

Pac-10 proves its power in Week One

BY ALEX MACK
For SN Today

It was fun to be in a big nonconference game to start the season, and also to watch how the rest of the Pac-10 played in non-conference games. We won our game against Michigan State from the Big Ten, UCLA beat Tennessee from the SEC, and USC beat Virginia from the ACC, which shows how strong the Pac-10 is. We root for every Pac-10 team to win all of their non-league games.

It was good for us to get a win, but last season we were unbeaten out of conference, and then in Pac-10 play we lost six games. Were we a bad team? Or was the Pac-10 just really good? I think it was a combination of both.

Winning is great, but we still have to get better. We played all right against Michigan State, but everyone on this team has some room for improvement. We can't have interceptions. We had a roughing-the-kicker penalty that ended up in a Michigan State touchdown. We had some dropped balls. There were also some interceptions we could have gotten.

On the offensive line, we did a good job of staying on blocks, but we need to improve our consistency, to make sure we're focused and getting our calls right on every play. I



MARCO JOSE SANCHEZ / AP

Cal FB Will Ta'ufu'ou (23) celebrates with D.J. Campbell during the Bears' 38-31 win over Michigan State.

About the author



Alex Mack
California C
Mack was part of an offensive line that helped pave the way for 203 yards rushing against Michigan State on Saturday. Spartans coach Mark Dantonio said afterward, "We faced a very good offensive line—one of the better ones that we've seen, certainly since I've been here."

think as the season goes on, our conditioning will improve and help in that regard.

We just have to work at getting better. Nonconference is tough, but the conference season is even harder. If we lose a nonconference game, we can still go to the Rose Bowl and be Pac-10 champions. But every game in the Pac-10 is important. With every conference game, starting this weekend against Washington State, we're playing for the Rose Bowl.

We know Washington State has a very

experienced defense, and it's going to be a challenge. This is also our first road game of the season—there's good and there's bad with that. A road game keeps everyone focused. Everyone treats it like a business trip.

But on the other hand, you're playing in an unfriendly stadium. It's going to be loud, so communication definitely becomes more difficult. We'll work on that this week in practice, and we'll be ready to play.

—As told to Benson Taylor

First-week bye means channel surfing

BY CURTIS PAINTER
For SN Today

We had a bye last week when everyone else was opening the season. That's tough, but it was kind of good at the same time. It's tough to see everyone starting when you've gone through camp and then you have a whole week to wait after that. But you get to see a few more games that you don't normally see.

It was good to go home after practice Saturday, relax and enjoy the games. With the Big Ten Network, I was able to see quite a few of them. I was flipping back and forth the whole time.

I watched most of the Missouri-Illinois game.

Chase Daniel looked good. Missouri has a tough offense to stop with so many weapons. The way they spread it out, someone is always open and they've got a lot of playmakers.

Even though they lost, Illinois looked good too.

Getting to meet some of the guys I met this summer, and now watching them play was pretty fun. You know them, you've developed a friendship with them, and there's not necessarily a hatred for another team. That's one of the coolest things.

Missouri's Chase Daniel, I've become friends with him, and Matt Stafford at Georgia. Brian Hoyer at Michigan State, he and I text back and forth a lot, so it's always fun to hear how they're all doing and vice versa. That makes the game that much more exciting.



BOB ROBERTSON / AP

Curtis Painter and Purdue were off Saturday, so he watched his pal, Missouri QB Chase Daniel, above.

The one thing people don't realize is a lot of players know guys from other teams from high school, whether it's a guy that played with or against you in high school, so there are a lot of times people know other people out on the field. Before I got here, I wasn't aware of all the friendships with other teams.

—As told to Derek Samson



About the author

Curtis Painter Purdue QB
Painter is second in school history in career completion percentage (.599), fourth in completions (760), fourth in passing yards (8,763), fourth in touchdowns (54) and fourth in total offense (9,101).