

# Wildcats can move closer to first Rose Bowl berth Saturday

No. 9 Arizona travels to Berkeley to show voters it belongs in the Bowl Championship Series

By Tim Pyle  
Oregon Daily Emerald

No. 9 Arizona (9-1, 5-1) at California (5-4, 3-3)

Losers of three of their last four, the Golden Bears hope to earn a sixth win and become bowl eligible as they close out the regular season with two Pac-10 home games.

Judging by the way the Wildcats have devoured their opponents of late (outscoring the opposition 152-24 in their last four games), Cal will probably have to wait until next weekend's grudge match with Stanford to cap its surprising season.

The stagnant Bear offense, last in the conference in scoring at 17.4 points per game, will likely have trouble moving the ball on Arizona's swarming defense, which is giving up a Pac-10 low 15.1 points per game.

The matchup to watch in this game will be Cal wide receiver Dameane Douglas against Wildcat cornerback Chris McAlister. Douglas leads the Pac-10 with 81 catches for 928 yards and four touchdowns, while McAlister is widely considered the best cover man in the conference and has four interceptions.

Last season, Douglas got the upper hand in grabbing 12 passes for 143 yards, but McAlister had the last laugh in a double overtime, 41-38 Arizona win. That thriller came the season after the Bears needed three overtimes to defeat the Wildcats 56-55 in Berkeley, Calif.

When Arizona has the ball, Cal will need its duo of big-play linebackers to perform heroically against the balanced Wildcat offense. The Bears' Sekou Sanyika and Matt Beck rank first and second in the Pac-10 in tackles for loss with 22 and 15, respectively. Arizona averages nearly 231

passing yards per game and almost 204 rushing yards per game.

The Wildcats should not need any extra time to dispose of Cal this time around.

Washington State (3-6, 0-6) at Stanford (1-8, 0-6)

Why ABC did not select this intriguing showdown as its Pac-10 broadcast of the week is a mystery. FoxSports too, for that matter.

All kidding aside, these two teams have a lot to play for in this matchup of ineptitude. Both teams have suffered through six-game losing streaks, and neither wants to finish the conference season winless. The last time the Cougars failed to earn a Pac-10 win in a season was 1975, and the Cardinal last stumbled to an 0-fer conference finish in 1960.

Another record Washington State does not want to set is to become the first Pac-10 team to go from the Rose Bowl to outright last place since UCLA dropped to the bottom of the conference the season after its 1943 Rose Bowl appearance.

Stanford had been close to breaking out of its dry spell in losing by seven points or less in three straight weeks until last weekend. Southern California then promptly drubbed the Cardinal, 34-9.

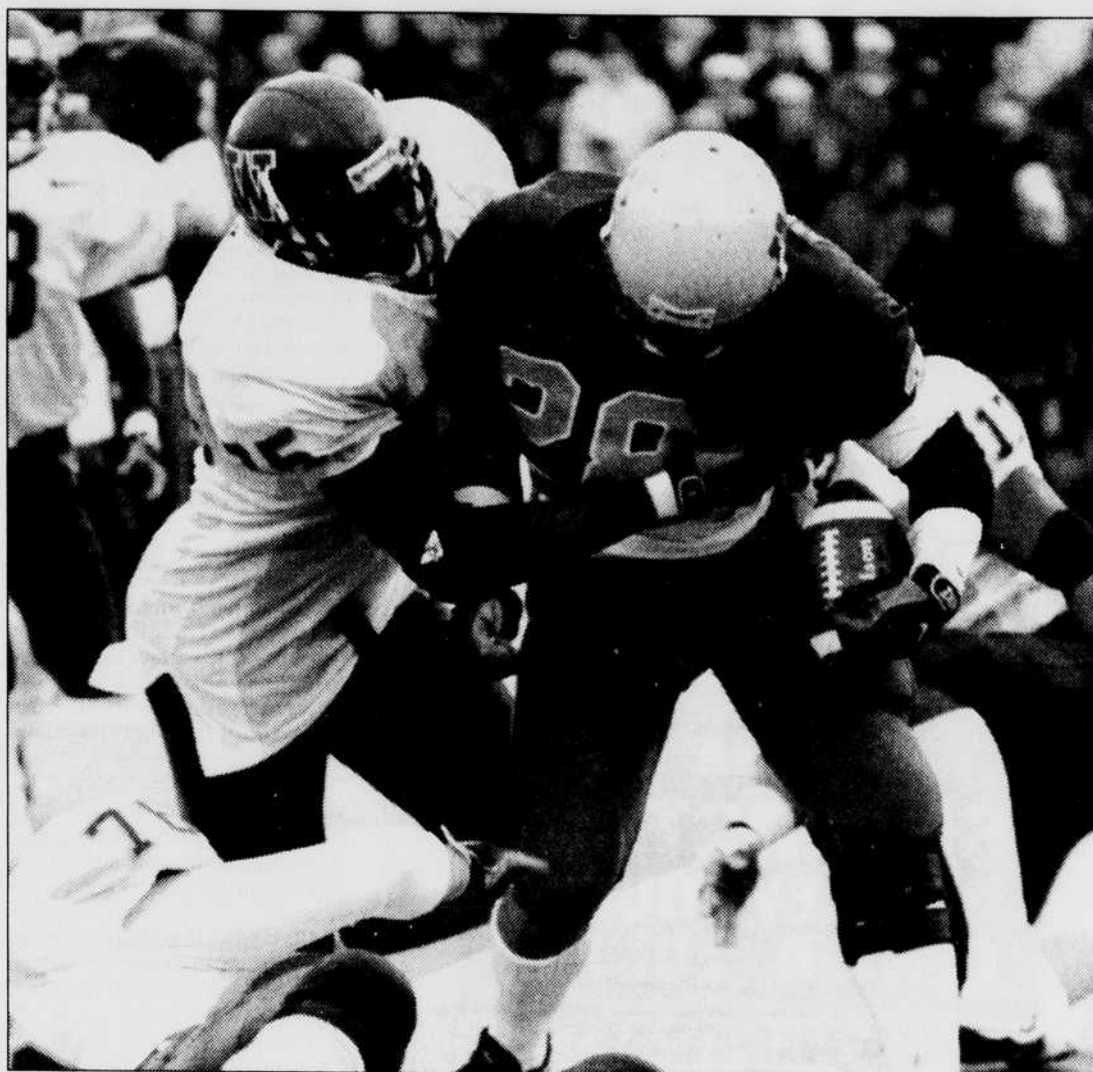
The Cougars, on the other hand, have two separate 10-point losses as their best Pac-10 results.

