

2003-04 College Basketball Preview ~ Men



Gonzaga Bulldogs



WE HAVE A LOT OF
GOOD PLAYERS AT EVERY
POSITION.

Last year: 24-9 overall
12-2 West Coast Conference

2003-04 schedule

| Date | Opponent, Site | Time |
|----------|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Nov. 14 | vs. Saint Joseph's at New York | 6 p.m. |
| Nov. 21 | IDAHO | 7 p.m. |
| Nov. 24 | DENVER | 7 p.m. |
| Nov. 29 | GEORGIA (Spokane Arena) | 1 p.m. |
| Dec. 3 | at Washington | 7:30 p.m. |
| Dec. 6-7 | BB&T Tournament, Washington, D.C. | |
| Dec. 13 | vs. Missouri (Key Arena) | 11 a.m. |
| Dec. 20 | vs. Stanford at Oakland, Calif. | 6 p.m. |
| Dec. 28 | WASHINGTON STATE | 7 p.m. |
| Dec. 31 | E. WASHINGTON (Spokane Arena) | 5 p.m. |
| Jan. 4 | MONTANA | 5 p.m. |
| Jan. 8 | #-at Pepperdine | 7 p.m. |
| Jan. 10 | #-at Loyola Marymount | 7 p.m. |
| Jan. 15 | #-SAN FRANCISCO | 7 p.m. |
| Jan. 17 | #-SAINT MARY'S | 8 p.m. |
| Jan. 23 | #-at Portland | 7:30 p.m. |
| Jan. 29 | #-at San Diego | 7 p.m. |
| Jan. 31 | #-at Santa Clara | 7:30 p.m. |
| Feb. 5 | #-PEPPERDINE | 8 p.m. |
| Feb. 7 | #-LOYOLA MARYMOUNT | 5 p.m. |
| Feb. 12 | #-at San Francisco | 8 p.m. |
| Feb. 14 | #-at Saint Mary's | 7 p.m. |
| Feb. 18 | #-PORTLAND | 7:30 p.m. |
| Feb. 21 | at Tulsa | TBA |
| Feb. 26 | #-SAN DIEGO | 8 p.m. |
| Feb. 28 | #-SANTA CLARA | 1 p.m. |
| Mar. 5-8 | WCC Tournament, Santa Clara, Calif. | |

#-West Coast Conference game.

Bulldogs roster

| No. | Name | Pos | Ht. | Wt. | Yr. |
|---------------------------------|------------------|-----|------|-----|-----|
| 1 | Ronny Turiaf | F | 6-10 | 243 | Jr |
| Hometown: Le Robert, Martinique | | | | | |
| 3 | Adam Morrison | F | 6-8 | 205 | Fr |
| Hometown: Spokane | | | | | |
| 4 | Tony Skinner | G | 6-5 | 198 | Sr |
| Hometown: Albuquerque, N.M. | | | | | |
| 5 | Derek Raivio | G | 6-1 | 155 | Fr |
| Hometown: Vancouver, Wash. | | | | | |
| 10 | Blake Stepp | G | 6-4 | 192 | Sr |
| Hometown: Eugene, Ore. | | | | | |
| 14 | Brian Michaelson | G | 6-3 | 203 | Jr |
| Hometown: Portland | | | | | |
| 15 | Colin Floyd | G | 6-2 | 187 | So |
| Hometown: Harrington, Wash. | | | | | |
| 20 | Kyle Bankhead | G/F | 6-0 | 193 | Sr |
| Hometown: Walla Walla | | | | | |
| 22 | Erroll Knight | G | 6-7 | 205 | So |
| Hometown: Seattle | | | | | |
| 32 | Sean Mallon | F | 6-9 | 208 | Fr |
| Hometown: Spokane | | | | | |
| 33 | Cory Violette | C/F | 6-8 | 255 | Sr |
| Hometown: Boise | | | | | |
| 34 | Richard Fox | C | 6-11 | 275 | Sr |
| Hometown: Denver | | | | | |

Head coach: Mark Few. Assistant coaches: Bill Grier, Leon Rice, Tommy Lloyd.

