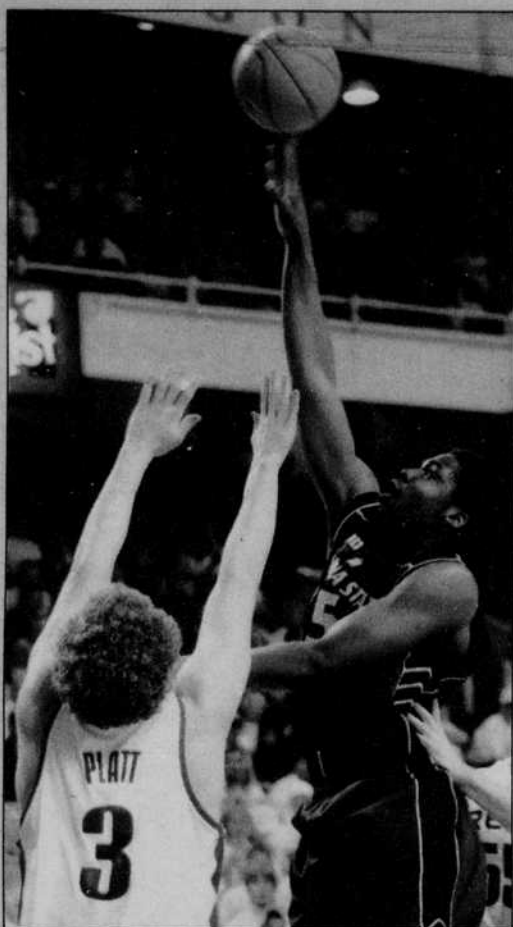


Pac-10 Outlook

The Washington and Arizona men's teams will likely duel to the finish;
Despite the loss of Nicole Powell, Stanford is in position for its 14th Pac-10 title in 18 years

MEN



Arizona State forward Ike Diogu leads the Pac-10 in scoring, rebounding and field goal percentage.

ERIK R. BISHOFF | PHOTOGRAPHER



Arizona guard Dee-Dee Wheeler's 19 points per game average tops the Pac-10.

DANIELLE HICKEY | PHOTO EDITOR

WOMEN

1. Washington

2003-04 finish: 19-12 (12-6, 2nd in Pacific-10 Conference)

2004-05 record: 12-1 (2-0 Pac-10)

Key players: Jr. Guard Nate Robinson, 17.7 ppg, 5.3 apg; Sr. G Will Conroy, 10.3 ppg, 7.5 apg

Pac-10 outlook: The sky's the limit for a Husky program that returns all five starters. Lorenzo Romar's team is the favorite heading into Pac-10 play and should go deep into the NCAA tournament with Robinson, Conroy and company.

2. Arizona

2003-04 finish: 20-10 (11-7, 3rd)

2004-05 record: 11-2 (1-0)

Key players: Sr. G Salim Stoudamire, 14.8 ppg; Sr. C Channing Frye, 13.5 ppg, 8.3 rpg; Jr. G Hassan Adams, 11.5 ppg, 5.8 rpg

Pac-10 outlook: The Wildcats have more talent on their roster than any team in the Pac-10. Look for a two-way battle between Lute Olson's squad and the upstart Washington Huskies.

3. Oregon

2003-04 finish: 18-13 (9-9, 4th)

2004-05 record: 9-2 (1-1)

Key players: So. G Aaron Brooks, 16.9 ppg, 5.1 apg; Jr. C Ian Crosswhite, 11.0 ppg, 6.0 rpg; Fr. F Malik Hairston, 13.0 ppg, 4.5 rpg

Pac-10 outlook: Life after Luke Jackson hasn't been too bad for the Ducks, who have started off the year 9-2 despite their latest disappointing loss to UCLA at home. With the arrival of super-recruits Hairston, Bryce Taylor and Maarty Leunen, along with Brooks' return from a broken wrist, the faithful in Eugene have their eyes set on an NCAA tournament berth.

4. Oregon State

2003-04 finish: 12-16 (6-12, 9th)

2004-05 record: 10-3 (2-0)

Key players: Sr. G J.S. Nash, 11.2 ppg; Sr. F David Lucas, 17.0 ppg, 4.3 rpg; Fr. F Sasa Cacic, 14.3 ppg, 5.8 rpg

Pac-10 outlook: After years of mediocrity (at best) in the Pac-10, the Beavers finally appear to be turning the corner ... and fast. Third-year coach Jay John and all-conference forward Lucas should improve on last year's ninth place finish at the very least, especially with the addition of the Croatian-native Cacic.

