

Raising Arizona

At 5-foot-10, senior forward Adia Barnes holds career records in seven categories and is one of the most prominent forces in women's college basketball today

By Ryan Frank
Sports Editor

Adia Barnes insists she's a mama's girl. The 5-foot-10 Arizona forward talks to her mom, Patricia, once a day on the phone, sometimes twice, just to talk.

Barnes chose Arizona partly because it is a six to seven hour drive from her hometown of San Diego, and Patricia cut her work schedule as a lighting designer to part-time so she could attend more of her daughter's games.

But watching Barnes on the court, a mama's girl is about the last thing you would call her.

The Wildcats' career-record holder in seven categories and the conference's leading scorer this season plays with the aggressiveness, fire and determination akin to that of a back-room brawler — not a mama's girl.

But that's the way Barnes likes it.

The senior, who leads the No. 7 Wildcats into McArthur Court for tonight's 7 p.m. contest, has two faces.

"I'm very competitive," she admits. "I'm aggressive, but that's not my personality. I'm feminine off the court."

Or "best dressed off the court, ferocious on the court," as her stepdad Bruce McRae, who coached Barnes in her youth, says.

You'll have to excuse Barnes' on-court demeanor, but playing on a boy's all-star basketball team at the age of 9 will do that.

Barnes — the biological daughter of 13-year NFL veteran Pete Barnes, who was also drafted into major league baseball — grew up as a self-confessed tomboy. She skateboarded with the boys and didn't find time to hang out with girls until after the fifth grade.

On the court the girls, she says, didn't provide much of a challenge, and besides, beating the boys was more fun.

While beating boys was fun as a kid, Barnes has taken to beating the rest of the women's basketball teams in the Pacific-10 Conference this year.

She came to Arizona four years ago ready to make an impact. McRae remembers telling her how she might not start. How she should expect to work her way into the lineup.



CHAD PATTESON/Emerald

Barnes, shown here in last season's win over Oregon at McArthur Court, leads the No. 7 Arizona Wildcats into Eugene to face the Ducks tonight.

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Fearless play-off prediction (Take 2)

Let me start off by saying that I am a devout San Francisco 49er fan. I bleed 49er red. (That being true, wouldn't that make us all 49er fans, and thus the world a better place?)

But I digress.

Being a Niner fan, it would make sense that my loyalties in this Sunday's Super Bowl would clearly be with Denver, which San Francisco demolished earlier this season. If Denver wins the Super Bowl and had lost to the Niners, logic would hold that San Francisco is the best team, would it not?

Unfortunately, I harbor a dark secret that can no longer be held in check.

I find it hard to hate the Packers.

I loathe the Cowboys, but not only do I not hate the Pack, I kind of like them. It's fun to watch them play, knowing that at any time, Brett Favre could let fly a bomb to either of his All-pro receivers, or his All-pro tight end, or hand off to his All-pro running back for six or seven yards.

Or that on any given play, either of Green Bay's All-pro safeties could return an interception for a touchdown, or one of its All-pro defensive linemen could record a sack.

It's fun to watch a team dominate in every facet of the game. Hell, even their special teams are some of the best in the league. It's fun to watch a team score 35 points on any team in the league. Forgetting for a brief moment it was the Niners, it was awe-inspiring to watch the No. 1 defense in all of football be humbled at the hands of the Pack.

Plus, fans have a chance to see two men who are possibly the best ever at their positions.

I don't mean to go out on a limb, but both Favre and Reggie White can make a case as the best quarterback and defensive end, respectively, ever.

Forget Unitas or Namath or Bradshaw. The beauty of watching them was knowing that they were average athletes with the will to make themselves and their teams great. Favre is a superior athlete as well as a superior leader. He can outrun most linebackers, outthrow even the fastest receiver, plus outthink an opposing coach. No other quarterback, possibly excepting Steve Young, combines the brains and the brawn as does Favre. Loyalty aside, anyone who would choose any player but Favre to build a franchise around right now is nuts.

An even easier case can be made for Reggie White. No other player in the NFL faces double-teams on every single play as White does, including his closest contemporary, Bruce Smith. Again, defensive lineman from the past combined better-than-average physical gifts with a blood lust to be great. White has that same blood lust, but carries it in one of the most physically powerful bodies in the game.

So it will be with great interest that I watch Sunday's game, not as a 49er fan, but as a football fan. Regardless of my rooting interest, stories abound that could pique the interest of even the casual fan.

Denver quarterback John Elway is back for his fourth, and probably last, attempt at Super Bowl glory. Bronco lineman Neil Smith left rival Kansas City for the riches of Denver and is reaping the benefits of

OPINION



Rob Moseley

Oregon faces Arizona on the road

The defending national champion Wildcats average 101.8 points per game and outscore their conference opponents by 18.2 points

By Chris Hansen
Assistant Sports Editor

Oregon head coach Ernie Kent said he loves a challenge.

Thank goodness. Tonight, Kent and the rest of the men's basketball team face the greatest challenge of the season so far when they take on defending national champion Arizona on the road.

Winning in Tucson is something that previous Oregon head coach Jerry Green wasn't able to do in his five years at the helm. And the coach before him, Don Monson, was only able to do it once in his nine years.

A daunting task indeed.

Unless the Ducks (7-8 overall, 2-4 Pacific-10 Conference) play at a level similar to the way they played against UCLA earlier this season, the record will no doubt be ex-

tended.

"You prepare them to understand the challenge that is set forth," Kent said of his players. "It is important for them to see the ... urgency of having themselves ready. We need to understand that they are not going to come down to our level. We are going to have to go up to their level."

The problem is Arizona plays at a level few teams in the country can match.

The No. 6 Wildcats are averaging 101.8 points per game in five Pac-10 games this season and are coming off convincing wins in their last two games, a 127-99 win over Arizona State on Jan. 15 and a 89-70 win over then-No. 13 New Mexico on Jan. 18.

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On tap

■ **WHO:** Oregon (7-8, 2-4) at No. 5 Arizona (15-3, 5-0)

■ **WHEN:** Tonight at 5:35 p.m.

■ **WHERE:** McKale Center, Tucson, Ariz.

■ **TV:** OSN (TCI Channel 6) beginning at 5:35 p.m.

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