

■ Washington notes

# Huskies struggle to pull out of downward spiral

Washington coach says the Huskies' bye week was just what they needed

BY SCOTT J. ADAMS  
SPORTS REPORTER

Sometimes a bye week is just what a reeling program needs following a devastating loss. Washington head coach Tyrone Willingham feels that the past week off for his Huskies (1-4 overall, 0-2 conference) was well-timed in light of its near-upsetting of then-No. 12 UCLA on Oct. 1.

"It is a great time for it," Willingham said. "If it wasn't here, I would say the same thing."

Despite the loss to the Bruins, who still sit atop the Pacific-10 Conference standings, Willingham saw the best play he has seen out of his team this season against UCLA. He feels his players are continuing to improve.

"There were definitely some positives, but the negatives still outweigh the positives, because there is only one thing to focus on and that is: We didn't get the win," Willingham said.

Junior quarterback Isaiah Stanback led the charge against the Bruins, completing 14 of 26 passes for just less than 200 yards. Stanback added 50 yards on the ground, including a 1-yard touchdown sneak that put the Huskies ahead 17-7 late in the third quarter. Tailback Kenny James also found the end zone, punching in a 20-yard run just before halftime.

Washington's defense could not keep the UCLA Bruins at bay as quarterback Drew Olson threw a pair of touchdown passes late in the game to hand UCLA its fifth win in a row over the Huskies. The loss marks the second time this year the Huskies have lost consecutive games. A Huskies win over their heavily favored rival from Eugene would be a blessing for the team heading into the second half of the season. Prior to last year's 31-6 loss, Washington had not fallen to the Ducks since 2000. They have topped Oregon in three out of the last five meetings.



COURTESY

Junior tailback Kenny James (8) has rushed for only 66 yards this season, but is averaging 4.2 yards per carry.

### Protect that ball

The Huskies have put the ball on the ground 10 times this season, and half of their fumbles have been lost. Stanback has been fairly accurate this season, despite throwing a trio of interceptions. The Huskies rank seventh in the conference in turnover margin (-1), leading only Oregon State, Arizona and Washington State.

### Playing with discipline

Penalties have not been a problem this season for Washington, which is second in the Pac-10 in penalty yards, having committed only 28. As luck would favor a disciplined team, the Huskies are also rank second in penalties committed by their opponents. Other teams have been flagged 39 times this year against Washington. It will be interesting to see how these two teams mesh, considering Oregon leads the conference in drawn penalties.

### No points, no wins

One of the reasons Washington is without a conference win is that it is next-to-last in the conference in scoring. Its offense has produced an average of just more than 20 points

per game, but it will have to do more than that counteract Oregon's high-octane spread offense.

### Huskies run in the family

The name Tuiasosopo still turns heads in Duck Country and belongs to the newest relative of Marques and Zach to don the purple and gold. Redshirt freshman Trenton Tuiasosopo is the cousin of both former Washington greats and is following in Zach's footsteps at linebacker. Although he probably will not see playing time in the near future, the Ducks could be lining up across from him as early as next season.

### Injury report

Washington's trainer's office has been filled with linemen these past couple of weeks. Both offensive tackles Chad Macklin and Joe Toledo are questionable to start against the Ducks. They have been nursing mid-season bumps and bruises. Defensive tackle Manase Hopoi has also been clocking his fair share of time icing after practice. Hopoi got hurt against UCLA, but Willingham feels he is probable for Saturday's game.

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