

# Sitake agrees to long-term contract extension with BYU

PROVO, Utah (AP) — Kalani Sitake will remain BYU’s head football coach after agreeing to a new long-term contract extension on Monday.

Sitake is 83-44 since taking over at BYU in 2016. The Cougars have won 11 games in back-to-back seasons for the first time since 2006 and ‘07, and have won at least 10 games in four of his last six seasons at the helm.

“For me, it’s like I’ve never really thought about leaving ever but I’m also competitive and I want to

be able to take care of people,” Sitake said. “This is just one of those moments where I felt like us being in the Big 12, we can make the right moves and I don’t really need to do this anywhere else. I can do it here. I feel like we’ve got some great momentum.”

Penn State made Sitake a top candidate in its search to replace James Franklin, who was fired earlier this season after a 0-3 start in Big Ten play. Sitake had conversations with Nittany Lions athletic director Pat Kraft and received an offer reported-

ly worth eight figures annually.

BYU made retaining Sitake a top priority and put together a contract extension that swayed him to stay at the school where he played as a full-back under LaVell Edwards in 1994 and from 1997 to 2000 following a two-year mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

As part of retaining Sitake, BYU made commitments to deeper investments in the football program that included everything from higher salaries for assistant coaches and support staff to enhanced football

facilities.

“I think the expectations are already set by Kalani and his vision and passion for excellence,” BYU athletic director Brian Santiago said. “He’s built something really really special and we wanted to give him the resources to be able to sustain it.”

This new contract extension comes as Sitake prepares No. 11 BYU to face No. 4 Texas Tech in the Big 12 championship game on Saturday. This is the first title game appearance for both schools and a

rematch of a regular-season game on Nov. 8 that the Red Raiders won 29-7.

The fact that Sitake will be on BYU’s sideline for that game and many others to come is a relief to the players he has coached and is currently coaching.

“If he left, I would have been super sad,” BYU receiver Chase Roberts said. “I would have probably cried in my bed and I’m not even coming back next year. That shows the character of Kalani and how much we care about this program.”

# Ole Miss loses coach, but moves up a spot in CFP rankings

Ole Miss lost a coach and moved up a spot anyway. Notre Dame didn’t lose a thing but the Irish fell.

The release Tuesday of the latest College Football Playoff rankings produced its fair share of eye-openers and head-scratchers — plenty to talk about before the final rankings and the actual pairings for the 12-team playoff come out this week-end after a slate of conference title games.

Undefeated Ohio State and Indiana remained at 1 and 2 in the rankings, while Georgia moved to third and Texas Tech rose to No. 4.

The rest of the top 12: Oregon, Mississippi, Texas A&M, Oklaho-

ma, Alabama, Notre Dame, BYU and Miami.

Even though Mississippi coach Lane Kiffin left the school for LSU last weekend, the selection committee moved the Rebels up one spot to No. 6. Committee chairman Hunter Yurachek explained the panel talked about the upheaval in Oxford but didn’t quite know what to make of it.

“We don’t have any way to evaluate what Ole Miss looks like, plays like, without its head coach,” Yurachek said. “We can only evaluate what we know, and what we know now is Ole Miss is an 11-1 football team.”

Notre Dame is a 10-2 football team, same as Alabama, but those two flip-flopped spots after wins last week.

The Tide is now ranked No. 9 — in a much better position to grab an at-large berth if they lose to Georgia in the SEC title game — while Notre Dame is No. 10, a little more on the bubble despite a 10-game winning streak.

Yurachek described the debate pitting two of the nation’s most storied programs as one “that has really split our committee room.”

“We all think highly of both teams,” he said. “There are some in the Alabama camp, some in the No-

tre Dame camp..

In the end, he said, it came down to Alabama’s 27-20 win over Auburn (5-7) in a rivalry game on the road getting more run than Notre Dame’s 49-20 romp at 4-8 Stanford.

In another move that could have a major impact, the committee put James Madison of the Sun Belt Conference at No. 25 — higher than unranked Duke, which plays No. 17 Virginia for the Atlantic Coast Conference title.

If Duke and James Madison win, then James Madison could deny the ACC an automatic bid.

