

Pac-12 preseason favorites UCLA and Oregon face off

Associated Press

A look at things to watch this week in the Pac-12 Conference:

Game of the week: UCLA at Oregon, Thursday. The Ducks and Bruins were the Pac-12’s pre-season favorites, but have suffered some unexpected losses. Oregon lost to Texas Southern at home in late November and to Oregon State last week to open conference play. UCLA cost coach Steve Alford his job with an even non-conference schedule that included losses to Liberty and Belmont. Even so, both teams have rosters loaded with talent — the Ducks less so with star freshman Bol Bol out due to a foot injury — and should get up and down the floor quickly.

Looking ahead: Arizona and Southern California had inconsistent non-conference seasons, but they’re tied with UCLA atop the Pac-12 after winning both games the opening weekend. The Wildcats have the Bay Area trip this week, facing Stanford and California, while the Trojans face the Oregon schools.

Inside the numbers: Two of the Pac-12’s longest series wins streaks will be on the line this week. Arizona has won 17 straight against Stanford and Utah has a nine-game winning streak against Washington State. ... The opening weekend was filled with lopsided wins. The average winning margin was 12.3 points and six of the 10 games were decided by double digits. ... Wash-

COLLEGE HOOPS



UCLA Bruins
(9-6,2-0)

Oregon Ducks
(9-5,0-1)

Today, 6 p.m., at Matthew Knight Arena, Eugene

TV: ESPN

ington’s Matisse Thybulle has 246 career steals, tied with Arizona State’s Stevin Smith for fourth on the Pac-12’s all-time list.

Player to watch: Nick Rakocevic, USC. The Trojans’ junior forward averaged 25 points and nine rebounds while shooting 70 percent in wins over California and Stanford last week. Rakocevic had a career-high 27 points against the Bears on his way to being named the Pac-12 player of the week.

On the women’s side: No. 19 Arizona State has a tough second Pac-12 weekend with No. 6 Stanford visiting Tempe on Friday and No. 24 Cal on Sunday. ... Cal’s trip to Arizona will feature two of the nation’s top scorers. ... Arizona’s Aari McDonald is second nationally at 25.4 points per game and Cal’s Kristine Anigwe is ninth at 22.1. ... It’s getting to the point where it’s surprising when Oregon’s Sabrina Ionescu doesn’t get a tri-ple-double. She extended her NCAA record to 15 against Washington State last week, finishing with 17 points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists. Ionescu leads the nation with nine assists per game.

Treasure Valley Chukars soar past Timberwolves for conference wins

By BRETT KANE
East Oregonian

Treasure Valley proved too much for Blue Mountain to handle as they were handed their first conference loss, 109-83, on Wednesday.

The hosting Chukars sprinted out to an 8-2 lead early in the first half. Blue Mountain’s Adam Hardman responded with a 3-pointer to pull within 8-5 of Treasure Valley.

But the Chukars went on two runs midway through the half to keep the Timberwolves down. Treasure Valley led 59-42 at intermission.

Jeremiah Hilliard, Bryson Pierce, and Mekhi Foreman combined for an eight-point streak to reduce the deficit to 72-64 with 12 minutes left in the final half. But the Partridges poured in 11 unanswered points and held the Timberwolves scoreless for the next four minutes.

When the Timberwolves trailed 109-78 with 1:20 remaining, Foreman returned for five more

points, but it wouldn’t be enough.

Hilliard led with 21 points, and shot 4 of 4 at the line, for Blue Mountain (1-1, 3-10). Foreman followed with 15. They’ll host Wenatchee Valley on Saturday.

Women

When it came down to it, the first and third quarters cost Blue Mountain their second conference game.

Host Treasure Valley defeated the Timberwolves 71-51 in Northwest Athletic Conference play on Friday night.

Blue Mountain held an early 5-0 lead, but the Chukars hit a 19-point streak for a 23-7 advantage by the end of the first quarter.

