

BYU v Arizona State... Still Something at Stake?

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It's hard to be serious about the possibility, but the possibility exists.

Arizona State still has a shot at making the CPD playoffs. RUGBYMag.com has already slotted BYU and Utah in the quarterfinal places, and most likely that is exactly how it will all shake out.

But ... if Arizona State beats BYU and scores four tries, they can, just possibly, unseat Utah.

If BYU gets a bonus point of any kind, they will take first place. A bonus-point win by ASU then ties them with Utah at 30 points in the standings. The tiebreaker is then head-to-head, which Utah wins, and so BYU (31 points with the hypothetical bonus point) and Utah (30 points) take 1st

and 2nd

However, if BYU fails to get a bonus point, then all three will be deadlocked at 30 points. Head-to-head gets thrown out the window because BYU beat Utah who beat ASU who beat BYU who beat It's circular. So we go to the next tiebreaker, which is points difference. Here's where it gets silly. Arizona State needs to beat BYU by 106 points to overcome Utah in the standings.

Doable? Well it would be the story of the year if they did it. ASU can actually overtake BYU for 1st, but to do that they have to deny BYU a bonus point of any kind, and win by ... 162.

So, no, it's not really realistic, but it remains a mathematical possibility.

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“Never say never!” said ASU head Coach Gary Lane. “I Rutgers can beat Kutztown maybe we can beat BYU. We’re going to go out there and play our hardest and have fun and see where the chips fall. We’ve studied BYU film and we’re going to do our best. I am really happy with how our boys have committed to the league. It’s the hot sport on campus, they put the work in, and look at us. Everyone thought that as a DII team everyone would walk over us, and we’re 4-1 and technically still in it.”

BYU Head Coach David Smyth said he is not worried about his team becoming complacent after so many blowout victories (after beating Utah 40-22, BYU average score has been 96-6).

“I would, for certain reasons, have preferred we had closer and tighter games,” Smyth said. “That would have helped us prepare for the inevitable closer and tighter games in the playoffs.”

BYU has also used a lot of players, so the key thing about the Cougars is, everyone is fresh.

“We’ve run on a lot of players, but our pack, especially with turnover ball, can cause some problems and we have some kids that naturally excel in that sort of environment [of striving to get a start] so when the opportunity arises they can be pretty lethal.”

The shifting around is over, though. Smyth said the lineup he expects to use going forward is the one he expects to use in the playoffs.

“We haven’t started the same backline in more than one game all year,” Smyth said. “But the team we will put out against Arizona State will be our strongest team. I know they have a chance and they have nothing to lose. We will see how the best BYU team we have available can do on the day.”

Something tells us they won’t lose by 106.