offensive machines like Boise State's keep running smoothly. You can expect a bit less passing from the Broncos this year due to strengths elsewhere, but with Miller on the outside, there is still the passing game threat that the offense loves to wave around and scare everyone on defense.

Consider all the ways he helps out. (He's like an All-American Mr. Belvedere.)

He will draw double coverage. That leaves single coverage on the crafty Mitch Burroughs, the speedy Dallas Burroughs, and the upside-filled Geraldo Boldewijn.

He can catch a pass when he's not open. There will come a time when TBD Boise State quarterback needs to throw the ball somewhere, anywhere and hope a receiver can make a play. Miller can make those plays.

He can get a first down when you need one. This may be his best quality. That, and politeness.

He can play all the wide receiver positions. This was his offseason project, and for good reason. The thought of lining up Miller anywhere is a scary one for opposing defenses. Imagine a poor, misguided nickel corner covering the diminutive Chris Potter one play, the beefy Kirby Moore the next, and then finishing the trifecta with Miller putting on a shake-and-bake clinic as he runs willy-nilly-free down the field for a score. Spoiler alert: The poor, misguided nickel corner plays for BYU, hopefully.

Miller's abilities will make life easier on whoever Boise State's new quarterback is, and the various skills of his wide receiver supporting cast could turn the position into a team strength. There is experience in Burroughs The First (Mitch) and Potter. There is potential in Burroughs The Second (Dallas) and Troy Ware. There is excitement with Moore and Boldewijn. Boise State's receiving corps continues to reload with new talent year after year. We are a year removed from asking, "Who will replace Austin Pettis and Titus Young?" We have our answer for "who will replace Tyler Shoemaker."

Thankfully, we've got three more seasons before we have to ask, "Who will replace Matt Miller?"

Matt Rankings

1. Damon
2. Lauer

3. Dillon
4. Miller
5. "Jump to conclusions" mat
10. Hasselbeck
500. LeBlanc

Hat rankings

1. Baseball
2. Top
3. Sombrero
4. Fedora
5. Kentucky Derby
99. Trucker

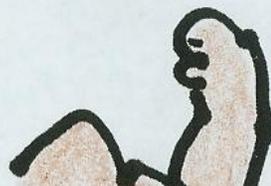
Cat rankings

1. Cat in the Hat
2. Garfield
3. Mr. Fiskers

TE

PRE

VIEW



Tight End

To be a Bronco tight end, you must do one of two things well, or both of two things if you are a brown-noser with NFL aspirations. Either a) you must be a threat in the passing game, capable of lining out wide or beating a linebacker or safety one-on-one, or b) you must block people as if you are an extra lineman except cooler because, hey, maybe they'll throw a pass to you if you're completely wide open and no one else is looking and you're up by 30 points.

Gabe Linehan is the team's token pass-catching tight end. He scored five touchdowns last year playing behind Kyle Efaw, so imagine what he can do as a full-time target. I just imagined, and here's what I saw: 500 yards, eight scores, and a commemorative ankle tattoo of two dogs high-fiving (push the ankles together to see them high five).

Linehan's brother in arms will be Chandler Koch, a tight-end-turned-fullback-turned-tight-end. Koch blocks well, which will earn him tons of playing time albeit not ladies.

And when Koch gets tired of blocking, fullback Dan Paul will take some reps.

Miscellaneous other tight ends include Connor Peters (blocker), Holden Huff (catcher), Kyle Sosnowski (blocker/catcher), and Jake Hardee (redshirt freshman, so I don't know).

Absent from this list is a do-it-all tight end, but the Broncos will get by. There are enough variations in scheme and formation that a plethora of parts beats a one-deep depth chart. Better to have too much of a good thing than one of a great thing.

End Rankings

1. The
2. Dead
3. Tight
4. Rear

Bend Rankings

1. Oregon

Lend Rankings

1. Money Tree

OL

PRE

VIEW



Offensive Line

It has been four years since a left tackle at Boise State has had as much pressure as Faraji Wright will have this fall.

Kellen Moore's blindside was his right, letting the left tackle off the hook for the type of blindside hits that Joe Theismann would very much like to tell you about and show you about if you have a few minutes and a computer dongle. Left tackles, football's figurative keymasters, have been nothing more than outside guards for the past five years at Boise State.

New responsibilities are one obstacle, and new shoes to fill are the other. Nate Potter's left tackle spot is the only one on the offensive line that will be without a starter from last year. The four others, to varying degrees, have experience.

Wright, then, is not only tasked with making sure Joe Southwick or Nick Patti doesn't get maimed but also with living up to or at least right near the expectations of an NFL-caliber former Bronco. Quick! Somebody stop him! He's running for the exits!

For what it's worth, coaches and players have said all the right things about Wright this offseason. He has potential, he shows leadership, he wears a cowboy collar that instantly makes him 50 percent cooler (the collar is due to a history of neck stingers, but I wouldn't blame him for wearing it as a fashion statement). He performed well throughout spring football when many of his linemates were resting their aching bones. There is no reason to fear Faraji Wright cannot handle the left tackle job except for the fact that none of us have seen Faraji Wright handle the left tackle job before. The unknown is a nub.

Fortunately for the Broncos, Wright's left tackle spot is really the only question mark. The other O-line spots are a series of exclamation points and periods.

Charles Leno is one of those exclamation points. O-line coach Chris Strausser expects him to follow in the illustrious line of great Boise State tackles - names like Potter and Clady and Colledge. He will be expected to hold down the right side with no mistakes. In fact, Strausser may forget he's out there for long stretches of the game.

Guard Joe Kellogg is a preseason all-MWC pick because he's been starting for three years now and been playing really well when he's in. He and Jake Broyles were Boise State's starting guards for three games last season before a toe injury claimed Broyles as its victim.

Cory Yriarte, all two rebuilt ACLs and all, will return at center and, should any ills or knee pain befall him, Matt Paradis is a more than capable fill in.

In fact, the Bronco depth at the position is simply incredible. Behind Kellogg and Broyles lurks Spencer Gerke who started two games last year. Former right tackle Michael Ames (who opened the 2009 season in the starting lineup) is now an option at guard. Brenel Myers, who many thought would be the next Ryan Clady including me but what do I know I thought Jeremy Avery would be a better back than Doug Martin, was a Fiesta Bowl starter and can play anywhere but center.

The Boise State offensive line is a strength of the 2012 team, and when your line is a strength, good things will happen. This is what I keep telling myself every time I am reminded of the 2012 NFL Draft.

Leno Rankings

1. Charles
- 2,001. Jay

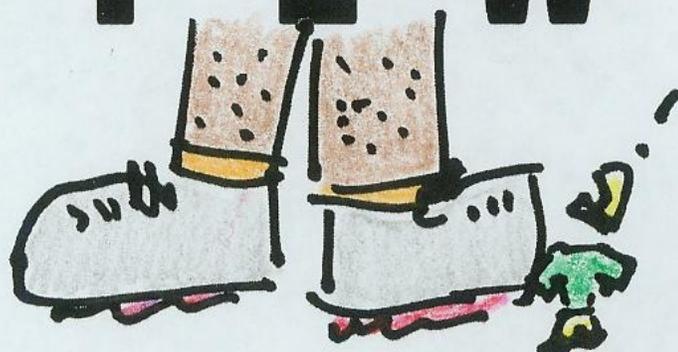
Steno Rankings

1. Pad
2. -graphy

DL

PRE

VIEW



Defensive Line

When you lose five defensive linemen in one year to the NFL Draft, you have to be doing something right. You also might be doing something wrong because, hey, look, no defensive linemen!

You can either view Boise State's D-line situation as the glass being half full or half empty, and we'll find out this year which way is right. (Alternate answer: it's Crystal Pepsi so who knows!)

If the glass is half full, then Boise State's proclivity for creating stellar defensive linemen will continue, and the Broncos will reload with a line-shift of future pro stars. There are already some signs that this is possible. Mike Atkinson and Ricky Tjong-A-Tjoe would have been starters by now if it weren't for Billy Winn and Chase Baker being so incredible. Bacon and Dutch Bacon can play at a level where you may not even notice a dropoff in the interior of the D-line.

In the spring, Demarcus Lawrence and Sam Ukwuachu turned heads with their aggressive, attacking play. Lawrence, a JUCO transfer, has been named the Next Great Boise State Transfer in unofficial ceremonies across Bronco Nation. Ukwuachu is exciting because he plays like a video game player you created to be really small and just run around people and get sacks all the time.

That's the glass-half-full mentality. Here's the glass-half-empty.

As you may expect, there are inherent dangers in graduating your top five defensive linemen. Who's going to start the next year is the question that gets the most attention. A follow-up to that, and the real risk in mass D-line attrition, is the question of depth.

Boise State's best four defensive linemen can play as well as any group in the Mountain West, but it has been a long time since Boise State was only interested in playing four defensive linemen. The Broncos routinely go eight-deep. Are there even eight defensive linemen left?

Darren Koontz should play opposite the Lawrence / Ukwuachu pairing. He's solid. Greg Grimes has been itching for a chance at playing time. Now is his time to scratch.

The rest of the Bronco D-line cupboard is a wildcard with the saving grace being line coach and defensive coordinator Pete Kwiatkowski's track record of turning big-boned boys into wrecking machines. Jeff Worthy, perhaps? Robert Ash, perchance? We'll see.

Installing a completely new set of defensive linemen has its benefits and its risks, and we won't know until the season starts which will rise to the fore. If you see Michigan State running backs bursting through holes the size of small Great Lakes, you'll have your answer. If you see Bronco linemen pitching tents and roasting marshmallows in the Spartan backfield, you'll have your answer, and you'll be a lot less stressed, I'd imagine.

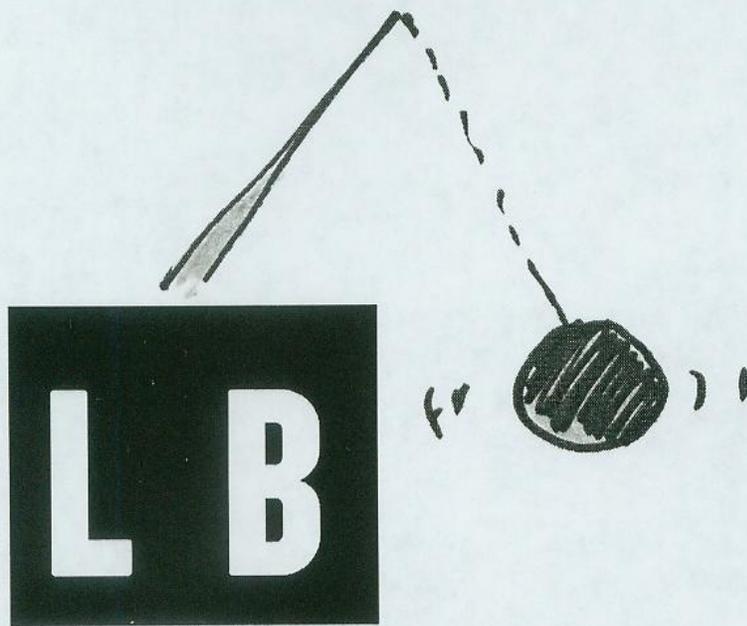
Bacon Rankings

1. The food

2. Sir Francis
3. Kevin
450. Canadian

Taken Rankings

1. The one with Liam Neeson



**PRE
VIEW**

Linebacker

If Blake Renaud is the second coming of Korey Hall, then I must not be remembering Korey Hall right. Was Hall 6'2", 250 pounds? Did the earth move when he ran downhill toward a running back? Could you fit a small Inuit village in his shadow? It's been awhile. I'm fuzzy on the details.

Nevertheless, Renaud may very well be the closest thing Boise State has had to Hall since the face of Glens Ferry took home WAC MVP honors six years ago. There have been flashes of linebacker brilliance since (Kyle Gingg and Byron Hout come to mind), but never the irresistible force of a true defensive leader at the linebacker position.

Renaud may be that irresistible force.

J.C. Percy could be it, too, which makes this year's Boise State linebacker position one of the more exciting spots on the team. There is little depth behind Percy and Renaud and Tommy Smith, but the cream at the top might be so good that it won't matter.

Percy, in the opinion of many, is one of Boise State's best defenders. He is dependable and rugged and could get 50 tackles in his sleep (apologies in advance, innocent sheep).

The only reason Percy is not the main attraction in the Bronco linebacking corps is that Renaud effervesces the potential to be an all-time great. We know what we will get with J.C. Percy, and we love it. We know what we *might* get from Blake Renaud, and it keeps us up at night with glee.

To appreciate Renaud is to see him in person, which 17,000 of us got to do at the spring game. He is large in a way that is both dense and spacious. When you hear he weighs 250 pounds, you say, "Yeah, that seems about right," but honestly, you wouldn't have been surprised if he was 270. And then Renaud will take your observations about people his size (you can outrun him, he eats at Carl's Jr. a lot) and turn them on their head. In one stunning highlight, he filled a passing lane and grabbed an interception, taking his big frame from zero to faster-than-he-should-be-able-to-run in no time whatsoever. He was a motoring train headed for the sideline - the sideline instead of the end zone because those were innocent teammates who might have to tackle him and he has a heart after all.

Plays like these are what Bronco fans will expect from Renaud this year, or next year, or some time before his Boise State eligibility is up. For some reason, linebacker hype has always been instilled in us. Derrell Acrey was the last to earn our proclamation of greatness and he didn't exactly make good on it.

Renaud feels different. Or do we say that every time?

