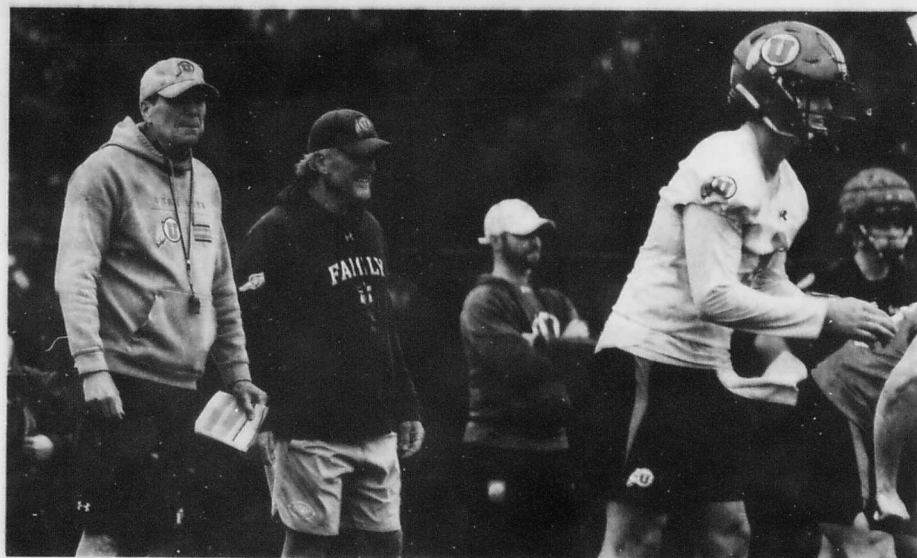


SPORTS



BYU has strength in numbers for NCAAs
Sprinter Jaslyn Gardner is among 21 BYU athletes headed to the NCAA track championships this week in Eugene, Ore. **C4**

INSIDE » HIGHLAND COACH GELWIX HEADED TO RUGBY HALL OF FAME **C3** | CHANGE IN ATTITUDE BOLSTERS AMERICAN FORK SOCCER **C4**



Utah offensive coordinator Andy Ludwig, left, and Utes head coach Kyle Whittingham observe during a practice on March 12. Utah makes the jump to the Big 12 Conference this season. **ELI REHMER / Utah Athletics**

Utes call portal audible

Utah football was built on under-recruited gems. Now Kyle Whittingham's staff is embracing a different strategy.

By **KEVIN REYNOLDS**

Maybe he was the last of a dying breed. Utah defensive tackles coach Luther Elliss doesn't like to think that way, but he knows a story like his son's may not be written again in Salt Lake City. At least not for a while.

Jonah Elliss was a three-star prospect out of Idaho. He was lightly recruited, but Utah took a chance on his upside, knowing his father's genes. In his first two years, he played sparingly. But by year three, he

hit for 12 sacks and became a third-round NFL draft pick.

If Jonah Elliss would be coming out of high school now, would Utah take the same chance?

Luther Elliss knows the answer is probably not.

"You want to be a Power Five program and you want to be contending for national titles, you have to find the immediate-impact type of guys," Elliss said this spring as he assessed Utah's current recruiting strategy. "And honestly, most kids coming out of high school very seldom are the immediate

impacts.

"We're all trying to win ... The best way to get a better batting average [of recruits panning out] is to get proven commodities [in the transfer portal]. Guys who have been there, done that."

Utah's approach to roster management has shifted over the last 18 months. What was once a program that prided itself on developing under-recruited players out of high school is now a group looking to milk the transfer portal for all its worth.

It's good business for a Power Four school. In a time of unlimited transfers,

loose NIL contracts and little NCAA stability, the calculation for Kyle Whittingham's team is simple: If a high school player isn't a four- or five-star recruit, look to the portal instead.

"Our business is all about results and performance," wide receivers coach Alvis Whitted said. "For us, we want to find guys in the portal that have had production, and we can see as a collective group they can help us ... We would be more apt to go after those type of kids than a high school kid for example."

UTAH, C4

Will pro model ruin college sports? Former Utah AD has some thoughts

Can Utah or BYU win a football national championship?

Will the pro model ruin college sports?

Is the term "student-athlete" a joke?

Former Utah athletic director Chris Hill has been out of office since 2018, but still has plenty of answers.

In an interview last week, Hill addressed a number of significant issues surrounding college sports, issues that will affect Utah, BYU, Utah State and other schools around the



GORDON MONSON

country moving forward. In the face of billion-dollar lawsuits targeting universities and the forthcoming changes being enacted by schools in

response to them, and even as college football alters its path toward more of an NFL business model, Hill insists that it can and should retain its educational emphasis and its collegiate charms, enabling fans to stay connected to the teams and games they love.

Note: Some edits were made for clarity and brevity.

Will college athletes be paid by — essentially becoming employees for — the schools for which they play?

In my mind, it's a good thing

By Gordon Monson, CS



SCOTT SOMMERDORY

Utah athletic director Chris Hill chats on his phone as the Utes men's basketball team practices at the Moda Center in Portland on March 18, 2015.



The Salt Lake Tribune

Tap into the influence of The Salt Lake Tribune to engage with registered voters in Utah.

Secure your strategy today by reaching out to us at connect@tribeconnect.com