

Howell blog: My preseason Pac-12 men's hoops prediction

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Last night, I submitted my ballot for the Pac-12 men's basketball preseason media poll. Here's my predicted order of finish for the 2013-14 season:

1. Arizona
2. Colorado
3. UCLA
4. California
5. Oregon
6. Stanford
7. Arizona State
8. Oregon State
9. Washington
10. USC
11. Washington State
12. Utah

Arizona just has so much talent, it was tough for me to not put the Wildcats at the top.

Colorado is a popular third/fourth-place pick in the preseason predictions I've seen. I bumped the Buffs up to No. 2 because I like what Tad Boyle is doing in Boulder and I really think their overall depth and talent will trump their youth.

UCLA, Cal and Oregon are all good enough to contend for the title, as well. I think all three are NCAA Tournament teams.

To me, the second tier starts with Stanford. The Cardinal haven't reached the NCAA Tournament since 2008, but they return more than any other team in the conference this season. I could see them making the NCAA Tournament.

ASU is another possible Tournament team and it wouldn't surprise me if the Sun Devils finished higher than seventh. Oregon State is a solid team that should at least get to the NIT.

USC leads the third tier, but they've got a long way to go. Washington State and Utah have some talent, but somebody has to finish at the bottom and they look like the weakest two teams in the conference.

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