Blake Rankings

1. Lively
2. Griffin

3. Renaud

Bake Rankings

1. Shake And
2. E-Z
3. Clam

Cake Rankings

1. The food
2. The band



N

PRE

VIEW

Nickel

Ellis Powers and Winston Venable made the nickel position at Boise State into a fan favorite and a difference maker. Last year, the nickel position was just a small linebacker. Or a big corner. Depends on where you were sitting.

For the first time since the 4-2-5 became Boise State's base defense, the nickel position lacked a dynamic star. Hunter White, Jonathan Brown, Dextrell Simmons, and Corey Bell filled the spot admirably, but there were no fireworks. No Fresno State quarterbacks tasted the pain of a flying suplex, and it just didn't feel right.

I don't know if things will change this year, either.

The current cast of nickel candidates is a group of solids, if unspectaculars. Corey Bell appears to be the man to beat for the starting role, and the sophomore could very well end up some day as one of most feared players on the Bronco defense. Maybe not this year, though.

Jonathan Brown is the biggest hitter. Dextrell Simmons is the most like Winston Venable. Hilton Richardson is the most unknown. And Bell, someday, maybe this fall, maybe next, will be the total package.

So if this year is doomed to be another without an impact player at Boise State's impact position, what does that mean for the Boise State defense? Can the defense survive with a good nickel and not a great nickel?

Last year, the Broncos got it done with the unique talents of Shea McClellin who provided flexibility for the front seven and served as a playmaker who could move pretty much anywhere and still make plays. McClellin is obviously not around anymore, and his playmaking may be what the Boise State defense has the hardest time replacing this fall. If the nickel does not produce plays, then the plays have to come from somewhere else. If the plays don't come from anywhere else, then the D is in trouble.

It is entirely possible that someone else on defense fills that Superman-shaped hole. Blake Renaud maybe. Jamar Taylor possibly. And if that happens, the Boise State defense can dominate like it's 2010.

If not, then I think the pressure for dynamic play from the nickel spot becomes all the more intense. We fans demand our comically big hits.

Nickel Rankings

1. The precious metal
2. The coin
3. Wooden
- 1,000,000. Nickelback

Pickle Rankings

1. Dill

2,000,000. Sweet

CB



PRE

VIEW

Cornerback

The cornerback travails of 2011 are behind us, and I wish to talk about them (and therefore cry about them) no more. We have turned the page. We have moved on. We have said way too many regrettable things about Casey Pachall.

This year is a new year ... so long as Jamar Taylor and Jerrell Gavins stay healthy.

If Taylor and Gavins can avoid injury, the Boise State secondary will be one of the best in the conference, if not the entire Western United States and probably Canada. Gavins was headed toward an All-America year before a practice knee injury. Taylor played well throughout the season, and his absence (in the games I just told myself I wouldn't talk about) was noticeable.

Depth behind the starters didn't really change much over the offseason. The one notable difference is that Quaylon Ewing-Burton is no longer on the team. The rest are the same fill-ins from last year: Ebo Makinde, Bryan Douglas, Josh Borgman. Boise State is hoping, then, that experience and maturity will turn last year's problem into this year's blessing. At the very least, no one should bite on double moves ever again! (There I go talking about that game I said I wouldn't talk about. It's a sickness!)

The spring proved positive for the cornerbacks as Coach Pete praised the secondary as making significant strides. A depth chart of Taylor, Gavins, Makinde, and Douglas could compete - and compete well - against any pass-happy attack in the country, much less the pass-happy attacks in the Mountain West.

Were this two or three seasons ago, there would be no worries whatsoever with two all-conference corners and two backups with starting experience. But Bronco fans have felt the sting of injuries harsher than they have in years. Take Taylor and/or Gavins out of the mix, and it's flashbacks to 2011, Makinde and Douglas are starting, and the Bronco coaching staff is rushing to prep true freshman (this year: Chaz Anderson and Donte Deayon) for playing time.

(This is the point in the preview where I mention the disappointment in the decommitment of four-star cornerback Marcus Rios from this year's Boise State recruiting class. I wonder if things would be different if he were not a waffle.)

There has to come a point where you let go of the fear, trust the growth of the secondary, and just enjoy the ride. Can a depth chart ever be deep enough? Probably not.

Taylor Rankings

1. Swift
2. Zachary
3. Lawrence (1980s)
4. Otis
5. Jamar
98. Lautner

198. Lawrence (current)

Sailor Rankings

1. Ahab
2. Jack Sparrow
3. Columbus
39. Bob

S



PRE

VIEW

Safety

How will Boise State replace Jeron Johnson?

That question was on the minds of many a Boise State football fan last fall, and the answer kind of ended up mattering less and less as the season progressed. To be honest, I don't know that the Broncos ever did replace Jeron Johnson. Cedric Febis literally replaced him in the lineup, but even he missed some time with an illegal Dutch benefits scandal. Losing Jeron Johnson was not the end of the world, like many feared it might be. And yet, I feel compelled to ask ...

How will Boise State replace George Iloka?

The answer, this time, might be more conclusive. Last year the options to replace Johnson were limited, either by ability or by eligibility. Febis was the best player but was only around for a year. Jeremy loane was the people's choice, but he flamed out in the season opener.

This year, the Broncos have a mighty fine backup plan for Iloka. Lee Hightower burst onto the scene as a true freshman safety last year by filling in at cornerback better than most of Boise State's actual cornerbacks. All along he was destined for the safety spot, but his play at corner showed a glimpse of what he could become. If he was that comfortable on an island at corner, how great would he be roaming the middle of the field at safety? If he can hit someone that hard by standing still in the flats, what kind of damage will he inflict with a head start?

Hightower is so potentially special, in fact, that the question of "how will the Broncos replace George Iloka" is hardly being asked. And this was a guy who started for four years and was one of the five best to ever play the position at BSU. We think a true sophomore can handle that? Yup.

Opposite Hightower will be the aforementioned loane, which is both a thrilling and terrifying thought. Thrilling as it is, loane came to Boise State as one of the most celebrated recruits in school history because he chose Boise State over Notre Dame. Terrifying, because he has had opportunities for playing time ever since he stepped on campus two years ago, and he has yet to play well enough to keep any of them.

We take for granted that Hightower and loane will start, though I imagine it's conceivable that Bronco coaches could choose otherwise. The pool of safety candidates is not very well-known, but conceivably loaded with possibilities. The cupboard includes senior Hazen Moss and a bunch of freshmen - Eric Agbaroji, Taylor Loffler, Darian Thompson, and Dillon Lukehart. If there is a diamond in the rough, someone will have to remove a lot of rough in Fall Camp. The jobs would appear to be Hightower's and loane's to lose.

Overall, the pairing of Hightower and loane has the appearance of something special. It is a duo you would put together 100 times out of 100 if you were going off of nothing more than potential. How that potential turns out once the season starts remains to be seen, and if Jeron Johnson's case study is any indication, it may not matter. We may not even notice.

Tee Rankings

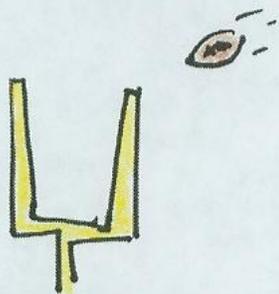
1. Shirts
2. Ball
3. Times
4. Mr.
10. Martin

Lee Rankings

1. Robert E.
2. Trevino
3. Bruce
65. Hightower
- 385,000. Kevan

Zee Rankings

1. The letter
2. The dog
7. Zabransky



ST

PRE

VIEW

Special Teams

Any discussion of Boise State special teams begins with kickers and ends in tears.

Dan Goodale, Michael Frisina, the Great White Hope Jake Van Ginkel, and the Great White Hope (Alternate) Sean Wale will compete this fall for the chance to not blow any more games by shanking makeable kicks. Who knows who is in the lead. The spring game was a veritable comedy of kicking errors, except no one found it funny other than the weirdos who laugh when they mean to cry.

The people wanted Van Ginkel until they saw him kick this spring. They may have changed their minds. The people definitely do not want Goodale or Frisina unless Coach Pete can guarantee beyond a shadow of a doubt that either kicker is the right kicker. The chances of that happening at this point are slim since Sean Wale, recruited as a punter, is now all of a sudden in the placekicking competition.

It may be another season of going for it on fourth down all the time, which isn't necessarily a bad thing.

The Broncos should be fine in all other aspects of special teams, even without the tutelage of special teams coach Jeff Choate. Returners Mitch Burroughs, Chris Potter, D.J. Harper, Jerrell Gavins, and anyone else fast you can think of will break at least one or two returns for touchdowns this year. Punter Trevor Harman should step in for better-than-expected Brad Elkin with little drop-off. Harman has a catapult for a leg, so the biggest difference may be a trade-off of length for accuracy. Coverage may be the one area where Choate's absence is felt the most, but Boise State has enough athletes up and down the roster to mask the mistakes of a few guys not running downfield in their lanes.

The real onus will be on the kickers to perform when called upon. There is not the same pressure to go undefeated as in years past, but all the same, this season can turn just as easily from 10-2 to 8-4 in a matter of wide rights.

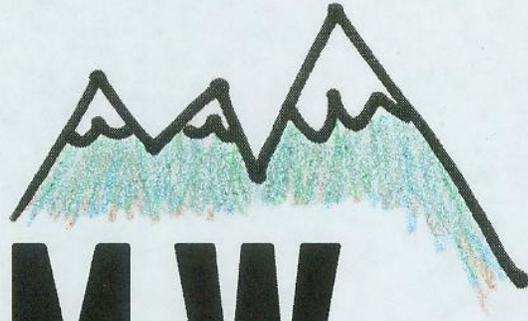
It's terrifying to rely so much on a well-placed foot to a well-held ball, but that's football for you. I can understand why the Broncos liked beating teams by 40-burgers instead.

Kicker Rankings

1. Jan Stenerud
2. Morten Andersen
14. Garbage-picking field-goal-kicking Philadelphia phenomenon
928. Ray Finkle

Ticker Rankings

1. Heart
2. NYSE
3. ESPN Bottom Line



MW

PRE

VIEW

Mountain West Preview

The Mountain West Conference has seen better days, like when Utah, BYU, and TCU were around instead of Fresno, Hawaii, and Nevada. The conference swapped football skill for football survival, which is one reason why Boise State has sought sanctuary elsewhere (the Big East) beginning next season.

The MWC is a conference in transition, which helps teams like Boise State who are transitioning in quite a bit of places themselves. Due to the wholesale changes in many Mountain West locales this offseason, almost every team has reason to be optimistic about their chances of competing – even New Mexico? Eh, let 'em dream.

What follows is an optimistic, pessimistic, and realistic view on how the season could shake out for each of the Mountain West's 10 teams.

Air Force

Best case: The triple option and 3-4 defense help make up for the serious attrition all up and down the roster. Air Force hovers around bowl eligibility like, well, an Air Force plane or something.

Worst case: The wholesale upheaval of the depth chart causes the Falcons to take a step back, way back, like into Hawaii-Colorado State territory. It is a strange, dark, cold place.

Likely: With some winnable home games on the schedule, the personnel losses hurt, but they don't maim. Troy Calhoun squeezes six wins out of thin air.

Boise State

Best case: Losing half a team of starters to the NFL is not as bad as you might think. Broncos reload, not rebuild, and pick up where they left off – undefeated, in a BCS bowl, slighted by Mark May.

Worst case: The next Kellen Moore does not live up to the name, Broncos play close games and lose close games, the New Mexico Bowl comes calling.

Likely: A talented roster and weak MW make for easy conference championship pickings and borderline BCS quality football. Broncos get no worse than Vegas Bowl, no better than Fiesta.

Colorado State

Best case: The Rams ride Chris Nwoke and the running game to borderline bowl eligibility. Jim McElwain wins coach of the year because no one thought bowl eligibility was even an option.

Worst case: Offseason defections and expulsions prove too much to overcome, and the Rams join New Mexico and UNLV as serfs in the caste system of Mountain West teams.

Likely: An easy schedule (North Dakota State = fourth toughest opponent?) makes the final record look better than the play on the field. CSU will take it. No complaints here.

Fresno State

Best case: Derek Carr wins MW POY, Tim DeRuyter wins coach of the year, and the Bulldogs win the Mountain West championship. Pat Hill eats his feelings at a Napa Valley Wendy's.

Worst case: The fastbreak offense breaks because the receivers don't step up and the line doesn't block, and Fresno finds itself wallowing in a sty of unmet expectations. The media regrets its decision to praise prematurely.

Likely: Carr and RB Robbie Rouse lead a Top 25 offense, DeRuyter's defense makes plays, and the Bulldogs finish second in the Mountain West. Things look up for next year because no Boise State.

Hawaii

Best case: New head coach Norm Chow rides RB Joey Iosefa and an opportunistic defense to bowl eligibility, with upsets of some MW elites along the way. Hawaii renames an island after him.

Worst case: Inexperience along the O-line sinks a sinkable passing attack, and UH falls to the bottom of the conference. They become BFFs with New Mexico.

Likely: A weak schedule (Lamar *and* South Alabama?) makes bowl eligibility practically a given, and Hawaii goes Hawaii Bowling no matter how good the team actually is.

Nevada

Best case: A healthy Cody Fajardo and a made-for-TV Brandon Wimberly lead a Top Ten Nevada offense to double digit wins, and a MW title. Enjoy the Vegas Bowl, suckers.

Worst case: An injured Cody Fajardo gives way to a string of Joe Q. Publics who run the Nevada offense into the ground. The Pack are one of those 7-6 bowl teams everyone loathes.

Likely: Fajardo plays well enough and long enough to make Nevada the MW's 1b to Boise State's 1a. No conference championship, but a P-Bowl ain't half bad.

