



Thomas Patterson Emerald

Tailback Brian Allen (34) and the Stanford Cardinal control their own destiny in the wild Pac-10 race, but face a big test Saturday in Seattle.

Pac-10 race still up for grabs with critical contests looming

■ The Pac-10 enters the final month of the season with each matchup becoming more and more important

By Hank Hager
Oregon Daily Emerald

When the preseason ranking by the Sporting News came out in early August, the Ducks were projected to be the odds-on favorite for the Pacific-10 Conference title. Washington was No. 4, UCLA was picked to finish fifth, Stanford at seven, and finally Washington State was No. 9 in the conference.



Look at them now.

A logjam is the only way to describe the top of the Pac-10, with four teams at 4-1 in conference play and UCLA right behind at 3-1.

But this week will take care of that, with many marquee conference games lined up. No one can

predict this week, although many will try. The Fiesta Bowl may be on the line, but who it will go to, nobody knows.

No. 9 UCLA (6-1 overall, 3-1 Pac-10) at No. 16 Washington State (7-1, 4-1)

Welcome to Pullman, Wash., UCLA. Hope you like it.

After last week's humbling loss to Stanford, the Bruins must get back on track this week to stay in the hunt. And although the Bruins came back late against the Cardinal to make something out of it, they are going to need a whole lot more effort against the surprising Cougars. But you can bet head coach Bob Toledo will make sure his squad gets up for the game.

"It's hard to go undefeated in this day and age," he said. "There are five teams tied for first place in the Pac-10. We're about three-quarters of the way done, and there are five teams tied for first place. None of them are undefeated. So we have a lot to accomplish. There is a lot of football to be played, and that is how we are going to ap-

proach it. You certainly find out who is on your side during these tough times."

As for Washington State, no one could have predicted that this game would mean so much to the Cougs. A loss to the Ducks last week has taken some of the sizzle out of their steak, but they are still eyeing the Fiesta Bowl.

A key for both teams will revolve around UCLA running back DeShaun Foster. After gaining 301 yards two weeks ago against Washington, Foster gained 77 yards for one touchdown against Stanford last week. On the flip side, Wazzu gave up 446 rushing yards to Oregon last week. If Foster can get even a fourth of that, watch out Washington State.

Oregon State (3-4, 2-3) at USC (3-5, 2-3)

How the mighty have fallen.

Perennial cellar dweller Oregon State, two years out of the hole, looks to stay out of it. Had it not been for California and Arizona, they may have been there. Instead,

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Stanford travels to the Dawg house

■ The game of the week features two teams prominent in the Pac-10 race, but only one will come out alive

By Hank Hager
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Take a whiff. Smell that. Yeah, smells like Pacific-10 Conference title hopes doesn't it? And when Stanford and Washington square off in Seattle, it will smell a lot more.

It doesn't get any better than this. No. 10 Stanford (5-1 overall, 4-1 Pac-10), led by newly emerged quarterback Chris Lewis, travels to Husky Stadium in hopes of dashing No. 11 Washington's (6-1, 4-1) title hopes. But it will be tough for either team to gain an edge before the game starts.

Stanford features the strong armed Lewis and a core of talented receivers in Ryan Wells, Luke Powell and the mammoth 6-foot-7 Teyo Johnson. However, it is the Cardi-

nal running game that has done the most damage. At 193 yards per game on the ground, Stanford is third in the conference and has scored 15 touchdowns. That number includes the four touchdowns scored by Kerry Carter two weeks ago against the Ducks.

Senior Brian Allen has also been effective for Stanford this year.

"In Brian's case, we knew that when we recruited him that he was a tremendous worker and a very tough young man that placed very high standards on himself," Stanford head coach Tyrone Willingham said. "With that being said, it is no wonder that over the course of the year he has continued to improve and get better."

On the other side, Washington seems to be the forgotten team of the Pac-10's elite. But they should be far from forgotten.

Behind a talented one-two quarterback combination of Cody Pickett and Taylor Barton, the Huskies

have jumped out to the second best pass offense in the conference at 289.3 yards per game. Neither has been impressive of late, but Pickett's 58.6 completion percentage is tops in the Pac-10. He suffered a shoulder injury earlier this year, but that has not stopped his ability to lead the Washington offense.

"We are really excited about Cody," Washington head coach Rick Neuheisel said. "We think Cody has got all the things that you look for in a quarterback. The team will walk down any alley with Cody because of the way he's fighting to participate and fighting to be in the game even though he is in obvious discomfort. It's kind of a neat thing to watch unfold. Fortunately he's able to pull it off and make all kinds of big plays. We are going to need him in a big way this weekend."

The game is not televised, but check the radio waves because this one is going to be a dandy.

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