

■ Pac-10 bowl preview

Pac-10 looking for continued non-conference success

ASU, UCLA and Cal, as well as Oregon and USC, will represent the Pac-10

BY JEFFREY DRANSFELDT
SPORTS REPORTER

The season that started with lofty expectations and dreams of a national championship shifts to a berth in the Insight Bowl in nearby Phoenix for the Arizona State Sun Devils football team.

Big East challenger Rutgers (7-4 overall, 4-3 Big East Conference) finished its season 1-2 in November with losses to South Florida 45-31 and Louisville 56-5. Arizona State (6-5, 4-4 Pacific-10) finished with a come from behind win against rival Arizona 23-20 to secure bowl eligibility.

"I'm happy for our players because this means a lot to our program," Arizona State coach Dirk Koetter said. "It's the third bowl (game) in five years, back-to-back for the first time since 2000." Sun Devils' receiver Derek Hagan likes the location of the bowl.

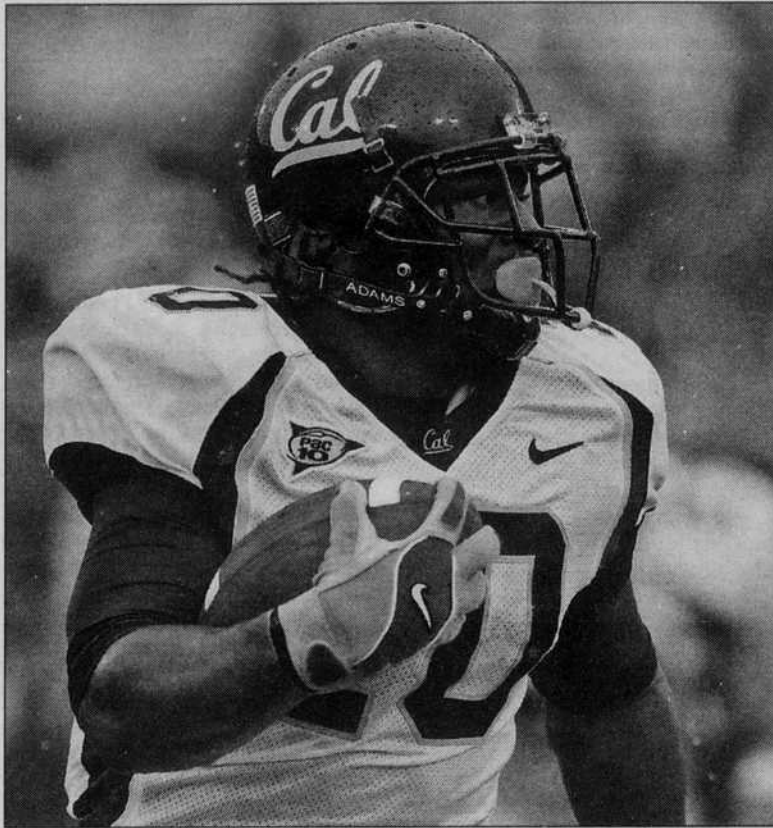
"We are playing right at home," Hagan said. "We expect a lot of fans to turn out."

Northwestern (7-4, 5-3 Big Ten) vs. No. 17 UCLA (9-2, 6-2 Pac-10)

UCLA's resurgence this season, dulled by losses to Arizona and No. 1 USC, now heads to El Paso, Texas, to face offensive powerhouse Northwestern in the Sun Bowl.

Both schools utilize prolific offenses with UCLA's tandem of quarterback Drew Olson and tailback Maurice Drew. Olson fought off highly-touted quarterback recruit Ben Olson and proceeded to pass for 3,055 yards and 31 touchdowns this season. The small but powerful Drew rushed for 900 yards with 13 touchdowns. He's been mentioned with the likes of No. 1 USC's Matt Leinart and Reggie Bush as a Heisman candidate.

Northwestern averaged 31.8 points and 492.7 yards of total



TIM BOBOSKY | PHOTO EDITOR

California tailback Marshawn Lynch looks upfield for daylight. Lynch has helped Cal reach the Las Vegas Bowl where they will face BYU Dec. 22.

offense per game.

"Our team has worked hard to earn its record of 9-2 and a trip to the Sun Bowl is a great way to cap this successful season," UCLA coach Karl Dorrell said.

California (7-4, 4-4 Pac-10) vs. BYU (6-5, 5-3 Mountain West)

California makes its third consecutive bowl appearance in the Pioneer PureVision Las Vegas Bowl against a high-powered BYU offense.

The pairing also matches two quarterbacks in Cal's Joe Ayoob and BYU's John Beck with varying degrees of success this season. Beck, statistically, had the better year with 3,357 yards passing and 24 touchdowns. Ayoob struggled to 1,707

yards passing and 15 touchdown passes compared to 14 interceptions.

The more neutral area involves the team's tailbacks. BYU's Curtis Brown ran for 1,095 yards with 14 touchdowns. Cal used the two-pronged attack of Marshawn Lynch and Justin Forsett. Lynch flourished as the season wore down with 123 yards against Stanford, 87 against USC and 189 against Oregon. He finished with 1,052 yards rushing. Forsett had 962 yards as he filled in early in Cal's season when Lynch missed two games with an injury. "This will serve as an appropriate way to measure our program in relation to the goals that have been established," BYU coach Bronco Mendenhall said.

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