

UO: O'Brien listed as questionable

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freshman Lindsey Dion or senior Mendy Benson.

If Dion gets the call, the Ducks' starting lineup would include three freshmen, with Brianne Meharry and Angelina Wolvert likely to start at the power forward and center positions.

Bowyer is averaging 9.1 points per game and, while not an official stat, has led the conference in the number of charges drawn.

If Bowyer can't go, the Ducks will need point guard Natalia Hughes to step her play up a level. Hughes was inconsistent in the games in the Bay Area, averaging just 8.5 points per game while shooting just 34.8 percent from the floor. She averaged 14.5 points in eight nonconference games.

"I would hope [Hughes] would step it up," Runge said while refusing to comment on Hughes' struggles of late.

The absence of Bowyer could hurt the Ducks, particularly from a defensive standpoint, where the defensive specialist would likely drop the assignment of trying to stop USC's leading scorer, guard Kristin Clark.

In addition to leading the Trojans, Clark is eighth in the Pac-10 in scoring at 15.3 points a game.

"Obviously, she's having a great offensive year," Runge said. "She's running the show for them. If we can do a good job on her defensively, that makes a big

USC Trojans

LEADING SCORER: Kristin Clark, 15.3 points per game

LEADING REBOUNDERS: Tiffany Washington, 6.6 per game; Adrain Williams, 6.4 per game

Lead the all-time series with Oregon 21-5

Have lost three of their past five games

Lead the Pac-10 with 13.1 steals a game

difference with them doing things."

It is also Clark's defensive prowess that could give Oregon's ball handlers fits. Clark leads the Pac-10 in steals with an average of 3.36 takeaways a game. In fact, the Trojans are tied for the Pac-10 lead in steals at 13.09 per outing, stressing the need for the Ducks, who average 18 turnovers a game, to take care of the ball.

Earlier in the week, Runge stressed the fact that for the Ducks to reach the NCAA Tournament for a fifth straight time, they must beat the teams that, on paper, they should beat.

As a team floundering around .500 and struggling to find consistency, much like Oregon, the Trojans could fall into that category.

They have lost three of their

past five games, including a split with the Arizona schools to begin the Pac-10 season last weekend.

After giving up nearly 100 points to Stanford, Oregon could use a strong defensive performance tonight. The Trojans are a hard time scoring as it is, ranking eighth in the Pac-10 at just 67.4 points per game and shooting just 40 percent from the field as a team.

One of the most interesting matchups inside could be Wolvert against USC's 6-foot-4 Adrain Williams, who averages 10.1 points and 6.4 rebounds.

"I think there are great matchups inside," Runge said. "Obviously, Adrain Williams is a great athlete, a very good shooter, and it's a tough defensive challenge."

Oregon has had its problems with the Trojans of late, going just 3-5 against them in the Runge era.

Last season, the teams split a pair of games, with each team defending its home court. USC defeated Oregon 73-65 in Los Angeles, but the Ducks got revenge with a 70-53 drubbing in Eugene later in the season. The Trojans hold an all-time 21-5 advantage over the Ducks in the series.

More bad news on the injury front: Forward Natasha O'Brien is listed as questionable following a severe sprain in her left hand, an injury that occurred during the game against Stanford.

Huard to stay with Huskies for at least another season

The 21-year-old UW quarterback said he is not ready to put on a professional uniform

By Jlim Cour

The Associated Press

SEATTLE — After taking a look at his NFL future, Brock Huard is staying at Washington for at least another year.

A two-year starter at quarterback, Huard announced Wednesday that he would be back for his junior season, his fourth year at Washington. He did not make any promises about his senior year.

"This is a pretty amazing reaction for a little punk kid who wasn't even all-Pac-10 this year," he told a heavily attended news conference on campus. "I'll be playing at least one more year at the University of Washington."

"I'll do my best to bring us back to the Rose Bowl next year."

Huard's older brother, Damon, formerly of Washington and now with the Miami Dolphins, was among those in the crowd.

The Huskies disappointed themselves — and Huard — when they failed to make it to Pasadena, Calif., this season. Instead, they went to the Aloha Bowl after losing their final

three regular-season games.

Overshadowed in the Pac-10 by Ryan Leaf, who led Washington State into the Rose Bowl for the first time in 67 years, Huard was told by an NFL advisory committee that he would be a third-round draft choice.

Leaf announced after the Rose Bowl that he would not be back in Pullman for his senior season. Now he has a chance to be the first player chosen in the April 18 draft.

"Ultimately, you play the game of college football to reach the next level," Huard said. "I didn't have the visions of I didn't have a professional uniform yet."

He added: "Physically, I've love the challenge of playing there. Emotionally, am I ready at 21? I don't know."

Huard's decision was welcome news to coach Jim Lambright, who has had two major defections.

Two-time All-America guard Benji Olson and All-America center Olin Kreutz are passing up their senior years to enter the draft.

Lambright said Huard told him of his decision Tuesday night. The coach said it helped give him a good night's sleep.

Huard's return will help the Washington coaching staff in its recruiting, Lambright said.

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