

No. 25 Oregon to face No. 12 Iowa State in Fiesta Bowl

By JOHN MARSHALL
Associated Press

GLENDAL, Ariz. — No. 12 Iowa State finished first in the Big 12 regular season for the first time and set a school record with eight conference wins.

The breakthrough earned the Cyclones a spot in their first New Year's Six bowl, Saturday, Jan. 2, against No. 25 Oregon in the Fiesta Bowl.

Like everything else in a pandemic, the experience will be a little different.

All extracurricular activities tied to the Fiesta Bowl were shelved, the sightseeing tours among them. When the game kicks off, it will be in an all-but-empty stadium instead of before 70,000 fans.

It will be a major bowl game on the field only.

"Our players, to have the opportunity to do the things that would typically be involved in the Fiesta Bowl would be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," Iowa State offensive coordinator Tom Manning said. "Certainly, missing out on that is tough. You would like to have the full experience of the Fiesta Bowl, but it's the way that it's gone this year."

The Fiesta Bowl is the culmination of what coach Matt Campbell has built



Ashley Landis/Associated Press

Oregon quarterback Tyler Shough (12) runs the ball during the second half of an NCAA college football game for the Pac-12 Conference championship against Southern California Friday, Dec 18, 2020, in Los Angeles.

during five seasons in Ames.

The Cyclones (8-3) won three games his first season in 2016, but are now making their fourth straight bowl appearance, a program first.

Led by running back Breece Hall and quarterback Brock Purdy, Iowa State's offense is lowering school records for scoring (32.8 points) and total offense (441.1 yards). The defense has been particularly stingy the past

four games, allowing an average of 13.3 points.

All that's left now is to win the program's first January bowl game.

"To play in a game like this and to do things that this program has never done and, in a lot of ways, nobody thought could ever do, what an honor for us to be part of a game like this and to play an opponent like we're about to play," Campbell said.

A New Year's Six bowl game is nothing new to

Oregon (4-2). The Ducks won the Rose Bowl last season and are playing in their seventh major bowl in the past 12 years.

The road to this one was a little different.

Oregon was limited to six games after the Pac-12 Conference chose to start the 2020 season in November. The Ducks won their first three games, but lost the next two, including to rival Oregon State.

Oregon was a late add to the Pac-12 Champion-

ship game when Washington had to pull out and made the most of the opportunity, beating No. 21 Southern California 31-24 for its second straight conference title.

"Extremely proud of just the effort and the accomplishment thus far, but yet never content," Oregon coach Mario Cristobal said. "Our guys will never be. Being candid, it's just not part of the DNA."

ARIZONA CONNECTION

The two starting quarterbacks are quite familiar with each other and Arizona.

Purdy and Oregon's Tyler Shough played baseball together when they were young and have the same quarterback coach. They played against each other at rival schools in the Valley of the Sun and work out together in the offseason.

Now they get to take their friendship/rivalry to the big stage.

"We haven't talked much throughout the week, just because we know we're competing and preparing to play against each other," Shough said. "But I'm excited to go against him. We've had some great games in the past."

HALL'S IMPACT

Oregon's top priority

defensive will be trying to slow Hall.

The sophomore running back was second nationally with 1,436 yards and has the nation's longest streak of consecutive games with a rushing touchdown at 11. Hall has scored 19 touchdowns rushing and two more receiving this season.

"From his vision to his elite burst, his ability to break tackles and obviously he has a good O-line and tight ends that do a great job up front changing windows," Oregon defensive coordinator Andy Avalos said. "The coaches do a great job changing surfaces and changing the looks within the formations, and they do a great job executing it."

WOUNDED DUCKS

Oregon is hoping to get back several key players who have been injured.

Running back C.J. Verdell, the Ducks' leading rusher, missed the Pac-12 title game with a knee injury that had been bothering him for several games.

Offensive lineman Malaesala Aumavae-Laulu, linebacker Adrian Jackson and cornerback Donte Manning also have been dealing with injuries, but Cristobal was optimistic they can all play.

A look at the glorious, 100-year-long history of Hayward Field



BOB BAUM
SPORTS COLUMNIST

It would be difficult to overstate what Hayward Field means to the world of track and field.

With the spectacular overhaul of the aging structure now complete, it will be the site of more great competitions, beginning with next year's U.S. Olympic Trials (pandemic conditions permitting).

It's the latest chapter for a structure that began as a home for Duck football in 1919. A 440-yard track was added two years later.

Bill Hayward coached at Oregon from 1904 to 1947. His reputation for success was such that the new athletic field was named after him in 1921. In addition to a highly successful

time coaching track and field athletes, he also served as athletic trainer and basketball coach for a time.