New Mexico

Best case: Sacrificial lambs Texas State and Texas Southern don't fight back, and New Mexico's defense finds a way to top UNLV or Colorado State in-conference. Four wins = parade.

Worst case: Injuries magnify the kiddie-pool depth on the UNM roster, and Bob Davie's miracle turnaround begins where Mike Locksley's ended - the bottom of the NCAA in everything

Likely: An attacking defense and a move-the-chains offense turn New Mexico from a laughingstock to an inside joke. The Lobos don't finish last in the MWC. Congrats.

San Diego State

Best case: New QB Ryan Katz and new half-of-defense turn out to be better than expected, leading the Aztecs to the top tier of the MW. The P-Bowl is more than happy to host.

Worst case: Losing a starting RB and starting QB and a whole D-line is never good (except for BSU, right? Right?), and the losses on the depth chart turn to losses on the field. SDSU misses a bowl game.

Likely: A sturdy defense and an offense that stays out of its own way are enough to capitalize on an easy schedule and take the Aztecs back to a bowl. It's the Armed Forces Bowl, but still.

UNLV

Best case: Being the best of the worst Mountain West teams is a title that UNLV would gladly accept. A realistic ceiling is four wins from general improvement, RB Tim Cornett, and black magic.

Worst case: Not having a passing offense turns out to be a bad thing (who knew?), and UNLV struggles to hang with any team on its schedule, even Northern AZ at home. No wins.

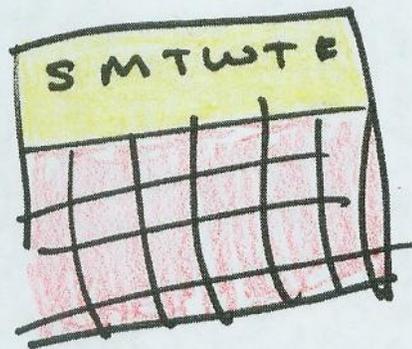
Likely: Three wins is possible with an inexperienced roster of possibly-bad players and a third-year coach whose coaching ability remains a mystery.

Wyoming

Best case: With its most talented team in the Dave Christensen era, the Cowboys threaten double-digit wins and a MW title. Vegas Bowl does not negotiate with terrorists. UW goes to Poinsettia.

Worst case: Fumble luck and close games do not go Wyoming's way, and the Cowboys struggle to stay at .500. Christensen stops buying Lotto tickets.

Likely: QB Brett Smith makes few mistakes, the UW defense forces mistakes from others, and Wyoming goes bowling for the third time in four years. Maybe even not the New Mexico bowl this time!



SCHEDULE OVER VIEW

Schedule Preview

@ Michigan State

Friday, August 31, 6:00 p.m. MT, ESPN

Opening the season with your toughest game is not generally good advice, but it has worked for the Broncos in the past (Georgia, Virginia Tech, Oregon). Never underestimate the ability of Coach Pete and crew to outcoach the opposition when given eight months to do so. Also don't underestimate the Big Ten road game as being hard on all the new Bronco starters.

BYE

vs. Miami (OH)

Saturday, Sept 15, 2:00 p.m., NBC SN

The RedHawks will not be the pushover that Bronco Nation might expect, but they will still topple pretty easily if Boise State gives them a hearty shove. Miami QB Zac Dysert will be fun to watch ... fail!

vs. BYU

Thursday, Sept 20, 7:00 p.m., ESPN

Boise State wasted no time getting through its Best Of games on the schedule, did they? BYU is expected to be one of the top non-BCS teams in the country. Boise State's two-game home winning streak will be on the line.

@ New Mexico

Saturday, Sept 29, 4:00 p.m., TBA

Bob Davie brings Lobo football to Boise and the results will be, how do you put this nicely, lopsided? UNM can make plays, but they can un-make them just as easily. Expect a big Bronco win and a smattering of pity Lobo highlights.

@ Southern Miss

Saturday, Oct 06, TBA, FSN

This game would have been scarier against last year's 12-2 SoMiss team. It's still pretty scary. Hattiesburg is a long way away, and experienced offensive lines and terrorizing DEs are generally best to avoid (by playing in the Mountain West? /rimshot).

vs. Fresno State

Saturday, Oct 13, 1:30 p.m., NBC SN

No more Pat Hill means a new era for Fresno State football. Or not. We'll know more when October arrives, but this year's Bulldogs tea - on the arm of Derek Carr and the legs of Robbie Rouse - could be 5-1 when they arrive in Boise. Or 2-4. Really, no idea.

vs. UNLV
Saturday, Oct 20, 1:30 p.m., NBC SN

The Rebs' first visit to Bronco Stadium will be fun for everyone except the Rebs. Boise State should be hitting its stride by now, and all the miracles Tim Cornett and Caleb Hering have won't be enough for the upset.

@ Wyoming
Saturday, Oct 27, 1:30 p.m., CBS SN

The Broncos will face one of the MW's best quarterbacks when Brett Smith gets his second crack at BSU. His first crack was a whiff, but he gets a pass for being a freshman. No excuses this time. He'll have high winds, thin air, and ugly uniforms (or awesome uniforms?) on his side.

vs. San Diego State
Saturday, Nov 03, 8:30 p.m., CBS SN

Don't let a lack of Ronnie Hillman or Ryan Lindley fool you. SDSU can find ways to score, especially now that head coach Rocky Long can see the Bronco players on the blue turf.

@ Hawaii
Saturday, Nov 10, 5:00 p.m., NBC SN

It would be best to play Hawaii early as their rebuilt squad might have its legs by November, but this trip to the islands should still be a vacation. Norm Chow is smart, but he's not omnipotent.

vs. Colorado State
Saturday, Nov 17, 1:30 p.m., NBC SN

If CSU is not yet looking forward to 2013 by this point, they will once Boise State gets finished with them. The possibility exists that the Rams could be trying for bowl eligibility, but a great possibility exists that they really, really won't.

BYE

@ Nevada
Saturday, Dec 01, TBA, ABC/ESPN

Everyone expects the MW championship to be decided here, and who am I to disagree with everyone? I'm not Mark May! The Broncos will be tested by Cody Fajardo and the Pistol and the ghosts of Reno games past. Hopefully they pass the test, for Bronco Nation's vindictiveness I mean.

* - all times Mountain

BOWLS



Bowl Possibilities

Mountain West teams are chosen for bowl games rather than slotted according to where they finish in the conference. Bowls with Mountain West tie-ins have a pecking order of selections. Here they are:

MAACO Las Vegas Bowl - Dec 22 - First choice

Poinsettia Bowl - Dec 20 - Second choice

Armed Forces Bowl - Dec 29 - TBD choice

New Mexico Bowl - Dec 15 - TBD choice

Hawaii Bowl - Dec 24 - Hawaii choice. The Hawaii Bowl gets Hawaii if the Warriors are bowl eligible and not in a BCS game (Ha! as if)

BCS Bowls

After bowls have replaced national championship participants with eligible at-large teams, the selection order in 2013 will go like this:

Fiesta, Sugar, Orange

BCS bowl game dates, for your travel plans:

Rose Bowl - Jan 1

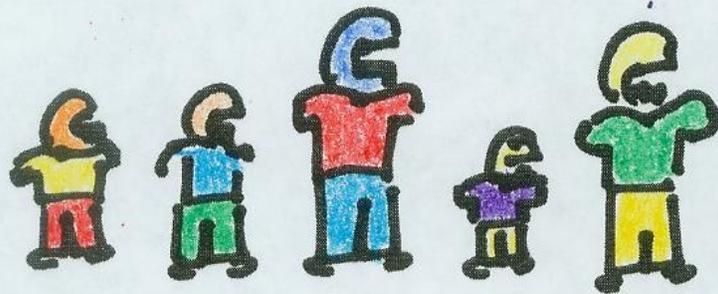
Orange Bowl - Jan 1

Sugar Bowl - Jan 2

Fiesta Bowl - Jan 3

National Championship Game - Jan 7

ROSTER



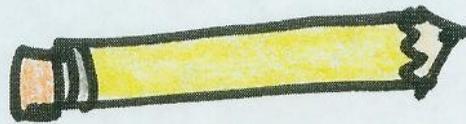
Numerical Roster

No....	Name.....	Pos.....	Ht..	Wt.	Class
2.....	Miller, Matt	WR	6.3.	215	So.
3.....	Potter, Chris	WR	5.9.	160	Sr.
4.....	Gavins, Jerrell	CB	5.9.	169	Sr.
5.....	Taylor, Jamar	CB	5.11....	198	Sr.
6.....	Simmons, Dextrell.....	N.....	5.11....	201	Sr.
7.....	Harper, D.J.	RB	5.9.	205	Sr.
8.....	Patti, Nick.....	QB	5.10....	189.	Fr.
9.....	Hedrick, Grant	QB	6....	191	So.
10.....	Ioane, Jeremy	SS	5.10....	190	So.
13.....	Renaud, Blake.....	MLB... 6.2.	250	So.	
14.....	Harman, Trevor	P	6.3.	215	Jr.
14.....	Laughrea, Jimmy.....	QB	6.1.	201	RFr.
15.....	Jackson, Tyler	WR	6.1.	197	Sr.
16.....	Southwick, Joe	QB	6.1.	192	Jr.
17.....	Boldewijn, Geraldo.....	WR	6.4.	211	Jr.
18.....	Burks, Aaron	WR	6.3.	201	Jr.
18.....	Van Ginkel, Jake.....	K.....	6....	186	RFr.
19.....	Borgman, Josh	CB	5.7.	176	Sr.
20.....	Burroughs, Mitch	WR	5.9.	193	Sr.
No....	Name.....	Pos.....	Ht..	Wt.	Class
23.....	Agbaroji, Eric.....	CB.....	6.1.	201	RFr.
24.....	Moss, Hazen	S.....	6....	203	Sr.
27.....	Ajayi, Jay.....	RB	6....	219	RFr.
28.....	Lukehart, Dillon.....	LB	6....	202	RFr.
29.....	Hightower, Lee.....	DB.....	6.2.	193	So.
32.....	Brown, Jonathan	N.....	5.10....	216.	Jr.
33.....	Smith, Tommy	LB	6.1.	236	Sr.
34.....	Loffler, Taylor.....	S.....	6.3.	210	RFr.
34.....	Moore, Kirby	WR	6.3.	203	Jr.
35.....	Thompson, Darian.....	DB.....	6.1.	195	RFr.
36.....	Gray, Tyler.....	LB	6.4.	225	Fr.
37.....	Makinde, Ebo.....	CB	5.1.	184	Jr.
38.....	Bell, Corey.....	N.....	5.11....	212	So.
39.....	Wright, Drew	RB	5.9.	208	Sr.
41.....	Goodale, Dan	PK	5.1.	189	So.
41.....	Marshall, Kharyee	DE	6.2.	240	Jr.
42.....	Hardee, Jake.....	TE	6.3.	239	RFr.
43.....	Tjong-A-Tjoe, Ricky	DT	6.3.	298	Jr.
44.....	Roberson, Chris	LS	6....	219	Sr.
44.....	Wilson, Jamal.....	FB	5.11....	233	RFr.
45.....	Saxton, Travis	LB	6.1.	221	So.
46.....	Douglas, Bryan	CB	5.9.	168	So.
47.....	Paul, Dan	FB	6.1.	265	Sr.
48.....	Percy, J.C.	LB	6....	223	Sr.
49.....	Richardson, Hilton.....	N.....	6.2.	222	RFr.

53.....	Martin, Beau.....	DL.....	6.2.	255	Jr.
54.....	Ames, Michael	OL	6.4.	293	Sr.
56.....	Kamper, Dustin	LB	6.1.	213	Jr.
58.....	Ash, Robert.....	DL.....	6.3.	280	RFr.
61.....	Kellogg, Joe	OG	6.3.	303	Sr.
62.....	Tozer, Chris.....	OL	6.4.	315	Sr.
63.....	Sheffield, Adam.....	OL	6.3.	323	RFr.
64.....	Myers, Brenel	OG	6.3.	284	Sr.
65.....	Paradis, Matt	DT	6.3.	292	Jr.
67.....	Odhiambo, Rees.....	OL	6.4.	298	RFr.
No....	Name.....	Pos.....	Ht.	Wt.	Class
68.....	Cushing, David	DL.....	6.1.	271	So.
69.....	Horn, Tyler	DE	6.5.	273	So.
71.....	Dohmen, Greg	OL	6.3.	293	So.
72.....	Henry, Marcus.....	OL	6.3.	295	RFr.
74.....	Yriarte, Cory	OL	6.1.	280	Sr.
75.....	Wright, Faraji	OT	6.3.	299	Sr.
76.....	Broyles, Jake	OL	6.5.	295	Jr.
77.....	Gerke, Spencer	OL	6.3.	300	Jr.
78.....	Leno, Charles	OT	6.4.	287	Jr.
80.....	Plinke, Hayden.....	TE	6.4.	240	Fr.
81.....	Burroughs, Dallas.....	WR	5.8.	172	RFr.
82.....	Ukwuachu, Samuel.....	DE	6.4.	218	RFr.
83.....	Ware, Troy	WR	6.2.	192	RFr.
84.....	Frisina, Michael.....	PK	5.5.	158	Sr.
85.....	Huff, Holden	TE	6.5.	220	RFr.
86.....	Sosnowski, Kyle	TE	6.2.	245	So.
87.....	Linehan, Gabe	TE	6.4.	246	Jr.
88.....	Koch, Chandler	TE	6.2.	250	Sr.
89.....	Peters, Connor.....	TE	6.4.	247	So.
91.....	Grimes, Greg	DT	6....	291	Sr.
92.....	Demarcus Lawrence.....	DE.....	6.3.	241	So.
95.....	Koontz, Darren	DT	6.3.	266	Sr.
96.....	Hoyte, Elliot.....	DL.....	6.4.	273	Fr.
98.....	Worthy, Jeff.....	DT	6.3.	280	RFr.
99.....	Atkinson, Michael	DT	6....	311	Sr.
	Anderson, Chaz.....	CB.....	5.10....	164.	Fr.
	Averill, Travis.....	OL	6.4.	270	Fr.
	Baggett, Steven.....	OL	6.3.	225	Fr.
	Barrett, Darien.....	DE.....	6.3.	215	Fr.
	Collins, Chris.....	LB	6.1.	208	Fr.
	Dean, D.J.....	WR	6.1.	180	Fr.
	Deayon, Donte.....	CB.....	5.9.	155	Fr.
	Demas, Devan.....	RB	5.9.	176	Fr.
	Fields, Jack.....	RB	5.1.	196	Fr.
	James, Chancellor.....	S.....	6.2.	190	Fr.
	Lewis, Archie.....	OL	6.4.	255	Fr.
	McCaskill, Sam.....	DE.....	6.3.	230	Fr.
	Nance, Armand.....	FB	6.2.	245	Fr.
	Pint, Andrew.....	LB	6.1.	220	Fr.
	Santini, Christopher.....	S.....	6.1.	208	Fr.