5. UCLA

2003-04 finish: 11-17 (7-11, 7th)

2004-05 record: 7-3 (1-1)

Key players: Sr. G/F Dijon Thompson, 17.1 ppg, 8.3 rpg; Fr. G Jordan Farmar, 12.6 ppg, 5.0 apg

Pac-10 outlook: The Bruins have the potential to finish in either the top four or bottom four of the conference. This young squad has three freshmen in its starting lineup, led by Farmar. Thompson has stepped up his game, but the Bruins may struggle with consistency with this freshman-laden lineup.

6. Arizona State

2003-04 finish: 10-17 (4-14, 10th)

2004-05 record: 11-2 (0-1)

Key players: Jr. F Ike Diogu, 22.8 ppg, 10.3 rpg, 2.77 bpg; Sr. G Steve Moore, 12.7 ppg

Pac-10 outlook: The Sun Devils, led by national player-of-the-year candidate Diogu, have gotten off to a blistering start thanks to a less than stellar pre-conference schedule. With no one to share the scoring burden with Diogu, Arizona State will again struggle to finish in the upper half of the Pac-10.

7. California

2003-04 finish: 13-15 (9-9, 4th)

2004-05 record: 8-4 (1-1)

Key players: Jr. G Richard Midgley, 16.7 ppg; So. G/F Marquise Kately, 11.2 ppg

Pac-10 outlook: The Bears, loaded with young talent, are probably a year away from contending for Ben Braun's first Pac-10 crown. That being said, last year's Pac-10 Freshman of the Year Leon Powe has been out the entire season after having reconstructive knee surgery in September.

8. USC

2003-04 finish: 13-15 (8-10, 6th)

2004-05 record: 7-6 (0-2)

Key players: So. G Lodrick Stewart, 15.2 ppg, Sr. C Rory O'Neil

Pac-10 outlook: Good thing Trojan alumni have football because the 2004-05 basketball season is a mess for USC hoop fans. After head coach Henry Bibby's firing and the Rick Majerus fiasco, the Trojans will have to work hard to make the Pac-10 tournament, let alone the NCAA tournament.

9. Stanford

2003-04 finish: 30-2 (17-1, 1st)

2004-05 record: 6-6 (0-2)

Key players: Jr. G Chris Hernandez, 12.9 ppg, 4.0 apg; Sr. C Rob Little, 9.3 ppg, 4.4 rpg; Jr. G/F Dan Grunfeld, 16.7 ppg, 5.8 rpg

Pac-10 outlook: Things have started off rough for the Cardinal and it's not likely to get better. Palo Alto lost its best player (Josh Childress) and coach (Mike Montgomery) to the NBA after their dominating 2003-04 campaign. New coach Trent Johnson, a former Montgomery assistant, will eventually right the ship, just not this year.

10. Washington State

2003-04 finish: 13-16 (7-11, 7th)

2004-05 record: 6-5 (1-1)

Key players: Sr. G Thomas Kelati, 11.9 ppg; Sr. G Jeff Varem, 8.8 ppg, 7.8 rpg

Pac-10 outlook: The Cougars limped through their non-conference schedule with a struggling offense that included an 81-29 loss to Oklahoma State and a 37-36 victory over Idaho. Though they seemed to be heading straight to the bottom of the conference, they did defeat Stanford 60-51 in their first Pac-10 game.

1. Stanford

2003-04 finish: 27-7 (14-4, T-1st in Pac-10)

2004-05 record: 11-2 (3-1)

Key players: Fr. Guard Candice Wiggins, 15.3 ppg, 2.9 spg; Jr. Center Brooke Smith, 12.8 ppg, 5.3 rpg, 1.2 bpg; Sr. G Kelley Suminski, 11.8 ppg

Pac-10 outlook: If it ain't broke, don't fix it. Stanford has owned the Pac-10 for almost two decades and the trend should continue. The backcourt of Suminski and Susan King Borchardt will anchor a very deep and talented team that will stay near the top of the Pac-10 all year.