2002-03 WCC standings

| | Conf. | Overall |
|------------------|-------|---------|
| Gonzaga | 12-2 | 24-9 |
| San Diego | 10-4 | 18-12 |
| San Francisco | 9-5 | 15-14 |
| Pepperdine | 7-7 | 15-13 |
| Saint Mary's | 6-8 | 15-15 |
| Santa Clara | 4-10 | 13-15 |
| Portland | 4-10 | 11-17 |
| Loyola Marymount | 4-10 | 11-20 |

Predicted order of finish

1. Gonzaga Bulldogs
2. Pepperdine Waves
3. San Francisco Dons
4. Saint Mary's Gaels
5. Santa Clara Broncos
6. San Diego Toreros
7. Portland Pilots
8. Loyola Marymount Lions

All-WCC

Preseason team
G — Blake Stepp, Gonzaga
G — Alex Acker, Pepperdine
C — Cory Violette, Gonzaga
F — Daniel Kickert, Saint Mary's

F — Ronny Turiaf, Gonzaga



Brian Plonka/The Spokesman-Review

Tony Skinner, left, Cory Violette and Blake Stepp return with high expectations for this season.



DIFFERENCE MAKER

Erroll Knight

■ Knight, a 6-foot-6 guard who redshirted last season after transferring from the University of Washington, brings a new level of quickness and athleticism to the Bulldogs. As a freshman at UW, he played in 29 games — 19 as a starter — and averaged 7.1 points while shooting 42.9 percent (30-70) from 3-point range. Former Husky coach Bob Bender called him "as good an athlete as has ever worn a Washington uniform." Zags coach Mark Few has warned fans about expecting too much too soon from Knight. But he is quick to admit that his explosiveness and ability to defend on the perimeter will make him an integral part of this year's team.

Zags face new tests

Coach Few will have to balance spoils of success

By Steve Bergum / Staff writer

As Gonzaga coach Mark Few looks around The Kennel during practice each afternoon, he can't help but feel a sense of pride, along with a certain amount of apprehension.

His pride stems from knowing that he and his assistant coaches have assembled — on paper, at least — the most talented group of players to ever wear the Bulldogs uniform.

So does his apprehension.

Because for the first time since taking over the program four years ago, Few must deal with the potential problem of trying to find enough minutes and enough touches of the basketball to keep 10 considerably talented young men happy.

"You can't look out there and not see that there's a ton of ability," he said recently, nodding toward the floor, where the Bulldogs — ranked No. 10 in the Associated Press' preseason Top 25 poll — were practicing. "Now the challenge for us is to have that same type of chemistry we've always had, because there are going to be a lot of minutes that are going to have to be shared.

"We have a lot of good players at every position who are going to be battling for playing time."

It's simply a way of life these days at GU, where Few has welcomed back eight letterwinners — including four starters — from a team that finished 24-9 last season after losing 96-95 to top-seeded Arizona in the second round of the NCAA West Regional in Albuquerque, N.M.

The Zags' roster, which includes returning West Coast Conference player of the year Blake Stepp and fellow first-team all-WCC selections Cory Violette and Ronny Turiaf, goes 10 deep before any kind of a talent dropoff becomes noticeable.

The Bulldogs five seniors — Stepp, Violette, Tony Skinner, Richard Fox and Kyle Bankhead — have experienced unprecedented success since joining the GU program, as evidenced by the Bulldogs' brassy 105-29 record over the past four seasons.

Last year's team won its third consecutive regular-season WCC title and advanced to the NCAA Tournament for the fifth year in a row, earning an at-large berth after losing to host San Diego in the finals of the WCC tournament.

The top six scorers, who accounted for more than 88 percent of the Bulldogs' points, are back. And they are joined by four newcomers, including three freshmen, who are expected to play key roles and carve deeply into the available supply of minutes.

"We've definitely got a lot of weapons," said Stepp, who led the WCC in scoring (18.0 ppg) and assists (6.0 apg) as a junior. "Everybody can come off the bench and do

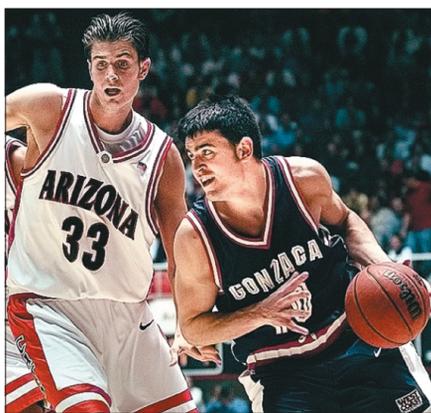
something, and everybody can do different stuff, too.

