

Scott Barnett Emerald

Quarterback Jonathan Smith and tailback Ken Simonton attempt to spark the Beavers to their first bowl win since 1962 in Hawaii.

Stanford stands in Great Dayne's way

■ Surprising Pac-10 champion Stanford tries to contain No. 5 Wisconsin

By Brett Williams
Oregon Daily Emerald

Rose Bowl Stanford (8-3) vs. Wisconsin (9-2)

Whether they admit it or not, even the most devoted Stanford fans didn't expect the Cardinal to end up in Pasadena, Calif., on New Year's Day. Not after Stanford's pitiful 1998 campaign.

But there's no time like the present for Stanford, which has the opportunity to prove the validity of the Pac-10 against Heisman Trophy hopeful Ron Dayne and powerful Wisconsin.

The Cardinal finished a dismal sixth in the Pac-10 against the run, their highest rating defensively. Badgers quarterback Brooks Bollinger could feel like a kid in a candy store exploiting a Stanford defense which ranks dead last in its conference in passing defense, total defense and scoring defense.

Bollinger may be a freshman, but his veteran-like poise has left opposing fans heading for the exits. Bollinger is 6-0 as the Badgers' signal caller. The Badgers' 35 points per game paces the Big Ten.

Holiday Bowl Washington (7-4) vs. Kansas State (10-1)

Does anyone still think last season was a fluke?

Kansas State, a Big 12 doormat throughout the 1990s, made a statement in 1998. The Wildcats were in the thick of the national championship race until a late-season loss to Texas A&M foiled their hopes. Not only were their national-title aspirations a thing of the past, but they were snubbed from the Bowl Championship Series and left without a bid to a New Year's Day bowl.

Kansas State lost quarterback Michael Bishop to graduation after its 1999 campaign, but the Wildcats dominance continued. Nebraska was the only team to beat the Wildcats, knocking them

out of BCS contention once again. Washington had visions of Roses during the latter part of Pac-10 play, but UCLA played spoiler.

Kansas State has contained some quality Big 12 quarterbacks, but none were as multi-faceted as Washington's Marques Tuiasosopo. He will have his hands full, however, against a stingy Wildcats' defense led by Mark Simoneau, a finalist for the Dick Butkus award.

Aloha Bowl Arizona State (6-5) vs. Wake Forest (6-5)

Arizona State didn't have the banner season it was looking for, but the Sun Devils will settle for a trip to Hawaii. They earned their trip with a win against Arizona in their last game.

The Demon Deacons proved they were worthy of postseason consideration by stunning No. 14 Georgia Tech 26-23 in their season finale.

The Sun Devils will rely heavily on senior tailback J.R. Redmond.

Because Wake Forest was able to slow Heisman-hopeful Joe Hamilton, the Demon Deacons are hardly sweating bullets about the arsenal of Arizona State backup quarterback Justin Leonard. Sun Devils' starting quarterback Ryan Kealy sustained a torn anterior cruciate ligament against Arizona and will not play.

Oahu Bowl Oregon State (7-4) vs. Hawaii (8-4)

Oregon State's fans can only hope it was worth the wait.

After 27 years without postseason play, Beavers' head coach Dennis Erickson has spearheaded an attack that has made Oregon State one of college football's biggest surprises this season.

Hawaii wasn't supposed to be playing after November, either. The Rainbows have struggled through a decade of futility that had school officials contemplating moving down to Division I-AA.

But the Rainbows have their own savior, head coach June Jones, who worked as interim head coach for the NFL's San Diego Chargers last season.

Minnesota

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win over a top-five team since 1986.

With such drastic improvements, it's hard to believe that Minnesota would feel slightly disappointed to be playing in a bowl game on the final day of the century.

Yet, it does feel a bit slighted after being snubbed by both the Outback and Alamo Bowls, which went with Purdue and Penn State — two teams that finished below Minnesota in the league standings.

Senior strong safety Tyrone Carter, whose 511 career tackles are a school record, had mixed emotions when it was announced his team was headed to El Paso, Texas.

"It just shows anything can happen," Carter told the Minnesota Daily. "I'm excited about going to a bowl game, but I'm a little upset by their putting us in the Sun Bowl and Purdue in the Outback. But any bowl is good for us and good for the program."

Carter was one of four Gophers named first-team All-Big Ten, the first time since 1978 that the team

had that many honorees.

The other three were senior running back Thomas Hamner junior center Ben Hamilton and junior defensive end Karon Riley.

Hamner was a workhorse all season finishing second in the league in rushing behind Wisconsin's Ron Dayne with a total of 1,362 yards. His 288 carries also set a school record for most rushing attempts in a season.

"You know what you get with Thomas Hamner," Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said. "He's obviously a quality running back who is very capable of packing the mail."

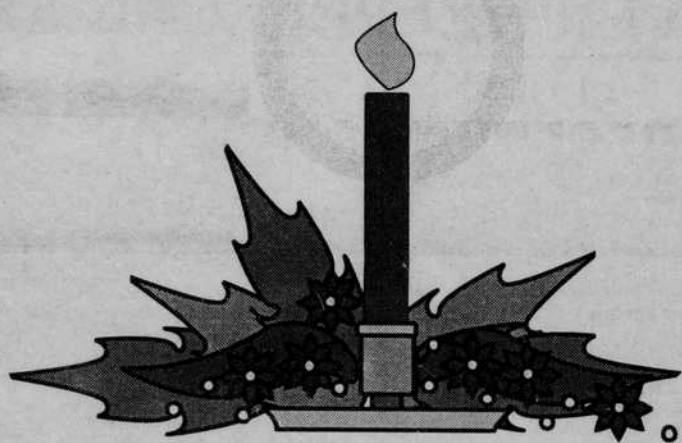
At the center slot, Hamilton only surrendered one sack and hasn't had a penalty called against him in two seasons. Riley led the team in sacks with 16.

All four will be on display for a national CBS audience. And although Mason knows his team may have deserved better, he is looking forward to the showcasing opportunity.

"We're ecstatic about being involved in the Sun Bowl," said Mason, who is currently a candidate for the Michigan State coaching vacancy. "We will play hard."

Happy Holidays

from the
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