Wale, Sean..... P..... 6.2. 175 Fr.
Weaver, Ben..... LB 6.1. 225 Fr.
Williams-Rhodes, Shane..... WR 5.7. 160 Fr.
Yakoo, Mario..... OL 6.4. 320 Fr.

ESSAYS



Essays

OBNUG roundtable: Kellen's future

*by Drew Roberts and Kevan Lee
originally published February 2012*

Kellen Moore's storied NCAA career is at an end (story illustrated by Maurice Sendak) and his NFL Draft future is uncertain, so I thought we'd be remiss to not at least attempt to analyze Kellen's potential in "the league." Guys that matter (Toddy McShay, Tony Pauline, Wes Bunting) seem to (mostly) like what Kellen Moore has to offer (anticipation, accuracy, awareness) while a few hack writers at Bleacher Report loudly proclaim Moore to be undraftable.

So which "analysts" are right about Moore? The guys paid to do this for a living, or the guys that fulfilled two of the three requirements to write for B/R (working keyboard, Internet connection, ability to make slideshows)? And what of Kellen's NFL future? Will he be a great backup, a future starter, or a Canadian hero? I'm too emotionally invested in Kellen Moore to start this roundtable as I took each Senior Bowl jab at KM personally. What are your thoughts on the matter, Kevan? First person to mention Kellen's height gets a knuckle sandwich!

Kevan:

I think I saw (read?) that Bleacher Report slideshow: "Ten Ways Kellen Moore is Like Danny DeVito." I got halfway through, started getting accosted for not providing an email address, then left.

The Kellen Moore - NFL debate is one that I have had in my head for quite some time now. I've been afraid to have it out loud for fear of my brain saying something my heart resents. Like this: I don't know if Moore will make a good pro quarterback or not. Stupid brain! Shut-y!

I do know this: Kellen Moore will be on an NFL roster in minicamp. That's not saying much, considering Tommy "Touchdown" Brandstater was on an NFL roster, but still. Moore will get his shot at the next level. If the debate is whether or not he'll get drafted, it's hard to say. I understand the logic in saying that all it takes is one team to like him and that team will draft him. But the thing is that a team isn't going to draft a player once that team gets wind that no one else is going to draft the player. That's why rookie free agents exist.

At this point in the roundtable, I'll say Moore will be drafted in the sixth or seventh round
AUUGH MY BRAIN TYPED THAT LAST SENTENCE. HEART SAYS NO. 1 OVERALL!

Drew:

The "Kellen Moore is undraftable" camp seem to be overly hung up on what Kiper-types like to refer to as "measurables," which, in my humble opinion, is exactly what is wrong with the NFL Draft. Allow me to name a few QBs that had "off-the-charts" measurables: Ryan Leaf, Jamarcus Russell, Rick Mirer, Brady Quinn, NATHAN ENDERLE! Forgive me for shouting the last one, but seriously, Nathan Enderle got drafted, a guy with a college completion percentage a full 20 points lower than Kellen's in 2011. A guy who threw just 10 fewer interceptions his freshman year than Kellen threw in his entire career. Lest you think I'm jumping on Enderle because he's a Vandal, I could find dozens of quarterbacks with similar statistics whose only draftable quality was that they were at least 6-foot-4 and possessed a rudimentary knowledge of football. Kellen's a freakin' wizard with a football but doesn't have to stoop to get through doorways, and NFL scouts want nothing to do with him? I just don't buy it. I'm resigned to the fact that many lesser quarterbacks will get the call on draft day(s) before Kellen, but if he slips past the fifth round, I give up.

Kevan:

The NFL likes its measurables and its prototypes because generally those shapes and sizes of players perform the best at the next level. For every Ryan Leaf, there is a Peyton Manning. For every Nathan Enderle, there is a ... John Friesz? Sorry, I'm grasping at straws trying to find a good, pro-caliber Idaho QB.

Point being, the NFL likes to play it safe and cover its bases by picking players based on a Jell-O mold of type. Even still, I don't think Kellen Moore's size alone will prevent him from being drafted as highly as he deserves. The Drew Brees argument is far too valid for teams to simply disregard him completely based on size.

What will hurt Moore the most is his lack of athleticism and his purportedly weak arm strength. Teams will take a flyer on a short quarterback if he has gazelle limbs for legs or a howitzer for an arm. But a career winning percentage in the mythological god range? That's not gonna cut it.

Drew:

Lots of money is at stake, so I see why it's less of a gamble to pick up a quarterback that could play tight end *cough* Tebow *cough* if he doesn't work out under center, but Kellen's game tape should more than assuage any fears teams might have about his command of an offense, or his longevity for that matter—he's not fast, but he rarely gets sacked.

And do you mind if we just dispel the arm-strength myth right here and now? While I have no doubt that being able to throw the ball more than 10 yards is a desirable trait for an NFL QB, scouts act as if quarterbacks are routinely asked to throw from one end zone to the next ... from their knees. Kellen has plenty of arm strength to get the ball downfield. Does he have Favre-like "zip" on his ball? No. He may even float sideline routes from time-to-time, but this is the one

area of Kellen's game he can improve. Look, he's not getting any taller or faster, but I'm sure he can learn or train to put a bit more velocity on the ball. QBs aren't born and then die with the same arm strength. Kellen can fix any strength or mechanical issues he may have. But your dumb 6-foot-6 QBs that already possess cannon arms aren't going to get any less dumb.

Kevan:

There is a certain unquantifiable quality to Moore's game. Precision? Anticipation? Goofiness? I don't know. I can't quantify it.

Unfortunately for Moore, the NFL Draft is a business of quantifying. If it wasn't, then coaches and GMs would go off of game tape and not need to see Kellen Moore in his undies on a scale. The NFL is weird, man. And its weirdness is very deep-rooted and thorough (see: sock height fines).

There is every reason in the world to draft Kellen Moore. I'm afraid that NFL teams will only bother looking at the few reasons not to.

Drew:

I'm afraid of the same thing, Kev, so it looks like this is less of a roundtable and more of a "two dudes sitting at a lunch counter" type situation. Also ... what does "quantifiable" mean?

Postscript: Kellen Moore went undrafted. He signed with the Detroit Lions and will be competing for a job as their third quarterback in training camp.

Roundtable: Who is the star of the 2012 Boise State football team?

*by Kevan Lee and Drew Roberts
originally published February 2012*

The big names are gone from the Boise State roster. No more Kellen Moore. Aloha Iloka. Later smellin', Shea McClellin. The dearth of familiar faces on the Bronco football team leads me to wonder, and when I start wondering, I start emailing my co-blogger Drew, and before you know it, we have ourselves a roundtable.

The topic: Who is the star of the 2012 Boise State football team?

I'll begin, but don't take that as an indication that I have any answers.

Kevan:

When preview magazines and out-of-town newspapers and Andrea Adelson's non-BCS helper monkey write about the 2012 Boise State Broncos, who are they going to feature? A staple of template journalism is the sentence "Team A sure did lose a lot of players from last year's team, but at least they still have what's-his-rump." Who is Boise State's what's-his-rump? I have no idea.

As evidence of my dire straits of hero worship, Mitch Burroughs is in my top ten Boise State stars of 2012, which says a lot about how far I've come as a person, a lot about how Burroughs has evolved as a playmaker, and a lot about the wattage of star power on this reloaded (no one said "rebuilt"!) Boise State football team.

For the record, the rest of my Top Ten includes the following, and yes, I know there are only seven people total:

- D.J. Harper
- Jamar Taylor
- Matt Miller
- Jerrell Gavins
- J.C. Percy
- What's-his-rump starting quarterback

I am leaning toward Harper or Miller being the presumptive star, although I find it a fascinating commentary on the state of Boise State football that the stars of 2012 might be a sophomore wide receiver and a former backup running back.

Drew:

I've put a lot of thought into this question in the five minutes since I read it, and here's my partially, kind of semi-educated guesses.

I'll happily break this down by position because why not have close to a dozen of these to make sure that neither one of us can possibly be wrong? Matt Miller should be the unquestioned star of the WR corps. After all, he was a freshman All-American, he's big, and he doesn't mind going, Frogger-style, into traffic. DJ Harper may get more work this year than he bargained for, and I think he'll be equal to the task. There's a good chance he'll outgain 2011 Doug Martin. QB-to-be-named is going to get the star treatment whether he performs like one or not, so let's pencil this one in (ghost writes "Nick Patti"). I'm not touching the O-line because I value my fingers, and honestly, if an O-lineman is one of your stars, you're coached by Robb Akey.

D-line should be fun. I think that Demarcus Lawrence is going to be a star from day one. I've heard some great things about him and think his skillset will rival Shea McClellin's. At DT, I think that Mike Atkinson will be very disruptive, and not in a law-breaking sort of way. At linebacker,

I'm going to will Blake Renaud to be a star because it's been too long since we've had a dominant force in the middle. Jerrell Gavins will be the star-studded corner if he plays anything like he did through three games last year—knee willing, of course. Lee Hightower has star written all over him at safety...in permanent marker. Probably four of the biggest hits I witnessed last season were by the true frosh (now sophomore), and I expect many more. Finally, I think another big star will emerge at the nickel position a la Winston Venable, and that star's name will be Corey Bell.

These are my picks for the guys that will play at Coach Pete's mythical "high level" and turn heads this season. One or two of the aforementioned will be transcendent and get love on a national stage. Magic 8 ball is cloudy on which, however. Ask again later.

Kevan:

So here's a what-if for you: If the Bronco Shop was having a super sale on all Boise State jerseys and the sale ended today and a rich Uncle Scrooge-type uncle gave you \$50 specifically to spend on Bronco gear, whose jersey would you buy?

(Obvious answer: Marty Tadman's No. 20.)

I'm going with Matt Miller. But ask me again in a couple paragraphs and I'm sure I'll have a different answer for you.

Drew:

So now I have to type a couple paragraphs? Not cool.

If hypothetical Uncle Scrooge descended from his money bin on the outskirts of Duckburg and gave me a wad of cash to spend on that classic bit of memorabilia, I think I'd resist the urge to buy an Atkinson No. 99, which I think could be used as a bedspread on a twin-sized bed. For cruising the town (what lady doesn't love a guy in his 30s rocking a college football jersey?), I'd probably go with a Hightower 29. Everyone likes a big-hitter and I could also wear it to my bi-annual Police Academy fan conventions.

Kevan:

I was thinking, during those two paragraphs I made you write, about the star power of Boise State's next quarterback. I think you're right on in saying that the starting QB has the most star potential ... unless that QB is Joe Southwick. I cannot see Bronco Nation rushing out to buy Southwick jerseys the day after Fall practice when he is named the starter. I can see them rushing online to scream "NICK PATTI BLAARRGGH!" at an ESPN message board, but not to buy Southwick jerseys.

Patti, Laughrea, and Hedrick on the other hand would be surefire hits. They're young, new, and they come bias free. I can totally see Bronco fans rushing the BroncoShop for Nick Patti's No. 22 jersey[1] (Doug Flutie tribute, you guys).

Selling Joe Southwick as a Boise State star isn't going to happen until after he lights up Michigan State for a fifty-burger.

Drew:

You may be right, and honestly I feel bad for Southwick because the fact is: he IS the presumptive Week One starter and no one seems to want him to be. Southwick's playing time thus far has been at the end of ridiculous blowouts when the offense went super vanilla (super vanilla is also my favorite type of ice cream). He's looked pretty darn good in scrimmages and is a better athlete than Tharp was. I think he'll do fine as starter if that ends up being the case. However, Hedrick and Patti can really run, which give Bronco fans visions of an unstoppable pistol-wielding offense that puts three guys over 1K in rushing for the year. Southwick is the safe pick, but not the "fun" pick. I get that.

Kevan:

And as strange as it sounds to say it, Boise State's starting quarterback - if it is Southwick - won't be the biggest star on this team. That will be super weird (my favorite type of weird).

So assuming the QB reins go to Southwick and not the people's choice of anyone other than Southwick (a conversation we'll get into in much more exhaustive, repetitive detail later, I'm sure), my short list for Boise State stars looks like this: Miller, Harper, Gavins, Hightower, with a soft spot in my heart for Joe Kellogg

Life would be a lot easier if I were Mark Johnson. "D.J. Highmiller it is!"

