

UW surprise of season's first half

Stanford currently resides on top of the Pacific-10 Conference women's basketball standings, a few teams optimistically chase close behind, a few others are mired in mediocrity and a couple of others occupy the cellar.

The first half of the Pac-10 schedule came to an end over the weekend with few surprises, a fitting close to a first round of games that, for the most part, went according to form.

The biggest surprise of the first half of the conference season has got to be Washington's overall



Alex Pond

performance (or lack thereof). At the beginning of the conference season 10-0 and moving to as high as No. 7 in the Associated Press top 25, the Huskies have struggled mightily in conference play, going 4-5 in the first nine games. (Yet they remain in the top 25, at No. 21, while UCLA and Oregon are 7-2 in the Pac-10 but remain on the outside of the polls looking in.)

The Huskies can beat the bad teams but can't beat the good teams. They have lost to all four teams ahead of them in the standings and beat, with the exception of a loss to Arizona State, all the teams below them in the standings. Their superb nonconference record (9-0) should get them in the NCAA Tournament, though, with a strong second-half showing and a top-five conference finish.

Stanford and Arizona were supposed to be 1-2, with UCLA and Oregon close behind. The mild surprise could be that the Ducks and Bruins both are 7-2. Despite injuries to two of its top players, Jenny Mowe and Brienne Meharry, the Ducks are finding a way to get it done. Meanwhile, UCLA is cleaning house on the road, going a perfect 5-0 in conference play, its best

Alex's Pac-10 Power Rankings

1. Stanford: The Cardinal has won 10 of 11. Win over No. 7 Texas Tech most impressive victory of the season.



2. Arizona: Adia Barnes needs 14 points to reach the 2,000-point mark for her career. Only five Pac-10 players have accomplished that feat.



3. Oregon: Five-game win streak second-best in Pac-10.



4. UCLA: Has won three straight, 10 of past 12 and beat No. 21 Huskies on the road by 21. Still not ranked?



5. Washington: Can beat teams below them in standings, but losses to four teams above them are by an average of 22.2 points a game.



6. Arizona State: Snapped two-game skid with 21-point win over California last Saturday.



7. Washington State: Freshman Alke Dietel is sixth in the Pac-10 in scoring (15.7 a game) and third in blocks (1.22).



8. USC: After losing four straight, Trojans have won two of past four games.



9. California: The Bears have lost six straight games by an average of 19.4 points. Stanford's next.



10. Oregon State: Last road win Dec. 12 at Seaton Hall. Beavs in Southern California this week.



Pac-10 power

With Arizona's 67-62 win over Kansas and Stanford's 80-71 win over No. 7 Texas Tech in the Pac-10/Big 12 Challenge last weekend, Pac-10 teams improved to 52-35 against nonconference opponents.

Pac-10 teams have had the most success with teams from the Big Sky Conference, going 6-0 against them, and more impressively, the Pac-10 is 9-1 against the Big 12 Conference.

Conferences that Pac-10 teams have struggled with are the Atlantic 10 Conference (1-3), Southeastern Conference (2-3) and, surprisingly, the Western Athletic Conference (3-5).

Pending milestones

Arizona forward Adia Barnes needs just 14 points to become the sixth player in Pac-10 history to reach the 2,000-point mark for a career. Barnes leads the Pac-10 in scoring with an average of 22.3 points a game.

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road mark ever at this point in the conference season.

Bittersweet homecoming

Southern California head coach Chris Gobrecht may be wondering if she made the right choice to switch jobs a couple of years back.

Last Saturday, Gobrecht returned to Washington, where she coached the Huskies for 11 seasons and guided them to a 243-89 record during her tenure. She received a standing ovation before the game, but her Trojans lost 67-60.

It was a rare Pac-10 loss in Hec Edmundson Pavilion for Gobrecht, whose teams lost just 15 conference home games during her stint with the team.

Gobrecht left the Huskies after the 1995-96 season to take over at Florida State, where she went just 5-22 last season. This season, she is just 8-10 overall with the Trojans (3-6 Pac-10), although the Trojans are young and did lose a lot of talent from last season's team that advanced to the second round of the NCAA Tournament.

Trial: PGA won't contest Martin's disability

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was mobbed by camera crews and supporters as he walked into court. "Who am I, Michael Jackson?" he said.

Martin is using the Americans with Disabilities Act as the basis of his lawsuit seeking to ride a cart instead of walk on the PGA Tour. The tour contends that walking is a fundamental part of the game and that allowing Martin to ride a cart creates an unlevel playing field.

Finchem said if there was a way to accommodate Martin without giving him an advantage over other golfers, he would, but "you can't write different rules and make everything the same. ... We're looking at the fairness of the sport."

A federal magistrate began hearing three to 10 days worth of testimony Monday, with a lineup of witnesses expected to include Martin, his orthopedic surgeon, his father and his golfing coaches.

One of the first witnesses for the PGA Tour will be Ken Venturi, who walked to victory in the 1964 U.S. Open despite almost collapsing from heat exhaustion. Videotaped testimony from golfing greats Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus also will be shown.

Mindful of the support for Martin, PGA Tour lawyer William Maledon has said he will not con-

"From a public opinion standpoint, it's a loser. This is a very unfortunate system we find ourselves in, having to litigate whether a fellow we think a great deal of can play the game."

Tim Finchem
PGA Tour commissioner

test that Martin is disabled.

"In no way, shape or form is the PGA Tour going to in any way attack Casey Martin," Maledon said. "The real issue here is whether the PGA Tour can establish the rules for its competitions."

Martin, 25, was born with Klippel-Trenaunay-Weber Syndrome. He does not have the vein that runs along the bone in his lower right leg. Instead, blood flows back to his heart through a jumble of veins near the surface. The condition makes it painful for him to walk and could ultimately lead to amputation.

Last week, Martin won the first

round in the legal battle, when U.S. Magistrate Thomas Coffin denied the PGA Tour's motion for summary judgment — in effect a request to throw the case out of court because the disabilities act does not apply to the case.

Coffin ruled the PGA Tour is a commercial enterprise, not a private club that would be exempt from the act. He also found that golf courses used for tournaments by the PGA Tour are places of "public accommodation" under the act, even inside the ropes that exclude spectators.

Martin, a member of Stanford's 1994 NCAA championship team and a former teammate of Tiger Woods, rode the course in the PGA Tour qualifying tournament last year after getting a temporary injunction from Coffin, and missed making the tour by two shots.

The tour didn't challenge the injunction pending the outcome of the trial when the second-tier Nike Tour started last month and Martin won the Lakeland (Fla.) Classic before missing the cut in his next event.

Any ruling against the PGA Tour will not affect the four major tournaments in golf: the Masters, U.S. Open, British Open and PGA Championship, all outside the jurisdiction of the tour.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Duke, North Carolina square off Thursday

(AP) — Duke and North Carolina held the top two spots in The Associated Press' college basketball poll Monday, setting up a No. 1 vs. No. 2 matchup this week.

The Blue Devils (20-1), who stayed in the No. 1 spot for the third straight week, will play at North Carolina (22-1) on Thursday night in the 14th meeting of the poll's top two teams since

1980.

The last 1-2 matchup was Kentucky's win over No. 1 Massachusetts in the 1996 Final Four. The last regular-season matchup was between Duke and North Carolina on Feb. 3, 1994, an 89-78 victory for the second-ranked Tar Heels.

Duke received 54 first-place votes and 1,734 points from the national media panel, 41 more than North Carolina, which was No. 1 on 16 ballots.

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