

OSU, USC and UW fit to challenge in Pac-10

By Scott Simonson
Oregon Daily Emerald

Stanford again?
It's the same question every year in women's basketball in the Pacific-10 Conference. Can anyone beat Stanford, which has won the league title each of the last five years?

The challengers trying to unseat Stanford this season include perennial runners-up (Washington, USC) as well as teams trying to overcome a history of mediocrity and mixed results (the Oregon schools).

Even though Washington, 2-0 in the Pac-10 and 10-1 overall, lost two key seniors from a team that made the NCAA tournament with a 17-12 record a year ago, the Huskies have regrouped, rebuilt and appear to be one of the top teams in the conference. They're doing it with defense: After the preseason, the Huskies ranked third nationally in scoring defense, allowing an average of 53.2 points per game.

Junior point guard Katia Foucade led the Huskies in assists and minutes played last season. The Paris native spent the summer playing on the French national team during the summer trying to improve her offensive game. Center Rhonda Smith was Washington's leading scorer and rebounder a year ago and will again play a major role.

The Huskies opened at home with a big win over Stanford, arguably the most talented team in the league. Washington doesn't

appear to have the talent of a Stanford or USC, but its results have been just as impressive so

PREVIEW 1994

The *Emerald* examines the women's basketball team in a two-part series

TODAY: A look at Washington, WSU, USC, UCLA and Oregon State

WEDNESDAY: A look at Stanford, California, Arizona, Arizona State and Oregon

far.

Washington State, 0-2 in the Pac-10 and 5-6, finished in a tie for last place in the league last season and should end up close to the bottom of the heap again. The Cougars would do well just to make it through the season in one piece. Seven players missed more than game with injuries last year, and three suffered career-ending injuries.

The Cougars are led by senior center Camille Thompson, who was the Cougars' top scorer last season and who hails from that legendary basketball mecca of Salmon Arm, British Columbia.

Washington State has a glaring weakness at its forward spots. Besides senior Angie Peterson, the team has three freshmen and a junior college transfer on its depth chart.

Most prognosticators have

USC, 2-0 and 9-1, in a dogfight with Stanford for the conference title. The Trojans' only loss this season was on the road at then-No. 2 Purdue on a controversial last-second buzzer-beater.

The Trojans have two of the top players in America. One is senior forward Lisa Leslie, a two-time All-American. The other is first-year head coach Cheryl Miller, who isn't allowed to play anymore but could probably still beat up on most any team in the country if she were given the chance.

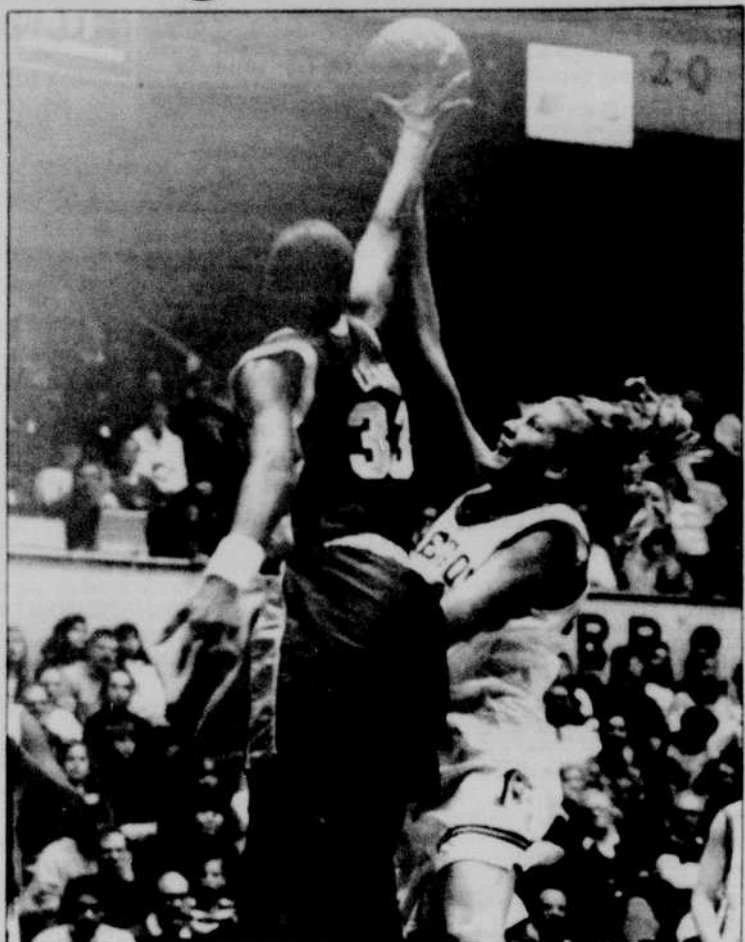
Miller has the Trojans running a high-scoring offense and playing tenacious defense in both half-court and full-court schemes. After the preseason, the Trojans ranked second nationally in field goal percentage defense.