2. UCLA

2003-04 finish: 17-13 (11-7 T-3rd)

2004-05 record: 9-3 (3-0)

Key players: So. G Noelle Quinn, 18.7 ppg, 7.7 rpg, 3.0 spg; Jr. G Nikki Blue, 11.4 ppg, 4.9 apg, 2.36 spg

Pac-10 outlook: The wildcard in the conference, UCLA probably has the most athletic and skilled team in the Pac-10 and their pressure defense should help secure a ticket to the Big Dance in March.

3. Arizona

2003-04 finish: 24-9 (14-4 T-1st)

2004-05 record: 10-3 (2-1)

Key players: Sr. G Dee-Dee Wheeler, 19.0 ppg, 5.1 rpg, 4.5 apg, 2.9 spg; Jr. C Shawntinice Polk, 13.9 ppg, 8.9 rpg, 2.64 bpg

Pac-10 outlook: If the duo of Polk and Wheeler are healthy, this team could oust Stanford from the top spot. However, with Polk out for the next few weeks with a bum knee, the offensive load will be carried solely on the shoulders of Wheeler, which make the matchups with Stanford and UCLA look even more daunting.

4. ASU

2003-04 finish: 17-12 (11-7 T-3rd)

2004-05 record: 10-3 (2-1)

Key players: Jr. Forward Kristen Kovesdy, 12.0 ppg; So. F Emily Westerberg, 11.1 ppg

Pac-10 outlook: One of the two darkhorses in the conference race. Their 8-1 home conference record last year does not bode well for any team in the conference, as evidenced by Arizona's lost 69-47 loss last week. In addition, senior Kylan Loney runs a potent offense that has the ability to score 80 plus points in a hurry.

5. Oregon

2003-04 finish: 14-15 (6-12 8th)

2004-05 record: 9-4 (2-2)

Key players: Sr. F Cathrine Kraayeveld, 16.1 ppg, 9.0 rpg; Sr. C Andrea Bills, 10.8 ppg, 6.8 rpg

Pac-10 outlook: The other darkhorse. With Kraayeveld back from her season-ending knee injury suffered against

Portland last season, the Ducks have the potential to finish somewhere in the top three by year's end. Consistent scoring from the role players will be crucial in case Kraayeveld or fellow senior Bills have an off-night.

6. USC

2003-04 finish: 15-13 (11-7 T-3rd)

2004-05 record: 8-4 (2-1)

Key players: Fr. G Brynn Cameron, 9.9 ppg, 1.5 spg; Jr. G Meghan Gnekow, 8.3 ppg, 5.9 rpg

Pac-10 outlook: If last week's wins over Oregon and Oregon State were any indication, the Women of Troy could provide serious competition for anyone above them. USC doesn't sport one player that can dominate, but instead uses a number of balanced scorers including Cameron and senior Kim Gipson.

7. Washington

2003-04 finish: 18-13 (9-9 6th)

2004-05 record: 6-8 (2-2)

Key players: RS Jr. G Kristen O'Neil, 9.3 ppg, 3.7 rpg; RS So. F Jill Bell, 8.1 ppg, 6.4 rpg

Pac-10 outlook: With the departure of the Mendiola sisters, the Huskies lost a large chunk of offense. O'Neil will be the one to try to step in and fill the hole, but without the Mendiola sisters on the floor anymore, Washington will be hard pressed to find a way to score.

8. California

2003-04 finish: 12-17 (4-14 9th)

2004-05 record: 8-5 (2-2)

Key players: Sr. F Leigh Gregory, 13.2 ppg, 3.6 rpg; Fr. C Jessica Lawson, 9.8 ppg, 5.2 rpg

Pac-10 outlook: If the Golden Bears can find someone else to help Gregory put points on the board, Cal should improve on its ninth-place finish last year.

9. Oregon State

2003-04 finish: 17-15 (8-10 7th)

2004-05 record: 4-9 (0-4)

Key players: Sr. G Shannon Howell, 17.8 ppg, 2.5 rpg; Jr. F Kim Howell, 10.2 ppg, 4.8 rpg

Pac-10 outlook: The exact opposite of Oregon, Oregon State needs to find some consistent defense in order to get back where they finished last season. If that happens the Beavers could make a lot of teams forget about their 0-4 start.

10. Washington State

2003-04 finish: 6-22 (2-16 10th)

2004-05 record: 4-9 (0-4)

Key players: So. F Kate Benz, 11.9 ppg; Sr. F Emma Joneby, 5.8 rpg

Pac-10 outlook: The conference doormat should remain that way as the Cougars desperately need to find some scoring — and quickly.