

# Key games turn Pac-10 into wild, wild west

In the Pac-10 has gained respect on a national stage, and this weeked a full lineup of conference games will begin to show who's the best of the best

By Peter Hockaday  
Oregon Daily Emerald

A Pacific-10 Conference schedule that has featured only one truly important matchup up to this point —

last week's Oregon-UCLA showdown — starts in earnest this week with bowl implications left and right.

Let the games begin

Stanford faces Arizona in Palo Alto, No. 8 USC travels to Oregon State, No. 15 UCLA takes on Arizona State at the Rose Bowl, and, speaking of the Rose Bowl, No. 6 Washington will try to break No. 20 Oregon's Pac-10 stranglehold in Eugene.

Who says west coast football isn't exciting?

## Arizona (2-1) at Stanford (2-1)

The big news for Stanford is bad news. Starting quarterback Randy Fasani injured his knee and will have surgery on Sept. 29. The good news? The Cardinal still have one of the Pac-10's best receiving corps and a decent backup quarterback in redshirt freshman Chris Lewis.

Lewis came in midway through the first quarter in Stanford's 27-24 upset win over Texas, and head coach Tyrone Willingham thinks the Cardinal's bye week could help the newcomer.

"Now he has an opportunity to take snaps, which gives him more situations, develops a better history of what he's doing," Willingham said. "Now, he has more information to recall and all that helps you be a better player."

Arizona also comes into the game well-rested. The Wildcats' last game was against San Diego State two weeks ago. Against the Aztecs, Arizona allowed only 192 yards of total offense and only 72 rushing yards.

It'll be a battle of offense (Stanford) against defense (Arizona) when the two Pac-10 powers meet.

## No. 8 USC (3-0) at Oregon State (3-0)

These teams can't believe themselves.

"We really haven't played anybody, to be honest with you," said Oregon State head coach Dennis Erickson.

"There are enough opportunities throughout the country to watch top teams drop games early in the season, and they don't necessarily drop games to teams that are better than they are," said Southern California head coach Paul Hackett. "They just lose."

Odd, considering this is the only

matchup of undefeated teams in Division 1-A football this weekend. These guys should be flying high.

Somehow USC and Oregon State feel they are tentative, untested teams. Oregon State's speedy offense and top-flight defense will try to dismantle the Trojans, but, as Erickson pointed out, the Beavers haven't proven themselves yet.

Both teams return some of their best players from last year. Oregon State has Ken Simonton and Jonathan Smith, the running back and quarterback that led the Beavers to a bowl berth last year. USC has Carson Palmer, the quarterback who could have been great last season before he was injured at Oregon, and his favorite target, wide receiver Kareem Kelly.

All of this means that the Oregon State-USC game will be a test for both teams. Come Sunday, these teams will believe in themselves, one way or the other.

## Washington State (1-2) at California (1-2)

Washington State has had Cal's number in recent years in this battle of 1-2 teams. Although the Golden Bears lead the overall series 36-22, the Cougars have won six of their last eight meetings.

On the field, California gets it done with special teams and tight defense. The Golden Bears' defense has given up less than 10 points in the first half of their three games.

Washington State's strength lies in its two-pronged rushing attack. Both Deon Burnett and Dave Minnich are among the Pac-10's top-9 rushers.

If Cal can stop Washington State's running game, the .500 team on Sunday will be the Golden Bears, not the Cougars.

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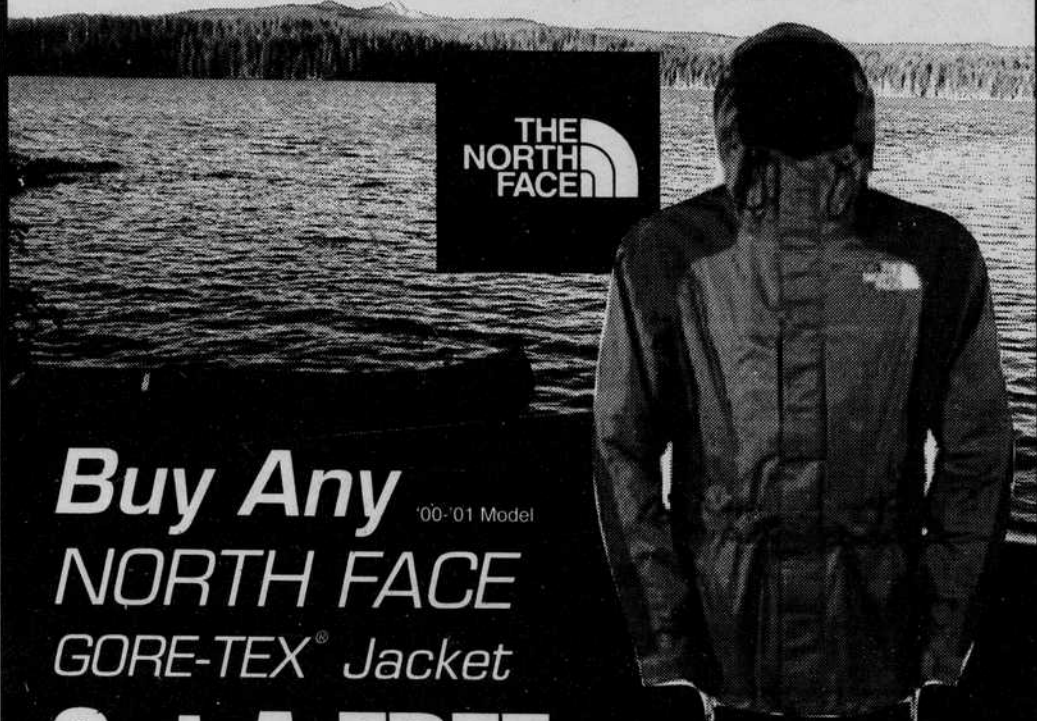
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