Note to self: Add D.J. Highmiller to list of potential deejay names.

Drew:

My star rankings: Harper, Miller, Hightower, Gavins, Lawrence, Renaud, ball tossin' guy, Linehan (I'm a sucker for "Wild One" bicep tattoos)

And I went to school with D.J. Highmiller. Seven-feet tall if he was a foot, arms the size of tree trunks, and a shock of red hair that ran down to his back. He played every position, including long snapper, holder, and kicker. He turned down a full-ride to USC to go find himself in the Amazon. Miss that guy.

Press conference primer: A guide to Coach Petespeak

by Drew Roberts
originally published March 2012

Coach Pete is not exactly Mr. Soundbite, but considering that coaches like Robb Akey are—that's not necessarily a bad thing. Pete rarely deviates from the script in his weekly pressers and you could virtually pre-transcribe his chats with the media. This is why I've compiled this list of Coach Pete-isms to listen for in his weekly spring press conference (today at 3 PM). I've affixed a point value to the different terms so you can score them at home. Listen carefully, and let us know how many points you were able to compile.

Petespeak glossary

"No question" (5 pts) – This is like a verbal security blanket for Coach Pete, and you'll likely hear it more than once. In general, used after a member of the local media asks him a leading question, in essence—no question.

example:

Chadd Cripe: "Coach, Doug Martin's neck is the size of pony keg...what are your feelings on that?"

Coach Pete: "*No question*, we had Tim Socha inject his neck with horse steroids"

variant:

"Without question"

"Hörd" (2 pts) – Despite being from Yuba City, CA—Pete pronounces the word "hard" like a Viking. He could use this word to describe the ferocity of a position battle, or how difficult it will be to pick the starter in said battle.

example:

"The kids are competing really *hörd* to be the one to model the new Tron-inspired home jerseys...it'll be *hörd* to choose the winner"

"High level" (5 pts) – This is the level that Coach Pete wants his team competing at, luckily, it appears to be the only level they ever attain.

example:

"The placekickers are competing at a very *high level* this spring—ha ha, just kidding"

"Yeah" (3 pts) – Yeah, is a fairly common term and Coach Pete by no means has exclusive rights to its use...but in pressers, Pete often becomes Bill Lumbergh—starting every question or statement with this adverb.

example:

Mike Prater: "Coach Pete, remember me?"

Coach Pete: "*Yeah*...no, no I don't"

"Good things" (8 pts) – What all players on the team are capable of doing, health permitting.

example:

"If Dan Paul can get over his bout with cauliflower ear, he's going to do some *good things* for us this year"

"One day at a time" (10 pts) – How Coach Pete always takes things. Always.

example:

"Brent Pease liked to take things two days at a time...long story short—he's at Florida now. We take things *one day at a time*."

"Great effort" (4 pts) – If the kids are competing hard, and at a high level, one would assume it's because they're putting in great effort.

example:

"Nick Patti has been putting in a *great effort* at keeping his hair full-bodied and easy-to-manage—he's been using Pantene Pro-V"

"Certainly" (8 pts) – Pete bequeathed this one to Kellen Moore, but will still use it on occasion when "without question" or "no question" seems ill-fitting.

example:

"*Certainly* we'd like for Mike Atkinson to save us all some breakfast sausage at Chuck-a-Rama, but that's just not gonna happen"

"He'll be okay" (15 pts) – Pete's dismissive response to inquiries of player injury. All this really means is the player is somewhere between death and having a charley horse and is as unspecific as possible (in keeping with program operating procedure)

example:

Dave Southorn: "Coach, we saw a DB get impaled on one of Geraldo Boldewijn's limbs today at practice..."

Coach Pete: "*He'll be okay*"

"We'll know more this week" (12 pts) – Timetable in which Coach Pete will know things. Generally deals with injury news (see "he'll be okay") or players return from NCAA suspension.

example:

"We're on double-secret probation from the NCAA for providing Ricky Tjong-A-Tjoe a 6" Blimpie Best, but *we'll know more this week*"

Kellen Moore goes undrafted, and we all learn a valuable lesson about the NFL

by Kevan Lee

originally published April 2012

Despite winning half-a-hundred college football games and piloting one of the most prolific and complicated football offenses for the past four years, Kellen Moore was not selected in the 2012 NFL Draft. Eleven other quarterbacks, including Northern Illinois and Tennessee-Chattanooga ones, were. Football god has a strange sense of humor.

Not that Bronco Nation finds it funny. Seeing an all-time great, your all-time great, get passed over for guys with measurables and potential is a tough pill to swallow, not unlike the crazy pills that most Bronco fans assume all 32 NFL GMs are taking. But it also shouldn't come as much of a surprise. After all, this is the business whose job fair is held in underwear and whose most brilliant minds at one point thought Jamarcus Russell was John Elway. The NFL is just being the NFL.

If Kellen Moore's draft story has taught us anything it is that there is a reason why we are college football fans and not NFL fans.

Players like Kellen Moore have a chance at the college level, and stories like his add to the pageantry and purity of the college game (yes, I recognize the irony in calling college football pure). There is more opportunity in college. There is more variety.

The NFL looks for a prototype for a reason. Prototypes are more successful, on average, and success means wins and wins mean money and money means fat, happy owners stay fat and happy (or plastic-surgery'd and happy, like Jerry Jones). Maybe some day the prototype will be 6-foot, left-handed, goofy football wizards. But that day was not Day Three of the NFL Draft.

Moore's legacy will live on in DVDs and record books and a certain blog's archives, and one day, when Moore is hoisting a championship trophy in a coaching polo and a headseat, we'll all forget this NFL Draft thing ever happened. I'd kind of like to forget starting now. Is there a crazy pill for that?

Postscript: Moore signed with the Detroit Lions as a rookie free agent. He is competing for the third quarterback spot this fall.

Munson's Gazetta: Do you believe in magic? or The war is nearly over

by tmunson

originally published April 2012

I was having coffee today with some Boise High school friends of mine. One had a yearbook from the year we graduated, 1970. The girls had all been drill team members, and while I didn't bring it up, I vividly recalled the last time I saw them in uniform for a Boise High football game. It was our last game and we were beating Meridian (a not unexpected thing in those days). They were all crying; I asked why and they said this is our last football game as Thunderbirds. Workmen were already assembling to start to tear down those wooden bleachers in what was the first of several renovations to Bronco Stadium in the modern era, i.e. as a collegiate competitor.

I thought about last week's draft in conjunction with that evening, and many I experienced following the Broncos. If you had told me then we would land two first round NFL (not CFL) draft choices whilst schools like Florida, Florida State, Texas, Ohio State (who am I missing?) landed NONE, ZIP, NADA, BUPKIS, NIENTE, NUTTIN', ZERO, I wouldn't have even laughed. It would have been a remark with such low credibility it would be beneath ridicule. And I do not care if it had been qualified with "in so and so many years" - it just would not have registered.

The other thing, and I'm not sure who said this, was a comment from some national muckety muck to the effect that the issue is now closed - Boise State is an elite team: take it off the grill, serve it well done. No, we still have a sliver of nay sayers, but in five years they've gone from a battleship crew to barely enough to man a tugboat. Don't get me wrong - a slip up here and there will still hurt us, still bring on the "told ya'so" chants. It could even happen this year. But it is becoming, well, not simply increasingly obvious, it's becoming damn near the consensus that, while a specific team may struggle here and there, despite the odds and against all logic, experience and intuition, the Boise State Broncos football program BELONGS. PERIOD.

The armistice has not been signed, the terms have not been spelled out nor entirely agreed to, and pockets of resistance remain to be mopped up. But the outcome is no longer in doubt.

postscript: tmunson passed away in June. His contributions to Boise State football, the Internet, and life will be deeply missed.

Joe Southwick is the clear leader in Boise State's quarterback competition, unless you ask a Nick Patti fan

by Kevan Lee

originally published April 2012

By now you have probably seen or read or heard about Joe Southwick's stellar, starter-worthy performance in the Boise State spring game. The rumors are true. He was as good as I have ever seen him, and the thought of him starting on August 31 against Michigan State no longer gives me hives. In the eyes of everyone who is not a Nick Patti fan, Southwick's play on Saturday cemented his status as the favorite in the Boise State quarterback competition. But let's face it. We're all Nick Patti fans, aren't we?

Welcome to Boise State's complicated, clear-cut quarterback battle.

The consensus among partisan viewers is that Southwick is the clear No. 1 and Patti, while impressive, has some catching up to do. The consensus among Pat-heads is that the junior and the teenager are thisclose, and also, NICK PATTI TIL WE DIE!

How can a fan base watch the same scrimmage and come to different conclusions? Why do birds suddenly appear every time Nick Patti is near? The answers are not easy to come by.

Part of it is that Bronco Nation has seen Southwick in game situations and, after doing so, really would prefer to not see him again. Bitter feelings from five-yard checkdowns on 3rd and 10 tend to paint a guy into a corner.

Then there's the aura of a new, highly touted true freshman riding into Boise on his chariot of dreams and playing well enough in the spring game to warrant Bronco Nation's exceedingly high expectations and wishes of a four-year starter. Kellen Moore played as a freshman. Why can't Patti? (Note: Moore started as a redshirt freshman and was an afterthought in the QB competition his true freshman year, a competition eventually won by Taylor Tharp.)

I left the scrimmage feeling confident that Joe Southwick could handle the starting job at Boise State and that, were the season to start tomorrow, he earned the opportunity to start against Michigan State. Then I got home and opened the Internet and realized half of Bronco Nation disagreed.

Fortunately, the Southwick/Patti debate can continue all summer long because Boise State has no intentions of naming a starter until Fall Camp is all but over (that gives even Jimmy Laughrea and Grant Hedrick a do-over). But don't think Saturday's scrimmage was played in vain. It gave

Joe Southwick credibility. It calmed the nervous hearts of Southwick fatalists. It gave Patti fans all the more reason to dream. It couldn't have done a better job encouraging Bronco fans that, whether the starter is a seasoned veteran or a fresh-faced freshman, Boise State is going to be okay.

And though it may have done enough to decide the quarterback competition in the minds of the media, some fans, and perhaps, secretly, some of the coaches, it did nothing to keep Bronco Nation from talking QBs all summer long.

It's going to be a fun offseason.

What would be a successful season for the 2012 Boise State football team?

originally published May 2012

Considering that the Broncos pushed the figurative reset button in a lot of ways, the possibilities for Boise State 2012 are vast. You may have high expectations, you may have low expectations; at the very least, you have some sort of expectations.

What constitutes a successful season for this year's Broncos? Share.

Poll results:

- 39% - Conference championship
- 20% - No more than one loss
- 19% - Double-digit wins
- 16% - BCS bowl appearance
- 2% - Trying hard
- 1% - Beating Nevada in Nevada

College football's four-team playoff is coming, and Boise State still may be on the outside looking in

by Kevan Lee
originall published June 2012

We college football fans have wanted a playoff system to replace the stodgy, stupid BCS for so long now that the announcement of a four-team tournament, literally the smallest step from championship game to playoff you could make, has been met with singing and dancing in the streets. Playoffs will change everything, you guys!

“Also: Boise State is still screwed.”
– college football analyst Bill Connelly on Twitter

Wait ... what?

How did a college football playoff turn from Holy Grail of championship access to *Suppression 2: Electric Boogaloo*? The devil is in the details.

The playoff process is expected to involve a selection committee that will consider factors like conference champions and strength of schedule in deciding which four teams get in and which Big East teams get left out. To hear Tom Scott tell it, the four-team playoff is going to be a bummer:

It will be a rare case indeed that sees a team from outside what will be known as the Big Four conferences selected for this Final Four. The mid-majors are being cast off, and I'm afraid Big East schools are going to fit that description.

Don't believe Tom Scott? (You should; he's always right.) Well, SB Nation's Bill Connelly reimagined the past 14 years of college football under the new proposed guidelines of the barely-playoff. The results were that no Boise State team ever made the Final Four, despite the Broncos having a case to make at least four times.

So as a Boise State fan, how do you feel about this playoff now? How should you feel? I have a couple hopes and dreams for the playoff planning process that may make life a little easier on BSU. First things first, I hope for some fair, rational minds on the selection committee. In other words, NO CRAIG JAMES PLEASE AND THANK YOU.

Second, I pray that the move to the Big East does enough strength of schedule mojo for the Broncos that people will have no choice but to respect the way Boise State goes undefeated every year in perpetuity.

And finally, I wish for sweet, swift bracket creep. The playoff field will grow from four to eight to sixteen eventually, so let's not delay the inevitable any longer than need be. A 16-team playoff in 2020 would be just fine, thanks.

Frequently asked questions about the new college football playoff

*by Kevan Lee
originally published June 2012*

We have ourselves a four-team college football playoff, which is something we basically had last weekend something we knew we were going to get months ago. That shouldn't stop you from singing and dancing in the streets and hugging a university president or two. Playoffs > BCS, every day of the week and twice on Sundays. Rejoice, even if you've been rejoicing for awhile now.

While you're singing and dancing and hugging, you may also be asking questions. Here are some answers to the most common ones.

When can we expect bracket creep to happen? Four teams are nice, but eight teams are nicer.

2026. Seriously. The next television deal will be for 12 years, and it will begin when the current BCS television deal runs out in 2014.

So we have two more years of the BCS? Barf!

Ditto barf.

How will the four teams be chosen?

Selection committee.

I am skeptical and, as a Boise State fan, paranoid. How can I be sure that the committee uses rational criteria and that the committee does not include Craig James?