Hayward coached four world record holders and nine Olympians and served as a track and field coach at six Olympics.

One of Hayward's pupils was Oregon coaching great Bill Bowerman. Whose students, in addition to many world-class competitors, included a skinny distance-running business major named Phil Knight.

My senior year at Oregon (1974-75), I lived in an apartment just across 18th Avenue from Hayward Field.

It was an era of strong dual meets in NCAA track, none more intense than when the Ducks under coach Bill Dellinger faced John Chaplin's Washington State Cougars. The place was almost always packed.

I went on to see many outstanding performances on

the historic track, including many NCAA championships, U.S. Championships and U.S. Olympic Trials.

I'd trudge up the steps of the wooden west grandstand to the press rows at the very top, a tough journey for an out-of-shape sports writer.

The Olympic Trials are among the best sporting events anywhere, in my humble opinion. It's an all-or-nothing competition. Finish in the top three, and you're headed to the Olympics. Finish fourth (unless you're a sprinter in the relays) and you're out of luck.

In my early days covering track, there were no lights at Hayward. At one NCAA meet, they had to drive cars up and turn the lights on to finish the decathlon pole vault.

No discussion of Hayward Field can be complete without talking about Steve Prefontaine, the charismatic, barrel-chested

runner from the blue collar mill town of Coos Bay who everyone knew as "Pre."

My last year in college, I covered track and field for the student newspaper, the Daily Emerald. That meant covering lots of Prefontaine. We were in the same class, not that I knew him — at all.

But he could be breathtaking to watch run. And so many of those great races occurred at Hayward.

I remember watching one Saturday as he pulled away to beat Oregon State's Hailu Ebba one Saturday afternoon in a stirring 1,500-meter race.

But Pre wasn't in the mood to talk about the race. He jogged away from a handful of reporters.

After his tragic death in a car accident, Prefontaine's name lives on in a meet held each year at Hayward.

The new Hayward is a beau-

tiful place, judging by the photos. It is set to host the world championships in mid-2022, the first time the event will be held in the United States.

The new Hayward undoubtedly will have many thrilling track moments.

It will build on a sterling legacy built there over the last 100 years, where those who sat in those old wooden stands became the most knowledgeable track fans anywhere.

There's now even more reason to call Eugene Track-Town, USA.

Bob Baum, who grew up in Union, covered 10 Olympics and four world track and field championships in a 43-year career with The Associated Press. He retired last year after 23 years in Portland and 20 based in Phoenix, Arizona. He lives in Island City with his wife Leah and their four cats and two dogs.

NFL to finish season without cancellations

By BARRY WILNER
Associated Press

During the summer, with baseball just returning from its hiatus and the NHL and NBA scrambling to build "bubbles" to complete their interrupted seasons, many scoffed at the prospect of the NFL going through a four-month schedule on time.

Without cancellations or significant delays, too, likely even to the staging of the Super Bowl.

It's now 2021, and while the league isn't gloating about getting every regular-season game played in an NFL stadium, maybe it should. When the Eagles host Washington for the season finale, a sense of achievement and relief would be natural.

"It's been a tremendous accomplishment by our players and clubs, all personnel who have worked on this, and certainly our relationship with the players association," says Jeff Miller, the league's executive vice president of communications, public affairs

and policy. "As we are thinking about Feb. 7 and getting to the Super Bowl, we all think about the many weeks it has taken to get here with an appreciation and gratitude."

Miller is understating the timeline. The NFL began formulating its plans and protocols to mitigate COVID-19 even before the 2020 business year began in March. Virtual reality became, well, virtual reality when such events as free agency, the draft, and all offseason activities went remote. A series of protocols, updated throughout the year, were designed to make team practice facilities and stadiums as safe as possible during the pandemic.

Preseason games were canceled — a four-game exhibition schedule would seem a thing of the past — and the schedule kicked off on time in September. Stadiums generally were empty of fans, creating an eerie environment in places such as Lambeau Field and Lincoln Financial Field that

usually rock with noise and enthusiasm from the stands. Eventually, enough places allowed socially distanced fans in some buildings, and the NFL reached 1 million in attendance, something it approaches in one week of regular-season games under normal circumstances.

The financial hit has been estimated at \$2 billion in revenue losses. No, that doesn't mean franchises will beg poverty or disappear. Broadcast contracts make up for much of the negative impact. But the lack of ticket sales and spending at games and at the draft that was planned for last April in Las Vegas, plus a scaled-down Super Bowl week, affects everything from the profit line to the salary cap — which could be stagnant for 2021, forcing most every team to scramble.

Scrambling became a necessity for the clubs experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks and even some of their opponents as games were delayed and moved.

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