

Ducks, 'Cats strive to end Southern Cal domination

USC looks to be football champ

By Thomas Prowell
Emerald Editor

One day, Southern California won't win all the nation's championships.

It may happen soon. The Dodgers look like also-rans. The Lakers folded up like a cardboard sunscreen when the Pistons came to play. The Raiders are ready to leave town and return to Oakland. Even with Gretzky, the Kings are no hockey powerhouse.

That leaves only the Pacific-10 conference football teams, USC and UCLA, both of whom have to replace their starting quarterbacks. With the Ducks and Wildcats looking hungry this year, it might not take an earthquake for LA to disappear from the face of the earth.

Arizona — Predicted record: 8-3 (6-2)

The Wildcats are blessed with quickness on defense and offense. Offensive coordinator Rip



Scherer's new passing game should give running QB Ronald Veal another weapon; last year Arizona was first in rushing, last in passing.

The home schedule also gives the 'Cats something to purr about — the school hosts both the Trojans and Bruins. Arizona will be looking to upset, and they could just do it on this field. Are you paying attention, UCLA?

Arizona State — Predicted record: 5-6 (2-5)

Home is where Arizona State's heart is; the Sun Devils have a sinfully easy card with eight games at home.



Beyond the schedule advantage, the Devils are decidedly mild. Their running game is soft, and quarterback Paul Justin doesn't seem like the kind of player to lead an impressive passing game. The defense was weak last year.



California — Predicted record: 5-6 (3-5)

With Aikman and Peete gone, many observers pick the Golden Bears' golden boy Troy Taylor as the Pac-10's best QB. Consider also Cal lost three in the final 20 seconds last year (including the 61-minute game with Oregon State), which won't happen this year, and Cal is ready to rise from the cellar.

Oregon — Predicted record: 6-5 (5-3)

Over the last five years, the Ducks are exactly a .500 ball-club. Not only that, there season records for the last five campaigns are 6-5,



5-6, 5-6, 6-5 and 6-6. America's most mediocre sports team plays at Autzen Stadium.

They'll follow the trend this year. Much has been made about the team returning its offensive squad virtually intact, but that offensive squad ranked ninth in yards per game last year. Much also has been made about the fact that Oregon doesn't play USC this year, and that is something to appreciate.

Another bold prediction: Brilliant but accident-prone QB Bill Musgrave will stay healthy this year. Musgrave's injuries in the past have all come in the open field; the offensive line is too good to let other teams get to Musgrave.

Oregon State — Predicted record: 4-8 (2-5)

It'll be some time before the Beavs are completely around the bend. Brilliant QB Erik Wilhelm is gone, as are the top two receivers and tailbacks. There are players ready to step into leadership roles, but it may be new-found pride that carries the team.



Conventional wisdom has it that this year's Pac-10 race is wide open with quarterback vacancies at both Southern Cal and UCLA. Not so, say Emerald staff writers Gary Henley, Tracy Sumner and Thomas Prowell, all of whom picked the same four schools to finish at the top. Below are their predictions of the 1989 Pac-10 football race.

| Henley's picks | Sumner's picks | Prowell's picks |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1. USC | USC | USC |
| 2. UCLA | UCLA | UCLA |
| 3. Arizona | Arizona | Arizona |
| 4. Oregon | Oregon | Oregon |
| 5. Arizona State | Arizona State | Washington |
| 6. California | Washington | Stanford |
| 7. Washington State | Stanford | California |
| 8. Washington | California | Arizona State |
| 9. Stanford | Washington State | Oregon State |
| 10. Oregon State | Oregon State | Washington State |

There are bright days ahead for OSU; Kragthorpe's recruiting class looks solid. For now, Beaver fans will have to be content with a ninth-place finish and another loss to the Ducks.

Stanford — Predicted record: 6-5 (4-4)

New Cardinal coach Dennis Green will inherit a team that's better than departed coach's Jack Elway's 3-6-2 record indicates.

