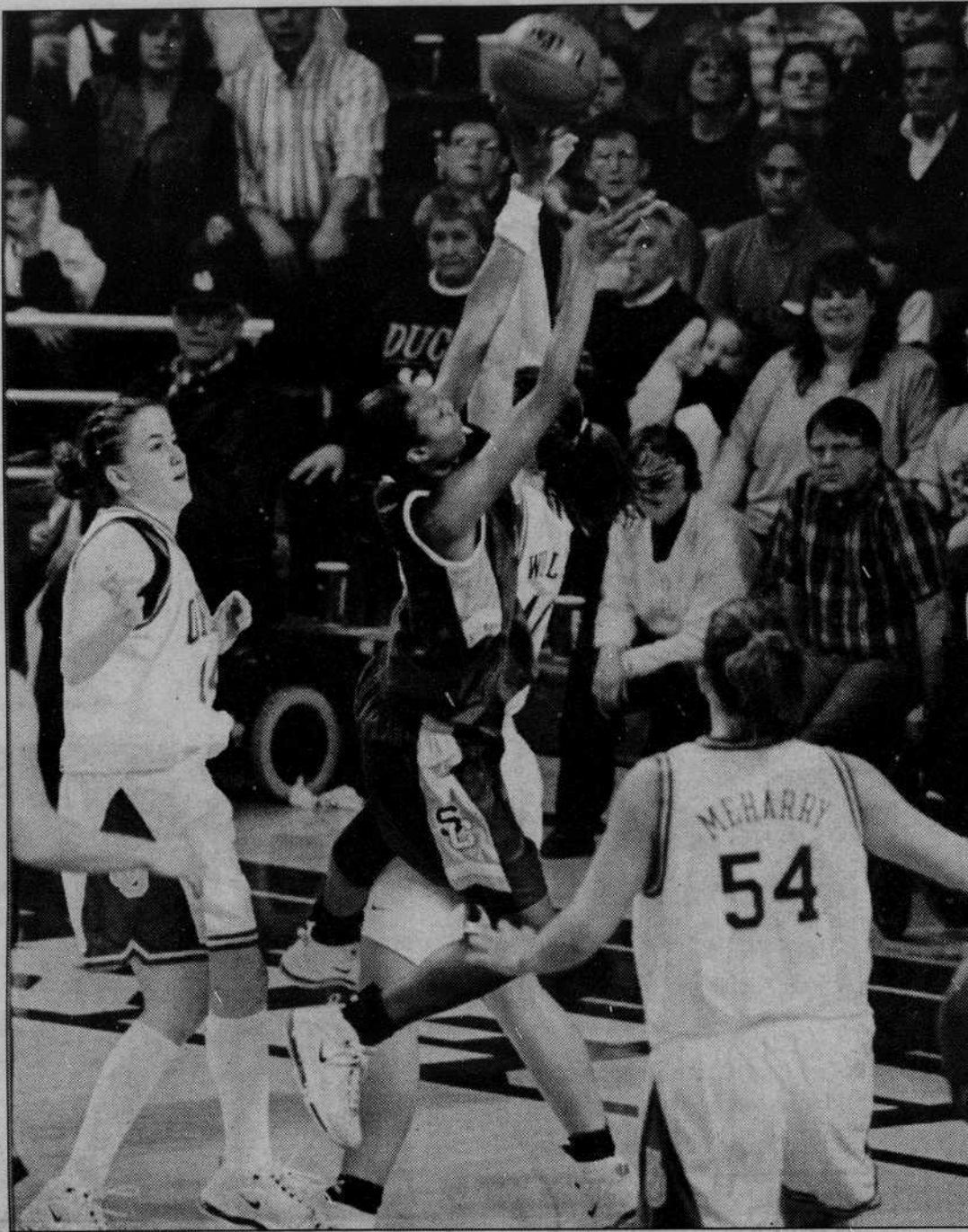


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Southern California guard Tiffany Elmore is Pac-10 player of the week for her performance against the Arizona schools.

Women

continued from page 7A

Because the Ducks' final game against Oregon State is also their final contest of the season, Oregon could win out the year and still finish tied with at least one opponent.

Let's take a look at our conference competitors, from top to bottom.

No. 1: Oregon (19-6 overall, 10-3 Pac-10)

The Ducks can certainly reclaim the Pac-10 title — if they want it bad enough.

Against Washington last Sunday, Oregon played like a Pac-10 championship contender. Shaquala Williams, playing with flair reminiscent of her freshman season, had a brilliant, 20-point game before fouling out in the second half.

But where Shaq left off, others resumed. Several players old and young stepped up to hit key shots down the stretch to come from behind and pull off the 70-69 win.

Oregon's win was monumental because it showed everyone — Ducks included — that Oregon can win without its most potent offensive player on the floor.

Just like last season, UCLA won't win at The Pit. On Saturday, the Ducks should avenge their one-point, late-January loss to the Trojans, unless guard Tiffany Elmore, this week's conference player of the week for her work against the Arizona schools, plays the role of giant-killer one more time. And, of course, the Beavers will fall.

Oregon's resolve will be tested when it travel to take on Arizona State and Arizona. The Wildcats still sting from last weekend's sweep, and will be looking to redeem their season.

Can Oregon win out, and earn a share of the title? Yes.

No. 2: Stanford (16-6, 9-3)

The remainder of the Cardinal's season begins with a homestand against the Washington schools.

Things get interesting again when Stanford travels to UCLA, USC and then returns home to meet Arizona.

Ranked higher than any other conference team in the Ratings Percentage Index, UCLA (No. 25) doesn't belong above Stanford (No. 29) or Oregon (No. 42). The Bruins will lose to the Cardinal.

Stanford should also beat Arizona at home.

Unless the Trojans play spoiler, Stanford has a strong chance of winning out, and an Oregon/Stanford title is not unrealistic.

No. 3: UCLA (15-7, 9-3) and No. 4: Arizona (20-5, 9-4)

The Wildcats are better than UCLA, but being swept last weekend by the California schools severely crippled their title chances.

Losses to Oregon and Stanford will leave the Bruins in second and Arizona in third. However, if the conference "x-factor" pulls out a win against UCLA Saturday, then second goes to the Wildcats.

No. 5: The X-factor ... Oregon State (12-13, 8-5)

Picked to finish eighth by coaches and media before the season, the Beavers have been a surprise, with a Pac-10 record of 8-5 and holding on to fifth place.

On the shoulders of seniors Sissel Pierce and Reda Petraitis, Oregon State leads the conference in scoring defense (58.6), blocks (5.0 per game) and rebound margin (+5.6 per game). Pierce leads the conference with 35 blocks and has the fourth-best field goal percentage. Petraitis has a third-best average of 2.54 steals per game and collects a fifth-best 7.1 boards per outing.

ASUO President Wylie Chen has a Pulse.

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Pulse

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