The selection committee is expected to factor in strength of schedule, head-to-head records, and win-loss records, with preference to conference champions. There will likely be 20 conference commissioners and school athletic directors on the committee, so fingers crossed for Karl Benson.

Where will these playoff games be played?

The semifinals will rotate among six different sites, probably including the current four BCS spots (Sugar, Rose, Fiesta, Orange), the Cotton Bowl, and a TBD location that is definitely not the Idaho Potato Bowl.

The championship game will go to the highest bidder. Congratulations, Jerry Jones!

Sounds like everyone is going to get rich. How rich?

The playoff is expected to double the current money of the BCS, which would mean no less than \$300 million. How that money gets split is still to be determined, although Ralph Russo sees things going this way:

... the five power conferences (SEC, Big Ten, Big 12, ACC and Pac-12) will get more than the others. The Big East no longer will get a big share, but how much smaller will it be?

Well, I'm just happy that Boise State will finally have a chance to prove its worth in a playoff. You know, settle things on the field instead of on a computer or in a boardroom. This changes everything!

Well ... (see previous essay)

BLOG BETS



Blog bets

Blog Bet - Boise State @ Oregon, 2008

Location: One Bronco Nation Under God headquarters, parents' basement.

Scene: Kellen Moore, Ian Johnson, and the bloggers of OBNUG are playing Scattergories on a Wednesday night, like they always do.

Kellen Moore: An occupation that starts with "P."

Ian Johnson: Plumber.

Kellen Moore: Pat Sajak's Personal Plant Psychiatrist. Four points!

OBNUG: Nothing.

News report comes on TV. Moore, Johnson, and OBNUG turn to listen.

Newsman: A crisis in Eugene. Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti has taken Nike CEO Phil Knight and a barista hostage in a downtown Starbucks. The Eugene volunteer SWAT team is currently on the scene, and the area has been secured. Bellotti's lists of demands include a replay of the Boise State - Oregon game, a retroactive medical redshirt for Dennis Dixon, and a sincere compliment about his goatee. We'll bring you more details as they arise. Up next, David Augusto interviews himself!

Moore: We have to do something!

Johnson: But he's Oregon's head coach. Let Patrick Chung deal with it.

OBNUG: Yeah. Who cares?

Moore: Guys, we owe Bellotti one. Don't forget; he stubbornly stayed with a gameplan that was never going to work, giving our team the chance to pull the upset and get back into the national spotlight.

Johnson: Alright. Let me check with the wife.

OBNUG: Alright. Let us check with our mom.

Moore pulls off his Boise State hooded sweatshirt to reveal a Superman cape and onesie.

Johnson: OK, I'm good to go.

OBNUG: Us, too. But we have to be home by 11:00.

Moore: Take my hand, friends. We have a rival Pac-10 head coach to save!

Johnson and OBNUG grab onto Moore as he blasts off through the roof of the house and flies toward Eugene.

OBNUG: I can see Robb Akey's mustache from here! (throws up from motion sickness)

Moore, Johnson, and OBNUG land in Eugene. Police chief comes over to update the trio on the situation.

Police chief: Bellotti is alone with Knight and the barista. We don't know if he's armed, but he has been threatening physical harm on the Fair Trade coffee beans if we don't meet his demands. We seriously fear that the lives of Bellotti's hostages might be in danger. Can I have your autograph?

Moore: Sure. (signs autograph)

Johnson: You bet. (signs autograph)

OBNUG: Our pleasure.

Police chief: Oh, not you. I don't know who you are.

Moore grabs bullhorn.

Moore: Coach Bellotti, it's me, Kellen Moore. I was the guy who tore up your secondary on Saturday.

Bellotti: Yes, Kellen Moore. I know who you are. You drove me to this insanity, and now you will pay!! How foolish of you to fall into my trap. I've got you right where I want you now.

Johnson: But Coach Bellotti, I thought you were holding people hostage in the hopes of making up for your inadequacies as a coach and facial hair grower.

Bellotti: That was all part of my master plan to lure you here and destroy you. Phil Knight and I have teamed up to put an end to your reign of terror on BCS schools before it's too late.

Knight: I hate you Kellen Moore, and buy the new Nike iPod shoe.

OBNUG: Who's the barista?

Bellotti: Oh, that's Onterio Smith. We didn't know he worked here. That was just kind of a coincidence.

Storm clouds and thunder and lightning rage overhead. Rain begins to fall.

Johnson: I only ran for two yards per carry on Saturday. Can I be excused?

Knight: Yes, you may go.

Johnson leaves.

Bellotti: You have thrown your last touchdown pass, Kellen Moore. Face the wrath of my 40-foot-tall, brainwashed Oregon Duck mascot. Kill, kill, kill!

People scream in the streets as the 40-foot tall, brainwashed Oregon Duck mascot lumbers toward Moore. The duck and Moore engage in an epic tussle through downtown Eugene, smashing into buildings and crushing parked cars. OBNUG's Verizon Wireless phone beeps.

OBNUG: It's a blog update alert from Brian Murphy. "Guess the winner of the Moore - Oregon duck deathmatch and win \$20 worth of Domino's Pizza." We better get to a computer!

OBNUG leaves.

The Oregon Duck pins Moore to the ground, but when he goes in for the killer blow, he makes the mistake of looking into Moore's eyes, thereby reversing the brainwashing curse and receiving implicit instructions through Moore's mental telepathy to go to New York, fix the NYSE using golden duck feathers and newly-released Kellen Moore currency, and convince NBC to never cancel Friday Night Lights.

Moore: Is that all you've got, Bellotti?!

Bellotti: We're just getting started!

Chris Harper, underage Nike factory laborers, and the Pacific Ocean appear.

Harper: DUAN!

Throws interception. Leaves.

Bellotti: I knew I should have brought Darron Thomas. Sic him, child laborites!

Underage Nike factory laborers attack Moore with their tiny sewing needles. Moore holds them off, helps them find jobs in America where they can earn minimum wage, and co-signs on an apartment for them.

Knight: Destroy him, Pacific Ocean!

The Pacific Ocean crashes into Moore and rocks and roars, trying to crush the young quarterback. Joe Giansante enters.

Giansante: "This is the Pacific Ocean's Super Bowl."

Joe Giansante leaves.

Just when things look bleak, Moore drinks the Pacific Ocean and spits it out in a fine mist over the dry farmlands of the Midwestern plains, causing pure ethanol corn to grow, and thereby solving the energy crisis.

Knight and Bellotti: (together) Drat!

Moore approaches Knight and Bellotti.

Moore: Let's settle this like men. UNO Attack time!

Moore, Knight, and Bellotti play UNO Attack for 52 days straight, going back and forth in a legendary battle of determination. On the 52nd day, Moore wins.

Knight: Rock, paper, scissors!

Moore, Knight, and Bellotti play rock, paper, scissors. Moore wins, best 452 out of 901.

Bellotti: Minesweeper!

Moore, Knight, and Bellotti play Minesweeper. Moore wins with a time of zero seconds on expert.

Bellotti and Knight: (together) We are beaten men. We should have known better than to test your will, Kellen Moore. We have learned our lesson.

Moore: Good. May you leave this mythical battlefield as better men. Now go donate blood and invite a homeless person to spend the weekend with you.

Moore flies back to Boise, stopping at the Pendleton Dairy Queen to buy Blizzards for every child in the world, and arrives at OBNUG headquarters. It's Wednesday night again, and it's time for more Scattergories.

End scene.

Article originally published at Addicted to Quack - <http://sbn.to/PdldQZ>

Blog Bet - Boise State @ New Mexico State - 2008

Scene: Fourth quarter of the Boise State and New Mexico State game. WAC TV announcers Guy Haberman and Dick Tomey with the broadcast.

Tomey: ... and that's how I ended up with four fingers on my left hand and the nickname Nubbers.

Haberman: We're joined now in the booth by some special guests. From Boise State: quarterback Kellen Moore and tight end Kyle Efaw. And because he's on the WAC's email list: OBNUG.

Moore: Hi there.

Efaw: How's it going?

OBNUG: I was told there'd be soft pretzels.

Tomey: This guy has a blog. It's a blog with a lot of potential. It does some good things every now and then, like that one feature ...

Long pause.

Tomey: ... anagram rosters. I love those. Anagrams are very underrated.

Haberman: Well thanks for joining us, guys. We wanted to get you up here to ask you some questions, help us with some play-by-play, and just hang out for a bit. Sound good?

Moore: You bet.

Efaw: Sure thing.

OBNUG: Are these pens complimentary?

Haberman: First and 10 for the Broncos at the New Mexico State 45. Joe Southwick takes the snap, hands off to Jarvis Hodge for a gain of nine. Kellen, what did you see there?

Moore: The defense was in a 4-3 strong look, heavy left, so that creates some easy leverage blocks on the right side of the formation and a quick pickup of nine. Southwick had a nice audible on that play, although the intonation of his voice makes me believe that he lacks the self-confidence that a two-parent home normally provides. Hodge hit the hole hard, but if you notice the way he runs on the outside of his feet, that's a warning sign for scoliosis. He should get that checked by a physician. Good blocking by Brenel Myers and Chuck Hayes who are direct descendants of George Washington Carver and Shaft, respectively. And a nice late fill by New Mexico State safety Donyae Coleman. He's going to die on April 14, 2059.

Tomey: That was a gain of nine!

Haberman turns to Efaw.

Haberman: So Kyle, that was a great touchdown catch you had earlier today. Sensational grab and run.

Efaw: My teammates do all the catching and running for me. I was really nothing more than a decoy on that play.

Haberman: But you caught the touchdown.

Efaw: Technically maybe. But I don't necessarily see it that way.

Tomey: The thing I like about this kid is that goatee. Lots of potential with that goatee. I like the way his Norelco Beard and Mustache Trimmer is handling that.

Boise State runs its next play.

Haberman: Back to the action, Southwick hands to Hodge again. Runs over a defender –

Moore: Poor form on that tackle by Jonte Green, but he has a lot on his mind what with his just finding out he was adopted.

Haberman: – he could take this one all the way. Touchdown, Bron-

Tomey: Touchdown Broncos. That's a touchdown run. Broncos.

Haberman: Boise State takes a commanding 58 to –

Tomey: End zone.

Haberman: - a commanding 58-0 lead. Kyle, why don't you break that play down for us?

Efaw: I'd like to let OBNUG do it, thanks.

OBNUG: OK, let me diagram this for you on the telestrator.

Accidentally draws horse farting on telestrator.

OBNUG: Now, what you have here is –

Tomey: Oregon only had one first down in the first half against Boise State last year.

Awkward silence.

Haberman: Let's go down to Lauren Mickler with a report on New Mexico State head coach DeWayne Walker. Lauren?

Lauren: Thanks, Guy. New Mexico State coach DeWayne Walker is the head coach of New Mexico State and he is losing 58-0 right now. I think we have tape of Walker's reaction to that last touchdown.

Tape of Live! With Regis and Kelly plays.

Lauren: OK, this isn't it. Um, looks like what we have here is Regis arguing with Kelly about whether or not the top was still spinning at the end of *Inception*. And the whole audience just received juicing machines. Juicing machines, Guy. Hang on, I'm being texted.

Haberman: Thanks for that report, Lauren. While we were away, Boise State scored twice and part of the field spontaneously combusted into flames. Footage of either is not available.

Tomey: Fire has done some nice things over the course of history. I'd give it a B, B-plus on the scale of elements. When I was at San Jose State, I tried to make a cheesy pita once.

Fans empty onto the field to get autographs from Boise State players. The New Mexico State Aggie mascot picks a fight with Buster Bronco. Tanner Rust quits football completely.

Haberman: Things are getting weird down on the field. Looks like all this losing has caused Aggie fans to lose their minds. Look out, there goes the Dip 'Dots station.

Moore: Guy, it looks like the fans have thrown their cowbells into the fire and are making a golden calf idol to worship.

Efaw: It has the head of Chase Holbrook!

OBNUG: And he's eating a Six Dollar Burger!

Tomey: You've got to like what the Six Dollar Burger does with an onion. You have to respect that.

Lauren (from the sideline): Hi guys, an update on that Regis and Kelly giveaway. It was not a juicer. It was a box set of Sex and the City. Back to you.

Haberman: WAC commissioner Karl Benson has just parachuted into the stadium, and it looks like he's holding signed contracts from University of Texas San Antonio and Colorado School of Mines to be the next members of the WAC. The fans have named him their leader and are making sacrifices to him with nachos, game programs, LG Chocolate phones, and travel-sized shampoo.

OBNUG: Hehe, you said poo.

Haberman: This is really getting out of hand.

Tomey: Things are really getting out of hand here. Just thought I'd point that out.

Kellen Moore grabs the public address system.

Moore: People of Las Cruces, listen to me. This is no way to behave. Yes, Boise State is beating you badly, but pagan religion is not the answer. I am very disappointed in all of you. You need to build yourselves back up with some strong local recruiting, a monetary commitment to facility upgrades, and long-term support of a single coach and system.

Hal Mumme enters.

Mumme: Like the Air Raid!

Hal Mumme leaves.

Moore: DeWayne Walker, stay the course, focus on getting some wins in conference play, and start Andrew Manley immediately. Aggie fans, find joy in the small things and continue to offer your support through ticket sales and positive thinking. Karl Benson, put your shirt back on. Drunk man riding the golden calf of Chase Holbrook, it's not too late to make something of yourself; try one of the 21 career opportunities provided by ITT Tech. Coed girl making out with Boise State TE Sean King, your body is not an object; you will find someone who loves you for you. Guy in the pizza costume, way to keep it real. And for everyone else, get back in your seats, give the Aggie mascot his chaps back, and let's enjoy these final two minutes of football.

