

Predictions

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him will have quality receivers to throw to. Both of last year's leading receivers, Derek Hill and Jeff Fairholm, are back looking for more. The pair combined for 56 catches, 905 yards and five TDs in 1986. And kicker Gary Costen, who led the Pac-10 in scoring last year, should put points on the board when called upon.

Arizona graduated 75 percent of its linebacking corps, including the heart of its defense in Pac-10 Defensive Player-of-the-Year Byron Evans. Returner Boomer Gibson is a potential All-Conference performer.

Strong safety Chuck Cecil figures to be the Wilcats big hitter, but Tomey plays a 50 defense that relies heavily on its linebackers to make reads and plug holes. If Cecil leads this team in tackles it is in trouble.

7. Oregon Ducks

Projected Record: 5-6 (3-5)

Replacing Chris Miller is just one of many difficult challenges facing coach Rich Brooks and his staff this fall, as Oregon football opens the second decade of the Brooks era.

Nearly every element of the Ducks' game plan needs an infusion of personnel, but that isn't necessarily the harbinger of doom everyone thinks. There is youth, but there is also talent that will develop with time.

Oregon returns only 10 starters from last year's 5-6 squad, the fewest of any team in the Pac-10. Besides Miller, the Ducks also graduated their leading receiver, their punter and placekicker, and both defensive cornerbacks.

Redshirt freshman Bill Musgrave was the clear leader in the race to fill Miller's cleats when fall camp opened, after an impressive spring. A preseason injury to backup Pete Nelson, who will be out until late Oc-

tober at least, puts the pressure squarely on Musgrave's shoulders.

The Ducks have a solid nucleus of young receivers and running backs to supply a balanced attack. Ball carriers Derek Loville and Latin Berry are two talented sophomores who should provide the offensive backbone for the next three years.

Loville scored 10 TDs last year, but Berry must learn fullback after missing most of spring drills to compete in track and field. Fellow tracksters Rod Green and J.J. Birden are both fleet-footed and sure-handed receivers. Green averaged nearly 18 yards per grab a year ago, and Birden was leading the team in receptions before going down with a leg injury.

The defense will be totally revamped in 1987, as Brooks scraps the 4-3 alignment in favor of the 3-4, which employs four linebackers and only three down linemen. For a team that was the Pac-10's worst against the run and in points allowed, any change is potentially good.

Nose tackle Rollin Putzier will be counted on to plug up the middle, and consensus preseason All-Pac-10 safety Anthony Newman will shore up the secondary. If the linebackers can fill the gaps, this team could finish better than anyone expects.

8. California Golden Bears

Projected Record: 3-8 (1-6)

The Bears return 15 starters, the most of any team in the Pac-10. But considering that last year's squad won only two games, all that experience could be detrimental. New coach Bruce Snyder is in for a rude awakening.

Cal had an offense that was virtually nonexistent last season, producing just 16 TDs and an average of 13 points per game.

Things may not be any better this time around with the graduation of running back Marc Hicks. Hicks led the team in rushing in 1986, was second in receptions and third in scoring.

Cal's quarterback-by-committee situation has eased somewhat with the moving of number two signal-caller Brian Bedford to receiver (three players shared the snaps last year). That leaves the quarterback chores in the hands of sophomore Troy Taylor, who threw just one touchdown pass last season.

The Bear defense should be solid, and if this team is going to win anything, it will have to hold down the opposition's attack, which is something it couldn't accomplish in 1986. The entire line returns, as do both safeties and two starting linebackers. If Oregon State wasn't on Cal's schedule, the Bears would most likely finish this season ninth in the conference. This is a team in danger of sinking to the depths for several years to come.

9. Oregon State Beavers

Projected Record: 2-9 (0-7)

Eric Wilhelm will probably lead the conference in passing again in 1987 and rewrite the OSU record books, but he won't produce more wins for the Beavers until third-year coach Dave Kragthorpe develops a running game and a defense that can make an impact on opponents. Until the Beavers prove otherwise, the assumption remains that they don't have either.

Oregon State had the most inept running attack of any team

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