
Decent odds for winning the Washington & UCLA game

Posted by MajorCougar - 2008/04/24 10:45

First off, I know that teams are different from year to year. I actually use this argument against pre-season polls. Second, I know that there are many other factors involved in wins & losses: coaching, preparation, attitude, execution (i.e. how well you run your offensive/defensive plays vs turnovers and penalties), and some luck.

With that in mind, I ran the season ending numbers for Pass Efficiency Differential (PED) Differential (based on last years research - credit for this formula needs to go to IndyCoug on Cougarboard.com). Basically, it takes the difference between your offensive and defensive passing efficiency and your opponents. The range of that differential is then compared to historical wins/losses since 2000. This calculation is quite interesting in predicting an expected winner.

If my calculations are correct, then here is the breakdown:

1) @ Washington: I feel we have a good chance of winning this game. With the numbers from last year, (for on the road column), the differential was 59.7. That meant that the better team in this category (BYU, in this instance) won 74% of the time. Yes, this will be a tough AWAY game for us; I know. However, their offense wasn't that great, and their defense was horrible: nearly the bottom of the nation in Pass Efficiency on defense.

I know that Locker SHOULD be better with a year's experience under his belt, and that the defense will get some new recruits. I also know that we are replacing the entire starting secondary and other key players on defense.

Keep in mind, as well, that our offense SHOULD be even better than last year, and the defense still has some great playmakers.

2) UCLA: While UCLA had a significantly better Defensive pass efficiency than Washington (actually, UCLA's was pretty close to ours), they lose some critical players on defense. (at least 2 will most like be drafted). The winning percentage with their numbers compared to ours for a home game is about 78%.

With all this in mind, I feel pretty good about our non-conference schedule. I see the potential of going 4-0 out of conference, as long as we EXECUTE (see my definition above: i.e. few penalties and less than 2 TOs). I feel we have a great chance of also ending our non-conference road losing streak to BCS teams that Mormonrasta keeps reminding us of.

As an interesting note, the team that had the SMALLEST differential with us was Utah. (The next smallest margin was TCU). This explains a lot as to why this game was so close, aside from the fact that it is a rivalry game.

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Re:Decent odds for winning the Washington & UCLA game

Posted by CougarBandit - 2008/04/24 12:21

For me, how well UW plays on offense depends on their O-line, and I don't think their line will be up to it at the beginning of the season.

All things being equal, UCLA's passing game should be better this year vs BYU with a healthy Patrick Cowan likely starting and a simplified Norm Chow offense in place. All things being equal, their pass defense shouldn't be as good with several key starters gone and with BYU offensive adjustments already in place.

Contributing factors may be 1) DeWayne Walker vs BYU, part III. Talk about familiarity! Not only has Walker studied BYU's offense, but by now he likely knows the BYU's player tendencies in detail. He probably won't even need to watch game film except to pick out tips from the NIU and UW games on how BYU's offense may adjust in 2008. He can likely craft a defensive gameplan to maximize his players potential vs BYU in his sleep. VS.2) As you said, Major, BYU's offense will be improved. Not only with higher execution but with better plays and gameplanning to beat UCLA.

So, UCLA's offense may be better at skill positions (+ QB, +RB (from the LV bowl), - receivers) but worse at O-line (3 new starters, I think. They'll also be playing their second game with a new offense. A chance to be better, but odds are less than 50-50.

UCLA's defense will still have excellent preparation but less talent and experience (IMO). An overall minus, compared to last year.

BYU will have the same offense with better game-planning for UCLA and more experience. A plus over last year.

BYU's defense loses quite a few players from last year but overall seems more athletic. Most of the new starters have significant playing experience. Overall, even, compared to last year.

To me, it looks like a grind-it-out game with UCLA's offense unable to match BYU's. BYU scores in the 20's and UCLA in the low teens.

