

EMERALD Sports

Duck Tracks

By Al Johnson
Emerald Ass't Sports Editor

The 1956 Oregon football outlook? Far from being a hopeless case, next year's edition of the Ducks should be another speedy, ever-improving team. Graduation will of course take its toll, but Webfoot grid fortunes, on the whole, seem to be on the upswing.

Though just barely past mid-season, Len Casanova's men have impressed many observers with their terrific backfield speed, sharp offensive maneuvers and an underrated line that has been able to handle much larger forward walls with a good deal of success.

Faced with the loss of such brilliant stars as all-American George Shaw, Ron Pheister, Jack Patera and Hal Reeve, the Duck cause this fall seemed to be less than hopeful. But such has not been the case with the advent of such new standouts as Jim Shanley, Tom Crabtree, Jack Morris, Jack Pocock and George Slender. And the team is even with the board at this writing with a respectable 3-3 mark.

1954 Mark Threatened

In fact, chances are good that this year's team, rated far below last season's PCC third-place finishers, will equal or better the 6-4 record posted by Shaw and company in 1954. The four remaining games will be tough, as always, but the potential is there and has shown up in the last three games especially.

After the opening win over Utah (14-13) the Ducks fought off a fine Southern California team for a half before submitting to a 42-15 loss. Then Washington's Huskies outlasted Oregon in a 19-7 game. Colorado was pushed all over the field by the Webfoots, but fumbles and bad breaks handed the visiting Buffs a 13-6 win.

Finally the offensive power of Casanova's fleet backs has begun to unwind. Guided by the deft split-T operating of Crabtree, the swift halfbacks and fullbacks have been able to rack up high scores in the last two games, a 21-0 win over an inept California team and a 46-27 pasting of Arizona. And the line-shredding of fullbacks Morris and Fred Miklancic has been able to take the defensive pressure off the wide sweeps of James, Shanley, Jack Brown and Crabtree.

Vandals Next Foe

Idaho's Vandals are next in line. They should not be too difficult in view of their 0-5 record, but cannot be counted out. Washington State presents a somewhat more major problem in the Nov. 5 game at Pullman. Another road trip is in store for Nov. 12, when the Ducks travel to meet the hot-and-cold Stanford Indians. And then the Civil War battle with Oregon State is a wide-open contest.

Given wins in all these games, the Webfoots would have a 7-3 mark, the best since the Cotton Bowl team of 1948 (Van Brocklin, Lewis, Garza, Wilkins). Even with one loss in the four remaining games, a 6-4 slate would equal last year's mark. At the worst, the Ducks should end up with an even record of 5-5.

Next season, the Webfoots will lose James, tackles Harry Johnson and Lon Stiner, and center Art Weber. A veteran nucleus, this quartet is the heart of the 1955 eleven and will be missed. But returning will be three-fourths of the backfield, both ends and both guards, another good nucleus.

Pittsburgh On Schedule

As in this year, the outlook is initially dim, but the appearance of new sophomores and transfers greatly helps the grid-iron picture, as per '54 and '55. Next year's schedule will see the addition of Pittsburgh (there) as a major intersectional foe. And in the future (1958) Miami and Oklahoma are on the slate.

At any rate, this season promises well for the future, but in itself it has been thus far highly interesting. And the two remaining home games and two road trips could easily result in a banner year for Webfoot football fortunes.

Navy Claims Top Rating On NCAA Defense List

By the Associated Press

The nation's No. 1 defense and a passer who ranks among the first ten in the major college ranks will be Navy's principal weapons Saturday in its effort to upend Notre Dame after nine straight losses to the Irish.

Although they haven't yet played anyone as tough as Notre Dame, the midshipmen come up to this game with a resistance record that is the best in major college competition in eight years.

NCAA service bureau statistics showed Wednesday that Navy has limited its five opponents to an average of 119.6 yards per game. No major team since 1947 has gone this far into the season with so small an allowance.

The midshipmen proved equally adept at defending against ground and air attacks. They're fourth in pass defense with an average allowance of 41.6 yards and sixth in rushing defense with a 78 yard average. In addition

they've yielded only two touchdowns in five games while every other major team has allowed at least four.

In contrast, Notre Dame is statistically nowhere in any defense department except for a third-place average yield of 5.6 points per game to a set of tough opponents. Navy's average is 2.8 points and UCLA's is 5.5.

Navy has a notable offensive statistical record, too, with George Welsh, the No. 8 passer, setting the pace.

Auburn, the only other team to appear in the top ten in defense against both rushing and passing, is the No. 2 total defense team with an average allowance of 123 yards. This also is a better record than any team has shown in the past seven seasons. The Plainsmen are second in pass defense and seventh in rushing. Auburn allowed Furman only 22 yards last Saturday.

Maryland, for the third straight week, is tops in defense against rushing—trademark of undefeated teams. The Terrapins have given up an average of only 52.3 yards to the running attacks of six opponents.

New leaders turned up this week in two defense departments—pass defense and punting. Detroit, which has won only two of five games, moved from ninth to

first in pass defense when Oklahoma A and M threw only one pass incomplete against the Titans. That brought Detroit's yardage figure down to an average of 35.8 per game against Auburn's 37.6 yards. Only 22.8 per cent of the passes against Auburn have been completed.

Four kicks by Earl Morrall that averaged 48 yards against Illinois brought Michigan State's average up to 43.6 yards on 13 punts. North Carolina is in front in punt returns with an average of 19 yards on 12 runbacks. Southern California has brought back 16 kickoffs for a 28.9 yard average.

Marshfield Atop State Prep Poll; Gophers Second

By the Associated Press

Marshfield continues this week as the unanimous choice as Oregon's best high school football team as a critical weekend of play confronts many schools.

The 16 sports writers and broadcasters who took part in the Associated Press poll all voted the high-scoring Pirates No. 1. Marshfield strengthened its prestige with a 32-13 victory over Eugene last weekend and now needs only to defeat North Bend to enter the state class 1-A playoffs.

Prineville, which moved up from tenth to No. 8 this week, will try for an upset of Marshfield when it hosts the Pirates Friday.

Gresham remained a strong choice as the No. 2 team but faces a real test as it meets powerful Central Catholic of Portland. A Gresham victory would give it a spot in the playoffs.

Corvallis, Pendleton, Jefferson of Portland, Hillsboro, Vale, Prineville, South Salem and Cottage Grove follow Marshfield and Gresham, in that order, in the roll.

Loss to Marshfield dumped Eugene, ninth last week, out of the top 10. Cottage Grove moved back in after a one-week absence.

There was no change in the first four top 10 teams, but below that, some positions were shuffled.

South Salem fell from fifth to No. 9 after losing to Milwaukie. Moving up a notch were Jefferson, Hillsboro and Vale, along with Prineville.

Of the top 10, Vale and Prineville are the only class A-2 teams. Jefferson and Washington have cinched the Portland League's two places in the state 1-A playoffs.

The poll, with the season record for each team:

	Points
1. Marshfield, 6-0	160
2. Gresham, 7-0	139
3. Corvallis, 6-1	105
4. Prineville, 7-0	101
5. Jefferson, 6-0-1	93
6. Hillsboro, 7-0	80
7. Vale, 6-0	50
8. Prineville, 6-1	32
9. South Salem, 5-2	23
10. Cottage Grove, 6-1	15

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