

■ Pac-10

Huskies, Wildcats in battle of last-place teams

In other Pac-10 action, Stanford and Arizona State look to get back on track after losing last week

BY SCOTT J. ADAMS
FREELANCE SPORTS REPORTER

Pacific-10 Conference football has reached the month of November and the bowl picture continues to become more and more clear as teams claw and scratch for position in the conference standings.

Arizona travels to soggy Seattle to take on Washington in a game pitting conference doormats against one another. Washington State heads south to play UCLA at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, Calif., and Stanford takes on Arizona State in Tempe, Ariz.

Arizona (0-5 Pac-10, 1-7 overall) at Washington (0-5, 1-7)

The beleaguered Wildcats of Arizona are still in search of their first conference victory for new head coach Mike Stoops as they battle Washington. Last season, Arizona beat the Huskies in Tuscon, Ariz., to snap a four-game winning streak that Washington held over the Wildcats.

Washington head coach Keith

Gilbertson understands that his offense will have to play considerably well to score on Arizona's defense. For Gilbertson, this will be the last time he faces Arizona from the sideline — he will step down as head coach of Washington at the end of the season. Gilbertson will aid Washington athletic director Todd Turner in planning the future of Husky football.

Last week, the Wildcats lost to Oregon State 28-14 and will need a win this week to avoid matching the school's all-time longest losing streak of eight games.

During last weekend's game, junior tailback Mike Bell climbed into the top four in the conference in rushing yards and is just 84 yards shy of cracking the 2,000-yard career mark. Freshman quarterback Richard Kovalcheck has started the last two games for the Wildcats and will most likely start this Saturday.

Washington is coming off of a 31-6 beating dealt by the hand of loathed rival Oregon. Although the Huskies did not put much on the scoreboard, they moved the ball well and were

defensively sound toward the end of the game.

Senior defensive tackle Manase Hopoi leads the Pac-10 in sacks with nine and makes up nearly half of the Husky defense's total of 19. Washington's defense continues to heat up and will need to stay hot to contain the meddlesome Arizona offense. Washington linebackers Joe Lobendahn, Evan Benjamin and Scott White all rank second, fourth and fifth in the conference in tackles, respectively.

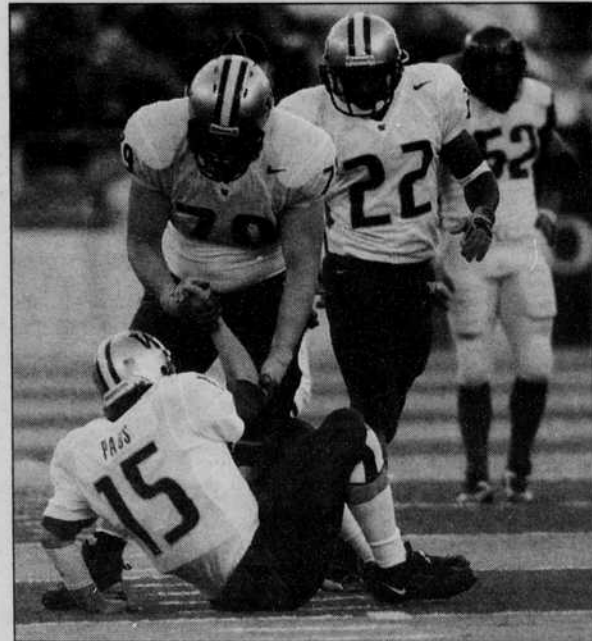
Washington State (1-4, 3-5) at UCLA (3-2, 5-3)

UCLA is riding momentum into this game after dealing Stanford a shutout in a 21-0 victory last weekend at the Rose Bowl. The Bruins will face a similar opponent this weekend in Washington State who, like Stanford, is still reeling in the wake of losing its starting quarterback Josh Swogger.

Bruin head coach Karl Dorrell attributed the spectacular play by his defense to many different factors.

"We were able to get some pressure on the quarterback," Dorrell said. "We didn't have to blitz as much and we could stay in our coverages more." The outing was a pleasant surprise for the

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Quarterback Casey Paus (15) and his Washington teammates have weathered difficult times this season. The Huskies have yet to record a Pac-10 victory.

ERIK R. BISHOFF | PHOTOGRAPHER

■ In my opinion

How the Ducks could defeat California in five easy steps

The outcome of Oregon's battle with No. 4 California on Saturday will start to put the Ducks' bowl picture into perspective. While defeating the Golden Bears in their own house is a daunting task, here are five reasons why Oregon has a chance this weekend.

5. Confidence — If the Ducks fear Cal, they sure did a nice job of hiding it during practice this week. Four consecutive wins have erased the bitter taste of Oregon's 1-3 start and the Ducks are looking for more.

While there is a general respect for Cal and its No. 4 ranking, Oregon believes it can beat the Golden Bears. No Duck better exemplifies



JON ROETMAN
ROUGHING THE PASSER

this confidence than cornerback Aaron Gipson and his urge to be matched up against Cal's All-American wide receiver Geoff McArthur.

"I love the challenge," Gipson said. "I love when (secondary) coach (John) Neal tells me to go cover their best receiver so I can just go in and lock 'em up. I don't want to back

down from nobody."

4. The Ducks are battle tested — Playing a televised game against a top-five team in its own house can be intimidating to any squad. Oregon, however, has the advantage of having already faced a similar situation earlier this season against Oklahoma. While the second-ranked Sooners beat the Ducks 31-7, the final score fails to indicate the fact Oregon was able to hang with one of the best teams in the country for three quarters. The Duck defense limited a powerful Sooner attack to a mere 10 points during the first half before wearing down late in the game.

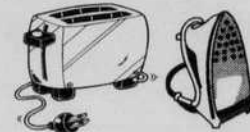
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