Haberman (to Moore): Oh, I forgot to mention. The clock ran out while Tomey was muttering about the Six Dollar Burger.

Moore: OK then. Drive home safely, everyone. Use public transportation to reduce your carbon footprint.

OBNUG: This is so going in my blog!

Tomey: This guy has a blog!

The WAC TV broadcast ends, and Kellen Moore, Kyle Efaw, OBNUG, and the Boise State football team return to Boise. Guy Haberman and Dick Tomey look forward to seeing them again in two weeks against San Jose State.

Article originally published at Bleed Crimson - <http://bit.ly/nmsublogbet>

Blog Bet - Boise State @ Wyoming, 2010

Scene: Austyn Carta-Samuels sitting by himself at a Jamba Juice in Laramie, Wyoming. He's having a sad.

Doors open. Kellen Moore, Doug Martin, and OBNUG enter.

Moore: Hey there, Austyn Carta-Samuels.

Carta-Samuels: Kellen Moore! Doug Martin! What are you doing here?

Moore: After the game, we had some time to kill, so I worked a soup kitchen here in town, built a Disneyland in Cheyenne to boost tourism, and set up Facebook profiles for every person in the state. I would have been done earlier, but you know how things go with dial-up.

Martin: I punched the wind and it ran away to Nebraska.

OBNUG: I have a BOGO smoothie coupon.

Moore: I sensed that there was someone in distress here, so we hurried over as fast as we could.

Carta-Samuels: Guys, I'm just totally bummed out about our loss on Saturday. I mean, that thing was ugly. I just don't know if I'll ever recover from this. Life, as I know it, is over.

Moore: Austyn, I know just the thing for you. Guys' night!

Carta-Samuels: Okay!

Martin: Sweet!

OBNUG: Super!

Carta-Samuels: Oh, the nerdy kid is coming?

Moore: Yes, he's our ride.

OBNUG: To the Ford Focus!

Carta-Samuels, Moore, Martin, and OBNUG hop in the car and take off toward downtown Laramie.

OBNUG: I love this Miley Cyrus song. Turn it up!

The group arrives at Laramie's finest steakhouse. The line is out the door. Moore approaches the maitre d'.

Moore: Table for four please.

Maitre d': Ha, you must be kidding me. Have you seen the line? The only way you're getting in is – OH MY GOODNESS YOU'RE KELLEN MOORE! Quick, everyone! Throw your valuable jewelry and expensive shoes in this doggie bag. We are in the presence of greatness! Accept this sacrifice as our penance for making you wait in line.

Martin: And that dude's bolo tie.

The maitre'd shows the group to a table. The waiter arrives.

Moore: My friend Austyn here is having a rough day. Bring us your finest dinosaur meat!

Waiter: Right away.

Martin: And give him a Dr. Pepper poured into the Ark of the Covenant!

Waiter: As you wish.

OBNUG: And it's his birthday!

Waiter: Is it really his birthday?

OBNUG: No.

The waiter brings out platters of slow-roasted dinosaur meat and arks of soda. Moore, Martin, Carta-Samuels, and OBNUG feast while Kellen Moore recites lines from Fletch movies to the delight of the entire restaurant. At one point, the manager comes over and gives everyone at the table a calf massage.

Waiter: This Oreo mudslide cake is from the gentleman at the bar.

David Augusto waves from the bar.

When the meal is finished, Kellen Moore settles the tab and leaves the waiter a 20 percent tip and a scholarship for children of rural farmers in his name. The group hops into the Ford Focus and continues on, stopping at Laramie's finest menswear store.

Carta-Samuels: Why are we stopping here?

Martin: If you want to hang with us, you have to look like us. See these pants? They're made out of live alligators. See Kellen's sleeveless tee? No, you don't, because it's invisible and can only be seen by people who have known and lost love.

Carta-Samuels: But that guy's wearing a button up T-shirt tucked into jeans.

OBNUG: For your information, Zac Efron wore this once. So yeah ...

Martin and Moore look around the store but don't see anything they like. So Moore grabs knitting needles and a live herd of goats and makes Carta-Samuels a purple velvet smoking jacket.

Aaron Taylor enters.

Taylor: That is one bright green coat!

Aaron Taylor leaves.

The group drives to Laramie's hottest club, which is lame. So Kellen Moore builds a bullet train out of tumbleweeds and the group jets over to New York City and the 40/40 club.

Carta-Samuels: This music could use some help.

OBNUG: Not these virgin Shirley Temples! They're delicious!

Moore: Hang on, Austyn. I'm on it.

Moore makes a phone call and the next thing anyone knows, Dr. Dre is working the turntables and the corpse of Mozart is freestyle rapping at the front of the stage. Eminem enters and makes up a song about Carta-Samuels and unicorns. It tops the charts within a half-hour and makes \$30 million in sales.

Carta-Samuels: This is off the hook!

When they are finished, the group leaves the club, walks to Times Square, reads the Top Ten list on the Late Show with David Letterman, and grabs a slice at an Sbarro chain that just renamed itself to Dougbarro.

Just then, a private jet pulls up.

Bill Gates: Hey guys, I was just about to test out some new virtual reality Xbox games and wondered if you wanted to help. It's just me, the missus, Jessica Alba, and Jessica Albas five sisters who look just like her. I asked them their situation. They're available.

The group climbs into Bill Gates's private jet, and they spend the rest of the evening flying back and forth across the country, playing video games, and getting the phone numbers of Jessica Alba's sisters. Early the next morning, Gates drops them back off at the Laramie Jamba Juice.

Carta-Samuels: Wow, what a night! I feel 100 times better. How can I ever repay you guys?

Martin: You could win the Mountain West.

Carta-Samuels: It's a deal. Thanks again, guys.

Moore: You bet.

Martin: Don't mention it.

OBNUG: No problem.

Carta-Samuels: Oh, you're still here? I thought we ditched you at the restaurant.

With renewed life, Carta-Samuels heads back to practice where he tells the team of his wild adventures. The team rallies around him and goes undefeated the rest of the year.

Article originally appeared at Cowboy Altitude - <http://bit.ly/wyoblogbet>

Blog Bet - Boise State vs. Virginia Tech, 2010

Location: OBNUG headquarters, Dairy Queen.

Scene: Kellen Moore, Austin Pettis, and the OBNUG bloggers are playing truth and dare while eating Blizzards, as they do every Thursday afternoon.

Pettis: OK, Kelsy, truth or dare.

Moore: Dare!

Pettis: Prank call Bill Hancock, using Frodo's voice from Lord of the Rings.

Moore (picks up telephone, dials): Hello, Mr. Hancock? Is your refrigerator running? Then you better let him out!

Laughter.

OBNUG: Ooh, my turn. Austin, truth or dare?

Pettis: Truth.

OBNUG: Will you go see *Eat Pray Love* with me at the theaters this weekend?

Just then, a man bursts through the door and runs over to the group. He is confused and disheveled and sweaty. Kellen Moore recognizes him immediately as Virginia Tech defensive coordinator Bud Foster.

Foster: Thank goodness I've found you. I need your help. Frank Beamer and Tyrod Taylor have strapped themselves to the top of the Washington Monument and refuse to come down. They are just sick over the outcome of Monday's game. They are threatening to stay up there forever, or at least until after this week's James Madison game is over because - woof - that one's a dog. You were the first people I thought of for help.

OBNUG: Well, we're honored.

Foster: Oh, not you. I don't know who you are.

Moore: We'll do it. Frank Beamer was kind enough to give us some breaks Monday night, and Tyrod Taylor and I are new texting buddies. Case Keenum is sooo 2009.

OBNUG: Speaking of which, I don't know if I ever got your phone -

Foster: There's no time to waste. We have to get to Washington, D.C. Stat!

Pettis: If only teleportation technology existed!

Moore invents teleportation technology.

Pettis: Cool.

The four men hop onto Kellen Moore's teleportation device and are whisked away to Washington D.C., but not before Moore stops at the NFL Kickoff party in New Orleans to play bass guitar with Dave Matthews and get to first base with Taylor Swift. But after that, straight to Washington D.C.

OBNUG (wearing Taylor Swift concert T-shirt): Look! There they are!

Frank Beamer and Tyrod Taylor are spotted chained to the top of the Washington Monument, like Cal grads to an endangered tree. A crowd of 86,000 people forms at the base of the monument to watch the proceedings.

Moore: Who are all these people?

Foster: Oh, this is just a neutral collection of onlookers with no real invested interests on the outcome of this situation.

"Enter Sandman" begins playing.

Pettis: What was that?

Foster: Nothing.

President Obama appears.

Obama: Kellen Moore, Austin Pettis, and Taylor Swift fan, I am so glad you are here. This crisis is of national importance. America's future hangs in the balance. I would help out but I'm really busy with getting you that college football playoff that I promised.

Laughter from all.

Obama: Yeah, just kidding. Put on a good show, guys. I'm playing pick up with Charles Barkley in five. Let's bounce, Secret Service.

Pettis: We need a way to get up to Beamer and Tyrod so that we can talk them down. Any ideas?

Moore: Well, I just built this 30-story crane out of Duplo blocks and clouds. Will that work?

Moore, Pettis, and OBNUG ride the crane up to see Beamer and Taylor.

Beamer: Oh, thank goodness you are here. Tyrod and I just can't live with ourselves after losing that game to you guys on Monday night. We are at our wit's end, and chaining ourselves to the top of the Washington Monument seemed like the only logical solution.

Taylor: That, and Shea McClellin can't get me up here.

Moore: You guys have to come down from here. It was a superb game from both teams. There were no losers on Monday night. Only winners. Well, there was Mark Schlereth, but you know what I mean.

Beamer: When you put it that way ...

Suddenly, Beamer and Taylor free themselves from their chains and wrap the chains around Moore, Pettis, and OBNUG before the trio even knows what hit them.

Beamer: Aha! You have fallen into our trap! We weren't feeling down about the loss at all. Are you kidding me? We could lose four more game and still make a BCS bowl! I had Bud Foster lure you here just like I lured you into blocking our punt and going up 17-0 on ourselves. Now it is my turn to take control. Tyrod, run circles around them!

Taylor begins sprinting in tight, concentric circles around the shackled threesome.

Beamer: Dizzy much? You have only begun to taste our sweet revenge.

Taylor: Yeah, and while I was running circles around you, I ate the rest of that girl's Blizzard.

OBNUG: Turds!

Beamer: Strapped to the bottom of the Washington Monument are NASA rockets that will shoot you into space - never to be heard from again! Good luck getting out of that mess. We will stay right here to make sure you see your end, Kellen Moore and Austin Pettis. Actually, check that. I've got somewhere to be, so Tyrod and I are going to leave you guys here with two minutes left on the countdown. But in two minutes - oh man - you guys are so going to be in outer space.

Beamer and Taylor leave.

Kellen: Don't worry, guys. I got this.

Moore pulls out a Harry Potter wand and turns the chains into giant mattresses with parachutes.

Moore: Here, take these to safety.

Pettis: Kellen, look out behind you!

A 10-story-tall, sentient BCS computer comes out of nowhere with Bill Hancock riding it on a saddle made of 50 dollar bills.

Hancock: I checked my refrigerator, Kellen Moore. And you were right. It was totally running. I hate it when you're right!

Moore and Bill Hancock's BCS computer trade epic blows back and forth, slamming one another into the streets of D.C. The BCS computer pins Moore against the Lincoln Memorial but Moore's quick-thinking and years of film study of Power Rangers win out as he flips the computer over and tosses it into the Potomac River. The entire river turns to peanut brittle and all the orphans of Washington D.C. never go hungry again.

Frank Beamer and Tyrod Taylor return.

Beamer: Noooo! You won't get away that easily, Kellen Moore. Try getting past these two weapons. Get him, Ryan Williams and Darren Evans.

Taylor: Oh, they didn't bother showing up.

Beamer: Oh. Okay. Well then how about this!

Beamer opens his coin purse and Lou Holtz and Mark May jump out. They immediately begin harassing Kellen Moore - Holtz spitting while he talks and May crushing Moore with condescension. Moore is almost a goner, until ...

Moore: Hey, how 'bout that Notre Dame - PITT game this weekend? Am I right?

Holtz and May pause for a second, look at each other, and then tumble into a heated discussion about that game, forgetting about Moore. As they speak, Moore takes Holtz's spittle, purifies it, and bottles it up to ship to Africa. Moore harnesses the hot air emanating from Mark May to heat the entire East Coast, thereby fixing America's energy problems for the next decade.

OBNUG: Kellen, the Washington Monument is about to be shot into space. We must save it! It is our nation's fifth-greatest landmark, right behind Chris Fowler's forehead.

Moore: How much time is left?

OBNUG: 56 seconds!

Moore jumps into action, whittling an elm tree into a thumb drive in the shape of the Chinese characters for Trust and Beauty. He codes it by hand with a kill code for the launch computer.

Moore: Austin, get open!

Pettis shakes free of a Beamer henchman with a head fake, shattering both of the henchman's ankles and giving him vertigo. Moore lofts the thumb drive to Pettis who hauls it in and touchdown spikes it into the space rocket's mainframe.

OBNUG: The Washington Monument is saved! We did it!

Bob Molinaro enters.

Molinaro: Lame.

Bob Molinaro leaves.

Pettis: Wait a second. Something doesn't feel right. Where did Tyrod Taylor get off to?

Moore: Oh no. It's 3rd down and we're out of timeouts. He's going to pass!

