

## Navy and BYU Stare Each Other Down

Written by  
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There's no debate – BYU has not been tested in the College Premier Division since March 5.

Even that game, a 40-22 defeat of Utah, was essentially over at halftime. The Utes made a game of it in the second half, but weren't going to come back all the way. In their other six

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games, the Cougars have averaged 93 points.

So looking ahead to this weekend's clash (webcast live 1pm Mountain here: <http://www.byurugby.com/featured/webcast-byu-vs-navy.html>

), the Cougars have to be conscious of the fact that rugby teams that win easily have a tough time adjusting to a more recalcitrant opponent. Like Navy.

"We've talked a lot about tougher games," said BYU Head Coach David Smyth. "We're well aware of what Navy's capabilities are. How we react to that remains to be seen, but I think the boys will be ready for it."

Smyth ran out what was essentially his best side against Arizona State and won convincingly, 80-0, last week.

"We did perform fairly well; we got off to a good start," said the coach. "But in the second half we weren't as technically sound as I'd like to be. I think that was partly due to the fact we hadn't played in three weeks."

The adjustment now for BYU will be having to play a lot of defense. Navy knows how to keep the ball, and knows how to defend. They will be uncompromising in a way that the Cougars haven't really seen yet.

"There will be no change in our approach," said Smyth. "We're spending most of our time on is what we want to do but we have been looking at their patterns. We know they will come at us with a real North-South attack early, and they have tried to go wide as well. They feel more confident in how they use their backs and we've set up a plan to combat that."

Meanwhile Navy, which flew in on Wednesday to acclimate to the altitude and the location, is not intimidated at all- even though Thursday was the first day of finals and players had to work their way around those requirements to get ready to play rugby.

"We can handle the physicality," said Navy Head Coach Mike Flanagan. "We're going to put it on the line. Remember, these guys have bigger fish to fry after graduation. We just saw in the news what sorts of things they are going to be doing. Kids don't come to the US Naval Academy to be rugby players, they come here to be Naval or Marines officers. So they won't be worried about a rugby game."

Asked about what Navy will do while BYU performs their Haka, Flanagan shrugged.

"Our guys aren't going to wilt at that," he said. "If they are scared of [that] before a rugby game they're in the wrong business."

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Coming off a 34-27 loss to Army, the Navy players felt as if they had left some points unclaimed.

“It was bad enough to lose but we felt like we contributed to our loss,” said Flanagan. “We are working on correcting those mistakes. We know BYU are a really good team and they use turnover ball extremely well, so we can’t turn the ball over. This will be another great game in a season of great games. We’re going to focus on what we’re going to do more than anything else.”