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UCLA-USC highlights rivalry week

By Tim Pyle

Oregon Daily Emerald

Washington (5-5, 3-4) at
Washington State (3-7, 0-7)

This season's edition of the Apple Cup is more like applesauce.

Both the Huskies and Cougars have been smashed this season like no time in their recent histories. While Washington is trying to avoid its first losing season since 1976, Washington State is attempting to dodge its first winless conference season since 1975.

The Cougars also need a win and a loss by Stanford or Oregon State to keep from becoming the first Pacific-10 Conference team to go from first to worst since UCLA accomplished the blunder the season after its 1943 Rose Bowl appearance.

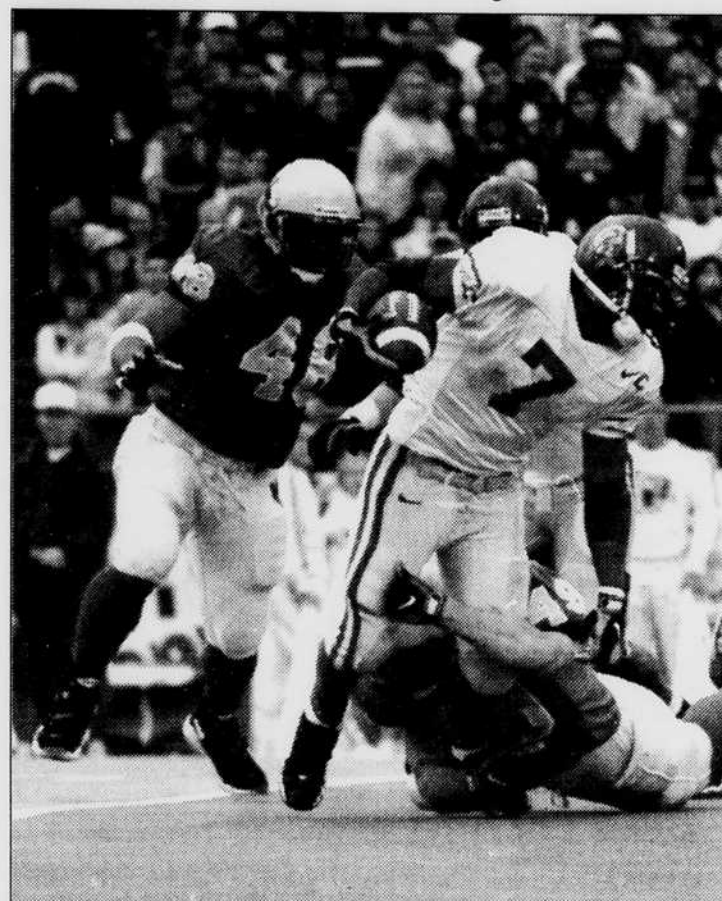
A quick glance at defensive statistics would seem to foreshadow a high-scoring affair, as the Washington State defense is ninth in the conference in points allowed and the Huskies are eight.



But the offenses have not fared much better. The Cougars are also ninth in the Pac-10 in scoring offense, while Washington is sixth.

With Brock Huard directing the offense, the Huskies do appear to have an advantage at quarterback. However, Huard has not enjoyed the kind of success that many people predicted when he decided not to enter the NFL draft last spring. He has thrown 14 touchdown passes against 12 interceptions, while accumulating a passing efficiency rating of nearly 112.

Washington State has rotated quarterbacks Steve Birnbaum and Paul Mencke throughout the conference season. In a 38-28 loss at Stanford last week, the tandem combined for 372 yards and three touchdowns, but they also threw five interceptions.



Nick Medley/Emerald

Chad Morton and the Southern California rushing attack will face a stiff challenge this week at the Rose Bowl, where the Trojans face Pacific-10 Conference champion UCLA.

In its loss to UCLA last Saturday, Washington finally found its long-lost running game. Both Willie Hurst and Braxton Cleman rushed for 100 or more yards as the Huskies rolled up 248 yards on the ground.

Stanford (2-8, 1-6) at
California (5-5, 3-4)

If the Golden Bears can find a big win in the Big Game, they could wind up in a little bowl.

However, the Cardinal would relish denying Cal a postseason appearance in the 101st edition of the West Coast's oldest rivalry, which dates back to 1892.

Last season, Stanford held off the Bears 21-20 to win its third straight Big Game, despite the fact

that Cal posted 380 yards in total offense to the Cardinal's 240.

Wide receivers Dameane Douglas of Cal and Troy Walters of Stanford will be the players to watch in this one.

Douglas has 87 receptions for 1,026 yards, but he needs 15 more catches to tie former Trojan Keyshawn Johnson's single-season record of 102 in 1995. Douglas better hope the Bears advance to a bowl game.

Walters has returned to form in recent weeks after being hampered by injuries early in the season. He caught seven passes for 143 yards and one touchdown against the Cougars last Saturday.

Game of the Week

By Tim Pyle

Oregon Daily Emerald

Southern California (7-3, 5-2) at
No. 3 UCLA (9-0, 7-0)

The Bruins are bona fide streakers.

In addition to owning the nation's longest winning streak at 19, UCLA has owned its arch rival in the 1990s. The Bruins have defeated the Trojans in seven straight battles for Los Angeles, which is the longest such streak for either team in the history of this series, which dates to 1929.

But USC fans take heart. Your Trojans still hold a 34-26-7 edge in the series, and eight of the last nine showdowns have been decided by seven or fewer points. Plus, your team would love nothing more — nor would you — then to knock UCLA out of

the national title picture.

After consecutive lackluster performances, the Bruins rebounded to impressively down Washington 36-24 in Seattle last week. The game was not as close as the final score indicated as wide receiver Danny Farmer hauled in four passes for 134 yards from quarterback Cade McNown to spark the UCLA offense.

Meanwhile, USC has had two weeks off to prepare for its biggest game of the season. The Trojans have already clinched a bowl berth with their seven wins, but they need a victory either this week or next week against Notre Dame to earn an upper-tier bowl bid.

The matchup between the explosive Bruin offense, which ranks first in the Pac-10 in scor-

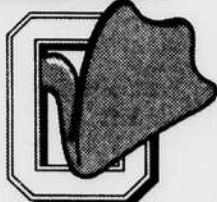
ing, and the stingy USC defense, which is second in the conference in points allowed, should prove intriguing.

Individually, the war between Trojan linebacker Chris Claiborne and McNown could pit this season's Butkus Award, which goes to the country's top linebacker, and Heisman Trophy winners.

However, the game could well be decided when USC has the ball. If the UCLA defense, ranked next to last in the Pac-10, can contain all-purpose weapons R. Jay Soward and Chad Morton, the Bruins should roll.

But Soward and Morton, who combine to average more than 243 yards per game in total offense, will not go down without a fight.

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