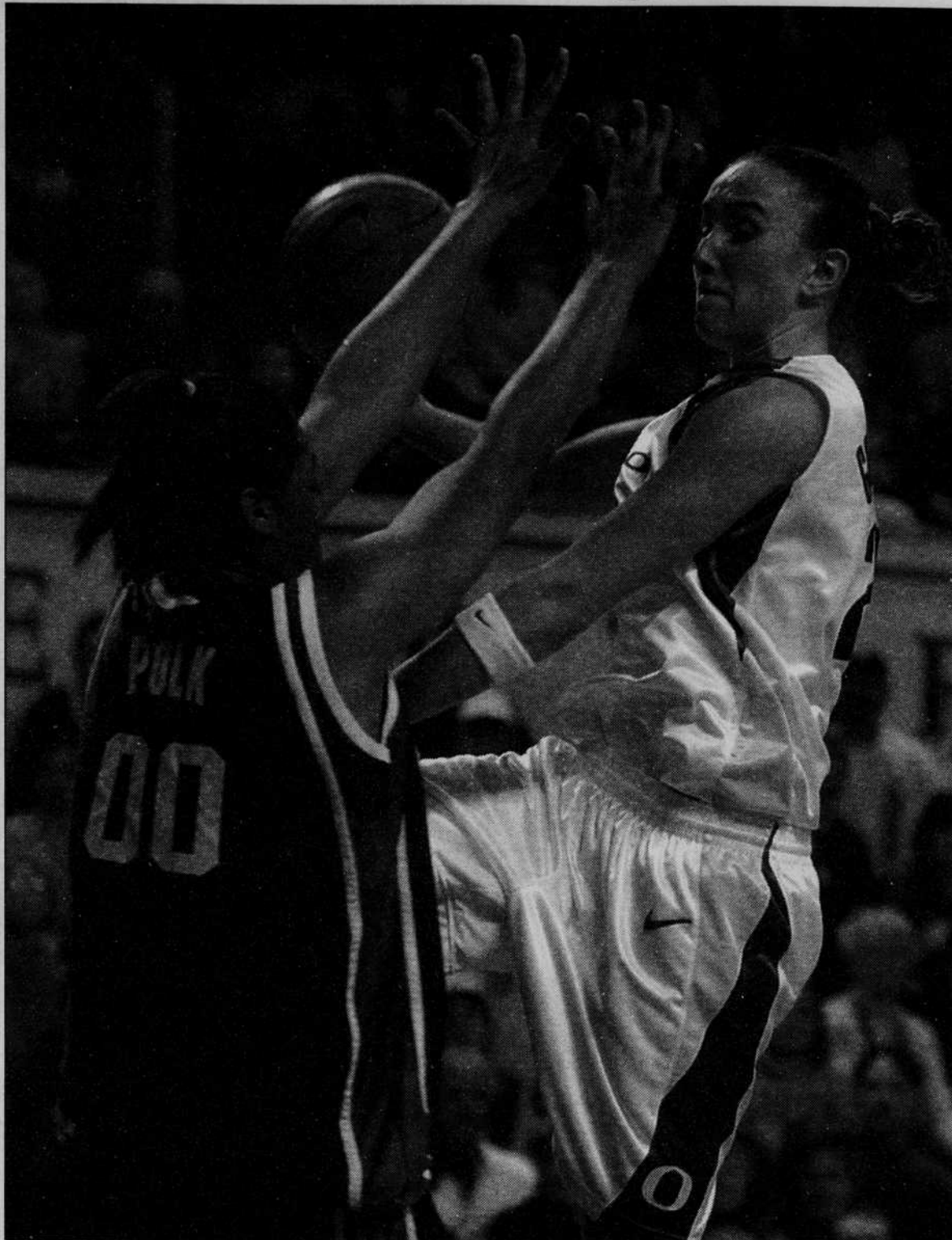


Pac-10 women garner high NCAA seeds



Jeremy Forrest Emerald

Shawntinice Polk (00), guarding Oregon's Kedzie Gunderson, and the Arizona Wildcats play Notre Dame in the first round.

Three Pac-10 teams are seeded 10th or better in the NCAA Tournament

Jesse Thomas
Sports Reporter

The stage is set for the madness to begin.

For women's Pac-10 basketball, three teams will represent the conference amidst the 61 other squads.

Arizona is the No. 6 seed in the East and will face No. 11-seeded Notre Dame. In the West, Washington sits in ninth to face Wisconsin-Green Bay. The Huskies and the Phoenix will battle at McArthur Court.