There are 15 returning starters, including running back Jon Volpe.

UCLA — Predicted record: 9-2 (6-2)

UCLA's chances for the Pac-10 crown will end early, Oct. 14, with an upset loss to Arizona. Then the team will play well until losing to USC on Nov. 18.

The Bruins lost more to graduation than did the Trojans, but there's still a great team here. The offensive line is tops, and it'll give explosive backs Brian Brown, Shawn Wills and Kevin Williams plenty of rushing room. A strong running game will take some of the pressure off the new QB, either Jimmy Bonds or Bret Johnson.



USC — Predicted record: 10-1 (7-0)

At USC, the talk isn't of winning the Pac-10, but of a national title.

Southern Cal isn't a pretty team. Their offense will just be mediocre, but it's defense that wins football games and USC has defense in spades.

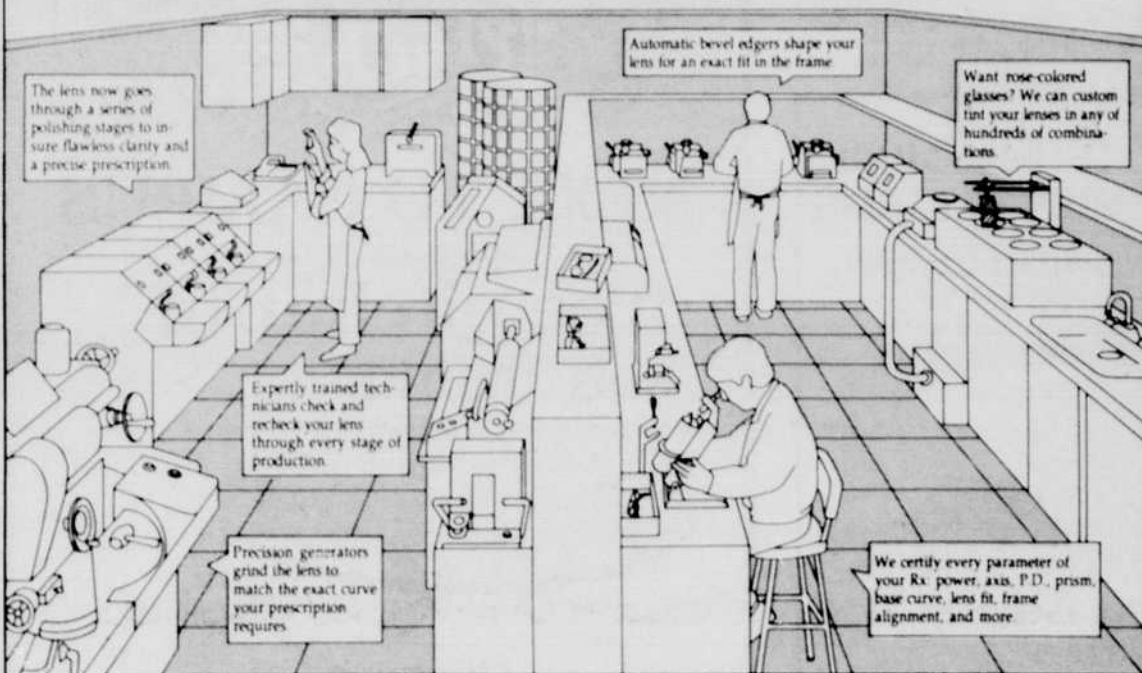
Washington — Predicted record: 6-5 (4-4)

Husky coach Don James and his team won't have to play at Autzen Stadium for a while, but they do have a tough early schedule that may keep Washington out of a bowl game for only the second time this decade.

Washington State — Predicted record: 3-8 (2-6)

Not only do the Cougars have to replace defecting coach Dennis Erickson (gone to Miami) and QB Timm Rosenbach (gone to the NFL), they have to replace most of their graduated offensive and defensive line.

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