

Pac-10 boxers ready to duke it out again

The Pac-10 teams tend to play close games, and that shouldn't change

Around the Pac-10

Mindi Rice

Freelance Sports Reporter

With 16 conference matches played so far this season, the Pacific-10 Conference is playing close games, regardless of the teams' rankings and records. Eleven of those 16 games have been decided by 10 points or fewer.

This week features two winless teams playing two teams in the top half of the conference. A first-place team and a last-place team are both coming off bye weeks, and two teams who are 1-2 in conference face off to see who can win this week's showdown at the Rose Bowl.

California (5-3, 2-2 Pac-10) at Oregon State (4-3, 0-3), 1 p.m.

Oregon State got the short end of the stick this year. The Pac-10 stick, not the Oregon stick. After starting the season at 4-0 before conference play started, Oregon State has gone 0-3 with losses to USC, UCLA and Arizona State.

California, on the other hand, has already won five games, matching its win total from 1998. With another win, Cal

would tie its win total from 1996. After that, the Golden Bears would have to go back to 1993 for another six-win season; they were 9-4 that year.

Jeff Tedford, former Oregon offensive coordinator, has made his presence known as California's new head coach. The Golden Bears have had an resurgence on offense — scoring an average of 36.0 points per game, good enough for third in the Pac-10.

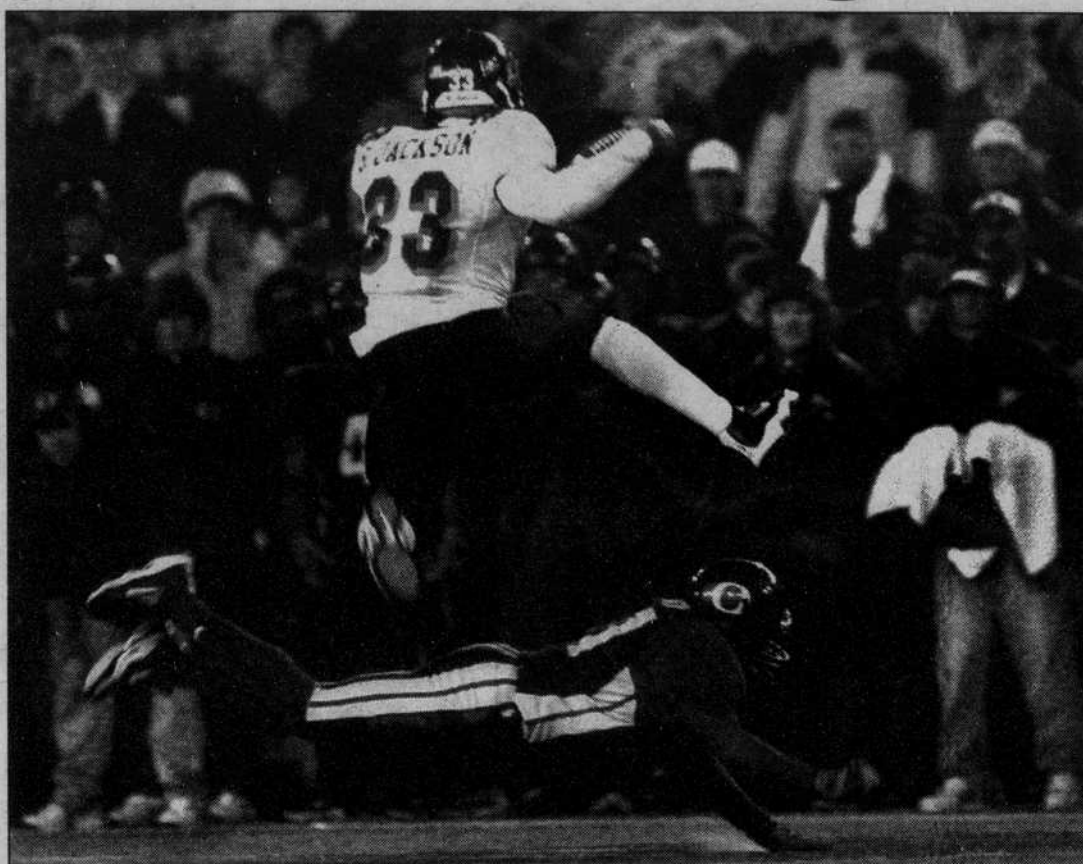
Combine this with a defense that's holding opposing teams to an average of 24.6 points per game, and California has a chance to finish in the top half of the Pac-10 this year for the first time since 1996, when they finished tied for fifth.

