

stanford

Lack of injuries and some luck are Cardinal hopes for this year

By MIKE GRADY
Of the Emerald

The question of whether Stanford can bounce back from their next-to-last place finish of a year ago will depend largely on their ability to keep from filling out the medical insurance forms.

Coach Dick DiBiasi's Cardinals got off to one of the hottest starts in the league last year, winning seven of their first 10. But then the injuries came, and with them, the losses.

By the end of the year the Cards owned a disappointing 11-16 overall won-loss record and the only thing that kept them in their 3-11 Pac-8 standing out of the cellar was Southern Cal.

This year the Cards have had some early injury problems, but DiBiasi hopes to see them cleared up before the end of the season. The biggest concern comes in the form of senior George Schader. Having recovered from knee surgery which kept him out of the entire season last year, the strong 6-7 power forward stepped on some glass and has not been starting as of yet.

Another forward, Jay Carter, has also been slowed. His trouble

is tendonitis in both knees caused by a dashboard being shoved into his legs in a recent automobile accident. A starter last year, Carter was incapacitated for two weeks according to DiBiasi, but is now playing.

"Both are practicing with us now but neither is at full strength," DiBiasi said. "Hopefully we'll be ready by the Pac-8."

Finding a replacement for the graduated Mike Bratz is another concern for DiBiasi. Bratz, a 1977 all Pac-8 guard, averaged 19.6 ppg for the Cards last year and was their most dependable performer.

"The loss of Bratz is definitely a factor for us," said DiBiasi. "Wolfe Perry will take over responsibility in the backcourt now." A junior, Perry started last year and averaged 11.4 ppg. The other guard position appears to be filled by either Carter or sophomore Paul Giovacchini. DiBiasi mentioned that 6-4 freshman Mark Pitchford from Chevy Chase, Md. will also be used.

The forward position is probably Stanford's strongest point. Kimberly Belton, a 6-7 sophomore from New York was the Card's power rebounder last year, who with some improvement in his

shooting touch could become a prominent Pac-8 player.

With the return of Schader the Cardinals have a player who has already proved he can play with the best of the big men. Add to this 6-7 freshman Jeff Ryan from Chicago and Carter, who is small for a forward but who can play good defense, and it is obvious just how deep they are at forward.

"Right now they're still fighting it out for center," said DiBiasi when asked about his big men. "It's between Jeff McHugh (6-9) and Tom Schmalzried (6-11), but Schader may even end up playing there with the depth we have at forward."

"We hope to spend more time playing man to man defense and fast breaking," said DiBiasi, now in his third year at Stanford. "In the past we haven't had the people healthy to consistently play a good man to man; we've had to play a lot of what I call 'junk defenses'."

DiBiasi stated that everyone in the Pac-8 helped themselves recruiting-wise this year but that no one team appears to be considerably improved over the others. As for Stanford's hope this year, he said it would depend on the injuries, or lack thereof.



Photo by Steve Schneider

Jeff McHugh, Stanford's standout center, showed the kind of muscle he has against Oregon last weekend.

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