

Pac-10 seeks to repeat bowl showing of '97

Four teams join Oregon in postseason bowls after the conference won five of six last season

By Tim Pyle
Oregon Daily Emerald

Rose Bowl
No. 6 UCLA (10-1) vs.
No. 9 Wisconsin (10-1)

Although losing out on the national championship sweepstakes surely stings, the Bruins do not get a bad consolation prize.

In making its 12th Rose Bowl appearance, UCLA will try to start a new streak after its school-record 20-game winning roll was blown away by Miami 49-45 in a hurricane of scoring the last weekend of the regular season.

This game is a rematch of the 1994 Rose Bowl, which was also the last time either of these teams appeared in the "Grand daddy of 'em all." In that game, the Badgers completed a 9-1-1 season with a 21-16 victory over the Bruins, who finished 8-3.

In keeping with general Midwest-West differences in style of play, Wisconsin will play physically and try to bulldoze the UCLA defense with enormous tailback Ron Dayne, while the Bruins will air it out offensively with quarterback Cade McNown.

It should prove to be a classic clash in contrasts.

The key for UCLA will be defense. If they can relatively contain Dayne and the Badger offense — a big if — the Bruins should rebound on the strength of the Mc-

Nown-charged offense.

Holiday Bowl
No. 5 Arizona (11-1) vs.
No. 14 Nebraska (9-3)

The Wildcats would rather be smelling roses in Pasadena, but San Diego and its Dec. 30 bowl will have to do.

To cap a stellar season, Arizona will have to hand the Cornhuskers their first four-loss season since 1968. Nebraska has also not failed to win at least 10 games in a season since 1992.

For Arizona to secure its first 12-win season, quarterback tandem Keith Smith and Ortege Jenkins will have to continue its sterling play against Nebraska's hulking defensive line and fast secondary.

Sun Bowl
Southern California (8-4) vs.
Texas Christian (6-5)

After a one-year hiatus, the Trojans return to postseason play Dec. 31 in El Paso, Texas, against the Big 12's Horned Frogs.

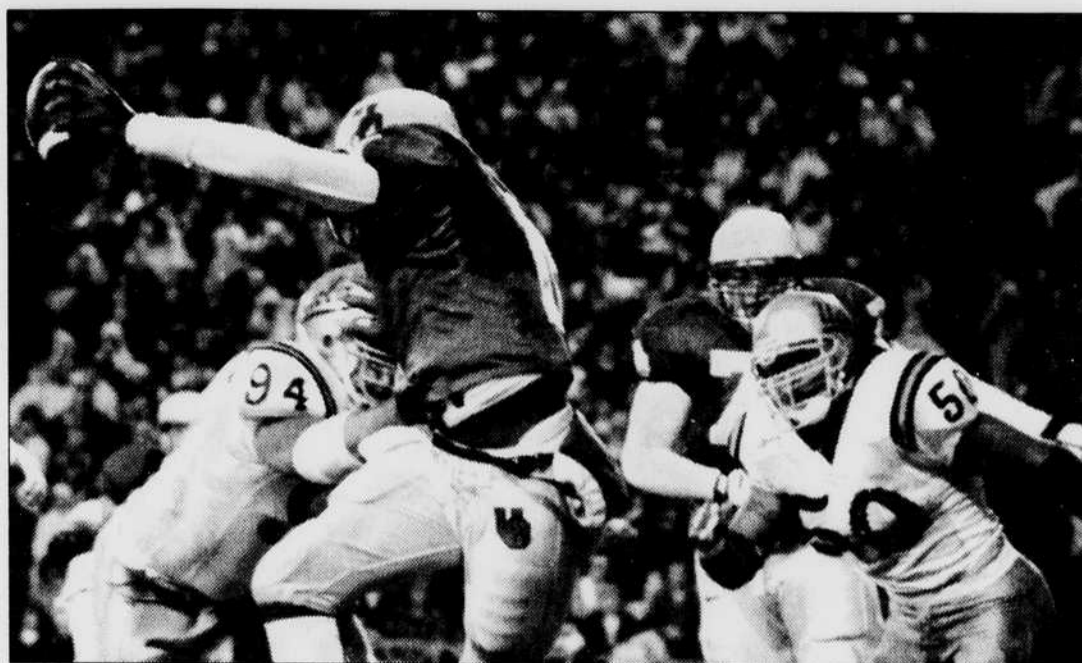
Coming off a 10-0 defeat of Notre Dame in its last regular-season game, USC will try for its first nine-win season since 1995.