The group turns to the White House steps where Taylor holds a ball of fatal anti-matter. Taylor lofts it deep in the direction of Moore, Pettis, and OBNUG.

The throw falls harmlessly to the ground beside them.

OBNUG: Why didn't he just run that over to us?

Beamer: You foiled us this time, Kellen Moore. But we'll be back. Oh we will be back.

Taylor: We beat ourselves tonight. You guys didn't beat us, we beat us. Just wanted to make that clear.

Beamer and Taylor hop in a taxi back to Blacksburg. Kellen Moore, Austin Pettis, and OBNUG head to the D.C. Dairy Queen for celebratory Peanut Buster Parfaits and for OBNUG to finally get an answer on that Eat Pray Love question.

End scene.

Article originally appeared on Gobbler Country - <http://bit.ly/vtblogbet>

Blog Bet - Boise State vs. Utah, Las Vegas Bowl, 2010

Scene: Pregame of the MAACO Bowl Las Vegas. Boise State and Utah players come together at midfield.

Allen Mooney: Nice carry, Eddie Wide. Does your husband play?

Eddie Wide: Your mom plays.

Mooney: No, your mom!

Wide: Your mom!

OBNUG: Something about Mormons!

Mooney and Wide come to blows. The rest of the players from each team start brawling at midfield. Zane Taylor pancakes Brad Elkin. Byron Hout breaks his foot cast over Matt Asiata's head. Joe Phillips gets trampled. Dan Paul stabs someone with a trident.

Kellen Moore: That's enough! You people should be ashamed of yourselves. Punching each other, calling each other names. There is a woman here, for goodness' sake!

Wide: Oh, that's not a woman. That's Chaz Walker.

Moore: My apologies. You look like a homeless Ellen Page.

Chaz Walker: Yeah, I get that a lot.

Moore: Look people, violence is not the answer. We are college football players, not animals. There are better ways to work out our problems than fighting. We have other options.

Bill Hancock enters.

Hancock: I know. Let's have computers decide.

Computers enter. Computers pick Middle Tennessee State. Computers leave.

Hancock: Well, my work here is done.

Bill Hancock leaves. Paula Abdul enters.

Abdul: OMG you guys. Let's have a sing-off.

Shea McClellin performs Handel's Messiah in its entirety as a rap. Dave Kruger performs a choreographed routine of Billy Ray Cyrus's "I'm Too Sexy."

Abdul: You are all such beautiful people. What inspiring performances that inspired the inspirational inspiration in all of us. You are all winners when you look deep inside your hearts. I have to go give a bird a hug.

Paula Abdul leaves. Tom Rinaldi enters.

Rinaldi: An update on Kyle Brotzman: He's standing here next to me. I'd describe his mood as smugly ambivalent with a hint of gassy.

Tom Rinaldi leaves. OBNUG's third grade teacher Mrs. Kretz enters.

OBNUG: Mrs. Kretz. It's me. OBNUG. Mrs. Kretz!

Mrs. Kretz: I have no idea who you are.

OBNUG: I was speed drill champion in your class. My cursive p's looked like q's. You told me I would make something of myself some day, so I started a blog.

Mrs. Kretz: Security!

OBNUG: Noooo!

Mrs. Kretz: Time for a spelling test, students. Titus Young, your word is "magnificent."

Titus Young: T-I-T-U-S-Y-O-U-N-G. Wassup yall!

Mrs. Kretz: Uh, no. DeVonte Christopher, your word is "buoyancy."

DeVonte Christopher: Ha, buoyancy. More like girlancy. They a bunch of bobbers. LOL.

Mrs. Kretz: Oh dear.

Mrs. Kretz leaves. David Augusto enters.

Augusto: Backrub train!

Silence.

David August leaves.

Tom Bergeron and Samantha Harris of Dancing With the Stars enter.

Tom Bergeron: America's Funniest Home Videos, what??

Samantha Harris (man voice): OH TOM YOU'RE SO FUNNY.

Tom Bergeron: Let's dance.

Doug Martin steps forward and does a complete, one-man rendition of the Nutcracker, using only a mixture of tap dance and krumping. Matt Asiata counters with a traditional Samoan number, featuring the ghosts of his dead ancestors. Channing Tatum enters and does the Dougie.

Samantha Harris: I WANT TO CARRY YOU ALL AROUND IN MY POCKET AND BUY YOU MINIATURE MATCHING OUTFITS.

Tom Bergeron: Join us next week for the three-hour results show.

Tom Bergeron and Samantha Harris leave. Tom Rinaldi enters.

Rinaldi: The latest on Kyle Brotzman: He's eating a sandwich while listening to his iPod. What courage. America, this is your hero.

Tom Rinaldi leaves. Joe Rogan enters.

Rogan: Eat this plate of baloney, Idaho Spud bars, stuff I found in a dumpster out back of the Mirage, McRibs, Mark May humble pie, hair, and shards of glass.

Zane Taylor eats all of it. Billy Winn eats all of it.

Rogan: OK, you guys are pretty good.

Joe Rogan leaves.

OBNUG: I know. Let's have a Minesweeper battle!

Stephen Hawking: Nerd alert!

A computer is brought out to midfield. OBNUG begins pacing nervously back and forth. Kellen Moore steps forward to give a motivational speech.

Moore: Listen to me. Mine sweeping is what you love. It is who you were born to be. And here you sit, thinking. Well, OBNUG is not a thinker. OBNUG is a miner. He is a doer. And that's what you need to do. You don't need to think. You need to mine. You need to grab a hold of that line between mines and chaos, and you need to wrestle it to the ground like a demon cobra! And then, when the fear rises up in your belly, you use it. And you know that fear is powerful, because it has been there for billions of years. And it is good. And you use it. And you ride it; you ride it like a skeleton horse through the gates of hell, and then you win, OBNUG. You WIN!

OBNUG: Yes!

OBNUG clicks a mine.

OBNUG: Turds.

Tom Rinaldi enters.

Rinaldi: Kyle Brotzman just told me that he was Myst champion in his third grade class. Incredible! It puts the lotion on its skin!

Tom Rinaldi leaves. Aslan enters.

Aslan: My children, you have battled a long time. You have fought strong and fair. Be proud of yourselves for what you have accomplished here on this field. Still, someone must come away from today victorious. I am going to sacrifice my life so that someone will win, and that someone is Boise State because I have always secretly been a Bronco fan.

Moore: No, I won't let you do it.

Aslan: You must let me. There is no other way.

Moore: There is one way ...

Kellen Moore and Aslan look into each other's eyes. OBNUG weeps quietly in the background.

Moore: Utah players, I am offering my statistics as a sacrifice. If we decide this on the field, I will give you a sack-fumble and an interception, both in Boise State territory in the first quarter. These are my terms.

Terrance Cain: I'm good with that.

Eddie Wide: It's a deal.

Christian Cox: I promise a victory.

Tom Rinaldi enters.

Rinaldi: Let's not forget the true hero here: Kyle Brotzman.

Tom Rinaldi leaves.

Boise State and Utah players return to their sidelines, and the Las Vegas Bowl gets underway. As promised, Kellen Moore gives up two turnovers in the first quarter, but Utah fails to take advantage. Boise State wins 26-3. Tom Rinaldi gets a Henna tattoo of Kyle Brotzman.

Article originally appeared on OBNUG - <http://bit.ly/utahblogbet>

Blog Bet - Boise State @ San Diego State, 2011

Location: Suburbia.

Scene: Kellen Moore, Tyler Shoemaker, Ryan Lindley, and OBNUG are sitting around a roaring fire in the living room of Kellen Moore's house, playing Jenga on the coffee table. Moore's wife Julie is baking cookies. Christmas music plays in the background.

OBNUG (singing): Christmas in the Northwest, it's a gift for you and me!

Tyler Shoemaker: Please stop.

Ryan Lindley: Hey, pale kid, it's your move.

OBNUG: Oh, right.

OBNUG pulls the bottom piece, like an idiot. The whole thing falls.

OBNUG: Turds.

Rocky Long enters.

Rocky Long: You can't play Jenga on a wooden coffee table. How can you see the pieces? It's unfair.

Rocky Long leaves.

Just then, a loud noise from outside brings Moore, Shoemaker, Lindley, and OBNUG to their feet.

Kellen Moore: Did you guys hear that?

Shoemaker: Yeah, I think there's something on the roof.

Lindley: Well, let's go check it out.

OBNUG: I'll grab the safety whistle.

Moore, Shoemaker, Lindley, and OBNUG step out into the snowy night. Standing in the front lawn, they look up at the roof and see Santa and his sleigh.

Santa: Hi, boys. Say, I seem to have dropped a pair of footballs. That's the last time I let Leon McFadden and Brandon Davis help hand out gifts, amiright? Be a guy and toss them up here to me.

Ryan Lindley throws a football through the front window. Shea McClellin picks it up and returns it to the San Diego State 24-yard-line.

Lindley: Sorry. It takes a couple throws before I get comfortable.

Ryan Lindley throws the next pass up to Santa, but the throw sails too high. Santa reaches for the pass and slips on the roof, sliding off the two-story house, and landing with a thud on the ground in front of Moore, Shoemaker, Lindley, and OBNUG.

Shoemaker: You killed Santa Claus!

OBNUG: Now who's going to get me Mario Kart Wii for Christmas?!

With his last breath, Santa pulls Ryan Lindley close.

Santa: Son, you are Santa Claus now. It is up to you to take joy to all the children in the world. Christmas depends on you now. Take your friends here to help you, and use my sleigh to deliver presents. Can I trust you guys to save Christmas?

Lindley: Yes, you can count on me.

Moore: Absolutely.

Shoemaker: We've got your back, Santa.

OBNUG: It would be my honor.

Santa: I don't know who you are.

OBNUG: I have a pretty prestigious blog.

Santa: Yeah, not ringing any bells.

Santa's body disappears into the ether, like a 30-point, second half Boise State lead. Moore, Shoemaker, Lindley, and OBNUG climb onto the roof. While they are climbing, Lindley's beard grows six inches.

Lindley: Hmm, that's odd.

Moore, Shoemaker, Lindley, and OBNUG pile into the sleigh. Lindley takes the reins.

Rudolph (struggling under the weight of the sleigh): Sheesh, who invited the big guy?

OBNUG: My doctor says my BMI is in the high normal range, thankyouverymuch.

Rudolph: No, I was talking about ...

Ryan Lindley suddenly weighs 400 pounds. He is holding half a cake.

Lindley: Where did I get cake?

Lindley is suddenly overcome with a desire to wear red. Moore's wife Julie brings Lindley some red sweaters and red stretchy pants.

Shoemaker: This is getting weird.

A small bird is now nesting in Lindley's beard.

Lindley: And away we go!

The sleigh takes off into the night sky. Lindley finds Santa's gift list in the sleigh.

Lindley: First stop, BCS executive director Bill Hancock's house.

The sleigh arrives at Hancock's mansion. Moore, Shoemaker, Santa Lindley, and OBNUG land on the roof and begin to descend down the chimney to the fireplace, which doubles as a smelter for non-AQ conference championship trophies.

Lindley: Merry Christmas, Bill Hancock. Here's your gift: The Premier Choice Ultimate Tier of DirecTV, which contains The Mtn television channel.

Hancock: Lower division football games. I love it!

Moore: Actually, Mr. Hancock, the Mountain West is an FBS conference.

Hancock: Ha! That's hilarious.

Awkward silence.

Hancock: OK, you need to leave now. Jim Delany and John Junker are coming over, and we are going to hunt the most dangerous of game: man. You with the Vegas Bowl t-shirt tucked into your jeans, do you have plans tonight?

OBNUG: Not really, why?

Moore, Shoemaker, and Santa Lindley leave. OBNUG stays behind when Hancock promises a ride on his Segway made of white gold. A 13" Mrs. Fields birthday cookie is lodged in Lindley's beard.

Moore: OK, let's finish this list.

Lindley: You got it. Now Dasher, now Dancer, now Prancer and Vixen! On Comet, on Cupid, on Donner and Blitzen! Giddyup!

Moore, Shoemaker, and Santa Lindley take off into the night sky to deliver the rest of the Christmas presents. Lindley's beard applies for a Social Security number.

For Ronnie Hillman, a foot bath and three inches of height.

For Adam Muema, hamstrings.

For Craig James, a heart.

For Dick Tomey, a Life Alert.

For Craig Thompson, a lifetime supply of Dep.

For Jared Zabransky, a rugby tee.

For the San Diego Chargers, Dennis Green.

For Gary Patterson, a pair of suspenders.

For Mark May, a friend.

At the end of the night, Moore, Shoemaker, and Santa Lindley return to Bill Hancock's house to pick up OBNUG. They find OBNUG hiding in a tree.

OBNUG: Thank goodness you're here. They hunted me with guns! What kind of sick people would do something like that?

Delany: Found him! Hand me that crossbow.

Moore, Shoemaker, Santa Lindley, and OBNUG take off in the sleigh and return to Moore's house where Santa Lindley hands out the final presents. For Moore, a book on love languages and the phone number for NFL super agent Leigh Steinberg. For Shoemaker, a gift certificate to a tattoo shop so he can finish his Marty Tadman sleeves. For OBNUG, the 2007 Fiesta Bowl on Blu-Ray. And for himself, a healthy Ronnie Hillman and a first-half lead.

Lindley: Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night.

Lindley's beard runs in the GOP presidential primary.

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<http://bit.ly/sdsublogbet>

Inspired by a true movie story.
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0111070/plotsummary>

About the Author

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About this book

All proceeds from the Bronco Football Almanac go to cancer research, so in a small way, you could say that the Boise State football team cures cancer.

Thanks for your support.