

PAC-12 FOOTBALL

No. 22 Washington St again flexing offensive muscle

By NICHOLAS K. GERANIOS
Associated Press

Now that Washington State coach Mike Leach has settled on Anthony Gordon as the starting quarterback, the No. 22 Cougars are looking to answer some questions at outside receiver.

The problem is not a dearth of talent. It's too much available talent.

Senior Calvin Jackson Jr., junior Tay Martin and freshman Rodrick Fisher are battling for the two starting jobs available at the outside receiver position.

"Don't have a clear-cut plan with that," Leach said this week as the Cougars prepared for their game Saturday against Northern Colorado. "Part of it is those guys are kind of playing keep away with us just a little bit. One guy looks like he's the best player. Then the

other player beats him out. Then the other player beats him out. And so it goes."

Fisher caught a 41-yard touchdown pass from Gordon on the first drive last Saturday against New Mexico State, a game the Cougars won 58-7. "I thought he played fast," Leach said. "He doesn't waste any time playing slow."

Gordon, who beat out Gage Gubrud to make his first start for the Cougars, completed 29 of 35 passes for 420 yards and five touchdowns, tying Luke Falk for the team record for most touchdowns in a first start. He was named Pac-12 Offensive Player of the Week.

The Cougars (1-0) turn that offensive prowess this week on Northern Colorado (0-1) which gave up 382 yards in a 35-18 loss at San Jose State last week.

Bears coach Earnest



AP Photo/Young Kwak, File

Washington State quarterback Anthony Gordon (18) throws a pass during the first half of the team's NCAA college football game against New Mexico State in Pullman, Wash., on Aug. 31.

Collins Jr. felt his team could have done much more. "We could have kept running the ball because they couldn't stop it," Collins said. "It's one of those games you could have won and should have won but we can learn a lot from it."

Other things to know as Washington State prepares to host Northern Colorado of the Big Sky Conference:

WHO'S NO. 2?

While Gordon is the starting quarterback, a question has emerged about whether

Gubrud or Trey Tinsley is the backup. Both played against New Mexico State.

"It appears to me they're pretty neck and neck," Leach said. "I think they're pretty close."

Gubrud is a graduate transfer who played a lot at Eastern Washington, while Tinsley has been with the Cougars since 2016 but has gotten little playing time.

Gubrud, who threw a late touchdown pass against New Mexico State, became the first player ever to throw a touchdown pass both for and against the Cougars. He threw eight touchdown passes against the Cougars while he was with Eastern Washington.

BEARS QB

Northern Colorado quarterback Jacob Knipp has suffered season-ending injuries three times in his college career.

But the sixth-year senior is back leading the Bears. The 6-foot-4, 213-pound Knipp is considered one of the better quarterbacks in the FCS and has dreams of playing in the NFL.

He said pro scouts "just want to see me string a stretch of games together and stay healthy."

NUMBERS GAME

Washington State piled up more than 600 yards of offense against New Mexico State, the eighth time the Cougars have topped that mark under Leach. ... Washington State has shut out four opponents in the past six years, tops in the Pac-12. Stanford and Washington have two shutouts each in that time. ... Washington State is 119-21 against current members of the Big Sky Conference. This is the first time the Cougars have played Northern Colorado.

Hawaii aims for 2nd straight win over Pac-12 facing Beavers

By KALANI TAKASE
Associated Press

HONOLULU — Oregon State coach Jonathan Smith expected plenty of growth from his team coming off a 2-10 record last year and one game hasn't done anything to change those expectations.

The Beavers (0-1) will look to rebound from a season-opening 52-36 loss to Oklahoma State when they face Hawaii at Aloha Stadium on Saturday.

The Rainbow Warriors (1-0) are seeking their second win against a Pac-12 team in as many games. They survived a 45-38 shootout against Arizona two weeks ago and are coming off a bye week.

"I think there's been attention to detail, I think there's been urgency and we talked about that," Smith said of the practices since the loss to the Cowboys.

"These kids will respond, they're going to battle. One game won't define a season — we talked about that

— it's always a big deal the first game because there's so much lead-up time, there's like six or eight months leading up to this first game, so yeah, it's a big thing, but it's a long season and it won't define us," Smith said.

The Beavers defense will face another prolific offense in Hawaii.

The Rainbow Warriors prefer to air it out, as evidenced by their 436 passing yards against Arizona.

"It's a different scheme, starting really with their pace of play," Smith said. "Oklahoma State wanted to get back on the ball and snap it and go; these guys aren't trying to do that. This is an effective offense, though. Yeah, they throw it, but they run it effectively, too — I think they ran it over 20 times against Arizona — so we've got to be able to defend both."

Hawaii coach Nick Rolovich, whose team is a 6½-point favorite Saturday, said the Beavers will be a formidable opponent.

"They were in all (their)



AP Photo/Amanda Loman, File

Oregon State running back Jermar Jefferson (22) tries to avoid Oklahoma State safety Malcolm Rodriguez (20) during the second half of an NCAA college football game in Corvallis on Aug. 30. Oklahoma State won 52-36.

football games last year. They just weren't able to pull out as many wins as they wanted, but I think they're proven. I think they're on the right path and they're going to be as challenging as we could have asked for, to be honest with you, because they're extremely efficient offensively. They put you in a lot of binds, they're smart coaches, they set you up, they've got good receivers

with speed and height and with the running back committee they've got, they can use three or four guys and not miss a beat," Rolovich said.

RECRUITING MISHAP

The Beavers made news during the summer of 2018 after Rolovich tweeted out photos of recruiting material that was mailed by Ore-

gon State to the Hawaii campus and addressed to several players who were on the Rainbow Warriors roster. Oregon State self-reported the incident and received a secondary violation from the NCAA.