"We don't have a lot of the same kind of guys."

Such versatility gives Few a seemingly endless number of combinations to work with. He can go big, with a front line of Fox, Turiaf and Violette. Or he can go small with a three-guard offense built around Stepp, Skinner and newcomer Erroll Knight, an immensely athletic sophomore wing who redshirted last season after transferring from the University of Washington.

And all combinations can be tweaked by inserting Bankhead, a former walk-on and 3-point specialist who started 14 games as a junior last season, and any of the three freshmen, Sean Mallon, Adam Morrison and Derek Raivio.

"On paper, we're definitely as talented as any of the teams that we've had here," said Fox, a 6-foot-11, 275-pounder who averaged 6.6 points and 5.0 rebounds last season after transferring from Colorado the year before. "They've had some great teams here, so to say we're better than them right now would be a premature statement.



Brian Plonka/The Spokesman-Review

Blake Stepp, right, led the WCC in assists last season.

"But I think we have a chance of being one the best-ranked Gonzaga teams ever come (NCAA) tournament time."

Violette and Turiaf combined to average 27 points and 14.2 rebounds last winter, while Skinner averaged 9.2 points and developed into one of the team's top perimeter threats just a year after transferring from Northeastern (Colo.) Junior College.

Knight, who started 19 games as a freshman at UW two years ago, is the most highly touted of the newcomers and gives the Bulldogs a much-needed defensive stopper on the wing.

But Few has warned GU fans against harboring unrealistic expectations about the 6-6 Knight.

"Everybody needs to back off a little and let Erroll play," he said. "Erroll is a tremendous athlete who is still learning the game. He can run the floor and get to the basket better than anyone we've had in awhile, and he has a bright future.

"But I think it's way too early — and crazy — for people to expect him to come in and take over a game."

Mallon, a redshirt freshman, can bang inside and shoot the 3, as well. Morrison is just as versatile with, perhaps, a slightly better touch from the perimeter, while Raivio is quick, flashy and already penciled in as the Bulldogs point guard of the future.

Early season injuries have slowed the Bulldogs' progress. Turiaf practiced only once in the preseason because of a stress fracture in his lower leg, and Knight, Skinner, Fox and Stepp all missed valuable practice time because of various injuries.

AT A GLANCE

West Coast Conference

Gonzaga Bulldogs

Coach: Mark Few, 105-29, 5th season; same overall.
Players to watch: Blake Stepp, sr., g; Cory Violette, sr., c; Ronny Turiaf, jr., f; Erroll Knight, so., g; Richard Fox, sr., c; Tony Skinner, sr., g.

Outlook: The Bulldogs return three first-team all-league players, including Stepp, the 2002-03 WCC player of year. He and Violette are Wooden Award candidates, and Turiaf is as athletic as any front-liner the Zags have had. Mix in one of the best crop of newcomers in the school's history, including Knight, a University of Washington transfer, and freshmen Sean Mallon, Adam Morrison and Derek Raivio, and you have a GU team that is big, deep, talented and everybody's pick to win their fourth-consecutive regular-season conference title and, quite possibly, make another deep run in the NCAA Tournament.

Pepperdine Waves

Coach: Paul Westphal, 37-22, third season; 121-49 overall, 6th season.

Players to watch: Alex Acker, so., g; Terrance Johnson, jr., g; Robert Turner, jr., f; Glen McGowan, sr., f.

Outlook: The Waves were washed out by season-ending injuries to two starters and their sixth man last season, but still managed to win 15 games and finish fourth in the WCC. One of those starters was McGowan, a 6-8, 240-pound beast, who has been declared healthy and ready to bang away in the paint again this year. Johnson, who averaged 15 points per game last year, was a first-team all-league pick last season, and Acker was named the WCC's freshman of the year. If Westphal can keep everyone happy and healthy, Pepp should remain among the WCC's elite and maybe even challenge Gonzaga for the regular-season title.

San Francisco Dons

Coach: Philip Mathews, 122-109, 9th season; same overall.

Players to watch: John Cox, sr., f; James Bayless, sr., f; Jovan Harris, sr., g; Alvin Broussard, sr., f.

