

This runner ain't no Walker... yet

By Steve Turcotte
Of the Emerald

In his own silent and persistent way, Terrance Jones has been getting the job done in the offensive backfield for the Oregon football team.

Although, he hasn't gotten the notoriety of a Herschel Walker or John Elway, Jones has been there week in and week out this season taking the handoffs from Duck quarterbacks and zipping through the opposing defensive lines.

For three years at Oregon, Jones has toiled as a sometime starter and backup. But this year, after finally gaining a permanent starting role, he is happy.

"I thought I should have been named starting fullback after spring drills (last year) because I felt I played very well," explained Jones. "But Dwight Robertson was moved from tailback to fullback and I was second-string."

Jones was not second-string for long though, because Robertson suffered an early-season knee injury which has kept him out of the lineup until last week.

So Jones has stepped in and filled in most admirably. Oregon coach Rich Brooks is not at all timid to give Jones the ball and let him go to work.

"Terrance has played some good football ever since he's been here and especially this year," said Brooks. "He has continued to get better every week. I have been pleased with his performance."

Jones, too, feels that the improvement factor has played a big role in the way he has

performed on the field this season.

"I think I have been improving every week," said Jones. "The key for me is to keep improving. The main thing right now that I am trying to work on is my blocking."

So far this year, Jones' statistics have been one of the few offensive highlights for the Ducks. The senior fullback has carried the ball 98 times for 395 yards, a 4-yard average every time he touches the football. In addition, he has scored two touchdowns which ties him for the team lead in that department. Jones has also caught five passes for another 29 yards.

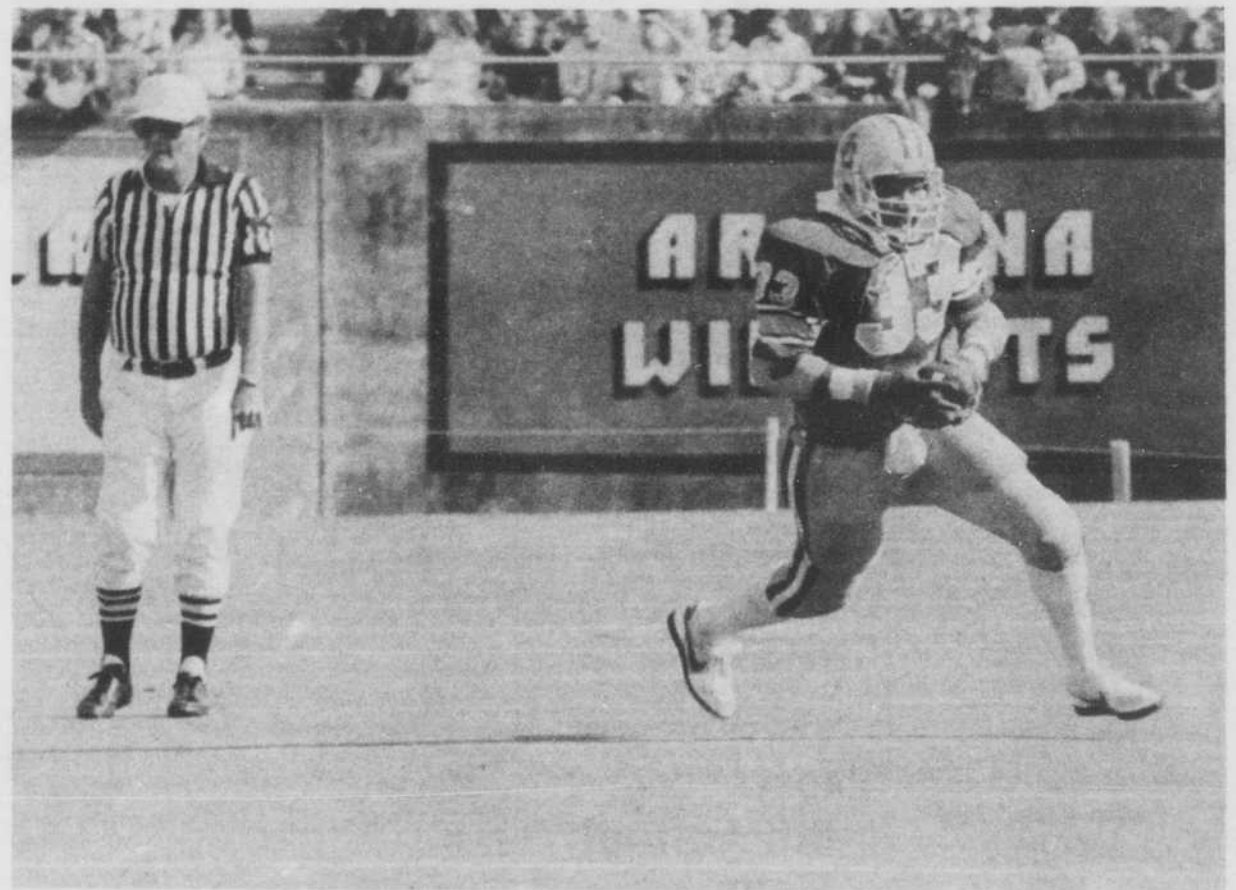
"I think we expected Terrance to be able to get the yards he is getting," said Brooks. "He is not a real shifty runner, but a good power runner. But he is getting some good moves."