At his news conference Monday, Smith said the issue forced the program to audit its recruiting process but that the mishap is in the past.

"We just looked into our protocol a ton of exactly how we're getting things out and we actually implemented some things so that that thing didn't take place again, so we've got a fail-safe of about two or three checks," Smith said.

FAMILIAR FACES

Oregon State assistants Legi Suaiaunoa (defensive line) and Kefense Hynson (wide receivers) and special teams coordinator Jake Cookus each spent time on the Hawaii coaching staff before joining the Beavers. Suaiaunoa and Hynson were with the Rainbow Warriors for

two seasons (2016-17) and were part of Rolovich's inaugural staff. Cookus oversaw the special teams for Hawaii under former coach Norm Chow in 2015.

Hawaii linebackers coach Mark Banker had two stints as an Oregon State assistant, including 12 seasons as defensive coordinator from 2003-14. Oregon State transfer Isaiah Tufaga made three starts at linebacker and appeared in nine games as a freshman for the Beavers in 2018 but must sit out this season due to transfer rules.

SERIES HISTORY

Oregon State has won the last four meetings against Hawaii and leads the series 7-3. The teams last met in 2014, when the Beavers won 38-30 at Aloha Stadium to improve to 5-3 against the Rainbow Warriors in Honolulu. Hawaii's last victory in the series came on Christmas Day 1999 — a 23-17 win over Oregon State in the Oahu Bowl. Smith was the starting quarterback for the Beavers in that game.

WOMEN'S U.S. OPEN

Serena Williams faces 19-year-old Andreescu in U.S. Open final

By HOWARD FENDRICH
AP Tennis Writer

NEW YORK — Getting to Grand Slam finals has not been the hard part for Serena Williams since returning to tennis after having a baby.

It's what comes next that's been the problem.

Despite repeated injuries, despite a lack of proper preparation, Williams keeps putting herself in position to earn a 24th major championship, which would equal Margaret Court for the most in tennis history. Williams gets her latest chance at the U.S. Open on Saturday, when she will face 19-year-old Bianca Andreescu of Canada for the trophy.

This will be Williams' fourth final in the past six majors. But she is 0-3 in those others, losing against Angelique Kerber at Wimbledon in July 2018, to Naomi Osaka at Flushing Meadows in September 2018 — who could forget that one? — and to Simona Halep this July.

"There's so many different emotions in finals," Williams said after her 6-3, 6-1 semifinal victory over No. 5 Elina Svitolina. "It just brings out so many highs and lows, nerves and expectations. It's a lot."

The difference this time, according to Williams' coach, Patrick Mouratoglou, is that she should feel better about her game now. Unlike for those past three finals, she is healthy, she is in good shape, she has been able to put in the right amount of work.



AP Photo/Adam Hunger

Serena Williams, of the United States, reacts after a shot to Elina Svitolina, of Ukraine, during the semifinals of the U.S. Open tennis championships Thursday in New York.

And therefore, he explained, it'll be easier for her to deal with the emotions and pressure in this final than in those others.

"If you feel weak or not as strong as you wish you would, it's more difficult to beat the pressure. When you don't move well, you can't be as confident as you should be because if your 'A' game doesn't work, you don't have any other option. And for me, that's what happened," he said Friday. "It's a totally different situation now because now she can move. If she needs to play the rally, she can play the rally. ... So there is no panic if she misses a bit more than usual. No problem."

Mouratoglou's conclusion?

"It's difficult for us to realize because she was in three finals, so you feel she's ready. But she was in the three finals because she's the best competitor of all time," he said, "not because she was ready."

The match against Osaka quickly devolved after Williams argued with chair umpire Carlos Ramos about a warning over receiving signals from Mouratoglou. Eventually, as things escalated, Williams was docked a point for breaking her racket, then a game for calling Ramos a "liar" and a "thief."

"Obviously there's a lot of things that I've learned in the past," she said, "but I just have to go out there (and), above all, most of all, just stay relaxed."

It might help that she got a look, if a brief one, at Andreescu just last month in the final of a tuneup event in Toronto, in front of the youngster's home fans. Williams was trailing 3-1 when she retired from the match, citing back spasms. That might have helped Andreescu, too, of course.

Andreescu has been a revelation this season, going 33-4, including 7-0 against top-10 opponents, and hasn't lost a completed

match since March 1. She was sidelined by injuries for part of that time, particularly to her right shoulder.

She has a varied style, an in-your-face attitude — her coach, Sylvain Bruneau, called her a "street fighter" — and an ability to come through in the clutch, going 13-3 in three-setters this year.

Just one year ago, Andreescu was losing in qualifying in New York. Now she is the first woman since Williams' older sister, Venus, in 1997 to get all the way to the final in her U.S. Open main-draw debut.

This is only the fourth

major tournament of her career.

"I definitely was not surprised," No. 15 Belinda Bencic said after her 7-6 (3), 7-5 semifinal loss to Andreescu. "I don't think anyone should be."

What about Andreescu herself? Is she shocked by this sudden success?

Well, yes and no.

On one hand, this is all a bit dizzying for someone never before even past the second round at a Slam, which is why she kept asking, "Is this real life?" after her quarterfinal win. On the other, she says she's been visualizing this since she

was 16 and wrote herself a fake check with what a U.S. Open champion earns — and has updated the figure as the real top prize has climbed to \$3.85 million (about \$5 million in today's Canadian dollars).

That the final comes against Williams makes it all the more special.

"I remember always telling my team I would have always wanted to play her right before she retires," said Andreescu, who was born the year after Williams won her first Grand Slam title at Flushing Meadows at age 17. "I'm really looking forward to it."

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