

Falcons soar over hapless Ducks

Louthan celebrates return at Oregon's expense

By DONALD COULTER
Of the Emerald

Oregon celebrated homecoming a week ago against Arizona, but it wasn't nearly as sweet as the homecoming party Air Force's Marty Louthan staged Saturday at Autzen Stadium.

Louthan, a former standout at Eugene's Churchill High School, came back to town in high style as he quarterbacked the Falcons to a 20-10 upset victory over the Ducks.

"This is beyond my wildest dreams!" Louthan exclaimed in the victorious locker room. "My parents were here and so were a lot of my friends. It was great!"

Louthan came off the bench to direct the Falcons' comeback victory. Eluding Duck tacklers for most of the afternoon while running the option (60 yards on 15 carries), he helped the

Falcons hand Oregon its sixth loss in seven games.

"Marty Louthan did a great job for them at quarterback," Oregon head coach Rick Brooks said after the game. "I was surprised he could come in off the bench and play as well as he did. He did a heck of a job."

Despite Louthan's heroics, the *real* story of this game was the dismal play of the Ducks.

These were not exactly giant killers that Oregon faced. Prior to their encounter with the Ducks, Air Force (2-5) had defeated only winless Colorado State this season. They had not won a road game in three years, since a victory at Boston College in September 1978. And the Falcons were at a significant size disadvantage matched up against the Ducks.

"We moved the ball well at times, but we could not sustain the offense when we had to,"

Brooks said of the game. "Air Force ate us up inside and they did a great job running the ball."

Oregon did a pretty good job of running the ball themselves in the first quarter, taking their first possession down the field for a field goal. The highlight of the eight-play drive came on a first down at the Oregon 44. Quarterback Mike Owens tossed a 32-yard flea flicker to Greg Moser, with Moser stopping and running back toward the ball to make the catch. But the drive stalled there, and after Owens was sacked on third down, Doug Jollymour came in to kick a 47 yard field goal.

The Ducks controlled the football for most of the first quarter, as Mike Owens completed 9 of 10 pass attempts, most of them short swing passes to Reggie Brown coming out of the backfield. The Ducks had the better of the stats for the quarter, with 129 total yards to only 42 for Air Force.

Oregon scored its only touchdown early in the second quarter on a 48-yard drive. Once again, the key was an Owens-to-Moser pass, this one for 12 yards on a third down play. Harry Billups scored the touchdown on his only carry of the day, a three-yard scamper over right guard.

With a 10-0 lead and 12:58 to go in the half, it appeared Oregon was firmly in control of the game. They were able to move at will on Air Force's defense, and had bottled up the Falcons' lethargic offense.

But that's when the game changed. Air Force head coach Ken Hatfield decided to shift from the "I" formation, used by the Falcons in the first quarter, to the wishbone, an offense the Ducks have seen very little of in recent years. And the man he chose to run the wishbone was Louthan.

"We knew they never play against it," Hatfield said of the wishbone. "We've been using it for two years now. But give credit to Marty — his running kept pressure off the full-

