

# Preview: Beavers start 2-0 for the first time since the 1985 season

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Gone is quarterback Ryan Leaf, four of the "Fab Five" receivers, tailback Michael Black and defensive line stars Leon Bender and Dorian Boose from 1997 Rose Bowl team. In their wake are a host of unproven players who struggled to a 20-13 season-opening home victory over Illinois, which went 0-11 in 1997.

Junior quarterback Steve Bimbaum won't make Cougar fans soon forget Leaf or Drew Bledsoe. That's why Mike Price plans to shift to a run-oriented offense this season. Sophomore tailback Kevin Brown, who rushed for 2,112 yards at the City College of San Francisco last season, will be the ammunition in the running attack. Senior wide receiver Nian Taylor figures to be the big-play man.

Defensively, Washington State should be tough again. Despite losing seven starters, the coaching staff is impressed with all the young talent. Senior defensive tackle Gary Holmes, junior linebacker Steve Gleason and sophomore free safety Lamont Thompson should be all-conference performers.

With an easy opening schedule, the Cougars could be 4-0 heading into UCLA on Oct. 3. From there on, however, Washington State may win just one game the rest of the season unless many of the young players come up big.

**Player to watch:** WR Dameane Douglas

**Outlook:** California has most of its players back from 1997, but that doesn't mean much. After opening with two non-conference wins, the Golden Bears won just one game — against Oregon State, of course — the rest of the season.

Still, California figures to be improved this season, if for no other reason, then experience.

Senior quarterback Justin Vedder, sophomore tailback Marcus Fields, senior tackle John Welbourn and senior wide receiver Dameane Douglas will lead the offense. But the talent of Vedder, Fields and Douglas, who caught 23 of his 53 passes last season in the final two games, will not show unless Welbourn is able to find some help on the offensive line.

Sophomore defensive end Andre Carter and junior linebacker Matt Beck will make their share of quality plays for the Bear defense. However, California needs improved performances everywhere else on defense to stop permitting the big plays that caused it to give up 30.8 points per game last season, last in the Pac-10.

Nebraska and Oklahoma will find out in September if these Bears have improved drastically. Otherwise, Cal fans will be praying for basketball season, as their team flounders at the bottom of the Pac-10 again.

Punter, Kicker

**Player to watch:** QB Terrance Bryant

**Outlook:** There was talk of roses after new quarterback Terrance Bryant engineered a 48-6 shellacking of Nevada in Oregon State's season opener.

A blowout victory — make that any victory — is always cause for unrestrained celebration in Corvallis. But roses?

Their first winning season since 1970 should be priority No. 1 on the Beavers' agenda. Bryant, a junior-college transfer, looks like he may be able to launch Oregon State's first real passing attack since Erik Wilhelm's playing days a decade ago. He has a steady group of receivers to throw to, led by former starting quarterback Tim Alexander and senior Greg Ainsworth.

The running game, worst in the Pac-10 by more than 33 yards in 1997, also needs a lift. Riley and staff think freshman Ken Simonton may have what it takes at tailback.

The defense should keep the Beavers close in most of their games. The linebackers, led by senior Brian Rogers, and secondary look good. Senior defensive end Inoke Breckterfield may be Oregon State's best player, but the rest of the undersized defensive line probably won't produce much.

This team should win at least one conference game, unlike last season.

Perhaps the Beavers will even be shooting for a winning season — but not roses — when they open a season-ending, three-game home stand against California, UCLA and Oregon.

However, this is not the season Oregon State will break its infamous string. Hey, everybody gets a new start in 2000, right?

## 8. Stanford Cardinals

**1997 Record:** 5-6 overall, 3-5 Pac-10

**Head Coach:** Tyrone Willingham, fourth year (19-15-1)

**Returning Starters:** Offense 5, Defense 3, Punter, Kicker


**Player to watch:** WR/KR Troy Walters

**Outlook:** Stanford doesn't have much returning from its 1997 squad, which lost five of its last six games. That is not good news for the Cardinal. Starting quarterback Chad Hutchinson opted for baseball riches instead of another season in Palo Alto, Calif. His replacement will be junior Todd Husak. Husak will look to get the ball to Stanford's best player, senior wide receiver and kick returner Troy Walters, as much as possible because he has no other proven weapons.

Not much returns from a defense that ranked ninth in the Pac-10 last season. That would be good news, but the new players gave up 182 rushing yards in San Jose State's 35-23 upset of the Cardinal on Sept. 5.

Junior defensive lineman Willie Howard could prove to be Stanford's best defensive player.

Barring a drastic turnaround, the Cardinal is bound to struggle mightily this season. Non-conference games against North Carolina and Notre Dame won't help pad the record. It looks like it's going to be Cardinal, Beavers and Bears — oh my! — at the bottom of the Pac-10, unless a lot of the new starters make big, immediate impacts.



**8. California Golden Bears**  
**1997 Record:** 3-8 overall, 1-7 Pac-10  
**Head Coach:** Tom Holmoe, second year  
**Returning Starters:** Offense 7, Defense 9, Punter, Kicker



**9. Oregon State Beavers**  
**1997 Record:** 3-8 overall, 0-8 Pac-10  
**Head Coach:** Mike Riley, second year  
**Returning Starters:** Offense 7, Defense 8,

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**SOCCER Home Schedule**

Oct. 2	San Francisco	3:00pm
3	Portland St.	1:00pm
9	Oregon St.	3:00pm
16	Washington	3:00pm
18	WSU	1:00pm
30	Arizona	3:00pm
Nov. 1	Arizona St.	1:00pm

**FOOTBALL Home Schedule**

Sept. 26	Stanford
Oct. 24	USC (Homecoming)
Nov. 7	Washington
14	Arizona St.

**VOLLEYBALL Home Schedule**

Oct. 2	Arizona St.	7:35pm
4	Arizona	1:00pm
16	California	7:00pm
18	Stanford	1:00pm
22	USC	7:00pm
25	UCLA	1:00pm
Nov. 6	WSU	7:00pm
8	Washington	1:00pm



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