

College Football

For the Pac-12, parity is both a good and a bad thing

By ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

Big upsets in the Pac-12 Conference point to more parity across the league than perhaps ever before.

That's good for the conference, right? Certainly it's good for fans.

But for now only this is certain: This season the Pac-12 will have no undefeated teams. And that could mean a tougher path to the College Football Playoff for the league.

"We eat each other," UCLA coach Jim Mora said. "And I don't mean that rhetorically. We just gobble each other up. Every game's just a complete battle for survival."

This weekend was particularly brutal for the Pacific Northwest.

Previously undefeated Washington State — which knocked USC off in a memorable game on the way to a 5-0 start — stumbled dramatically last Friday in a 37-3 loss at California.

The Cougars had climbed to No. 8 in the rankings before the loss to the Golden Bears, who were 0-3 in conference play going into the game. The loss dropped

Washington State (6-1, 3-1) to No. 15.

Washington won the Pac-12 championship game last season and went to the playoffs. This season the Huskies were undefeated until Saturday night, when they fell 13-7 to Arizona State.

The Huskies (6-1, 3-1) fell from No. 5 to No. 12 with the loss.

"There's no gimmes in this league," Mora said. "There's no teams that you can look at and say, 'Oh yeah, we should win this game even if we don't play our best.' Every week you have to play your best. This conference is just like the NFL, where every game is a complete battle."

Stanford coach David Shaw weighed in: "There are no upsets in our conference. There's no such thing."

It's not just the cliched notion that anyone can win on any given Saturday. Some say the Pac-12 schedule lends itself to cannibalism.

The No. 22 Cardinal (5-2, 4-1) were hurt by a non-conference loss to San Diego State but they've since won four straight.

"In our conference we play, most of us, five, six,



AP Photo/D. Ross Cameron
California players pose for a celebratory picture after their team upset eighth-ranked Washington State 37-3 on Oct. 13 in Berkeley, Calif.

or seven conference games in a row. Whereas in other conferences, they'll play a couple of conference games and then they get a bye, or they have a I-AA opponent or a non-conference opponent," he said. "In our conference, a lot of times it's attrition. Back-to-back-to-back-to-back-to-back conference games, and those are tough."

Asked if that hurts the league when it comes to a shot at the national championship, Shaw said it's up to

the CFP committee.

"I have talked to a couple of committee members in the past. They do recognize that what we do in our conference is difficult. It is different," he said.

There are other schedule issues. The Trojans lost on the road to Washington State on a Friday night, a short week after playing another road game the Saturday before. Same thing happened to Washington State, a road game on a Saturday was followed by another road

game (this time a loss) on Friday.

Washington faces a challenge in that three Pac-12 opponents this season are coming off byes.

Colorado coach Mike MacIntyre pointed out that the Pac-12 plays nine conference games, while other leagues play eight.

The nine-game schedule has been criticized because it's obviously more difficult, and there's less likelihood that a team will finish undefeated — which lowers the odds of getting coveted playoff berths. That challenges a conference where some key matchups are played late.

Both the Southeastern Conference and the Atlantic Coast Conference play eight-game slates in league play.

"The conference games, no matter what you say, always seem tougher. Especially in November," MacIntyre said. "Stanford's playing, I'll just say Arizona, and somebody else (in another conference) is playing a I-AA team. That's like comparing apples to oranges, especially late in the year when everything's on the line. It's a big differ-

ence to me."

Of course, Washington was able to get to the playoff last season with a loss. So it's not impossible for a Pac-12 team to make it to the playoffs.

The top five teams in the AP Top 25 are currently undefeated: Alabama (7-0), Penn State (6-0), Georgia (7-0), TCU (6-0) and Wisconsin (6-0).

It appears the No. 11 Trojans — with that lone loss to Washington State this season — could get a playoff nod if they win out, claim the league championship and a few top teams lose. Washington and Washington State face off in the Apple Cup to end the season, and one of those teams could also emerge with one loss.

The Trojans (6-1, 4-1) visit No. 13 Notre Dame this weekend.

"The Pac-12 is top to bottom, inside and out, the most competitive conference," Mora said. "I'm not saying it is the best conference, that's to be determined. But it is so incredibly competitive and it's been like that for a while, but it seems even more so this year than it has in the past."

NFL

Seahawks' Glowinski, Pocic get chance to replace injured Joeckel

By CURTIS CRABTREE
Associated Press

RENTON, Wash. — Seahawks guard Luke Joeckel is expected to miss at least four to five weeks after having surgery on his knee.

Joeckel started the first five games of the season for Seattle while working back from a torn ACL sustained last season with the Jacksonville Jaguars. Joeckel signed a one-year deal with the Seahawks in March and was eased back into a full workload during the offseason.