The Timberwolves went into the locker room down 33-23, and were outscored 26-7 in the third quarter. It was a deficit that couldn’t be reconciled.

Brooke Wheeler had a team-high 18 points for Blue Mountain (0-2, 2-10). Karlie Gerlinger had 10, and Chloe Morrison nine.

Mac-Hi falls to Hood River Valley on the road

By BRETT KANE
East Oregonian

A “flat” second half cost the Pioneers a nonleague matchup at Hood River.

The Eagles turned away Mac-Hi 55-43 on Tuesday night.

The Pioneers were down just 29-25 at half-time, but the game quickly got away from them.

“We played right with ‘em in the first half,” said coach Jordan Poynor. “It was really back-and-forth. But we just didn’t play well in the second. We fouled them too much

and sent them to the line on four or five straight possessions.”

The Eagles outscored Mac-Hi 15-5 in the third quarter. The Pioneers rallied to top Hood River 13-11 in the fourth, but the Eagles still managed to hold them off.

Dareagan Stephens scored a team-high 14 points for the Pioneers. Alexis Pio and Zach Hodgen each chipped in nine.

Mac-Hi (0-1, 8-6) resume Greater Oregon League play again on Friday for a home game against La Grande.

McCollum scores 24 points, Blazers beat Bulls

By ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

PORTLAND — CJ McCollum had 24 points and the Portland Trail Blazers pulled away in the final quarter to send the Chicago Bulls to their fifth straight loss, 124-112 on Wednesday night.

Jusuf Nurkic had 18 points and eight rebounds but got into foul trouble and came up just short of his fifth straight game with 20 or more points. Portland has won three straight and five of its last six games.

Wendell Carter Jr. had 22 points to lead the Bulls in the first of a five-game road trip.

After a tight first half, the Blazers led by as many as 11 points in the third quarter but the Bulls kept the margin from getting any wider until Meyers Leonard’s dunk put Portland up 106-94 with just under eight minutes left in the game.

A pair of consecutive 3-pointers from McCollum and Seth Curry put the Blazers up 112-96 and Portland went on to lead by as many as 19 points down the remaining stretch.

Bulls coach Jim Boylen said before the game that Bobby Portis would be on a 24-minute restriction. Portis returned Sunday from a sprained right ankle that kept him out of seven straight games. He finished with 15 points in 19 minutes against the Blazers.

Portland was without Maurice Harkless, because of left knee soreness. Jake Layman started in his place. Harkless, who had surgery on the knee last March, has missed 14 games this season because of the knee.

The Blazers held a 30-29



AP Photo/Craig Mitchelldyer

Portland Trail Blazers center Jusuf Nurkic scores during the first half of the team’s NBA basketball game against the Chicago Bulls in Portland on Wednesday.

edge after a close first quarter but they began to pull away in the second, going up 41-35 after Nic Stauskas’ 3-pointer. Portland briefly extended the lead to 10 points at 54-45 but led 56-51 at halftime. CJ McCollum led the Blazers with 12 points at the break, while Zach LaVine had 12 for the Bulls.

Nurkic was called for his fourth foul with 6:30 left in the third quarter and headed for the bench. Portland

began to pull away late in the quarter, with Seth Curry’s 3-pointer putting the Blazers up 95-85.

In his seven previous games, Nurkic averaged 21.9 points and 11.9 rebounds. He had 20 points in Portland’s 111-101 victory over the Knicks on Monday.

Damian Lillard finished with 16 points and 10 assists for his fifth double-double of the season.

Chicago, which had six

Rodeo: Titles up for grabs at CRC finals

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bareback standings with \$19,729, while Austin Foss of Terrebonne is second (\$12,426) and Kevin Lusk of Ellensburg third (\$8,301).

“We’ve been going all season long, then there is a break. It gets a little lonely,” said Peebles, who will ride Classic Moon on Friday night. “You get to the finals and you get to see your buddies. I have more friends on the road than I do at home.”