Jones' football career at Oregon has been one of ups and downs. The ups coming early and late in his career while the downs plagued the middle portion of his tenure at Oregon.

Jones got his first Duck start against USC his sophomore season in the 7-7 Duck-Trojan standoff at Autzen Stadium. Jones recalls the game as if it were only yesterday.

"USC was my best game that year by far," Jones said. "That is still one of my best games I have ever played. I got the only touchdown against the Trojans and that was pretty thrilling."

Jones' statistics for his sophomore year weren't overwhelming, but statistics aren't supposed to be for a seldom-used sophomore. He carried the ball 33 times for 109



yards and two touchdowns.

But the next season is one that Jones calls "a season I'd like to forget."

"Last year was bad for me," said Jones. "I started the first game against Fresno State when Vince Williams wasn't eligible. I started the next three games but after that I was in the doghouse."

"I got suspended when I missed the team bus from the hotel to practice on Friday night at the Arizona State game. Things just weren't the same after that. It was real disappointing."

Jones carried the ball just 24 times for 89 yards last year, including one run of 29 yards.

But Jones almost didn't get a chance to carry the football in college because of a dangerous injury suffered in a high school grid tilt.

In his senior year at Norte Del Rio High School in Sacramento, Jones suffered a collapsed lung on the first play from scrimmage in the team's first game of the season.

"I kind of got speared on the play," said Jones. "I tried to play the next couple of plays but just couldn't stand the pain. I found out later that it was a partially collapsed lung."

The injury, which is sometimes very serious, didn't keep Jones out of the lineup very



Photos by Bob Baker

Terrance Jones breaks into the open (top). Osborn Thomas and Jones celebrate after Jones scored a touchdown against Notre Dame (bottom). Thomas points out that Jones scored, while Jones shows that Thomas set it up with a 23 yard catch, which brought the Ducks to the Irish's one yard line.

long. He missed two games that season and came back and began tearing up opposing defensive lines.

"Some doctor wanted to put a tube in me which would have kept me out for the season," explained Jones of his injury. "Another doctor said that if I got rest I could come back in a couple of weeks."

Jones did come back and finished the season with 875 yards and an invitation from Oregon to play football.

Jones also had a Duck connection in the form of Duck assistant coach Bill Tarrow.

Tarrow coached at Norte Del Rio for 15 years before accepting the assistant job at Oregon in 1977. Although Tarrow left before Jones' senior season, he did have some indirect impact on Jones' attending the University.

"I knew Coach Tarrow would have gone to a good school to coach so I knew Oregon must be a good place to play football," Jones said. "I already knew a few people here and I wanted to play Pac-10 football."

And Pac-10 football is what Jones has been playing for four hard years.

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