

Mystery of the Cougars

Weekend game against OSU may give everyone a better idea of WSU's ability this season.

The WSU football team hasn't forgotten last season's 38-19 drubbing it took from the Oregon State Beavers.

Head coach Bill Doba still remembers the disappointment he showed the media after the game.



Marcus Potts
Commentary

"I kind of over-reacted, a little bit, but that was my first time as a head coach that we were just completely out of the ball game," Doba said of his post-game reaction. "We were competitive or close in all the others. We got embarrassed down there, they embarrassed us."

At the time, the Cougars had just lost starting quarterback Josh Swogger, but were 3-3 and the season could have gone anywhere.

This year, some things are the same, but a lot has changed.

Quarterback Alex Brink will again lead the team to Corvallis, Ore., but this year it will be his ninth start instead of his first.

Last year Jason Hill was lighting things up, having scored nine receiving touchdowns before the OSU game. Hill is at it again this year, having scored six touchdowns in three games, but unlike last year, the Cougars are also running the ball consistently.

During the first six games of 2004, the Cougars had three good rushing games and three horrible ones. Against New Mexico, Colorado and Arizona, WSU running backs combined to average 24.6 yards on the ground.

In games against Idaho, Oregon and Stanford, the backs combined to average 203 yards per game. So far this season, the ground game is far more reliable, averaging 219 yards per game, third best in the Pac-10.

And here's the important similarity: While the pre-Beaver game records are vastly different, the boom-or-bust potential is pretty close to the same, if for different reasons.

Like last season, the quality of WSU's team is unknown. A year ago, mostly because of a 3-3 start and the loss of a starting quarterback, few knew what WSU could do.

One would think a 3-0 start this year would carry more promise, but considering the competition thus far, this season is just as up in the air as last sea-

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CHRISTOPHER ONSTOTT/DAILY EVERGREEN

Sophomore Allison Scurich, who plays defense for the WSU soccer team, was honored for her defensive skills Sept. 18 at the Oregon State Invitational. But Scurich hopes to transition to the world of baseball in the future.

California dreamin'

Soccer player talks about her love for SoCal, the Giants and hatred of the word 'pop.'

Tamara Vallejos
Contributing writer

The sand, the surf, the soap-opera themes. It seems since the debut of shows like "The O.C." and "Laguna Beach," Orange County has become practically every young woman's dream spot.

For sophomore soccer player Allison Scurich, shows like "The O.C." hit a bit closer to home. Literally.

The 5-foot-10 WSU defender hails from Laguna Niguel, a city within the now-famed Orange County

In her senior year at Aliso Niguel High School, Scurich was named Orange County Register Athlete of the Week and All-Orange County first team honoree, as well as earning the title of Aliso Niguel Athlete of the Year. An all-around athlete, she was named league and team MVP for both basketball and soccer.

Almost 1,500 miles away from home, Scurich is used to the beaches and sights depicted

on the popular television shows, and enjoys the reminders.

"I got kind of suckered in and addicted. It's kind of fun seeing all the sights and it kind of brings me back to home," Scurich said. "Laguna Beach is five minutes from my house, and I hang out there all summer."

Constantly asked by people unfamiliar with the area what it's like to live in Orange County, Scurich is amused by the impact of "The O.C." on her beloved home.

"It was never 'the O.C.," she said. "People don't really call it the O.C. in Orange County. Everything has changed now because it's become more popular."

And don't even get her started on the differences between calling a carbonated beverage "soda" or "pop."

"Pop? We don't say that kind of stuff. I can't handle 'pop,' actually. Ridiculous," she said. "[It's] soda."

By the time she entered high school Scurich knew she wanted to play college soccer. Determined to go to a Pac-10 school, she was excited when she was recruited by schools such as University of Arizona,

"No one can believe I'm a Giants fan from Southern Cal."

Allison Scurich
WSU soccer, sophomore defender

Oregon State and WSU.

The friendly, small-town atmosphere of Pullman helped her make a final decision.

"I love Southern California, and I'll probably end up back down that way after here, but I mean, I think this is a good experience being in a different place in a completely different environment and stuff that I think a lot of people from Southern California don't get to experience," she said.

Although she may appear to be a typical Southern California girl, one of the most important aspects of Scurich's life sets her apart from the residents of her half of the Golden State.

"Well, my dad grew up in northern California up in the Bay Area, and he's a big baseball fan, so I kind of just live and die by the Giants."

It takes hardly any time at all to realize the San Francisco

Giants are the love of Scurich's life. An unabashed sports fanatic majoring in sport management, the Barry Bonds-obsessed Scurich hopes to pursue a career in Major League Baseball, preferably working in a behind-the-scenes capacity with Giants.

"No one can believe I'm a Giants fan from Southern Cal," she said.

Naturally, a girl who shows such extreme enthusiasm for her own teams highly respects the same showing of spirit in others, which is why she notes the Sept. 2 come-from-behind win in overtime at Tennessee, one of her favorite games ever played.

"Think about Washington State and how much school spirit we have. It was like times a thousand [at Tennessee]," Scurich said. "Orange everywhere, and flags everywhere, and volunteer everything. I was pretty blown away by how much school spirit they had."

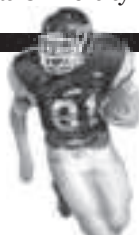
With such a passion for school spirit and sports, there's little doubt Scurich is a vital piece to WSU women's soccer, and will continue to make an impact in the sports world for some time to come.

Football + Soccer =

Rugby. Next week take a look at WSU's club rugby team, which just beat No. 2 Utah.

Back on the Palouse

Pullman High School football team plays neighboring Moscow. Look for an article next week.



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Find out when the new WSU golf course should start and where funds come from.

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