Offensively, Stanford possesses far more firepower than Washington State. Receivers Troy Walters, DeRonnie Pitts and Dave Davis provide Cardinal quarterback Todd Husak, who leads the Pac-10 with 296 passing yards per game, with ample weaponry.

But defensively, Stanford gives up about 58 yards more per outing than do the Cougars, who are led by safety Lamont Thompson and his four interceptions and 55 tackles.

Look for the Cardinal offense to give the home crowd that rare winning feeling Saturday.

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Jabari Issa, shown here attempting to strip Herman Ho-Ching, and the Huskies host UCLA in this week's Pac-10 Game of the Week.

Nick Medley/Emerald

## Game of the Week

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No. 3 UCLA (8-0, 6-0) at Washington (5-4, 3-3)

The Bruins are still in the hunt for the national championship, but they have been far from impressive in recent weeks. Following a narrow 28-24 home victory over Stanford two weeks ago, UCLA barely escaped Corvallis with its 18-game winning streak intact after a 41-34 win against Oregon State last week.

The Huskies have lost two straight, but they should provide the Bruins with a test, especially at Husky Stadium in Seattle. If playing the No. 3 team in the country is not motivation enough, Washington still needs a sixth victory to become bowl eligible.

In the preseason, this matchup would have been billed as a battle between the

Pac-10's two best quarterbacks — and two of the top quarterbacks in the nation. But while UCLA's Cade McNown has lived up to the hype amid his run for the Heisman Trophy, Washington's Brock Huard has not enjoyed the kind of success prognosticators thought he would.

Perhaps the gap in the two quarterbacks' statistics — McNown owns a 150 efficiency rating vs. Huard's 112.9 — is due to the differences in the two teams' running games. The Bruins have set the pass up by averaging nearly 185 rushing yards per game, while the Huskies have struggled to average 119.4 rushing yards per outing.

If Washington is to shut McNown and the potent UCLA offense down, the combination of linebackers Todd Johnson and Jeremiah Pharms and defensive tackle Jabari Issa will have to

continue getting to the quarterback with the regularity that has given them a combined 23 sacks.

The Bruin defense will need to regroup after allowing the Beavers 491 yards in total offense last week. Safety Larry Atkins, an All-American candidate, leads the team with 55 tackles.

Last season, UCLA rode McNown's golden arm to a 52-28 win in Los Angeles, where the Bruins put up 565 yards in total offense. McNown threw for 320 yards and three touchdowns, while Huard passed for 271 yards and accounted for two touchdowns, one through the air and one on the ground. UCLA also intercepted two of Huard's throws and sacked him five times.

Expect another wide-open, high-scoring affair Saturday on ABC.

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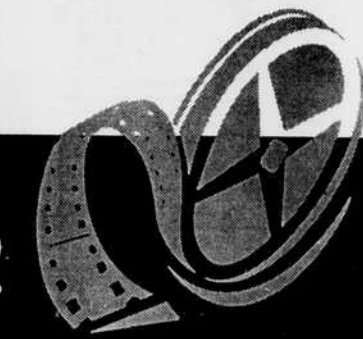
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