

Cardinal moves into runner-up spot in AP poll

The No. 2 ranking is Stanford's highest since the Cardinal earned a No. 1 ranking in March 2001

By Jesse Thomas
Sports Reporter

Stanford is as close to the top as it has been in almost two years.

As Associated Press Top 25 Poll rankings were released Monday, the Cardinal, which remains undefeated, found itself at No. 2, behind Duke.

Stanford (14-0 overall, 5-0 Pacific-10 Conference) is one of just three teams that remains undefeated, alongside St. Joseph's and Cincinnati. The Cardinal's No. 2 ranking is the highest Stanford has been ranked since it was No. 1 on March 5, 2001.

"I think if you had said we were going to be No. 2 in the country in January, that (would have been) surprising," Stanford head coach Mike

Montgomery said. "We haven't been trying to do anything but play basketball and win games."

Seven weeks ago, Stanford was ranked 21st in the nation. And in seven weeks, the Cardinal has jumped from 17th to second in the USA Today/ESPN poll.

Stanford is currently beating its opponents by an average of 15.3 points per game, and the Cardinal has won 18 of its last 19 home games.

"Most of these kids have been through this a time or two with the rankings," Montgomery said. "We're a good solid basketball team who enjoys playing together right now. We're not too worried about what all that other stuff is right now. If we can keep our heads straight and do what we've been doing we'll be fine."

Stanford hasn't had success with just one star player; it has been a team effort. Four of Stanford's five starters are averaging more than 10 points a game with senior guard Matt Lottich

leading at 14 points and 3 rebounds per game.

"It makes it harder to guard us in terms of the feeling of taking one guy out and then that being the end of Stanford," Montgomery said. "We can score inside, we can score outside, we've got some slashers, we've got some depth, but the reality of it is we're winning with defense and rebounding."

Diogu domination

Forward Ike Diogu of Arizona State is in his sophomore year, but he is already one of the most dominating players in the Pac-10.

Diogu is the conference leader in points, averaging 23.1 per game, and he and ranks third in rebounding with 8.7 per game.

"He's been developing very well," Arizona State head coach Rob Evans said. "He is critical to our basketball team. He's barely into his sophomore year but he's gotten better from last

year as far as his ability to step away from inside."

Diogu has led the Sun Devils in scoring in 10 of 16 games this season. He is currently in a streak of 46 straight games of double-digit scoring, which leads the nation. Diogu has not failed to score in double-digits in his collegiate career.

In Arizona State's 100-85 win over USC on Saturday, Diogu led his team with 27 points. He shot a career best 3 for 3 from the three-point line and was a perfect 12 for 12 from the free-throw line.

"We can't have just me scoring," Diogu said. "Everybody on this team is capable of scoring. There's no reason for us not to come out and play like this all the time."

Arizona dropping in polls

As the Associated Press rankings were released for week 10, Arizona again found itself further down the list than the previous week.

The Wildcats ranked in at No. 14 on Monday. In week nine, Arizona was ranked No. 7. The week prior, the Wildcats were ranked as high as No. 3.

Arizona head coach Lute Olson isn't worried because the NCAA Tournament in March decides which teams go where.

"As far as national polls in basketball, it doesn't make any difference," Olson said.

The Wildcats (11-3, 3-2) are in a tie for third in the conference with Oregon. Arizona had its way in a 97-72 victory against UCLA on Saturday, but prior to the Bruin matchup, the Wildcats had lost two straight to then-No. 4 Stanford and USC.

"We're still a work in progress," Olson said. "By the time we get to the end of March, we'll be a consistently good ball club."

Contact the sports reporter at jessethomas@dailyemerald.com.

