

# HAGER

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next nine weeks, but one of the two will most likely finish on top."

That sentiment is echoed exactly by the voters in the Associated Press Top 25 poll that ranked Arizona third and Stanford fourth last week. From then on, no Pac-10 teams are ranked or receiving votes.

Concerned? Don't be. The Pac-10 has proven time and

time again that it is a quality basketball conference. One or two of its teams, regardless of the number that enter, will seemingly always reach the Sweet 16 and Final Four.

What this season should do is bring a sense of parity to the Pac-10 in an era when overall conference superiority is becoming increasingly important. Gone are the days of individual teams running the gauntlet in the NCAA Tournament. Much like its football brethren, conferences are ranked in terms

of dominance.

The conferences with higher ratings get more teams into the NCAA Tournament, at least theoretically. More teams equal a better chance of success in the postseason, and even though the money payouts don't mirror those of college football, you'd better believe publicity for a conference school gets that league notoriety in turn.

Just ask the Big East Conference after Syracuse won last season. The Pac-10 is still battling to be-

come the eminent conference in all the land. Heck, for right now, I'm sure the league would just like being one of the top three, hopefully displacing the Atlantic Coast, Southeastern and Big 12 Conferences.

For now, just getting its usual four or five teams should be a complete season for the Pac-10. Getting Washington State and Oregon State into the mix of competitive play should be an overall goal. It may lead to parity within the conference, but imagine the day when the Beavers

could upset Gonzaga, or Kentucky.

How about Florida? What a day that would be for the Pac-10.

Until that day comes, though, sit back and enjoy what should be an interesting 2004 season.

In the Pac-10, as usual, it will be unpredictable and fast-paced.

In other words, fun.

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# VICTORY

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during the 1992-93 season. But California is back on the winning track after a 74-62 win over Arizona State on Saturday.

"This did a great deal for our confidence," California forward Amit Tamir told the Oakland Tribune. "We know we didn't have a good day

against Arizona and we know we're about to play a very good team."

**How 'bout them Bruins**  
Surprise team of the Pac-10 season to this point?

UCLA takes that claim. While Washington State going 2-2 in its first four games is certainly something to talk about, the Bruins have started the conference slate off with four wins. UCLA started off by defeating Oregon and Oregon State

in Los Angeles, then defeated Washington State and Washington on the road this past weekend.

"People say we are a young team, but we are learning and at the same time showing maturity and coming out with W's," UCLA forward T.J. Cummings told the Los Angeles Times after the 86-84 win over the Huskies. "We are really happy."

The big test for UCLA will come Saturday when it hosts Arizona in a

nationally televised game on ABC.

## Sink or swim

While most of the conference sits at 1-2 or 2-2 in Pac-10 play, Washington and Arizona State have yet to win their first games of the season.

Forward Ike Diogu leads Arizona State and the Pac-10 with 23.4 points per game, but the Sun Devils have fallen to Arizona, Stanford and

California in consecutive weeks.

It is conceivable that both teams could remain winless until they meet on Jan. 31 in Seattle. After that, it's anyone's guess as to how the Huskies and Sun Devils will do.

For now, the Sun Devils play at UCLA on Thursday and Washington visits Oregon the same day.

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# OPTIONS

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per game and Lalum is fourth with 17.1.

Washington, picked to be one of the top teams in the Pac-10 in pre-season polls, is off to a 1-5

conference start and provides Oregon with a legitimate chance to pick up back-to-back wins.

**Nomination**  
Wagner was one of six nominees for Pac-10 Player of the Week for Jan. 5 through 11. Wagner finished with an Oregon career-high 15 points on

5 of 11 shooting and grabbed three rebounds Saturday.

The award was given to Stanford forward Nicole Powell, who averaged 22 points and 10.5 rebounds in wins over Arizona State and Arizona. It was the second time this season Powell has been named

player of the week.

The other nominees were Arizona State's Betsy Boardman, Oregon State's Shannon Howell, UCLA's Lisa Willis and USC's Jamie Hagiya.

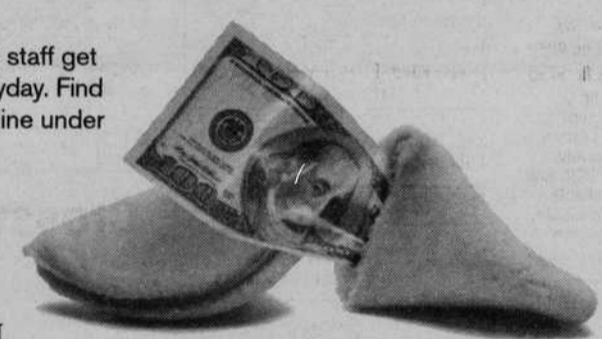
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### Horoscope by Linda C. Black

**TODAY'S BIRTHDAY** (Jan. 13). You'll reach a new level this year, but that will present new problems. You'll make gains in status and possibly wealth, but you'll have to give up some preconceived notions. To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.

**ARIES** (March 21-April 19) \_ Today is a 5 \_ You should be getting a little better at delegating by now. If not, that's OK. You'll soon get lots of practice.

**TAURUS** (April 20-May 20) \_ Today is a 7 \_ Communications can be a problem in even the best conditions. If you're having trouble getting your meaning across, wait for a better time.

**GEMINI** (May 21-June 21) \_ Today is a 7 \_ If you've recently made a big mess, don't blame yourself. It's a natural part of the creative process. Don't stop. You're almost in the groove.

**CANCER** (June 22-July 22) \_ Today is a 5 \_ Conditions are changing in your favor, but you may not see it quite yet. It's best to lie low for a couple of days as the transformation takes effect.

**LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22) \_ Today is a 7 \_ You may have just promised more than you can actually do. It happens sometimes. You may have to stay up all night learning how to keep your promise.

**VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) \_ Today is a 6 \_ Some issues may remain unresolved. Don't worry about them any longer. You have other things to take care of now, and lots of money to make.

**LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) \_ Today is a 7 \_ A tense situation with someone you love can dissolve just as fast as it arose. It's just a misunderstanding, that's all. Make sure that what you heard is what was said, and vice versa.

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) \_ Today is a 7 \_ This is NOT a good day to ask for a raise or any other favors. Instead, go back over your plans and look for things you might have forgotten.

**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) \_ Today is a 7 \_ Don't dwell on hurtful words that were uttered. They can't be taken back, but they can be ignored. With friends, sometimes that's the best thing to do. You can afford to be gracious.

**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) \_ Today is a 6 \_ You'd rather be in charge, but somebody else has that honor now. The good news is that you can profit by listening carefully. Take notes, too. The bad news is that you may hear something you don't like. Hold your temper.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) \_ Today is a 6 \_ There may be some confusion at first. Changes are taking place. It might be wise to wait until the dust settles before moving forward. Watch your flank.

**PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20) \_ Today is a 7 \_ A conversation about money could end up hurting a friend's feelings. Although it's something you must address, you don't need to do it now.

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