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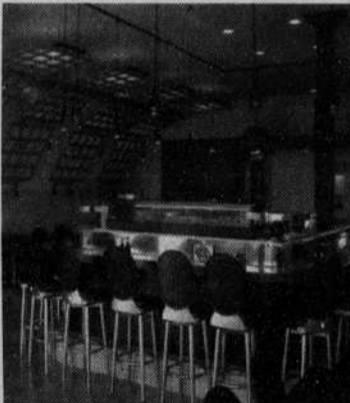
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# Slow Pac-10 week could lead to bowl implications

Pac-10 teams are looking to go bowling, but a slow week may hinder some in their progress

## Around the Pac-10

**Hank Hager**  
Sports Reporter

The Pacific-10 Conference rumbles on with Week 9 of the season looming ahead. This week's matchups are weak, with many of the conference's best taking on the worst.

Still, upsets can dramatically change the outlook of a season. One interception, one fumble, maybe even one extra yard gained could ruin a team's season.

### Oregon State (6-3 overall, 2-3 Pac-10) at Washington (4-5, 1-4), 12:30 p.m.

Washington has a losing record and Oregon State is riding the coat tails of a two-game winning streak.

Could this really be happening? Apparently so, as the folks in the Northwest are spinning on their heads trying to figure this one out.

Washington, normally a program that enjoys unadulterated success, is having a down season by most every-

one's standards. The Beavers are not having a spectacular one as well, but are far ahead of the Huskies.

"We find ourselves in a place where I don't think we envisioned ourselves to be," Washington head coach Rick Neuheisel said. "(Oregon State) coach (Dennis) Erickson just said, 'we are where we are', but there's still many things left to play for."

If anyone knows how it feels to be the Huskies, the Beavers would. Oregon State has survived just long enough this season to stay competitive, but is seemingly teetering every week.

### No. 10 USC (6-2, 4-1) at Stanford (2-6, 1-4), 4 p.m., ABC

The Trojans lead the all-time series, 53-24-3, but have fallen to Stanford the last three games by a combined total of 11 points.

Don't expect the same, though, as USC is riding high on the passing arm of senior quarterback Carson Palmer. He is second in the Pac-10 in passing yards with 303.6 per game, and leads the conference's third-ranked offense.

"I think he's playing great football, he's a fantastic player," USC head coach Pete Carroll said. "I think we've allowed him to throw the things that show the variety of style

he has. He's a great thrower on the run. He's a terrific pocket passer and really quick rhythm guy."

The Cardinal will need every bit of the conference's third-ranked rushing attack to match up with the Trojans. USC, a contender for the Pac-10 Championship, should coast.

### UCLA (6-3, 3-2) at Arizona (3-6, 0-5), 6 p.m.

If Arizona fails to win a Pac-10 game, will anybody notice?

Aside from the record-keepers, probably not, as the Wildcats have suffered through a dismal season. Quarterback Jason Johnson has thrown for just 11 touchdowns, and has also been picked off nine times.

UCLA, on the other hand, has been both consistent and inconsistent this season. After dropping two straight to Oregon and California, the Bruins have gone on a two-game winning streak, defeating Stanford and Washington.

"They have the best athletes in the Pac-10, without a doubt," Arizona head coach John Mackovic said about the Bruins. "I don't know that they are leading the conference necessarily in all the categories, but they have a good, solid defense, and they have a creative offense."

Contact the sports reporter at [hankhager@dailymerald.com](mailto:hankhager@dailymerald.com).

# California goes 'Devil' hunting

The Sun Devils and Bears go head to head in a game that could have Rose Bowl implications come January

## Game of the week

**Hank Hager**  
Sports Reporter

### California (5-4, 2-3 Pac-10) at No. 25 Arizona State (7-3, 4-1) 3:30 p.m., Fox Sports

The Golden Bears and Sun Devils have not met since the 2000 season, and what better of a time for them to do so.

California is coming off a bye week but lost to Oregon State, 24-13, in its last contest on Oct. 26. After starting out 3-0 with victories against Baylor,

New Mexico State and Michigan State, the Bears are just 2-4. However, with former Oregon offensive coordinator Jeff Tedford leading the blue and gold, Cal never is out of a game.

"I have faith in our players and our leadership that no matter how the game goes the week before, our guys are very resilient," Tedford said. "They bounce back very fast and are focused on the job at hand the next week ... whether we win the big game or lose the big game. Our team and our coaching staff have the same mentality no matter what happens the week before."

Arizona State, on the other hand, has been the surprise of the Pac-10 after victories over Washington and Oregon. But a 44-22 loss to Washington State set the Sun Devils back a bit.

The Sun Devils are in a dire Rose Bowl predicament, because their only loss came to conference leader


Washington State, and they have yet to play Pac-10 power USC, a game that is scheduled for Nov. 16.

Still, with an offense that is ranked third in scoring and a defense that is ranked fifth in the conference, head coach Dirk Koetter's squad could continue its reign.

Not surprisingly, Koetter and Tedford are good friends, both having passed through the Oregon offensive coordinator position in recent years. Koetter manned the spot from 1996-97, while Tedford succeeded him from 1998-2001.

"Jeff and I became friends when I left Oregon to go to Boise State (as head coach) and he replaced me," Koetter said. "I think Jeff is an excellent football coach and I think the fans will be able to see the similarities in our offensive styles."


Contact the sports reporter at [hankhager@dailymerald.com](mailto:hankhager@dailymerald.com).




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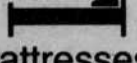
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