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Re:Decent odds for winning the Washington & UCLA game

Posted by j2b03 - 2008/04/24 12:33

Wow, great stuff guys. I am impressed.

I hear some people saying that UW will be tough but that we should beat them as they have been a "bottom dweller" team in the Pac10 the last few years...umm so was AZ and we know how that game played out at their house. I know Bronco will have the team up for this game despite UW's past record. I think I am more nervous about UCLA than UW though. However, it seems like the positive and negatives of both games cancel each team out as far as which one I am more nervous about.

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Re:Decent odds for winning the Washington & UCLA game

Posted by gordito - 2008/04/24 12:41

I'm much more worried about UW than UCLA. The Bruin's offense is a mess, if we limit turnovers we will be able to score on their defense. UW I don't know much about however. I do know that we suck on the road against decent teams.

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Re:Decent odds for winning the Washington & UCLA game

Posted by redneckjedi - 2008/04/24 13:08

The thing that scares me about UW is Locker's running ability. Anytime we play a team with a mobile quarterback, I have visions of Ratliff rushing for a billion yards against us in 2005. However, if his passing is still weak, we can probably game plan for that and make him beat us through the air. I'm not too worried about our ability to score on them - or anybody in the country, for that matter.

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Re:Decent odds for winning the Washington & UCLA game

Posted by Conosticator - 2008/04/24 16:58

When looking at UW's record last year we need to also consider that they played a very tough schedule.

One other factor we have going for us in this matchup is that our game against UW is sandwiched between their season opener at Oregon (who in their right mind schedules a major conference rivalry game to start the season?), and their OOC game Oklahoma.

They will likely perceive us as the "easiest" of the three. Man are they in for a surprise... :cheer:

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Re:Decent odds for winning the Washington & UCLA game

Posted by MLOdaws - 2008/04/24 17:14

Opening at Oregon you can thank Director Douchehelmet for that (Turner). He thought opening at Oregon was worth a 2nd bye week.

Thank god we get Bye week at home, it would really suck to play them on the road!

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Re:Decent odds for winning the Washington & UCLA game

Posted by rackem - 2008/04/24 17:56

redneckjedi wrote:

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I think you nailed it. Jake Locker will be one of the mobilist QB's we'll see all year. I like his arm too. He is able to throw on the run under pressure, he's got skills and college time under his belt. I think looking past these guys would be a major mistake. Washington is no push over IMHO.

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Re:Decent odds for winning the Washington & UCLA game

Posted by CougarBandit - 2008/04/24 18:20

I checked on my belief about Washington's offensive line and my initial impression that they lost a lot from their line is wrong. At this point, however, with the loss of their starting center, they are still a question mark.

Pre-spring they were considered the most experienced and solid group on the team. Last year they improved in run-blocking and sacks allowed over a horrible 2006 and nearly all their starters return this year, with one held out due to injury during the Spring. That's their good news. The bad news is, their center was/is the leader of the unit and his backup is a sophomore.

They did block for a 1,000 yard rusher last year and their QB says that they were improved during the spring relative to last year, or is that because their defense is worse this spring? :unsure: Also, did their sacks allowed stat go down because the o-line improved or because Locker scrambles and runs the ball more/better compared to their former QBs? Whatever the case may be, their line is big and possibly not horrible, but may be a little uncertain without their unit-leading center. I suspect that their offense will be somewhat improved.

Their defense however will still be their achilles heal. They seem to be banking on the idea that their defense will improve because they are replacing most of the starters from a bad defense last year with new inexperienced players. I don't think it works that way. :P

BYU has struggled in Seattle against solid defenses, usually while bringing in offensive teams that were still trying to establish their identity at the beginning of a season. That will not be the case this year. BYU knows who they are and what they need to do. The 2008 UW defense will not be the challenge that they were for much of the last decade. UW's offense may or may not make things interesting but this should be BYU's game to win.

