



Men's Pac-10 teams ready to dance in tourney

■ Half of the men's teams in the Pac-10 are selected for the one and only Big Dance

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

The men's NCAA Tournament selection committee must like the Pacific-10 Conference.

Five teams were selected from the Pac-10 to go to the men's version of March Madness, none lower than a number six seed.

Stanford was the real winner from the Pac-10, receiving the number one seed in the West Region. Arizona, UCLA, California and Southern California all got their tickets punched to the Big Dance as well.

Without further ado, here is the analysis of the Pac-10 teams in the NCAA Tournament.

Stanford

The Cardinal, ranked No. 1 in the nation, were a lock to get one of the four No. 1 seeds in the tourney for the

second year in a row. Stanford will take on North Carolina-Greensboro in San Diego Thursday. The West Regional, probably the easiest in the tournament, features Iowa State, Maryland, Cincinnati and Georgia Tech.

Stanford should go further this season than last year's disappointing second-round loss to North Carolina. The Cardinal will need Casey Jacobsen to step up — as a freshman, Jacobsen went 2-for-12 from the floor in that loss to UNC — if they want to make it to their second Final Four in four years.

Arizona

The Wildcats are the No. 2 seed in the Midwest Region, which will be held in Kansas City. Arizona will match up with 21-9 Eastern Illinois in the first round, and could meet ACC power Wake Forest in the second

round if the Demon Deacons can handle Butler. Further down the bracket, the Wildcats could possibly meet up with Notre Dame, Kansas, Syracuse or the No. 1 seed in the Midwest, Illinois.

All signs are good for Arizona. It has won six in a row — including a 76-75 victory over Stanford Thursday — and nine of its last 10. The 'Cats have lost only two games since Lute Olson resumed coaching the team after his wife, Bobbi, passed away. The Wildcats could be looking to make a statement after many had written them off earlier this season.

UCLA

The Bruins, a No. 4 seed in the East Regional, seem to have an easy first couple of rounds — they play Hofstra to open things up, then a disappointing Ohio State team or Utah State in the second round. But then they would face Duke, if the Blue Devils don't get upset along the way.

UCLA also shouldn't overlook the No. 13 seed Hofstra Pride. Hofstra has the nation's longest winning

streak — 18 straight games — and has won 36 of its last 37.

The Bruins enter the NCAA Tournament after suffering a devastating last-second loss to Pac-10 bottom-feeders Washington Saturday. Before that loss, UCLA had won nine of its previous 10 games.

But fans shouldn't forget last season, when the Bruins were written off but went further than any Pac-10 club — all the way to the Sweet 16. They could easily do it again.

California

Cal got the worst deal of all the Pac-10 tourney teams. A No. 8 seed in the South region, the Golden Bears face a tough Fresno State team in the first round. If they make it past the Bulldogs, Cal will most likely face No. 1 seed and defending national champion Michigan State.

Still, the Bears have the talent to possibly upset a No. 1 seed. Sean Lampley, the Pac-10's leading scorer, spearheads a multi-faceted offense that has brought Cal to a

blowout win over UCLA and two near-upsets of Arizona. However, the Bears will be freezing-cold heading into the tournament, as they lost three of their final four games. Cal's spotty play will only add to the madness of March.

Southern California

The Trojans will compete with cross-town rivals in the East Regional, but chances of the two teams meeting are slim. USC faces an emotional Oklahoma State team, still reeling from a plane crash that killed two players, in the opening round, with possible matchups with Boston College, Iowa and Kentucky down the road.

USC has a good record this season, 21-9 overall, but is unproven against good teams. The Trojans lost to Stanford, Arizona and UCLA a combined six times. USC has won its last three games, and could be peaking at just the right time. Look for the Trojans to make a little noise in the tournament.

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