Terrebonne cowboys Jordan Spears and Russell Cardoza are in a battle for the CRC all-around title. Spears leads with \$21,600.32. Less

an \$1,900 separates the two. “We are pretty close,” said Spears, who will compete in bull riding this weekend. “We are both competitors and we will be happy if either of us wins. I have won the circuit finals once before. I have a good bull (Party Boy) in the first round. I’m going to try and win the bulls, and maybe both.”

Spears was enjoying a few snowboarding runs at Mount Bachelor on Wednesday, which he says is a good workout and helps with his balance.

“I haven’t really lost a step,” Spears said of taking

a few weeks off. “There’s been a lot of little bull riding events. I just have to keep going. It can pay pretty well. You keep winning, the prizes last longer than the memories. You don’t want to go home second.”

Spears is second to Roscoe Jarboe of New Plymouth, Idaho, in the bull riding standings — trailing by just \$204.62. Both have earned more than \$25,000.

Cardoza, 32, will compete in his first rodeo since the Pendleton Round-Up.

“I had a new hip put in Nov. 6,” Cardoza said. “Since Pendleton, I was on the couch. I fractured

it and there was no way it was going to get better with what was wrong with it. I was on a horse three weeks after my surgery. I’m ready to get up there and win. I’ve been roping every day.”

Cardoza will team rope this weekend with Kolton Schmidt of Barrhead, Alberta. Cardoza, the heeler, has earned \$16,034 in the event at CRC rodeos.

“I didn’t rope with him all year,” Cardoza said. “A guy I roped with, we weren’t in the same circuit. We just ended up pairing up this weekend. I know Kolton, we’re friends. It will be good.”

SCOREBOARD

LOCAL SLATE

THURSDAY, JAN. 10

Boys Basketball

Riverside at Irrigon, 7:30 p.m.

Girls Basketball

Riverside at Irrigon, 6 p.m.

Boys Wrestling

Hermiston vs. Hanford and Kamiakin, at Hanford, 6 p.m.

FRIDAY, JAN. 11

Boys Basketball

Weston-McEwen at Pilot Rock, 6 p.m.

Enterprise at Heppner, 6 p.m.

Stanfield at Union, 6 p.m.

La Grande at Mac-Hi, 6 p.m.

Umatilla at Burns, 6:30 p.m.

Pendleton at Hood River Valley, 6:30 p.m.

Ione at Mitchell/Spray, 7:30 p.m.

Echo at South Wasco County, 7:30 p.m.

Imbler at Helix, 7:30 p.m.

Nixyaawii at Cove, 7:30 p.m.

Kennewick at Hermiston, 7:30 p.m.

Girls Basketball

Umatilla at Burns, 5 p.m.

Kennewick at Hermiston, 5:45 p.m.

Ione at Mitchell/Spray, 6 p.m.

Echo at South Wasco County, 6 p.m.

Nixyaawii at Cove, 6 p.m.

Helix at Imbler, 6 p.m.

Weston-McEwen at Pilot Rock, 7:30 p.m.

Stanfield at Union, 7:30 p.m.

Enterprise at Heppner, 7:30 p.m.

La Grande at Mac-Hi, 7:30 p.m.

Hood River Valley at Pendleton, 6:30 p.m.

Girls Wrestling

Hermiston at Othello, 5 p.m.

SATURDAY, JAN. 12

Boys Basketball

Horizon Christian at Ione, 3 p.m.

Wenatchee Valley at Blue Mountain, 4 p.m.

Union at Heppner, 4 p.m.

Grant Union at Weston-McEwen, 4 p.m.

Enterprise at Stanfield, 4 p.m.

Nixyaawii at Helix, 5:30 p.m.

Condon/Wheeler at Echo, 5:30 p.m.

Hermiston at Chiawana, 7:30 p.m.

Girls Basketball

Wenatchee Valley at Blue Mountain, 2 p.m.

Condon/Wheeler at Echo, 4 p.m.