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Re:Decent odds for winning the Washington & UCLA g

Posted by MLOdawgs - 2008/04/24 19:53

The offensive line is a strength, even with the loss of Garcia although that is a big loss. Before Garcias injury, the Oline lost only one starter from last year and returns 7/8 who had playing time last year. Sedillo is athletically capable but inexperienced. Don't forget, they didn't just block for a 1000 yard rusher (Rankin), they also blocked for a 900 yard rushing QB. The QB before Locker was Isaiah Stanbeck, also a running QB. Carl Bonnel did start the last 5 or 6 games of 2006 though. I suspect that is where a lot of the sacks came from as Stanbeck is a fast dude (now a WR on the Cowboys). Before Garcias injury, our oline was predicted to be either the best oline in the Pac-10 or at least in the top 3 this year.

The defense has to replace 3/4 dline, one safety and one corner. We are hoping it is addition by subtraction as the guys who left were not that good with the exception of Roy Lewis the corner. We are also praying that our new DC Ed Donatell will be able to instantly improve the defense just because nobody could possibly be as bad or worse than Kent Baer was.

We return all of our best linebackers. We lost Dan Howell the senior but towards the end of the year he was getting pushed out of the way by freshmen Mason Foster (an absolute stud frosh last year).

CougarBandit wrote:

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Re:Decent odds for winning the Washington & UCLA game

Posted by cougarfan87 - 2008/04/25 07:29

Color me as one who has some concerns about both games. Don't get me wrong, I am sure BYU CAN win both games. I am not so sure that they WILL win both games. Here's why:

1. Historically, BYU has not done well on the road against BCS opponents (no matter how much of bottom-feeders they are). I know, the last few seasons don't mean anything for this season, but the past is usually a pretty good predictor of the future. So, we are going to have to have our A game for Washington.

2a. UCLA is going to come to BYU with something to prove after they lost on that blocked field goal. You know they have our game circled on the calendar. Furthermore, I am a little worried about Norm Chow's ability to game plan against us since he is an offensive mastermind.

b. I am also a little worried that UCLA faces Tennessee at home on a Monday, gets a bye for the next week, and then faces us the following week on a Saturday. That gives UCLA almost two weeks to prepare for us after having played Tennessee at home. If they win that game (which I will posit they have a good chance of doing since the PAC-10 and SEC do not travel well to eachother's conferences), they are going to come into BYU rested, with a lot of confidence, probably having worked out some of the kinks in their new offense. Even if they lose, I am a firm believer that facing tough competition makes a team better. We are going to have to be prepared for UCLA's A game (unless Tennessee physically beats the crap out of UCLA).

So, while I am confident BYU CAN win these two games, I will temper that confidence with a little concern. BYU will have to be prepared from the start of the season--unlike the last three years. These two games will allow us to see if BYU has finally taken the next step forward in its progress where we consistently beat BCS teams (and by consistently I mean almost every time we face them, not 50% of the time).

Go COUGARS!!!!!!!

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Re:Decent odds for winning the Washington & UCLA g

MLO, thanks for the info and perspective. Certainly optimism and enthusiasm are needed for a unit to be successful, and bringing in a former NFL defensive coordinator can do that. New/experienced players may outperform more experienced players who have lost hope.

I really do hope that the Huskies get themselves turned around this year. Partially, at least, because if BYU is successful as we hope this year, it'll be great not to have to shrug our shoulders when the inevitable question arises "but who did you play?".

BYU has its own experience with new coaches imprinting a changed attitude and effectiveness on the program. Under Coach Mendenhall and recently named DC Hill, the defense has transformed from a passive bend-and-stretch philosophy to an aggressive, disciplined unit that believes it will successfully hold down any team it plays against. Even though BYU lost experienced defensive leaders last year, former backups are stepping into their new roles and filling the leadership void.

BYU vs. UW should be a good game and I'm really looking forward to it. :woohoo:

MLOdawgs wrote:

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