

Western Week Six Roundup

Written by Pat Clifton
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The standings didn't budge in the Western Conference after round six, with the top four teams squaring off against, and beating, the bottom four.

The Best of the Western, BYU, bullied Arizona 70-12. Though losing by 58 is never much of an accomplishment, the Wildcats can take some solace in the fact that they played the Cougars to their second-closest match of the CPD season.

Ryan Roundy bagged his third-straight multi-try performance against Arizona.

Utah, currently third in the Western, defeated Colorado 50-22 after spending three hours clearing snow from the frozen field. The Buffs scored first when he Utah mishandled the opening kickoff, and Colorado gathered it up to punch in a try on the game's opening possession.

"We've had trouble with slow starts all year long, and it's something that we're trying to fix," said Utah head coach Blake Burdette. "I was happy how the boys reacted to that, especially in the blizzard, wintry conditions."

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The Utes poured in the next six tries, four in the first half, to put the game well out of reach. Freshman scrumhalf Tonata Lauti scored Utah's first try at 12 minutes and slotted five conversions to lead either team in scoring.

"I think he's just getting confidence in the system and what we're trying to do, instead of just doing his own thing," said Burdette. "He's very athletic. He's got a very good fight in him, so how well he's playing is not surprising me at all."

Lauti has been spelling Don Pati at halfback while the All American nursed an injury. Pati was back in the lineup this week, but at outside center. Burdette indicated Pati was not unseated at No. 9 by the freshman, but moved to 13 to slow down Colorado's midfield, where they like to attack from.

Sitting just ahead of Utah in the standings (but with one more game played), is Arizona State, who started a young side in their 27-0 defeat of Wyoming.

"I think Wyoming has to be congratulated. They really came out after such a devastating loss to BYU, had obviously studied us pretty well, and put us under a lot of pressure straight from the word go," said ASU coach Gary Lane. "But, the fact is, we won a lot of first phase ball, we won a lot of lineout ball...and our defensive structure held very well."

Lane said he started several young guys who he wanted to see get some CPD experience. One of them was freshman wing Adam Sandstrom, who scored a pair of tries in the effort.

The team who looks most poised to challenge Utah for the Western's second playoff bid, Air Force, pounded Colorado State 46-10 Saturday. The Zoomies were led in tries and sin-bin minutes by senior leader and No. 8 Brennan Gallagher. Air Force makes a trip to Salt Lake City next weekend, where they'll need a win if they want to participate in the postseason.