Outlook: Once again, Mathews heads into the season with a boatload of experience and talent. Replacing three-time All-WCC pick Darrell Tucker will be a major chore. But the return of four starters, including Cox, a first-team all-WCC performer who averaged 15.3 points last winter, should make it less painful. Harris is one of the best streak shooters in the league and can carry a team when he gets it going. In addition, junior point guard Jason Gaines returns after finishing second in the WCC in assists with an average of 5.14 per game.

Saint Mary's Gaels

Coach: Randy Bennett, 24-25, 3rd season; same overall.

Players to watch: Daniel Kickert, so., f; Chase Poole, Sr., f; Tyler Herr, sr., g/f.

Outlook: Look for the Gaels to continue their remarkable climb under Bennett, despite the losses of all-conference point guard Samuel Saint-Jean and WCC defender of the year, Anthony Woodards. If Bennett can groom someone to take over at the point, the Gaels could be salty. There are plenty of inside scoring options, starting with Kickert, a 6-10, 250-pound Aussie, who averaged 12.7 points as a rookie. There are some questions on the perimeter, but the return of junior Paul Marigney, who missed last season after undergoing reconstructive knee surgery, should provide some answers.

Santa Clara Broncos

Coach: Dick Davey, 186-32, 12th season; same overall.

Players to watch: Kyle Bailey, jr., g; Jim Howell, sr., f; Jordan Legge, jr., f; Brandon Rohe, 6-4, so., g; Ethan Rohde, jr., g.

Outlook: Davey, the dean of WCC coaches, watched his once-proud program slip dramatically last season when the Broncos went a dismal 4-10 in conference play and finished in a three-way tie for last. Injuries were a key factor, and the return of Bailey, a 2001-02 all-WCC point guard, from a leg injury that forced him to shut down after only six games last season, will make a huge difference. In addition, Rohe, who made 50 3-pointers to break Steve Nash's freshman school record last season, has proven he can light it up from the perimeter. And the 6-8 Howell, who Davey calls the "heart and soul of this team," is a proven leader who averaged 9.0 points and a team-high 6.2 rebounds as a junior.

San Diego Toreros

Coach: Brad Holland, 144-111, 10th season; 167-142 overall, 12th season.

Players to watch: Nick Lewis, so., f; Cory Belzer, jr., f; Brice Voungang, jr., f.

Outlook: The Toreros lost four starters off last year's team, which knocked off Gonzaga in the finals of the WCC Tournament and made the school's first NCAA appearance since 1987. The biggest hole to fill is at center, where Oklahoma State transfer Jason Keep, a 6-10, 280-pounder, averaged 18.0 points and a WCC-best 9.0 rebounds last winter. Lewis is 6-10, but not the banger that Keep was. The addition of Voungang, a 6-8, 250-pound transfer from Northeastern Oklahoma, adds some muscle on the low blocks. But this doesn't appear to be one of Holland's better teams. Still, the former UCLA standout has built a well-deserved reputation for getting the most out of his players.

Portland Pilots

Coach: Michael Holton, 17-41, 3rd season; same overall.

Players to watch: Adam Quick, sr., g; Casey Frandsen, sr., g; Dustin Geddis, sr., f; Eugene Jeter III, so., g.

Outlook: The Pilots continue to make strides under Holton. And with Quick, a three-year starter, returning at the point, there is reason to believe they will be improved over last year. Frandsen, who averaged 19.2 points as a sophomore, had an off-year as a junior and needs to regain his scoring touch if Portland hopes to challenge for a first-division finish. But even if he does, there will still be a lack of muscle and production inside — unless Andreas Gahlman, a 6-8, 250-pounder in his second season since transferring from CS Fullerton, shows vast improvement.

Loyola Marymount Lions

Coach: Steve Aggers, 29-59, 5th season; 343-329 overall, 25th season.

Players to watch: Charles Brown, jr., g; Sherman Gay, sr., f; Keith Kincade, sr.; Brandon Worthy, so., g.

Outlook: The Lions were crippled by the off-season defections of forward Andy Osborn, who transferred, and guard Kent Dennis, who quit the team to focus on academics. That set Aggers' massive rebuilding project back considerably and leaves the Lions short on experience. Worthy had a sensational freshman year, averaging 11 points a game, and Brown can also shoot it from the perimeter. But the lack of inside muscle will most likely prevent LMU from pulling itself out of the WCC basement.