

BYU hoops star suspended for premarital sex

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PROVO, Utah (RNS) A Brigham Young University basketball star has been suspended from the nationally ranked team for the remainder of the season because he violated the Mormon-run school's honor code that prohibits premarital sex.

Brandon Davies, a 19-year-old sophomore, acknowledged his transgression to BYU officials on Monday (Feb. 28), according to multiple sources.

As March Madness approaches, BYU had been expected to gain a top seed in the annual tournament. The loss of Davies, the team's starting center, puts a big crimp in those plans.

Cougars coach Dave Rose addressed Davies' dismissal on Wednesday after the team lost for only the third time this season, saying, "I think it was a surprise to everyone."

Asked whether he believes Davies will play basketball for BYU again, Rose said, "Yeah, I do."

On Tuesday, the school owned and operated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints announced Davies had been dismissed from the team but was being allowed to remain in school while his situation was under review by the Honor Code Office.

BYU spokeswoman Carri Jenkins said Davies' suspension from the team was for the remainder of the season and that his future at the school has yet to be determined.

Two of Davies' teammates, Jimmer Fredette and Charles Abouo, said that they stand behind their former teammate and have no resentment toward him.

"Everyone makes mistakes in their life," Abouo said. "We are reaching out and trying to help him get through this."

Davies was averaging 11 points and a team-leading 6 rebounds per game this season for a team that entered Wednesday's game ranked No. 3 in the nation, but will surely tumble after losing by 18 points on Wednesday to unranked New Mexico.

"Brandon is one of our good players, and he is like a brother to us, family," Fredette said. "It is tough to lose a guy like that. We just have to pull together."

Fredette said Davies spoke to the team and apologized.

"He told us everything. He told us he was sorry and that he let us down. We just held our heads high and told him it was OK, that it is life, and you make mistakes, and you just got to play through it," Fredette said.

At 6-foot-9 and 235 pounds, Davies' physical presence was regarded as essential to the Cougars as they fought for a possible No. 1 seed in the upcoming NCAA Tournament, but Wednesday's loss likely takes BYU out of consideration.

According to a source close to the program, Davies was "extremely remorseful, heartbroken," but has accepted the punishment doled out by the school.

On Wednesday afternoon, the school confirmed that Davies' dismissal was not due to anything criminal in nature, but would not acknowledge the specific portion of the honor code he violated, per school policy.

Among other things, the honor code forbids students from engaging in premarital sex, and admonishes them to "live a chaste and virtuous life."

Jenkins said Tuesday that the school became aware of Davies' honor code violation on Monday, the same day the Cougars moved up to No. 3 in the polls.

Rose said the Cougars played so poorly Wednesday, and New Mexico so well, that it is doubtful Davies' presence would have changed the final result.

"Brandon's heart is in the right place. I think that he wants to continue his education here at BYU," Rose said. "There are a lot of things that have yet to be determined."