



BYU guard Dallin Hall, handling the ball during a game against Houston on Jan. 23, is staying with the Cougars after spending time in the NCAA transfer portal.

BYU's Hall tests the portal, sticks with 'incredible home'

By ALEX VEJAR

When Dallin Hall entered the transfer portal a couple of months ago, 15 schools reached out to him for his services. It was a moment of uncertainty for the BYU men's basketball team, which had just lost coach Mark Pope to Kentucky and several key players from last year's roster, and prized recruit Collin Chandler in the wake.

But in the end, Hall chose to return to BYU, a place he called "an incredible home" Thursday after a summer practice.

Hall said he and new coach Kevyn Young built a good relationship quickly, and he felt Young's vision would help get him to the next level of his basketball career.

"Just talking about how he saw me fitting in his style play, the things that he wanted to help me

grow my game in order to make those dreams of being a pro reality," Hall said. "So that combination, as well as just the relationship that we built over that time, is ultimately what helped me feel really good about coming back here and accomplishing all my goals on and off the court."

Hall was reportedly considering Utah, Utah State, Creighton, Clemson, Cincinnati, Florida and Washington during his time in the portal, while also meeting a return to BYU. He said as he talked to coaches at other schools — many of which had played against the Cougars — they gave him tips on what parts of his game he could improve.

"I was just trying to be a sponge in the portal as well and take in everything I could," Hall said.

Young, most recently the associate head coach of the Phoenix Suns,

has said he wants to make BYU a place that can be seen as a pipeline to the NBA. The way he's doing that, he said Thursday, is by bringing in assistant coaches, a strength and conditioning coach and mental performance coaches who all have NBA experience.

"It's not just one specific thing," Young said. "I think it's an overarching mindset of how we're organizing the program."

Hall said that even in just four days, he's started to see that NBA influence. Young has broken up the team into groups and had them run pro sets and taught them how to play out of them, Hall said.

"He gives us a lot of freedom to play," Hall said.

Young said he has already seen leadership from Hall and Richie Saunders, another player who briefly entered the portal only to return to BYU.

Utah fighters are ready to show their stuff at the Huntsman Center

Professional Fighters League event is scheduled for June 21.

By ANDREA URBAN

PHOTO

He's gone from Castle Dale to the octagon.

And after spending time in the Ultimate Fighting Championship, Utah's own Clay Collard will be headlining the state's first-ever Professional Fighters League event.

He will take on Mads Burnell of Denmark in a highly anticipated lightweight showdown, where Collard, who already has 12 knockout wins, hopes to live up to his nickname "Cassius."

"Somebody tweeted one time, 'Clay is a man of violence for the people,' that hits the hammer on the nail," Collard said of his style. "I like to be entertaining. I like to take risks."

He adds, "Utah has been my

home, from getting paid \$300 in my first time to now fighting for millions."

On June 21, the Huntsman Center will introduce another Utahn and undefeated prospect Julian Ruiz, who is making his PFL debut.

"To be on a card like this, the fact that my training partner and my mentor [Clay Collard] ... how can I not be excited and have confidence in myself?" Ruiz said.

Ruiz, who is from Vernal, grew up wrestling, which led to boxing and then MMA.

"I do get a lot of support here in Utah, that's one of the reasons I stayed here. I am a local guy, a loyal guy and I want to be the man to bring this place up," Ruiz says. "Obviously Clay has already done that, but I want to add my own to it."

The PFL comes to town on June 21 at the Huntsman Center with Clay Collard as the headliner. Tickets are on sale at Ticketmaster.



Utah's Clay Collard, left, and Joilton Lutterbach trade punches during a mixed martial arts bout on June 10, 2021, in Atlantic City, N.J. Collard will face Denmark's Mads Burnell in the featured fight at a PFL event on June 21 at the Huntsman Center.

BYU

defenses need to rotate. Good spacing often puts defenses in conflict, where there is too much ground to cover and it creates open lanes and open shots. For example, if an offensive player is driving from the slot above either side of the key and beats his man, the weakside corner defender will come to pick him up. It means, for some time, there are now two defenders occupied with the ball and the weakside corner three is wide open.

So instead, Voigt decided that if a defender gets beat with the ball, he is no longer trying to recover. He will simply rotate to the next

man and everyone else will rotate one man over. The help defender who picked up the ball will now be guarding the ball handler. It eliminates the need to put two players on the ball, shrinks the distance the defense needs to rotate and takes away that skip pass.

"If I'm beat off the dribble, we call that a switch. We don't call it a help or a go. That's a switch for us," Voigt said on the Basketball Immersion podcast. "It doesn't make sense to have two on the ball because these guards are too good to make that pass. Having two is not going to deter that pass. So once you are beat, you are done doing anything that can help us with the ball. So now the help man is to shrink on the ball. You want to shrink

your rotations as much as possible." Beyond defense, Voigt also understands the G League model of an ever-changing roster. That is close to what college basketball has become with the transfer portal.

"You can't be rigid in your approach," he said on the podcast. "The trademarks of a team are important on any level. But you have to be able to adjust to the players on your team and the talent they bring to the table."

