

Pac-10 race heats up

Washington, Arizona square off in key Pac-10 battle this Saturday

By Joel Hood
Oregon Daily Emerald

The good news is that five Pacific-10 Conference teams are still ranked in the Associated Press Top 25 following a difficult week of play outside the conference.

The bad news is that we now know exactly where the Pac-10's top teams rate compared to the powerhouses of college football.

For the second straight season, the Washington Huskies succumbed to the Big Red machine of Nebraska on national television. And "succumb" might not even be the best word to use. Washington was flattened, 55-7.

But the Huskies (2-1 overall, 1-0 Pac-10) remain in the Top 25 thanks to two things: they have the most difficult schedule in the nation, according to the Sagarin ratings, and they have a history of quality play in the Pac-10.

Furthermore, help is on the way. The No. 20 Huskies begin a four-game homestand this Saturday with a nighttime showdown against No. 16 Arizona. Washington head coach Jim Lambright said that could give his team the advantage.

"It just increases the atmosphere and the drama a little more," Lambright said of playing at night. "It just creates a tremendous feeling in the stadium."

As if Arizona needed any extra incentive. The Wildcats (4-0, 1-0) have their best start in four seasons thanks to a rejuvenated pass-

Football Notes

ing attack that feature two of the country's most explosive quarterbacks in Keith Smith and Ortege Jenkins.

But Arizona head coach Dick Tomey knows how difficult playing in Seattle can be in the month of October.

"I don't think the environment that we've played in in any of our games on the road has been as adversarial as the environment is in Washington," Tomey said.

Arizona has won eight straight games dating back to last season, including four straight on the road.

Across the desert is Arizona State, which by its own admission isn't having the season it had set out for in early September. The Sun Devils (2-2, 0-1) struggled on defense in their first three games, but made up for it last week by only allowing nine rushing yards to Oregon State.

Arizona State head coach Bruce Snyder knows that his team will need more performances like that if his team wants to get back into the Rose Bowl picture.

"Two [losses] really knocks you out of the Rose Bowl and the championship of our conference," Snyder said. "So from that standpoint of reaching that particular goal, we cannot afford another loss."

On the other hand, Oregon State would just be happy with another win. The Beavers (2-2, 0-2) have not won a conference game in three seasons.

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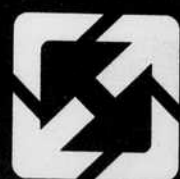
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