Nixyaawii at Helix, 4 p.m.

Union at Heppner, 5:30 p.m.

Enterprise at Stanfield, 5:30 p.m.

Grant Union at Weston-McEwen, 5:30 p.m.

Boys Wrestling

Farm City Invitational (Hermiston)

Pendleton at Colton Holly Memorial Tournament, Wilsonville, 10:30 a.m.

Girls Wrestling

Hermiston at Othello, 10 a.m.

NFL

WILD-CARD PLAYOFFS

Saturday, Jan. 5

Indianapolis 21, Houston 7

Dallas 24, Seattle 22

Sunday, Jan. 6

L.A. Chargers 23, Baltimore 17

Philadelphia 16, Chicago 15

DIVISIONAL PLAYOFFS

Saturday, Jan. 12

Indianapolis at Kansas City,

1:05 a.m. (NBC)

Dallas at L.A. Rams, 5:15 p.m. (FOX)

Sunday, Jan. 13

Los Angeles Chargers at New England,

10:05 a.m. (CBS)

Philadelphia at New Orleans,

1:40 p.m. (FOX)

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic

	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	31	12	.721	—
Philadelphia	27	15	.643	3½
Boston	25	15	.625	4½
Brooklyn	21	22	.488	10
New York	10	31	.244	20

Southwest

	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	19	20	.487	—
Charlotte	19	21	.475	½
Orlando	17	24	.415	3
Washington	17	25	.405	3½
Atlanta	12	29	.293	8

Central

	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	29	11	.725	—
Indiana	27	14	.659	2½
Detroit	17	21	.447	11
Chicago	10	31	.244	19½
Cleveland	8	34	.190	22

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest

	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	23	17	.575	—
San Antonio	24	18	.571	—
New Orleans	20	22	.476	4
Memphis	19	22	.463	4½
Dallas	19	22	.463	4½

Northwest

	W	L	Pct	GB
Denver	27	12	.692	—
Oklahoma City	25	15	.625	2½
Portland	25	17	.595	3½
Utah	21	21	.500	7½
Minnesota	20	21	.488	8

Pacific

	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State	27	14	.659	—

L.A. Clippers

24	16	.600	2½
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L.A. Lakers

22	19	.537	5
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Sacramento

20	21	.488	7
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Phoenix

10	33	.233	18
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Wednesday's Games

Boston 135, Indiana 108

Washington 123, Philadelphia 106

Brooklyn 116, Atlanta 100

Memphis 96, San Antonio 86

Milwaukee 116, Houston 109

New Orleans 140, Cleveland 124

Dallas 104, Phoenix 94

Utah 106, Orlando 93

Portland 124, Chicago 112

Thursday's Games

Boston at Miami, 4 p.m.

L.A. Clippers at Denver, 6 p.m.

Oklahoma City at San Antonio, 6:30 p.m.

Detroit at Sacramento, 7 p.m.

Friday's Games

Atlanta at Philadelphia, 4 p.m.

Milwaukee at Washington, 4 p.m.

Brooklyn at Toronto, 4:30 p.m.

Indiana at New York, 4:30 p.m.

Cleveland at Houston, 5 p.m.

Dallas at Minnesota, 5 p.m.

Charlotte at Portland, 7 p.m.

L.A. Lakers at Utah, 7 p.m.

Chicago at Golden State, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday's Games

Detroit at L.A. Clippers, 12:30 p.m.

Memphis at Miami, 2 p.m.

Boston at Orlando, 4 p.m.

New Orleans at Minnesota, 5 p.m.

San Antonio at Oklahoma City, 5 p.m.

Denver at Phoenix, 6 p.m.

Charlotte at Sacramento, 7 p.m.

Chicago at Utah, 7 p.m.

NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Tampa Bay	43	33	8	2	68	180	124
Toronto	42	27	13	2	56	152	117
Boston	43	25	14	4	54	126	110
Buffalo	43	23	14	6	5		