

Pratt enjoying time at Stanford

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When three-sport athlete Jordan Pratt graduated from Central High School in 2003, the Stanford University football team was in the midst of a 10-23 run under coach Buddy Teevens.

A lot has changed since then. Pratt, who signed a baseball contract with the Los Angeles Dodgers and spent eight years pitching in the minor leagues, is now a 26-year-old walk-on wide receiver for the undefeated No. 3 Cardinal.

Pratt and his much-younger Stanford teammates host No. 6 Oregon at 5 p.m. Saturday at Stanford Stadium in a game that will decide the Pac-12 North title and determine the host team for the first Pac-12 Conference championship game.

"It's a big game," said Pratt, who has yet to participate in a game. "We're preparing for it because it's the game coming up. It's this week. We need to do what we do and play Stanford football.

"But it's an exciting week, too. We're looking forward to it."

Pratt spends much of his time in practice on the scout team, running the plays of the opponent against the Cardinal defense. He joked that sometimes it seems as though he knows other teams' plays better than Stanford's.

Pratt, the lone Oregonian on the Stanford roster, also has an opportunity to work with Cardinal all-American quarterback Andrew Luck.

"It's pretty special," Pratt said. "The two words that come to mind about Luck are 'as advertised.' All of the good things that you hear about him are true. Great person. Great teammate.

"It's cool to work with him and all of the other players as well."

Pratt, who took online courses during his baseball days, said it was a bit of an adjustment returning to school full time.

"Overall, it's a lot different," he said. "I'm spending so much time in the classroom. Plus practice and film study. You just have to take whatever comes your way and stay in the moment."

Stanford has stayed in the moment pretty well in recent days. The Cardinal have not lost since the Ducks beat them 52-31 on Oct. 2, 2010 at Autzen Stadium.

They finished 12-1 last season after beating Virginia Tech 40-12 in the Orange Bowl and are 9-0 this season.

What is the key?

"Do the little things right," Pratt said. "Pay attention to detail. We're going to focus on what we are doing each and every week. If we do this and execute we like our chances against everybody we face."

Accomplishing all of that is a bigger challenge for Pratt than baseball was.

"There is so much mental preparation," he said of the difference between the two sports. "We analyze everything to death. Pitching always was a mental battle, but there is so much more that goes into football."

Pratt also has had to cope with being not only the oldest freshman on the team but the oldest player period.

"There are a couple of five- to six-year guys who have had injuries, but most of them are more traditional college students," Pratt said. "The guys give me a bit of a bad time. Even the young guys are giving me grief. I don't mind it. I enjoy it. We're all working toward the same goal."

Pratt also has found a model for coping with the "Why do you do it?" question in teammate Tyler Gaffney, a junior running back who also plays on the Stanford baseball team. Gaffney and Pratt have talked about the difficulties of playing two sports at a school such as Stanford.

"We're going to play until we can't play anymore," Pratt said. "That's why I'm here. We want to keep playing until they take the ball away."