

football

Spring is the time for grid decisions

By MIKE MARINO
Emerald Sports Editor

Don't underestimate the importance of spring football practice. Sure, the season is five months away. And true, the double sessions in the fall are important to work off the laziness of summer. But now — Oregon's five-week practice sessions that ends with an alumni game on May 13 — is the time when many, if not most of the top assignments for next sea-

son will be given.

"We have to assume," said Duck Head Coach Rich Brooks, "that at the end of spring practice, whoever is lined up at first string is going to start against Colorado."

Oregon had a helluva recruiting year. But most of the people who signed letters-of-intent — excluding the five junior college players and one freshman, Jim Arranian, who graduated early from high school — won't be showing up until the first day of drills in August.

"We can't count on the freshman to do it for us," Brooks said flatly. "Obviously I hope a couple can come in and start or help us right away, but we only had one last year (Vince Goldsmith at noseguard)."

"We do, though, have more quality freshmen this year than last."

Still, admittedly, the guys like Reggie Young and Andrew Paige will enter the fall a good deal behind the rest of the Oregon team. Brooks and his staff had a full off-season to work with this time around. The recruiting results — acclaimed by many people who gauge blue-chip talent — speak for themselves. But there were other gains made, too.

"The kids have had the benefit of our bringing in a full off-season program," Brooks said. "With the weights (instructed by Coach Mike Flynt) there's really been a significant improvement in size and strength."

In both areas, the Ducks suffered last season. Statistics bore out the fact, as Oregon stayed even with most clubs in the first and third quarters, but bowed in the second and fourth.

"People wore us down," Brooks said. "This year, they will not do that as easily."

The second-year coach points to some rather looming examples. Terry Dion, a junior defensive tackle, had increased his weight from 235 pounds to 265. Jamey Mathews, sophomore offensive guard, increased from 225 to 250. Scott Setterlund went a light 214 to 230 at defensive end. "We've gotten the talent we had a little bigger," Brooks explained.

The bulk will come in handy next year, as Oregon looks to es-

tablish control on both the defensive and offensive lines. On defense, the little extra bulk enables the Ducks to switch to the 4-3 defensive alignment, instead of the 5-2 (really a 3-4) of a year ago. "I've always liked it better and felt more comfortable with it," Brooks said.

"I feel now we have the line able to run the 4-3. Last year, we didn't have enough people to do that," he added. "We have everybody back but Rob Plath, and we've added some JC people."

Notably, the newcomers include behemoths Sherman Anderson (6-5, 250), Paul Clay (6-3, 230) and Mike Kelsler (6-4, 220). They join Dion, Goldsmith, Setterlund and Daryl Mitchell to suggest more than a few workable combinations.

"We'll be better against the run," Brooks deduced. "Four guys on the line is better than three, and we get a better pass rush, too."

Pressure on the opponents' quarterback will open up things for the Ducks' secondary — led by Kenny Bryant — that, with experience, could be a lot better than last year.

But in the absence of an opponent, a big focus is on Oregon's quarterbacks, and, specifically, who'll get the job for the September 9 opener in Boulder.

Brooks bears a preference for a running-type QB, which is why he recruited three top prep signal-callers in Paige, Kevin Lusk and Wilson Pica. But again, they come in August, and right now it's a battle between Mike Kennedy, Dan Daly and Tim Durando for the rights to succeed Jack Henderson.

Last year Brooks wanted Henderson to run more. This year,

though, the Ducks might let the quarterback stay in the pocket and pass — especially if he's Kennedy.

"In throwing, he has the edge," Brooks said of the junior who red-shirted last year. "Mike mechanically throws the ball better than the other two, but that's not automatically completing passes."

Too, Daly and Durando have the experience of running the Ducks during the season — a job they traded when Henderson was hurt for two games. "That's a definite advantage to them," Brooks said. "They've experienced it, whereas Mike has never played at that level."

Just in case he does, though, Kennedy's promise has brought about a change in the Oregon offense. The offensive line (anchored by Steve Kleffner, Bill Hoffman, Steve Greatwood and Pat McDougall right now) will be doing a bit more pass blocking — not as much as in the Don Read days, but enough to keep the relatively slow Kennedy from harm.

The running game has also changed. "We've installed a tailback series and slowed the option a bit," Brooks said. "We want to have the tailback run more."

Tailback? It might be the all-World prep Reggie Young, or the other top freshmen, Dwight Robertson. But for the moment it's a choice among Don Davis, Ed Radcliff, and Jim Johnson, who returns after sitting out 1977 with an injury.

Really, though, nothing is really set. As it was last year, every position is, according to Brooks, wide open. "We're trying to find who's better right now, and to see if anything has changed."

Bet it has.



Photo by Mike Baer

Spring practice is very important to any football team, and thus Oregon Coach Rich Brooks is spending a good deal of time looking at what he's got. Spots to be settled include quarterback, where Mike Kennedy (background) has the early edge.



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Notice U. O. Bookstore's Annual Meeting

Thursday
April 20, 1978

3:30 PM, 138 Gilbert Hall on the University of Oregon Campus the University of Oregon Bookstore, Inc. will have its Annual Meeting.

The purposes of the annual meeting shall be to receive annual reports of officers of the corporation, make such recommendations or proposals to the Board of Directors as the members may deem advisable and to receive nominations for membership on the Board of Directors.

Nominations Open:

- One (1) freshman for a two (2) year term of office.
- Two (2) sophomores for two (2) year terms of office.
- One (1) student-at-large for a one (1) year term of office.
- One (1) graduate student for a one (1) year term of office.*
- One (1) graduate student for a two (2) year term of office.**
- One (1) faculty member for a two (2) year term of office.

*Candidate receiving second highest number of votes cast for graduate student position.

**Candidate receiving highest number of votes cast for graduate student position.

The meeting is open to all registered students of the University of Oregon, all faculty members employed on the Eugene campus and all classified staff members holding a fulltime University position.

You are encouraged to attend the annual meeting and participate. The Bookstore is your bookstore so get involved and help make it better.