Pac-10 defensive player of the year Chris Claiborne and cornerback Daylon McCutcheon are the ring leaders of the Trojans' stingy defense. Big-play wide receiver R. Jay Soward and speedy tailback Chad Morton pace the USC offense.

Oahu Bowl
Washington (6-5) vs.
No. 16 Air Force (11-1)

Quarterback Brock Huard will try to make his Husky finale a winning one after the junior announced he will enter the NFL draft next spring.

Meanwhile, the Western Athletic Conference champion Falcons will be seeking revenge against the Pac-10 for the 41-13 loss Oregon dealt them in last season's Las Vegas Bowl.



Brendon Ayanbadejo (50) and the rest of the UCLA defense face Wisconsin in the Rose Bowl after missing a chance to be national champs.

Game of the Year

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Fiesta Bowl
No. 1 Tennessee (12-0) vs.
No. 2 Florida State (11-1)

Fiesta Bowl, the nation turns its busy eyes to you.

When the dust cleared after a hectic ending to the regular season, these two teams were left standing in the chase for the national championship. They will settle matters in the Bowl Championship Series' initial season Jan. 4 in Tempe, Ariz.

The Seminoles get a shot at their second championship in six seasons despite having one loss, much to the chagrin of fellow one-loss power Ohio State. Florida State's only slip this season came early on in a 24-7 loss at North Carolina State on Sept. 12.

Seminole wide receiver Peter Warrick is maybe the nation's most exciting player. In addition to grabbing 61 catches for

1,232 yards and 12 touchdowns, Warrick has rushed 13 times for 85 yards and one score and even threw a 46-yard touchdown pass.

Marcus Outzen has taken over the offense as quarterback after starter Chris Weinke went down with a season-ending injury. Tailback Travis Minor provides an ample ground attack as he has rushed for 857 yards and six touchdowns.

But the Seminoles' strength is their defense, which is ranked No. 1 nationally.

Florida State has used its outstanding defensive speed to limit opposing offenses to less than 215 yards per game and just 11 points per outing.

The Volunteers have also been forced to overcome a season-ending injury to a key offensive player as star tailback Jamal Lewis went down early in the season.

But quarterback Tee Martin

has performed consistently as No. 1 NFL draft pick Peyton Manning's replacement. Martin has thrown for 2,164 yards and 19 touchdowns.

Wideout Peerless Price is Martin's favorite target, and he has hauled in 61 passes for 920 yards and 10 touchdowns. Tailback Travis Henry has replaced Lewis adequately, rushing for 970 yards and seven touchdowns.

Overall, Tennessee averages 34 points per game while allowing opponents just 14.

The multitude of superior athletes and clutch performers on both these teams should give ABC's national television audience the kind of dramatic, hotly contested showdown it desires.

But the guess here is that a suffocating defense and Warrick's big-play tendencies will vault the Seminoles to another crown.

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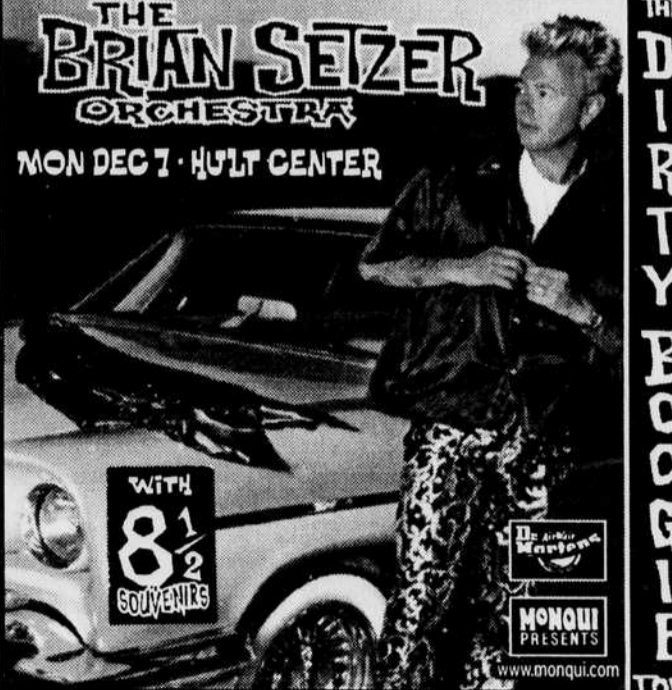
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