After Voigt, Young hired Tim Flanning. Flanning was with Over-time Elite for the last few years and helped build an NBA pipeline. He coached Ethan Thompson, a lottery pick last year. He was also involved with Alex Sarr, who will be a lottery pick this summer.

Before that, Flanning coached in the top league in Israel and New Zealand. He has a professional background in player development.

For his other three positions, Young did get some college experience. His first hire was former Stanford assistant Brandon Dunn. He was seen as a capable recruiter who helped the Cardinal sign McDonald's All-American Andrey Stogovskiy.

Former Utah assistant Chris Burgess also signed on. He is a strong local recruiter who understands BYU (he worked with former head coach Mark Pope for several seasons dating back to 2019).

The final assistant was John Linehan out of St. Joe's. The Linehan hire works on multiple levels. For starters, one of Young's

closest confidants is St. Joe's head coach Billy Lange. He helped Young through the interview process with name, image and likeness funding questions. Linehan is out of that coaching tree and worked with Young while he was with the Philadelphia 76ers organization.

Beyond that, Linehan helped NBA player Anthony Edwards while he was at Georgia. He understands defense and player development.

In years past, BYU's coaching staff often put a premium on institutional knowledge and connections. This time, only Burgess has worked at BYU before.

The message Young is sending is clear: He wants to recruit NBA-level talent. And he backed it up with his coaching selections.

Larsen

alternates, and of course, the remarkable Utah mountains plastered across the front. It is meant to evoke both our home state and the John Stockton and Karl Malone years, and succeeds at both.

The mountains are a topic essentially every Utahn can agree on. Their protection led Brigham Young to settle this valley. Their riches, geologic and ecologic, have led millions of non-believers to come here before and since. Even former Jazz center-turned-villain Enes Kanter, when asked if there was anything he still liked about Utah upon being traded from the club, had just one answer: "The mountains."

But it's not just Utah's peaks that make these uniforms sing. There's more to like about the new look.

► The gradient-infusion in the 2025-26 uniforms work really well, especially on the white background. It's a clever nod to another successful bit of previous Jazz branding, the team's red-rock-themed jerseys that debuted in 2017, in a melding of two smart design ideas the Jazz can lean on moving forward.

► The black "Statement" jersey, which will see its debut in January, is a similar bit of smart



A photo shoot featuring Junior Jazz players highlights four new Jazz jerseys.

fusion. The Jazz have gone back to the small numbers under the Jazz note concept, used in innumerable colors over the past few years. But we haven't seen that look in black before, and we also haven't seen it with a mountain backdrop — a creative way to spice up what could have otherwise been a bland design.

► The minimal, non-distracting addition of "sky blue" to the Jazz's color palette. Yellow screamed at you, but this blue is simply designed to look good next to purple and black, integrating it into

the jersey's shoulder piping and at the tops and bottoms of the shorts adds substance and complexity, in sharp contrast to the Jazz's monochrome uniforms of a year ago. And the faux pass are minor, in my opinion.

► Three of the four jerseys read "Utah" on the front, while none read "Jazz." I tend to think that the Jazz wordmark is stronger than the Utah one — the double Zs, goofy as they are, do provide some visual flair and a more natural shrinking of letter height as the word moves vertically

upwards. The team explained that they wanted to tie together Utah's mountains with the state itself, which makes some sense, but the word Jazz would have been welcome on at least one of these looks.

► The two primarily purple uniforms do look pretty similar. This isn't as big of a problem as you might think at first glance, as the pair will actually never be worn in the same season — the gradient mountain ones won't debut until the 2025-26 season, while the standard mountain ones will only be worn in 2024-25. But announced all at once now, it's a bit duplicative.

► The 2024-25 "transition" year provides a hedge-podge of looks, with both old and new jerseys being worn. Nike and its restrictive production schedule that relies on overseas, unethical manufacturing processes is to blame here, though, not the Jazz.

These aren't the best jerseys I've ever seen. My reaction upon seeing them for the first time wasn't an astonished, elated "Wow!" but a sense of comforted relief. A sense that the franchise has returned to an identity that served them well for decades, and should continue to do so.

Most importantly, it's a sign that the team is back to listening to its fans, its customers. You may continue at all levels throughout the franchise — not just with the laundry.

Jazz jerseys

BY ANDREA URBAN

"We wanted to make sure that Utah was front and center on our uniforms for this uniform set."

These jerseys won't be available for fan purchase right away. Instead, the team is targeting a fan purchase date of "fall 2024" for the "City" edition purple jersey, and "early 2025" for the black "Statement" jersey. The two 2025-26 jerseys won't be available for purchase until the following season.

New York-based creative design studio Doubleday & Cartwright helped the Jazz build the branding. The Smith Entertainment Group is contracting with the studio to create the new Utah NHL team's branding as well.

As part of the jersey unveiling, about 50 Junior Jazz participants were chosen to participate in a photo shoot for the team. Photos were taken around the valley — at Ridgeway Elementary and Fort Herriman Middle School in Herriman, and at Churchill Junior High in Millcreek.

The approximately 70,000 Junior Jazz participants around the state will receive a reversible version of the jersey, with the purple "City" jersey on the front and the black "Statement" jersey on the back.