

Huskies look to pad NCAA Tournament resume

By JOHN MARSHALL
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Washington last won the Pac-12 regular-season title seven years ago. The Huskies are hoping to avoid a repeat in history.

Not the title. What happened after.

Appearing to be in good shape for an NCAA Tournament berth after winning the Pac-12, Washington was left out of the bracket in 2012 after losing to Oregon State in its opening game of the conference tournament.

With that kind of history, the Huskies want to leave no doubt at this year's Pac-12 Tournament, which starts on Wednesday in Las Vegas.

"We're at our best when we have a little chip on our shoulder and it's going to be fun to go down there and play good basketball," Huskies coach Mike Hopkins said.

Washington all but clinched the Pac-12 regular-season title by the midpoint of the conference season. The Huskies (24-7) matched a school record



AP Photo/Ted S. Warren

Washington guard Matisse Thybulle is honored on senior night before an NCAA college basketball game against Oregon on Saturday in Seattle.

with 15 conference wins and will be the No. 1 seed in the conference tournament at T-Mobile Arena.

But Washington isn't exactly going into the tournament on a roll.

The Huskies lost to last-place California, which hadn't won a Pac-12 game prior to the Feb. 28 game, and closed out the season by scoring just 47 points in a loss to Oregon.

The Huskies can make it a whole lot easier on themselves by making a deep run in the conference tournament, starting with Thursday's game against Arizona or Southern California.

A few more things to look for when the Pac-12 Tournament starts:

ASU, too: Washington isn't the only team looking to improve its NCAA Tournament standing.



AP Photo/Ted S. Warren

Oregon State guard Stephen Thompson Jr. (1) gets a pass off next to Washington guard Matisse Thybulle (4) during the first half of an NCAA college basketball game Wednesday, March 6, 2019, in Seattle.

Arizona State appears to be in good shape with wins over Kansas and Mississippi State on its resume. The Sun Devils also have some ugly losses, including at home to Princeton and Washington State.

Arizona State solidified its NCAA Tournament case with a convincing road win over rival Arizona. The second-seeded Sun Devils could make Selection Sun-

day much easier by winning the Pac-12 Tournament or at least making a deep run.

The Sun Devils play Thursday against the winner between Stanford and UCLA.

Utes wait: Utah locked up the No. 3 seed in the Pac-12 Tournament by beating USC and UCLA during the final weekend of the regular season. The Utes have a potentially difficult opener

if No. 6 seed Oregon gets past No. 11 Washington State in its opener.

Utah coach Larry Krystkowiak is 2-14 against Oregon coach Dana Altman and the Ducks have knocked the Utes out of the Pac-12 Tournament four times. Oregon also closed the regular season with four straight wins.

Wide-open tournament: More so than in years past, the Pac-12 Tournament could be a wild ride this time around.

The conference went into the final weekend of the regular season with eight seeds and two first-round byes left to be decided.

Washington dominated the league early, but faltered late and lost to the last-place team. Oregon was the pre-season favorite, yet opened conference play 2-4. Arizona State beat Washington, lost to Washington State. Cal closed out the regular season with three straight wins after opening 0-15.

Washington is the favorite at 5-2, but 10 teams are 25-1 or less, so expect almost anything to happen.

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Washington's Thybulle named AP Pac-12 player of the year

By JOHN MARSHALL
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — The Pac-12 player of the year award often goes to the highest scorer or the best player on the best team.

Washington's Matisse Thybulle took home the honor by being a disruptive defensive force for the Pac-12 regular-season champions.

Thybulle was named Pac-12 men's basketball player of the year by The Associated Press on Tuesday after becoming the first Division I player in 20 years to have 100 steals and 70 blocked shots in a season.

Washington's Mike Hopkins was named coach of the year and Arizona State freshman Luguentz Dort newcomer of the year.

Thybulle was joined on the first team by teammate Jaylen Nowell, Oregon State's Tres Tinkle, Washington State's Robert Franks and USC's Bennie Boatwright.

Thybulle was the Huskies' fourth-leading scorer at 9.5 points per game, but dominated at the top of their disruptive zone, using his long arms to block shots and reach into passing lanes.

The 6-foot-5 senior led the nation with 3.55 steals per game and was 18th with 2.32 blocked shots per game, becoming the only Division I player to rank in the top 20 in both categories.

His 110 steals tied the Pac-12 record set by California's Jason Kidd in 1992-93 and he has started every game of his career at Washington, heading into the

THE 2019 AP ALL-PAC-12 TEAM

Name, school, position, height, weight, class and hometown (u-denotes unanimous selections):

FIRST TEAM

u-Tres Tinkle, Oregon State, F, 6-8, 225, Jr, Missoula, Mont.

u-Jaylen Nowell, Washington, G, 6-4, 200, So, Seattle

Matisse Thybulle, Washington, G, 6-5, 200, Sr, Issaquah, Wash.

Robert Franks, Washington State, F, 6-9, 225, Sr, Vancouver

Bennie Boatwright, USC, F, 6-10, 235, Sr, Mission Hills, Calif.

SECOND TEAM

Sedrick Barefield, Utah, G, 6-2, 190, Sr, Corona, Calif.

Remy Martin, Arizona State, G, 6-0, 170, So, Chatsworth, Calif.

Tyler Bey, Colorado, F, 6-7, 218, So, Las Vegas

Zylan Cheatham, Arizona State, F, 6-8, 220, Sr, Phoenix

KZ Okpala, Stanford, F, 6-9, 215, Orange County, Calif.

Pac-12 Tournament with 130 straight starts.

Washington was picked to finish third in the Pac-12 preseason poll, but quickly took command of the reg-

ular-season race by winning its first 10 conference games under Hopkins. The Huskies built a three-game lead by the season's midpoint and closed out

their first Pac-12 title since 2011-12.

Washington won 15 conference games to match a school record and Hopkins is the second coach in school history — with Tippy Dye from 1951-53 — to open his career at Washington with consecutive 20-win seasons.

Dort was a top-rated recruit from Montreal and had a stellar start to his Arizona State career, setting a school freshman record for an opener with 28 points. The 6-4 guard built like a linebacker had it a little tougher once the Pac-12 season started, but still finished as the Sun Devils' leading scorer with 16.5 points per game.

Dort also grabbed 4.5 rebounds per game and led Arizona State with 42 steals.



AP Photo/Tony Avelar, File

In this Feb. 28, 2019, file photo, Washington guard Matisse Thybulle blocks a shot during a basketball game in Berkeley, Calif.

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