

Ducks last major obstacle in BYU title march

When Brigham Young comes to Autzen Stadium Saturday, the game will likely be more important for the Cougars than the Ducks.

That isn't to say the game doesn't have some significance for Coach Rich Brooks' team. A win over BYU would bring Oregon some much-needed and well-deserved national recognition. A loss wouldn't likely hurt the Ducks unless they're blown away and that seems unlikely considering how badly Duck quarterback Bill Musgrave shredded the Cougar secondary last season.

But for BYU, Oregon is probably the last hurdle it will have to overcome to win a national championship.

Granted, anything can happen in college football these days, but if the Cougars get by the Ducks, the only thing standing between them and an undefeated season is a weak Western Athletic Conference schedule. Seems like 1984 all over again, doesn't it?

You remember 1984 don't you? That was the year BYU walked to a 13-0 schedule thanks to being in the WAC and then defeated a .500 Michigan team in the Holiday Bowl to "win" the national championship. The Cougars didn't deserve to win the national championship then and they don't deserve to win one now.

OK, OK, BYU did defeat Miami, Fla. 28-21 back on



From the Sidelines by ASHLEY CONKLIN

Sept. 8 and it does have the best quarterback in the nation in Ty Detmer.

But how did BYU follow that win up? They trailed Washington State 29-7 at halftime in Provo before Detmer rallied the Cougars to a 50-36 win. Washington State is a fine offensive team, but don't expect it to be in a bowl game this season.

Last week BYU rolled it up against San Diego State, winning 62-34. The Aztecs stayed with the Cougars in the first half and then were blown away in the second half.

With a 48-27 lead, Detmer was left in to engineer two more scoring drives late in the game. The reason: to pad Detmer's stats for the Heisman Trophy and gain the Cougars a few more first place votes in the Associated Press Top 25 poll.

If BYU beats Oregon and then rolls to the undefeat-

ed season they will probably win the votes needed to claim the national championship. A lot of sportswriters and coaches will claim they deserve it by finishing undefeated. The only way they really deserve it is to play a real schedule.

Given a schedule like Notre Dame's that includes Michigan, Michigan State, Miami and USC among others or playing in a real conference like the Pacific-10, Big Eight, Big Ten or Southeastern Conference would really merit a national championship for an undefeated team.

Before people from the WAC respond, Hawaii and Air Force were strong teams a year ago, but didn't cut the mustard in 1984 and they don't again this year. How do you think a strong Pac-10 team like Washington, Arizona or Oregon would fare in the WAC? They would probably win the conference.

So when BYU plays at Autzen Saturday, it won't be just Duck fans rooting for their team to win. It will be fans from around the nation rooting against BYU and their hopes for a national title.

Ty Detmer is a great quarterback and BYU a very good team. Detmer deserves the Heisman, BYU doesn't deserve a national championship.

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