

Orange Bowl has Rose-like appeal, teams

The Jan. 2 BCS bowl will host the Big Ten and Pacific-10 Conference co-champions

Bowl of the year

Mindi Rice

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This year, the Orange Bowl might want to request a name change.

The Rose Bowl is supposed to feature the Big Ten and Pacific-10 Conference champions every year, but it's the Orange Bowl that pits No. 3 Iowa against No. 5 USC, both co-champions in their respective conferences.

The teams will face off in Miami in the only bowl game played on Jan. 2. The 5 p.m. game, played at Pro Player Stadium, will be shown on ABC.

The Big Ten's co-champion, No. 2 Ohio State, will play in the national title game, while the Pac-10's co-champion, No. 7 Washington State, will play in the Rose Bowl.

Iowa and USC have met eight times, with USC leading the series 6-2. The most recent matchup re-

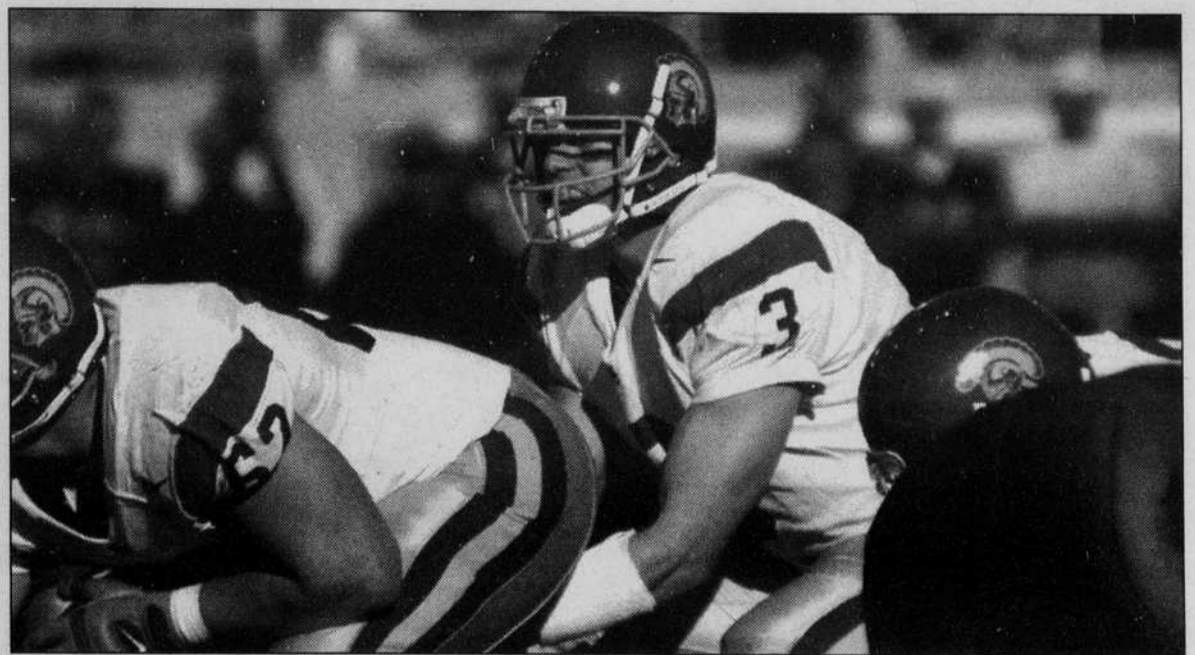
sulted in a 55-0 USC victory in 1976. Iowa and USC have never met in a bowl game.

Iowa started its 2002 campaign strong, winning two games before losing to rival Iowa State. The Hawkeyes lost a disappointing game to the Cyclones, 36-31.

Iowa came back and won out the season, finishing 8-0 in Big Ten conference play and 11-1 overall. The Hawkeyes dominated opponents throughout the season, outscoring opponents by an average of 23 points in their 11 wins.

Senior Brad Banks will lead his Hawkeye teammates against a USC defense that is holding its opponents to an average of 19 points per game. Banks is one of the top candidates for the Heisman Trophy and has the second-highest quarterback rating in the nation.

USC started its season in similar fashion to the Hawkeyes. The Trojans won their first two games of the season before dropping one. USC suffered a 27-20 loss to Kansas State, then two weeks later earned the only other blemish on the Trojans 7-1 Pac-10 and 10-2 overall



Mark McCambridge Emerald

USC quarterback Carson Palmer led the Trojans to a 10-2 season and a trip to the Orange Bowl against Iowa.

record, with a 30-27 loss in overtime to Washington State.

USC won out its season, outscoring opponents by an average of 21 points in 10 wins. Redshirt senior Carson Palmer has the seventh-best quarterback rating in the nation and second-best in the Pac-10.

Without having faced each other in 26 years, both teams are stepping onto new territory. Rose-less territory, at that.

Mindi Rice is a freelance writer for the Emerald.

Seniors

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it feels a little good to be over and be like a regular student for once. I am going to miss everything about it — it is just indescribable."

Oregon's senior class this year is diverse, with some only in their second year with the team and others in their fifth.

Moretti has been with the team for three years, after transferring from Chabot junior college. The Pleasanton, Calif., native is tied for second in the Pacific-10 Conference in tackles with 104.

From all of Oregon's seniors, which includes more than 14 who have played, head coach Mike Bellotti recognizes the contributions and knows they will be missed.

"It's always hard," Bellotti said. "They have done a nice job of blending together and providing leadership for the team. There are guys that I look at and wonder where would we have been without them. They're realizing it might be their last-ever football game at this level or higher, so it's a very emotional thing."

And with the Seattle Bowl in just three weeks, some are ready for bigger and better things.

"I am real excited to play with them for the last time," senior wide receiver Keenan Howry said. "It's kind of exciting getting to move on, and knowing it's your last game. You're sad, but there are better things ahead of this."

All of the athletes want to be remembered as being good friends, as loving the game of football and as being great at what they did. But most of all, the seniors want that one final win.

"To me, winning is probably the most important thing right now," Moretti said. "We haven't done a lot of it lately. It's something that I want to do because I came in on a winning note, played for a winning program for three years, and I want to go out on a win."

Contact the sports reporter at jessethomas@dailyemerald.com.



Photos by Mark McCambridge Emerald

(Above) Senior linebacker David Moretti, chasing down Oregon State's Derek Anderson, hopes to end his career with a win.

(Below) Senior Allan Amundson, also preparing for his last game at the Seattle Bowl, had a career game in the Civil War, rushing for 77 yards in place of Onterrio Smith.

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