"We're going to be optimistic that he can make it back in four-five weeks. We'll see what happens. Maybe that's possible, maybe it isn't. We've got to see how he heals and how he comes back around," head coach Pete Carroll said. "He definitely needed to get some things cleaned up and that was taken care of and everything went beautifully. He's very optimistic as well so we need to see what happens here."

Carroll said Joeckel wasn't limited in what he could do directionally during games but that it

would just take him several days to recover after each game played.

"It just got to the point where it wasn't getting any better and we needed to do something for the long haul," Carroll said.

Joeckel is expected to be back to full strength when he returns from the surgery. The team won't know exactly what his timeframe will be for three weeks or so.

Meanwhile, Mark Glowinski and second-round pick Ethan Pocic will get the opportunity to take over for Joeckel in the interim.

"It's a great opportunity. I'm looking forward to it, looking forward to the challenge and just going to have some fun," Pocic said.

Glowinski started all 16 games at left guard for Seattle last season before being shifted to the right side this offseason. He started the first two games of the year at right guard before being replaced by Oday Aboushi.

Pocic has been active for all five games as a reserve but hasn't played on the offensive line.

"Neither one of them have played enough reps here

lately so conditioning would be an issue," offensive line coach Tom Cable said. "A little bit different styles of play which together, I think, would be really good. Let's tag-team it and as we go through this off time with Luke we'll figure out what's best."

Cable said the hope is that they would ultimately settle on one option in the coming weeks after giving Glowinski and Pocic a trial run this weekend.

The Seahawks brought in free agent tackle Brandon Albert for a workout last week and he remained in

contact with the team through the weekend. However, they have not reached any agreement. According to NFLPA records, Seattle has just under \$1.9 million in salary cap space so they are hamstrung in the level of contract they can offer Albert, who has been unemployed since he was released by Jacksonville in August.

Albert is primarily a left tackle. However, he would give Seattle a veteran option at left tackle if the team wanted to make a change from Rees Odhiambo, who has started all five games this season at the position.

Beavers' Collins out indefinitely

CORVALLIS, Ore. (AP) — Oregon State receiver Seth Collins is out indefinitely with an undisclosed health issue.

Collins did not play in Oregon State's 36-33 loss at home to Colorado this past Saturday. The junior also missed the first three games of the season with a broken finger.

The issue was not related to the illness that hospitalized Collins and kept him out of Oregon State's final two games last season.

A dynamic playmaker, Collins was a quarterback for the Beavers his freshman

year. This season he has 12 catches for 130 yards and one touchdown.

Because of his limited play this season, Collins could obtain a medical redshirt.

Basketball player files lawsuit against University of Oregon

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — A University of Portland basketball player has filed a lawsuit against the University of Oregon claiming the basketball coach and staff members were negligent during an official visit that resulted in

an injury.

Crisshawn Clark's lawsuit seeks at least \$100,000 along with loss of future income because of an ACL injury that occurred while on a visit to the Eugene campus in 2015, The Oregonian/OregonLive reported. The lawsuit was filed Monday in Portland.

While Clark was a sophomore at a junior college in San Mateo, California, the University of Oregon offered him a full scholarship. The lawsuit claimed that during the visit, an assistant coach instructed that Clark be put through a workout when it was against NCAA rules for him to be working out at that time.

BRIEFLY

When Clark was going through shooting drills on the court, an assistant coach made contact that caused Clark to land awkwardly, according to the suit. Clark tore the ACL in his left knee.

The university paid for his surgery.

The lawsuit cites an NCAA bylaw that prohibits campus evaluation until "after the conclusion of the prospective student-athlete's season and he or she has exhausted his or her two-year college eligibility in basketball."

University of Oregon spokesman Jimmy Stanton said the school won't comment on pending litigation, but it will

"certainly fight against this claim in court."

Basketball coach Dana Altman and members of his staff are named in the suit.

Seahawks to place Avril on IR

RENTON, Wash. (AP) — Defensive end Cliff Avril is expected to be placed on injured reserve by the Seattle Seahawks as he continues to deal with a neck injury.

Avril was injured three weeks ago in a game against the Indianapolis Colts. While chasing down Colts quarterback Jacoby Brissett, the back of Brissett's foot caught Avril in the chin as he lunged to make the tackle.

Avril was seen shaking his arms and flexing his hands after the impact.

Head coach Pete Carroll said Wednesday in an interview with Sirius XM NFL Radio that Avril will go on injured reserve.

"He's seeing a bunch of doctors, seriously looking at a big decision," Carroll said.

Avril would be eligible to return from injured reserve after eight weeks and able to return to practice after six weeks. Seattle can have two players return from the injured reserve list during the season and has not used either one of its return designations up to this point.

Avril is in his 10th season in the NFL.

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