Free throw shooting propels Longhorns past Tigers

Sixteenth-ranked Texas improved to 12-2 with the six-point win over Missouri

By Chip Brown
The Dallas Morning News (KRT)

COLUMBIA, Mo. — Guard Royal Ivey scored a career-high 24 points and almost single-handedly pulled Texas through overtime as the 16th-ranked Longhorns overcame a huge disparity in fouls called and pulled off

an improbable 75-69 victory over Missouri Tuesday night.

"Royal Ivey's been around a long time," UT coach Rick Barnes said. "He's going to end up starting more games than probably any other Texas player when it's all over, and he used every bit of his experience tonight. He was terrific."

Texas players celebrated inside the tunnel, probably in disbelief that the Longhorns could overcome Missouri shooting 37 free throws compared to UT's 19 free-throw attempts. The

difference was that Missouri missed 14 of its attempts while Texas missed only four.

A game that started out with the officials letting players play turned into a whistle-fest in the second half with most of the whistles coming against UT's big men. James Thomas, Jason Klotz, Brandon Mouton, Brad Buckman and Ivey all played with four fouls in the second half. Buckman fouled out in overtime.

But Ivey, the hero in a 63-61 victory over Nebraska on Saturday, did it

again Tuesday, scoring 10 of UT's 14 points in overtime, including six-of-six shooting on free throws. The victory gave Texas (12-2, 3-0 Big 12) its sixth straight victory over the Tigers (7-7, 2-2), including UT's third straight at the Heames Center in front of a sellout crowd of 13,611.

"I'm just playing and having fun," Ivey said.

After Missouri took a 64-63 lead in overtime on a 3-point play by Arthur Johnson, Ivey took over, scoring 10 straight points that put Texas up,

73-69, with 19.2 ticks left on the clock. Johnson took his first 3-pointer of the season for Missouri with 10 seconds to play, but it clanged off the rim, ending the Tigers' hopes for a comeback.

In regulation, Missouri took a 61-58 lead with 30.8 seconds left when Rickey Paulding raced past Brandon Mouton and brought the fans to their feet with a two-handed jam.

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continued from page 7A

Oregon. "It was great to see our team

play together."

Mendiola scored a combined 35 points last week, vaulting her into a tie for 23rd place on the all-time Pac-10 scoring list with 1,596. She is the only

player in conference history to rank in the top 25 in scoring and top 10 in assists (540).

Scoring snap

Oregon State guard Shannon Howell exploded for 40 points Saturday in an 87-74 loss to Washington.


It was the most points scored by a Pac-10 player since Mendiola scored 43 against UCLA on Feb. 1, 2003. Howell connected on 14 of 28 shots, including 5 of 10 from three-point range.

The junior-transfer from Nebraska became eligible to play on Dec. 27

due to NCAA Division I transfer rules. In seven games, Howell has helped the Beavers to a 4-3 record while averaging 22.6 points per game.

Oregon State hosts Arizona State Thursday and Arizona on Saturday. The Beavers are in a tie for fourth in the conference with the Sun Devils.

Contact the sports reporter at jonroetman@dailyemerald.com.



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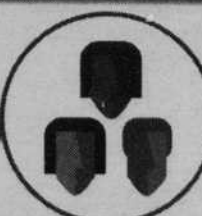
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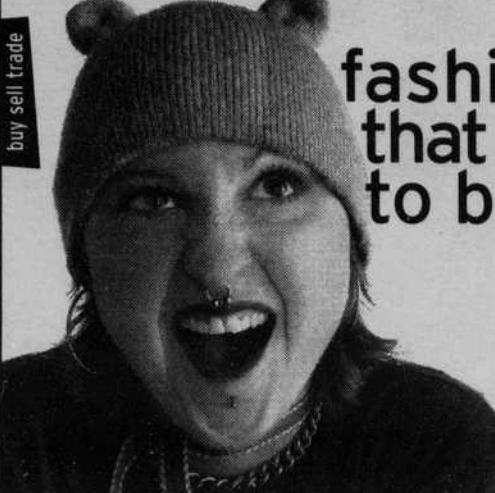
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