

help their confidence as they begin with Stanford and Cal on the road followed by UCLA and USC. They need to come away from those 4 games with at least 2 wins in order to reach their upper division goals and get into the NCAA tournament.

Beavers in Eugene: Saturday, January 10th Ducks in Corvallis: Saturday, February 7th

STANFORD CARDINAL

Head Coach: Tara Vanderveer, 18th year
Gone: None

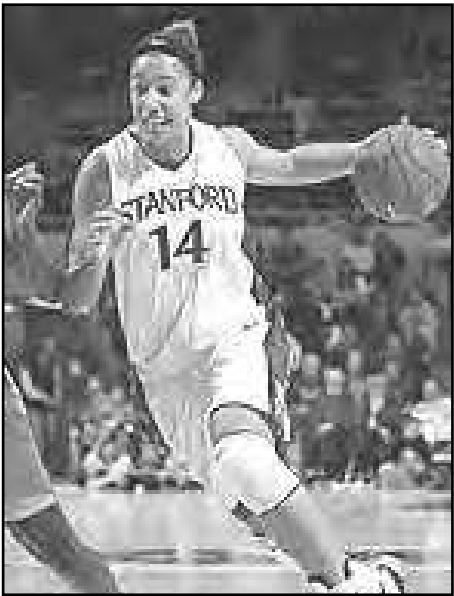
Top Returnees: all top 7 scorers including 6-2 senior forward, Nicole Powell; 5-9 junior guard, Kelley Suminski; 6-1 junior forward, Azella Perryman; 6-3 junior center, Chelsea Trotter; 5-11 junior guard, Sebnem Kimyacioglu; and 6-1 junior forward, T'Nae Theil.

Top Newcomer: 6-5 freshman center, Kristen Newlin.

Top 5 scorers (pre-conference):
Nicole Powell, 6-2 senior: 22.4
Chelsea Trotter, 6-3 junior: 10.0
Kelley Suminski, 5-9 junior: 7.6
Kristen Newlin, 6-5 freshman: 7.6
Susan Borchardt, 5-7 junior: 6.7

Forecast: Stanford barely lost to Tennessee in overtime over a week ago and beat Georgia at home by two. They lost three conference games last year: to Washington, Arizona, and USC. With such a loaded line-up of experienced players it seems the only way they will not win the conference is if Nicole Powell suffered a major injury. They should go to their 17th straight NCAA tournament with their depth of talent. They are favored again to clinch their 13th Pac-10 title and although Washington, USC, and Arizona will try to dethrone them, come March Stanford should have another Pac-10 Championship banner.

Ducks at Maples: Monday, December 29th Stanford in Eugene: Thursday, February 26th



Nicole Powell

UCLA BRUINS



Nikki Blue

Bruins who earned 4th place with a 12-6 record last year. All Pac-10 guard, Nikki Blue will attempt to fill the shoes of Michelle Greco, a two-time All Pac-10 selection. The team's goal is to get to the NCAA tourney as they just missed out last year. Coach Olivier says that this team has more athletic talent than any she has ever had at UCLA. The Bruins should finish in the upper division, but it will be hard to break into the top 2 spots. Those close preseason losses may come back to bite them at the end of the season.

Bruins in Eugene on Sunday, January 4th and Ducks at Pauley on Thursday, January 29th

Head Coach: Kathy Olivier, 11th year
Gone: Michelle Greco (18.9 ppg) and Natalie Nakase.
Top Returnees: 5-8 sophomore guard, Nikki Blue; 5-11 sophomore forward, Lisa Willis; 5-10 senior forward, Whitney Jones; 6-2 sophomore forward, Julia Pitts; and 5-6 senior guard, Gennifer Arranaga.
Top Newcomers: 6-0 freshman forward, Noelle Quinn and 6-1 freshman forward, Amanda Livingston.