California leads the series with the Beavers 31-23. Oregon State has won the last three games, and hopes that streak will help them with their 0-3 Pac-10 record. Last year, the teams met in Corvallis. In the wet weather that greeted the Golden Bears that day, the Beavers prevailed 19-10. This year, the Beaver Believers will again be cheering on their team at home, but California could go home with a win.

Stanford (2-4, 1-2) at UCLA (4-3, 1-2), 3:30 p.m., Fox Sports

In Saturday's most even matchup, the

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Oregon State running back Steven Jackson (33) and the rest of the Beavers look for their first Pac-10 victory.

Adam Amato Emerald

Arizona State looks to remain undefeated in Pac-10

The Sun Devils, who host a struggling Washington team, aim to stay atop the standings

Game of the week

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Washington (4-3, 1-2 Pac-10) at Arizona State (6-2, 3-0), 7 p.m.

There will be two homecomings in one game Saturday when the Washington Huskies travel to Arizona State.

For the Sun Devils, it's homecoming weekend. For Rick Neuheisel, it's again time to pay a visit to Mc-

Clintock High School, where he graduated from in 1979.

Arizona State has shocked Pacific-10 Conference fans this season with a blowout win over Stanford, a come-from-behind victory over Oregon on Saturday, and a 3-0 conference record. Arizona State is second only to Oregon in the Pac-10 for scoring offense, averaging 36.4 points per game.

Washington suffered a rocky start to its season when the Huskies lost 31-29 in their season opener at Michigan. In Washington's next three games, it beat up on San Jose State, Wyoming and Idaho.

Opening conference play at home, the Huskies thought they were being handed a 1-0 record when California came to visit, but the Golden Bears

shocked the Huskies. Washington has since beaten Arizona 32-38, and it lost to USC 41-21 Saturday.

Washington leads the series against Arizona State 15-8, with the Huskies winning four of the past five matches. Washington has a three-game winning streak at Sun Devil Stadium, and has won eight of the 13 games played in Tempe.

The Sun Devils shocked the Oregon Ducks and football fans Saturday when they scored 22 points in the third quarter and squeaked out a 45-42 win. Redshirt sophomore quarterback Andrew Walter set a new Pac-10 record for most passing yards in a game with 536.

Washington started a late comeback after starting the fourth quarter

down 34-7 to the Trojans on Saturday. The Huskies scored 14 points, and gave up seven more to USC. Husky senior tailback Braxton Clement had 15 receptions. That tied for second on the Pac-10 single game receiving list and is the most receptions ever in a game by a running back.

Junior quarterback Cody Pickett threw 61 passes Saturday, one shy of the Pac-10 record for pass attempts in a conference game.

"(Pickett) has the ability to run like (ex-Husky quarterback Marques) Tuiasosopo but throw like any of the great throwers," Arizona State head coach Dirk Koetter said.

The game looks to play out as another close Pac-10 match. Pickett and Walter are among the top in the

nation for quarterback rating. Walter has the eighth-best rating in the nation, while Pickett is ranked 17th.

If the Sun Devils are intent on keeping their perfect Pac-10 record, they need to stop Pickett. Against USC Saturday, he threw for 350 yards, his seventh-straight 300-yard passing game.

Pickett leads the Pac-10 with 2,601 passing yards to make him Washington's all-time single-season passing leader. Pickett is on pace to become the first Pac-10 quarterback to pass for 4,000 yards in a season.

The Sun Devils must also let junior defensive end Terrell Suggs loose on the Huskies to win. Suggs leads individuals in the conference with 13 sacks for a loss of 78 yards.

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