

sports

Grid questions to find answers in Alumni game Saturday

By MIKE MARINO
Emerald Sports Editor

Oregon's spring football practice, which at times has been excellent and at other times somewhat lacking, concludes its month of workouts against an Alumni team Saturday at 2:30 at Autzen Stadium.

The Spring has been a continuation of Oregon's effort to get a lot better, and since opening day, April 10, a lot of questions have been answered for Coach Rich Brooks and his staff.

But just as many new ones have popped up.

"It's hard to evaluate the progress when you just go against yourself," Brooks said after Thursday's workout. "A lot of things we'll have to judge after looking at the films from the Alumni game."

"But one thing that has improved," he smiled, "a lot of individuals have gotten a lot better."

Indeed, due to among other things, the Ducks' highly-regarded weight program that has added noticeable bulk to Oregon's size, the talent has improved strides beyond last season. But working together, that's another thing altogether — and that's where the questions lie.

"I've not been happy with the secondary, tailback position or quarterback," Brooks said. "There, definite improvement is needed."

The big look is at quarterback, where Mike Kennedy and Dan Daly have had success one day, and a hard time the next. Of the two, Daly is the known quantity, having subbed for Jack Henderson after the latter's injury in the fall.

But Kennedy, the redshirt from San Diego, is the one most people feel should take the job.

"All fall and spring he's been working against just our defense," Brooks said of Kennedy. "For one thing, I'm anxious to see what he is going to do in a game-type situation."

At least one member of the Alumni defense should give Kennedy the test he needs — Mario Clark, Oregon's All-American cornerback from 1975 who now plays for Buffalo in the NFL, will return for the game Saturday. In addition, former starts Tim Stokes, Tom Yaru, along with Henderson and other '78 grads, will return under the tutelage of Seattle Seahawk coach Jack Patera, also an Oregon alum.

But Kennedy isn't the only varsity player that's about to be tested — the helter-skelter Duck secondary, which has in effect, no set lineup for the entire spring, will have to contend with Ahmad Rashad of the Minnesota Vikings, who as Bobby Moore set Jerry Frei's offense afire in his three years (1969-70-71).

"They'll probably just send him long," said the Ducks' defensive

backfield coach, Milt Jackson. "Either he'll catch the ball or run off the field."

Either way, Jackson's troops need the work. "We've been inconsistent, sure," he said. "But we haven't had four working people to play with all the way."

Potentially, this secondary could be a lot better than in recent years. But at one time or another, Rock Richmond, Kenny Bryant and the rest of the crew have been out with numerous conflicts.

"So we can't get an idea of how these guys work together," Jackson said. "But I still guarantee that these guys are going to be a lot better than last year. A lot better."

Something that has made for the individual improvement in the secondary — and there has been plenty of that — is the addition of graduate assistant Paul Hansen to help with the coaching. "Before I was all alone with these guys," Jackson said. "Now they get a little more attention."

One thing's for sure: with a few starting positions up for the taking, everyone will be getting the attention Saturday. After this, the Ducks' opener against Colorado on September 9 won't seem too far away.



Photo by Mike Baer

Tuesday afternoon was the final spring practice for Oregon football, and while Dan Daly passed, George Rogers (84), Vince Williams, John Brosterhous (81) and coach John Becker prepared for the Alumni game Saturday at Autzen Stadium.

National berth at stake for Oregon softball team

Oregon's women's softball team will battle for a national berth this weekend as it travels to Tacoma, Wash., for the Northwest College Women's Sports Association (NCWSA) regional tournament.

Four other teams will contest Oregon for one of two spots that would qualify two teams for the national Women's College World Series to be held in Omaha, Neb., May 24-27.

The Ducks' stiffest competition should come from Oregon State, the defending AIAW Region IX champion and the top team in the region this year.

According to coach Becky Sisley, Oregon stands a better chance to finish second, thus assuring themselves a spot in the national tourney, though she insists first is not out of her team's grasp.

"We could win the whole tournament if we play heads-up ball. We've proved we can play that kind of game, but we can't afford to give anything away."

Though Oregon's record is only 4-14 for the season, it is coming off the best softball it has played this season. The women recorded regular season-ending shutouts over Portland State, 4-0 and 2-0.

sportfolio

Gymnast signs for Oregon

All-around high school gymnast Gloria Shepherd has signed a letter-of-intent to attend Oregon next year. Shepherd, from Rome Free Academy in Rome, N.Y., was 13th in the 1976 national AAU all-around.

Lacrosse team faces OSU

The Oregon Club Sports lacrosse team plays host to Oregon State Saturday at 1 p.m. on the 18th Avenue and Agate Street field. The winner of the match will own sole possession of the first place in the Pacific Northwest Lacrosse Association. On Sunday, Oregon will face Portland Lacrosse Club at 12 on the same field.

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