Top 5 scorers (pre-conference):
Nikki Blue, 5-8 sophomore, 15.0
Lisa Willis, 5-11 sophomore, 13.0
Whitney Jones, 5-10 senior forward: 9.0
Noelle Quinn, 6-0 freshman forward: 9.0
Julia Pitts, 6-2 sophomore forward: 6.0

Forecast: In the preseason the Bruins have beaten Illinois and UNLV and lost some close ones to Purdue and St. Mary's. Three starters and 5 of the top 6 scorers return for the



Ebony Hoffman

USC TROJANS

Head Coach: Chris Gobrecht, 7th year
Gone: Aisha Hollans (12.5 ppg) and Meghan Gnekow (6.1 ppg).

Top Returnees: 6-2 senior forward, Ebony Hoffman; 5-10 senior guard, Rometra Craig; 6-1 junior forward, Rachel Woodward; 5-9 senior guard, Jessica Cheeks.

Top Newcomers: 5-4 freshman guard, Jamie Hagiya and 5-11 freshman forward, Eshaya Murphy.

Top 5 scorers (pre-conference):
Ebony Hoffman, 6-2 senior: 16.0
Rometra Craig, 5-10 senior: 11.7
Meghan Gnekow, 5-11 sophomore: 8.5
Jamie Hagiya, 5-4 freshman: 7.3

Eshaya Murphy, 5-11 freshman: 6.6

Forecast: USC played a great game against #1 Connecticut on December 7th, only losing by 3. The question is: which USC team will show up each night. All-American candidate Ebony Hoffman and fellow senior Rometra Craig lead the team which is very young otherwise. The Women of Troy signed 7 freshmen and two are already major contributors. If the supporting cast were stronger, USC might make a run for third place. The best guess is that they will probably end up about 5th, where they were last year.

Women of Troy in Eugene: Friday, January 2nd Ducks in L.A.: Saturday, January 31st

WASHINGTON HUSKIES



Giuliana Mendiola

the Pac-10 player-of-the-year along with 6-5 Andrea Lalum in the frontcourt. Giuliana scored 27 against Notre Dame and another guard, freshman Cameo Hicks poured in 24 in the same game. The Huskies have beaten Oklahoma State and Notre Dame but lost to Colorado. Their depth was hurt recently with the loss of 6-1 junior Kristen O'Neill and 5-11 sophomore Erica Schelly for the rest of the season. Much like USC they have a few veterans surrounded by a youth movement. They should be fighting it out for third place with USC and UCLA.

Ducks in Seattle: Thursday, January 15th Huskies in Eugene: Saturday, February 14th

WASHINGTON STATE COUGARS

Head Coach: Sherri Murrell, 2nd year
Gone: Holly Harris (6.1 ppg), Sarah Barrett and Emma Joneby.
Top Returnees: 6-1 senior forward, Bianca McCall; 5-6 junior guard, Jessica Perry; 5-9 senior guard, Lindsey Egeland, and 6-2 senior center, Candace Fields.

Top Newcomers: 6-2 freshman forward, Kate Benz (Portland, Oregon) and 6-0 freshman guard, Adriane Ferguson.

Top 5 scorers (pre-conference):
Bianca McCall, 6-1 senior: 10.0
Jessica Perry, 5-6 junior: 9.1
Kate Benz, 6-2 freshman: 8.3
Candace Fields, 6-2 senior: 5.6
Charmaine Jones, 5-6 sophomore: 5.4

Forecast: They won just one league game last year and only two the entire season, but WSU has already doubled that production with 4 wins in the preseason by beating Fresno State, Wyoming, Eastern Washington, and Utah Valley State. They also were competitive in losses to Nebraska and Utah. So, the 2003-4 edition is definitely improved, but can they escape the basement where they have been 3 of the last 4 years?

It doesn't look likely as they have so few impact scorers on the team. However, any team that comes to Pullman thinking it will be an easy win may go away with a loss this year. The Cougars have tasted victory enough times already and know that on any given night they might be able to upset any team.

Ducks at Pullman on Saturday, Jan. 17th & Cougars in Eugene on Thursday, Feb. 12th

Editor's Choices:

1. Stanford
2. Arizona
3. USC
4. Washington
5. UCLA
6. Oregon State
7. Arizona State
8. Oregon
9. California
10. Washington State



Bianca McCall