

SPORTS



Packers not sweating lack of No. 1 receiver
 "I think you don't have to have a No. 1 receiver," Green Bay QB Jordan Love says, after spreading the ball around last season. » C2

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BYU's new coach puts premium on pro experience

Young assembles staff to help make his program a pathway to the NBA.

By KEVIN REYNOLDS
 The Salt Lake Tribune

During BYU basketball coach Kevin Young's interview process in April, a pillar of his pitch to the university's administration was recruiting a higher-level player. He had NBA experience he could leverage. He was backed by two BYU alumni with deep NBA connections: Utah Jazz owner Ryan Smith and CEO Danny Ainge. It could translate, he thought, to making Provo a destination for future NBA players — something it has lacked in the past.

"What I want to do to take [BYU] to the next level is make this the best place in college basketball to prepare young men to play in the NBA," he said. "I think with my background we can get that done."

As he builds the scaffolding of his program, nearly everything appears to be centered around that tenet.

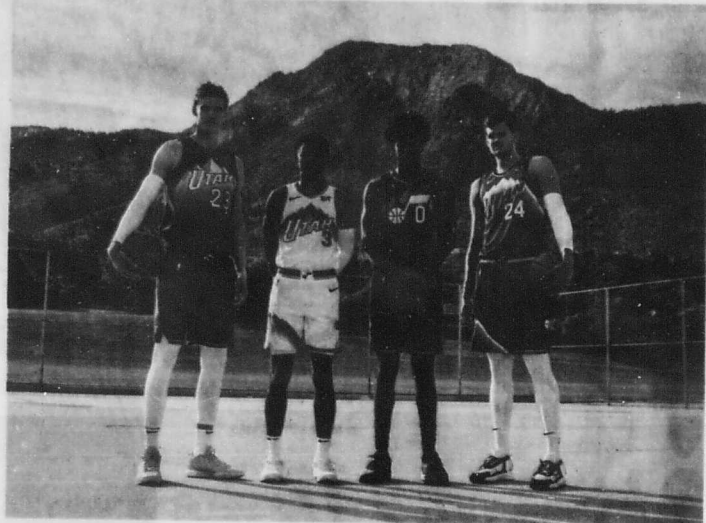
His coaching staff puts a premium on NBA and international experience. He mixed in several high-level recruiters who have been around the college game. In sum, it looks more like a professional approach to building out a staff than a traditional college coach. It's another reminder that Young has operated differently from nearly any other BYU basketball coach in the past.

Around him, Young will have Will Voigt as his main defensive voice. Voigt was the head coach of the San Antonio Spurs' G League team in Austin. He also coached national teams in Nigeria and Angola. He bounced around in China, Egypt and Germany.

Voigt became known as a defensive tactician, particularly as he coached the Angolan national team. It was there he created a new version of a switch defense called the "peel switch" to keep up with the drastic offensive spacing in the professional game.

Essentially, the aim of the "peel switch" is to lessen how far

Photo by BYU, CA



From left, Utah Jazz players Lauri Markkanen, Keyonte George, Taylor Hendricks and Walker Kessler model four new game jerseys — City, Statement, Association and Icon editions — that the NBA team will debut beginning during the 2024-2025 season.

Purple haze

Utah Jazz announced four new uniforms the team will roll out over next two seasons.

By ANDY LARSEN | The Salt Lake Tribune

Purple is back. Really back.

On Wednesday, the Utah Jazz unveiled new uniforms for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 seasons. Being phased out is the "Spotlight Yellow" color the team wore in recent years, and in comes a new "Mountain Basketball" theme that fully embraces purple as the Jazz's primary color moving forward.

The Jazz also want Utah's mountains to be at the core of their brand identity. "It's really been a philosophy that's been a part of who we are... We realized that this was a really good time to bring that back into the forefront," Ben Barnes, the team's senior brand director, said. "It's informed our culture since the team moved here. It's

rooted in our homes, our unparalleled love for the sport, the rigor of playing with elevation and in the confidence of the community on the rise."

The jerseys will be added to the Jazz's schedule gradually.

The team's "City" uniform — with a purple base, stark white mountains and an upward-slanting "Utah" in the middle — will see action as early as this year. After Jan. 1, a black mountain jersey will be introduced as the team's "Statement" jersey.

In 2025-26, two new "Mountain Utah" uniforms will be added to the mix — one white, one purple, but both with gradient mountain features front and center.

That means the Jazz will have bits of old and new looks for the upcoming 2024-25 season. The white jersey from the Jazz's last

two seasons will still be part of the rotation for now, while the team's black jersey with yellow lettering will be worn until Dec. 31, when the newer black jersey replaces it.

"Typically this isn't how things are done, but we wanted to get the story out there," Barnes said about the dual-themed season.

The new look involves re-colored logos, what the Jazz are calling Mountain Purple, Midnight Black, and Sky Blue as the team's colors moving forward.

Three of the four upcoming new jerseys feature "Utah" on the front rather than "Jazz" — a choice Barnes says was intentional.

"We're one of the few teams in the NBA that represents an entire state and not just a city. I think that's important," Barnes said.

Photo by JAZZ JERSEYS, CA

A return to Utah's roots is what team's look needed

The Utah Jazz's primary goal with their new jerseys was the erasure of an error.

The uniforms of recent years — black, white, and especially yellow — were widely panned, both locally and nationally. My biggest complaint, other than the brightness of the jerseys, was that they just had nothing to do with the idea of the Utah Jazz: the state had developed over decades. They looked like generic, video game Create-A-Team units. That the



ANDY LARSEN

basketball players who played in them were largely anonymous too didn't help.

So the Jazz's decision to move back to purple mountains was a

welcome one.

Look, too often, we live in a world that doubles down on its mistakes. There are certainly organizations out there, leaders out there, that would have responded to the negative reaction by insisting that those bright yellow jerseys were good and digging in on their position. It could have dragged down the Jazz's look for decades.

Instead, the Jazz slow-rolled the release of the yellow two years ago, and are getting out of their mistake as soon as

humanly possible under the restrictions provided under the Nike deal.

It's to be lauded.

Jazz brand director Ben Barnes called this "Mountain Basketball" look a revisiting, not a rebranding — and while some of that line is to save the franchise blues from two rebrands in the past two years, there is no doubt that these mountains are comfort food for Utahns. This is familiar territory: white and purple primary uniforms, black

Photo by LARSEN, CA



MARY SCHWIM | Associated Press file photo
 Phoenix Suns acting head coach Kevin Young yells to his team during a game against the Boston Celtics on Dec. 31, 2021.

The Salt Lake Tribune

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