USC's strengths are its quickness and athleticism, but the Trojans can play tough and physical. Leslie was so eager to demonstrate this Thursday night at Oregon State that she removed one of Oregon State center Kristina Lelas' front teeth with her elbow. Next up on the Trojans' schedule for a checkup and cleaning is the Pac-10's other 2-0 team, Washington, in Los Angeles on Thursday.

The Trojans share some characteristics with their crosstown rival, UCLA. The Bruins, 1-1 and 6-4, also feature a new head coach (Kathy Olivier) and an All-American forward (Natalie Williams).

However, neither Olivier nor Williams can rely on the depth of talent that the Trojans feature. Williams, forward Amy Jalewalia and center Zrinka Kristich form a front line that matches up well with almost anyone, but the Bruin backcourt is suspect and the bench isn't deep.

The Bruins played less than stellar basketball in the preseason, compiling a 4-4 record that included a loss to Boise State. UCLA is capable of beating some very good teams on its better nights, but the Bruins' victory at Oregon State on Saturday was the first sign that UCLA can win



USC center Lisa Leslie is tough inside both offensively and defensively for the 10th-ranked Trojans.

away from Pauley Pavilion. The Bruins don't appear capable of being much more than a .500 team in the conference.

The answer is: Malmo, Solna, Zagreb and Rijeka. The question was: What are places that Oregon State has recruited in during the past two years? Four-fifths of the Beavers' starting lineup hails from outside the United States. (Malmo and Solna, as everyone knows, are in Sweden. Zagreb and Rijeka, of course, are in Croatia.)

Snicker if you wish. The dividends have been considerable. Starting four sophomores and a freshman, the Beavers were 8-1 in the preseason before being swept by the

Southern California schools last week.

As of last week, forward Tanja Kostic (Solna's finest) ranked among the top 25 scorers nationally, averaging 21.8 points per game. Kostic was the Pac-10's freshman of the year last year and was a preseason All-American.

Point guard Bozana Vidic (the pride of Rijeka) ranked fourth in the nation in assists (8.4 per game) and 20th in steals before the conference season began.

Oregon State has the talent to challenge anyone in the conference night in and night out. What's less certain is whether Oregon State has the experience, needed to win big games against tough opponents.

Murray honored for 62-point week

WALNUT CREEK, Calif. (AP) — Cal forward Lamond Murray, who scored 62 points in two conference games last week, was named the Pacific-10 Conference player of the week Monday.

The 6-foot-7 forward hit a career-high 36 points on 10-of-12 shooting in the Golden Bears' 70-54 victory over Washington State. Murray also got a season-high 10 rebounds.

In a 79-64 win over Washington, Murray led all

scorers with 26 points on 9-of-12 shooting.

As the Pac-10's leading scorer, and averaging almost 25 points a game, Murray shot 79.2 percent from the field in the two games, leading the 9-2 Bears to their seventh straight win. Also nominated for player of the week were Arizona's Ray Ows, Stanford's Brevin Knight, UCLA's Tyus Edney, Southern Cal's Lorenzo Orr and Washington's Sam Allen.

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