Those go to the five best-ranked conference titlists, with no guarantee

to the Power 4 leagues. The SEC, Big Ten and Big 12 will earn spots, while the American from the Group of 5 seems to have a hold on one of those, with No. 20 Tulane and No. 24 North Texas slated for that title game Friday.

It means the fifth and final will either go to the ACC or the Sun Belt, where James Madison plays Troy on Friday for the championship.

The final rankings come out Sunday, the day after the title games determine the five automatic qualifiers for the 12-team bracket. The playoffs start Dec. 19 and end a month later with the title game outside Miami.

## ► Tomlin

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Asked if he feels his team has an identity three months into the season, Tomlin laughed.

“Yeah, 6-6, and I don’t like it,” he said.

Pittsburgh is 6-11 in its past 17 games going back to the end of last season, when a 10-3 start mor-

phed into a free fall punctuated by a lopsided defeat in Baltimore in the opening round of the playoffs.

While Tomlin likes to point out that one season does not necessarily correlate to the next, the issues that troubled the Steelers down the stretch in 2024 — namely, an inability to stop the run — have continued deep into 2025.

Pittsburgh drafted defensive lineman Derrick Harmon and Yahya Black and brought in Daniel

Ekuale to join a group that includes Heyward, Keanu Benton and Dean Lowry. Lowry was injured in training camp, Ekuale was lost for the season in a loss to Green Bay in October and Harmon has been forced to sit twice because of knee problems.

“You can’t run out of bigs,” Tomlin said. “If you run out of bigs in AFC North ball, you’re running on the beach, certainly.”

The Steelers are a middling 17th

against the run this season, and now face a Ravens team that smashed them for 299 yards on the ground the most recent time the rivals met 11 months ago.

“Certainly at different times in this journey, I felt really good about (our physicality),” Tomlin said. “And so I think that could describe a lot of conversations, as I mentioned earlier when you’re sitting at 6-6. For us it’s about absorbing that and understanding that and plotting a

course to move forward.”

### NOTES

While Harmon will miss a second straight game, everyone else could be available against the Ravens. ... Tomlin said quarterback Aaron Rodgers and his broken left wrist were fine after he struggled against Buffalo. Rodgers, who turned 42 on Tuesday, could be limited in practice this week but is expected to start.

## ► Orioles

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With teams often times game planning to shut down Baughman and Carter, coach Anderson will be looking for his other three starters to step up and be a bigger part of the offense when called upon.

“I think Aiden, Connor and Haydon are ready for the challenge. With defenses focused on stopping Noah and Landen, these guys know there are times when they are going to be leaned on a little more to do the scoring and I think this year they are ready to shine a little more. These guys are all complete players and I think they can also make up

the points and assists we lost with Schiffer.”

Anderson said that the team will be working on its defense, as well as looking to improve its efforts in cleaning up rebounds off the glass.

“We have the mindset that we will outscore our opponents, but we need to have that defense that can shut a team down when we aren’t scoring and not shooting well,” he said. “Rebounds are our other thing. We’re not as big as most teams, so rebounding has always been a challenge. The one thing I can’t work on is making the players taller, so all we can do is work on the fundamentals and focus on boxing out.”

Two players that could help off the bench are 5-10 senior guard Davis LeGoullon and 6-1 junior

Landon Jones.

“Davis has been around and he does a lot of things well. He played with these guys a lot over the summer, so he will be seeing some playing time,” coach Anderson said. “Landon is a bigger body. He rebounds well, he can score and he is real crafty around the hoop with his different arm angles. He is one of those kids that always finds himself in the right position.”

Also expected to see playing time off the bench for the Orioles are three sophomores in 5-9 guards Dreyden Hughes and Liam Grigsby as well as 6-1 guard/forward Preston Keith.

“I don’t need these guys to score a lot of points. I just need them to take care of the ball and play good defense,” coach Anderson said. “When

they come into the game, they work really hard and take advantage of the opportunities they are given. They will have their chance in the future to be more of a scoring threat.”

As for the style of play the team is focusing on this year, it is similar to last year.

“Our style is to get the ball up the floor and try to score in transition,” coach Anderson said. “We don’t have a lot of size, but we’ve always been quick, and we can run with the floor really well.”

After losing to Lakeview in the D-10 title game last year, the Orioles will get an early chance to gauge where they are at as they travel to play the Sailors on Dec. 9.

