

# The Pacific Division is now the NBA's elite

If the World Series is over and Oregon State is more than halfway through another dismal football campaign, then it must be just about time for the start of another NBA season.

Here is one sportswriter/fan's predictions for the 1990-91 NBA campaign.

It looks like it will be Portland vs. Detroit this spring in a championship rematch that will leave the Trailblazers with the responsibility of preventing a Piston three-peat.

The good ol' days of the Eastern Conference beating up on the "soft" Western Conference are gone. Despite the fact that Detroit has won back-to-back titles, the balance of power in the NBA has definitely shifted to the younger, quicker and more exciting Western Conference, more specifically the loaded Pacific Division.

The Pacific has gone from being the Los Angeles Lakers and a six-pack of mediocrity to being a division that is packed from top to bottom, or at least down to the last place Sacramento Kings, with the NBA's best young talent. If the Pistons are to be dethroned, it will be by the team that staggers out of this heavyweight division.

This is the year that the Portland Trailblazers will break the Lakers' string of division titles.

The Blazers improved their most glaring weakness



## From the Sidelines by ROBERT WEBER

in the off-season by acquiring sharp-shooting guard Danny Ainge from Sacramento. The improved bench will mold nicely with a maturing Cliff Robinson and the league's strongest starting five to give the Blazers the top spot in the west.

Phoenix, Seattle and the Lakers will be on the Blazers' heels throughout the year. Look for the Super-Sonics to be the darkhorse of the league, because Gary Payton will thrive in the NBA now that he has Sonic mates Shawn Kemp and Xavier McDaniel finishing on the fast break instead of college teammates Earl Martin and Will Brantley.

The Pacific makes the Midwest Division look like the minor leagues.

Admiral David Robinson and his pals in San Antonio are the only team in the division that appears capable of playoff success, but their hopes are riding on the inexperienced shoulders of point guard Rod Strickland. The Spurs will win the Midwest but will be

knocked out of the playoffs by a quicker team from the Pacific.

The balance in the east is even more lopsided than it is in the west, with five of the conference's top seven teams located in the Central Division.

While the Central is stacked with the Pistons, Michael Jordan's "hole in the middle" Chicago Bulls, and four other playoff teams, the Atlantic Division has become a haven for slow, boring and muscular teams that are unwilling to make the transition to the up-tempo game and are heading downhill at breakneck speed.

Look for the Celtics to reclaim the top spot in the Atlantic because they replaced the ageless, and in recent years, useless, Dennis Johnson with rookie Dee Brown and Brian Shaw.

The Pistons will clinch another berth in the finals by defeating the Bulls in the conference championship. Chicago must learn that they will never defeat Detroit using their three-ring circus of Bill Cartwright, Will Perdue and Stacey King at the center position.

The league finals will be a rematch of last year's Portland-Detroit series, but the outcome will differ slightly. Look for Portland, with their new and improved bench, to knock the Bad Boys off the top of the heap in six games with Kevin — no make that Terry — Porter snaring the MVP.

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## Ducks check back into AP poll at 25th

Oregon reentered the Associated Press Top 25 poll this week, one week after dropping out.

The Ducks are ranked 25th this week, receiving 98 total votes to return to the rankings. Oregon was as high as 19th two weeks ago, but fell out of the poll with a 38-17 loss to Washington. The Ducks beat Arizona State 27-7 this past Saturday.

Washington is the highest ranked Pacific-10 Conference team in the poll, checking in at No. 7, moving up from the 13th spot it held a week ago. USC fell from No. 15 to 21st after losing to Arizona which also checks back into the poll at No. 23.

The Pac-10 and the South-eastern Conference are the only two conferences in the country with four teams in the Top 25.

Besides the four Pac-10 teams in the poll, California received 62 votes this week to check in at No. 27. The Golden Bears are coming off their first win over UCLA in the last 18 games between the two schools.

Virginia remained No. 1 this week, the second week in a row that the Cavaliers held down the top spot. Auburn moved up from No. 5 to No. 2 this week after defeating Florida State last weekend.

Rounding out the Top 10 are

Notre Dame, Nebraska, Illinois, Houston, Washington, Miami, Brigham Young and Colorado.

### The Top Twenty Five By The Associated Press

The Top Twenty Five teams in the Associated Press 1990 college football poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, records through Oct. 20, total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote, and last week's rankings:

	Record	Pts	Pvs
1. Virginia (45)	7-0-0	1,469	1
2. Auburn (4)	5-0-1	1,370	5
3. Notre Dame (5)	5-1-0	1,369	6
4. Nebraska (5)	7-0-0	1,352	4
5. Illinois	5-1-0	1,219	8
6. Houston (1)	6-0-0	1,180	9
7. Washington	6-1-0	1,106	13
8. Miami, Fla.	4-2-0	1,061	2
9. Brigham Young	5-1-0	972	12
10. Colorado	6-1-1	930	14
11. Tennessee	4-1-2	899	3
12. Florida St.	4-2-0	795	7
13. Texas	4-1-0	689	19
14. Florida	6-1-0	681	17
15. Iowa	5-1-0	665	22
16. Georgia Tech	5-0-1	628	11
17. Mississippi	6-1-0	606	18
18. Wyoming	8-0-0	426	21
19. Clemson	6-2-0	414	22
20. Michigan	3-3-0	373	10
21. USC	5-2-0	300	15
22. Oklahoma	5-2-0	196	16
23. Arizona	5-2-0	172	—
24. TCU	5-1-0	161	—
25. Oregon	5-2-0	98	—

Other receiving votes: Louisville 77, California 62, Indiana 55, Texas A&M 39, Michigan St. 33, Penn St. 31, S. Mississippi 23, Alabama 13, Ohio St. 13, South Carolina 10, Minnesota 7, Central Michigan 3, LSU 2, Fresno St. 1.

## Oregon ranked sixth

The Oregon women's cross country team is ranked sixth in this week's NCAA cross country poll which was released Monday.

Coach Tom Heinonen's team moves up one spot in this week's poll after being seventh a week ago. The ranking is the highest for the Ducks this season.

The Ducks are only one of two Pacific-10 teams ranked in this week's poll. Washington State is also in the poll as the Cougars check in at No. 18.

After being off this past week, the Ducks return to action Saturday when they compete in the Pac-10 cross country championships in Stanford, Calif. Oregon is a strong favorite to win its fourth title in the last five years and regain the title it lost last year.

Oregon's 1-2 punch of Liz Wilson and Stephanie Wessell are expected to be among the favorites for the individual Pac-10 crown with Washington State's Jennifer Robertson also figuring in the individual title race.