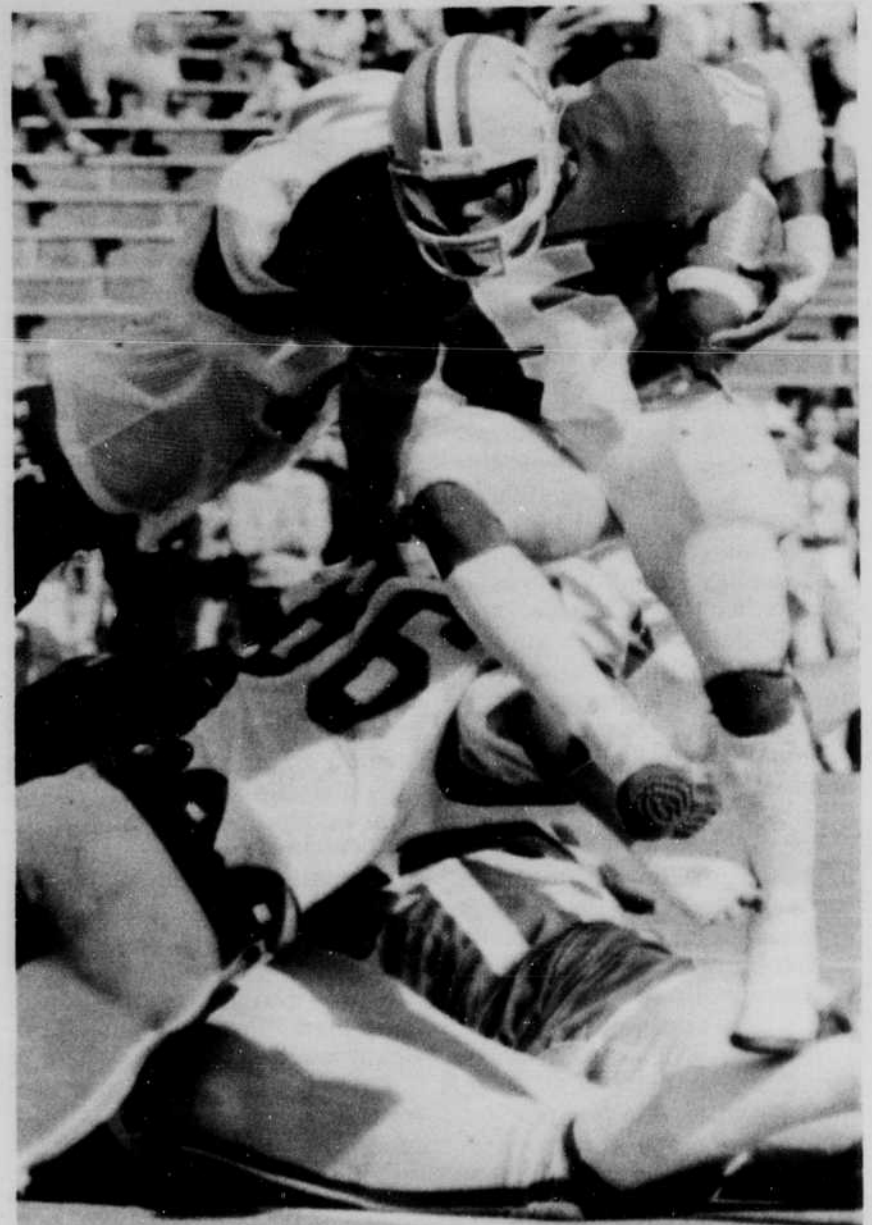


Photo by Bob Baker

Harry Billups scored Oregon's lone touchdown on his only carry — a three yard bull over the right guard.

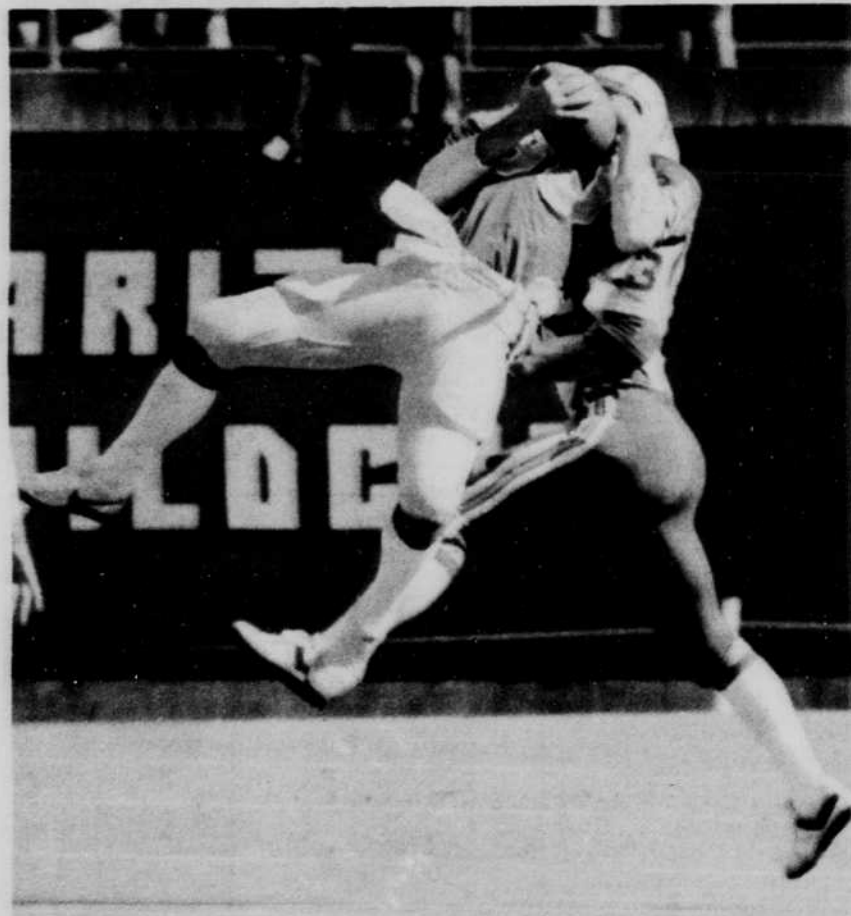


Photo by Bob Baker

Greg Moser came back to snag Mike Owens' pass on a tricky flea flicker play for a 32 yard gain.

backs and tailbacks."

Louthan made his presence felt quickly as he drove the Falcons the length of the field from their 37, picking up five first downs along the way. Then, on a first-and-goal situation at the Oregon 1, Oregon's Steve Baack recovered a Charlie Heath fumble, snuffing out the Air Force drive.

But the Ducks couldn't hold onto the ball for long. On the play following Heath's fumble, Mike Owens threw a pass straight into the waiting arms of Falcon safety Johnny Jackson at the Oregon 16. Jackson ran the ball back to the one, and

Heath popped over the goal line on the next play to put Air Force back in the game.

"We had (flanker) Osborne Thomas open on the sideline on that play," Brooks said, "but Mike threw it up toward the middle of the field and he (Jackson) was right there."

Four plays later, after a 26-yard punt by Oregon's Ryan Murphy, Air Force put together what was to be the game-winning drive. Starting at the Oregon 45, Louthan used a combination of short passes and options to drive the Falcons for a touchdown with 1:06 remaining in the game.

Air Force plowed over the left side of the Ducks' defense — Baack and Steve Johnson were neutralized by the Falcon offensive line — to roll up most of their yardage during this series. Fullback John Kershner scored the touchdown on a seven-yard run, and the Falcons went up 14-10 at the half.

The second half was uneventful, with Air Force scoring twice on Sean Pavlich field goals of 45 and 18 yards. Neither team was able to move the ball with authority. But the Falcons were able to keep the Ducks out of the end zone, a feat that grows easier as the nightmarish season wears on for the Ducks.

Typical of this season, the Ducks could not come up with the big play against their opponent when they needed it. They converted only 2 of 6 third down plays in the second half. Owens threw two interceptions, both picked off by Jackson, which Air Force converted into 10 points. And the defense — one of Oregon's few redeeming features in this disappointing year — was shoved around during the final three quarters by a smaller Air Force squad.

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