Stanford, the Pac-10 Champion and No. 3 seed, will face No. 14-seeded Western Michigan in the first round in Palo Alto, Calif. UCLA, which appeared to be a bubble team, did not make the bracket.

Arizona will go head-to-head against Notre Dame at Bramlage Coliseum in Manhattan, Kan. Notre Dame (19-10, 10-6 Big East) won four of its last five games to finish the season.

The Irish are led by sophomore Jacquelin Batteast at 14.9 points and 8.3 rebounds per game. In 2002, the Irish went to the tournament and lost in the second round to Tennessee.

If Arizona (22-8, 13-5 Pac-10) can win in the first round, the Wildcats will face either Kansas State or Harvard. Arizona could then advance to the regional where they would most likely face No. 2-seeded Purdue.

"We are obviously going to be tested early, but I think it's really going to help us," Arizona head coach Joan Bonvicini told the Daily Wildcat. "I have a lot of confidence in this team. We are very athletic, we have good shooters and we have good depth."

Washington (22-7, 13-5 Pac-10) finished second in the Pac-10 standings, but the Huskies will have their hands full against Wisconsin-Green Bay.

UWGB (27-3, 15-1 Horizon) received an automatic bid as the

eighth seed in the tournament after winning the Horizon League Women's Basketball Championship.

The Phoenix are led by senior guard and tournament MVP Kristy Loiselle. Loiselle averages 14.4 points per game and shoots better than 57 percent from the field. This will be the fifth tournament appearance in the last six years for Wisconsin-Green Bay.

If Washington can route the Phoenix, they will probably play No. 1 seed Louisiana State or possibly 16th-seed SW Texas. Washington will clearly have a tough first two rounds before making the regional.

"This team has so much potential," captain Loree Payne told the Seattle Times. "If we put it together, we can have a good run. It's up to us at this point."

Stanford (26-4, 15-3 Pac-10) will do battle with Western Michigan (20-11, 10-6 MAC) in their home town. The Cardinal dominated all year, winning the regular-season title and the Pac-10 Tournament Championship.

The Broncos received an automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament after winning the Mid-American Conference Championship for the first time since 1984-85. Western Michigan earned its first 20-win season since 1977-78, and this will be the Broncos' first tourney appearance since 1985.

The Broncos are led by senior forward Kristin Koetsier, who averages 17.3 points and 6.2 rebounds per game and has earned six double-doubles on the year.

If the Cardinal can get past the first round, they will face the winner of the Minnesota-Tulane matchup. And if Stanford advances to the regional, it could face No. 2 seeded Texas, provided upsets don't occur.

The Pac-10 teams represent a small majority, yet with each team seeded in the top-10, anything is possible.

Contact the sports reporter at jessethomas@dailyemerald.com.

UConn keeps top seed despite loss

Mel Greenberg
Knight Ridder Newspapers

PHILADELPHIA — Despite the loss to Villanova that ended Connecticut's record 70-game winning streak last week, the Huskies were still No. 1 Sunday when the 64-team women's NCAA Tournament field was announced.

The Huskies received the overall top seeding and were made No. 1 in the East Regional. They remain strong favorites to win the national title. But thanks to last week's upset, they won't be the prohibitive favorites they were a year ago when they went 39-0.

If UConn advances to the Women's Final Four in Atlanta next month, it might be matched in the semifinals against Louisiana State, which received the No. 1 seeding in the West.

The No. 1 seeding in the Mideast went to Tennessee, which will host the regional semifinals and final, while Duke received the top seeding in the Midwest.

There were few surprises, if any, among the other 12 teams that received the highest seedings.

Texas Tech, Villanova, Purdue and Texas all received No. 2 seedings as projected. North Carolina, Kansas

State, Mississippi State and Stanford were named No. 3 seeds. Penn State, Rutgers, Vanderbilt and Ohio State were noncontroversial No. 4 seeds.

All season, the Big East Conference, which includes UConn, had been likened to the traditionally powerful Southeastern Conference. The validity of that comparison was reflected in the Big East's matching the SEC with a conference-record seven teams in the field.

Miami, despite being relatively low in the Ratings Percentage Index at 67, helped itself by advancing to the Big East semifinals with an upset of Rutgers before losing to Villanova. The RPI is used to help pick at-large teams for the NCAA Tournament.

Conference USA was a mild surprise, getting five teams in the field after Texas Christian won the league tournament. Charlotte, the regular-season league champion, had an RPI of 60, according to one published report.

Virginia, at 16-13 taken as an at-large team, has the most losses of any such team in the history of the women's tournament.

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