“The guys have a bad taste in their mouth after last year. We beat

them early in the season but lost to them in what we called the biggest game of the year,” coach Anderson said of Lakeview. “We didn’t play our best and I think they did.”

Rocky Grove will open its season by hosting the Roy Sanner Memorial Tournament on Friday and Saturday. The Orioles will play Titusville at 8:30 p.m. on opening night with Cranberry and Reynolds squaring off in the other boys contest at 5:30 p.m..

“We want to win the region and then compete for a District 10 Championship,” coach Anderson said of his team’s ultimate goals. “That is the goal every year. With these guys and the experience they have, we are also going to try to make a run at the state playoffs.”

## THE DAILY SCOREBOARD

NFL STANDINGS							
AMERICAN CONFERENCE							
East							
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
New England	11	2	0	.846	351	241	
Buffalo	8	4	0	.667	337	259	
Miami	5	7	0	.417	247	286	
N.Y. Jets	3	9	0	.250	246	315	
South							
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Jacksonville	8	4	0	.667	292	253	
Indianapolis	8	4	0	.667	357	249	
Houston	7	5	0	.583	263	198	
e-Tennessee	1	11	0	.083	170	328	
North							
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Baltimore	6	6	0	.500	289	293	
<b>Pittsburgh</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>.500</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>289</b>	
Cincinnati	4	8	0	.333	280	374	
Cleveland	3	9	0	.250	194	270	
West							
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Denver	10	2	0	.833	284	218	
L.A. Chargers	8	4	0	.667	277	252	
Kansas City	6	6	0	.500	305	232	
e-Las Vegas	2	10	0	.167	179	308	
NATIONAL CONFERENCE							
East							
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Phila.	8	4	0	.667	270	249	
Dallas	6	5	1	.542	351	342	
Washington	3	9	0	.250	262	323	
e-N.Y. Giants	2	11	0	.154	279	367	
South							
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Tampa Bay	7	5	0	.583	279	301	
Carolina	7	6	0	.538	247	297	
Atlanta	4	8	0	.333	243	276	
e-New Orleans	2	10	0	.167	182	295	
North							
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Chicago	9	3	0	.750	313	307	
Green Bay	8	3	1	.708	294	226	
Detroit	7	5	0	.583	350	274	
Minnesota	4	8	0	.333	224	281	
West							
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
L.A. Rams	9	3	0	.750	334	210	
Seattle	9	3	0	.750	350	217	
San Francisco	9	4	0	.692	307	269	
e-Arizona	3	9	0	.250	265	303	
e-Eliminated from playoffs							
Thursday's Games							
Green Bay 31, Detroit 24							
Dallas 31, Kansas City 28							
Cincinnati 32, Baltimore 14							
Friday's Games							
Chicago 24, Phila. 15							
Sunday's Games							
Carolina 31, L.A. Rams 28							
Houston 20, Indianapolis 16							
Jacksonville 25, Tennessee 3							
Miami 21, New Orleans 17							
N.Y. Jets 27, Atlanta 24							
San Francisco 26, Cleveland 8							
Tampa Bay 20, Arizona 17							
Seattle 26, Minnesota 0							
<b>Buffalo 26, Pittsburgh 7</b>							
L.A. Chargers 31, Las Vegas 14							
Denver 27, Washington 26, OT							
Monday's Games							
New England 33, N.Y. Giants 15							
Thursday, Dec. 4							
Dallas at Detroit, 8:15 p.m.							
Sunday, Dec. 7							
Cincinnati at Buffalo, 1 p.m.							
Indianapolis at Jacksonville, 1 p.m.							
Miami at N.Y. Jets, 1 p.m.							
New Orleans at Tampa Bay, 1 p.m.							
Pittsburgh at Baltimore, 1 p.m.							
Seattle at Atlanta, 1 p.m.							
Tennessee at Cleveland, 1 p.m.							
Washington at Minnesota, 1 p.m.							
Denver at Las Vegas, 4:05 p.m.							
Chicago at Green Bay, 4:25 p.m.							
L.A. Rams at Arizona, 4:25 p.m.							
Houston at Kansas City, 8:20 p.m.							
Open: New England, Carolina, N.Y. Giants, San Francisco							
Monday, Dec. 8							
Philadelphia at L.A. Chargers, 8:15 p.m.							