

Ducks host bowl-hungry 'Cats

By Paul Danzer
Of the Emerald

The good news heading into Oregon's home football finale Saturday at Autzen Stadium against the Arizona Wildcats is that last week's bye allowed some of the wounded Ducks, including quarterback Mike Jorgensen, to heal.

The bad news is that Jorgensen, and the Oregon offense, will have to keep up with one of the most explosive attacks in the Pac-10.

That is a tall order for an offense that has had trouble keeping up with the ball most of the season. The Ducks have turned the ball over an average of four times in each of their nine games.

"We've just tried to eliminate the mistakes," says Oregon coach Rich Brooks echoing the season's theme. "We always look good in practice," he said, adding that only the outcome of the game will tell him if his squad has made any headway.

Arizona is also familiar with the turnover bug. It bit them painfully as USC returned three interceptions for touchdowns last week to upend the Wildcats 48-41.

The 41 points they scored has Brooks concerned. "It's hard to believe anybody could score 41 points against USC's defense," says the Oregon coach, who had his contract renewed this week. "It's incredible really."

"They are an extremely explosive team," he says, noting the proficiency of quarterback Tom Tunnicliffe, and runningbacks Vance Johnson and Brian Holland. "They give you a lot of different dimensions to contain," Brooks says of their use of varied formations such as the shotgun and pro set.

There is good reason for Brooks to be concerned about the Arizona attack. The Wildcats have scored over 41 points the last three times out. Tunnicliffe, a junior, stands 12th in the nation in passing efficiency, connecting on 147 of 264 passes for 2,094 yards.

To go along with Tunnicliffe's strong arm, Arizona has some powerful legs in Johnson, who scored the go-ahead touchdown in Arizona's 18-14 win at Autzen, and Holland. Johnson has rushed for 402 yards on 89 carries, including a 160 yard effort in the Wildcats' victory at Stanford.

"I don't think anyone will be letting down after last week's game with USC," says Arizona coach Larry Smith. "We need this win to give us a shot at going to a bowl."

If their past holds true, the Wildcats should dispose of the Ducks. Arizona is undefeated on the road, and they have won in places where no one else has managed to. They pulled off a 16-13 upset of Notre Dame in South Bend, drilled Stanford 41-27 and tied UCLA (24-24) all away from Tucson.

But Smith is not about to take Saturday's game for granted. "I have a lot of respect for Oregon," the coach says. "The first thing I look at when I look at a team that hasn't won is their defense, and Oregon has a good defense."

While Smith respects Oregon's defense he



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Oregon will be keying Saturday on Brian Holland, who ran for 63 yards against a tough USC defense last week in the Wildcats 48-41 loss.

isn't exactly pleased with his own, which has given up an average of more than 35 points a game the last three times out.

Despite the bye, which Brooks would rather not have had, the Oregon lineup on offense is up in the air again entering the game. Although Jorgensen has recovered from his back spasms, the Ducks may still miss Ladaria Johnson in the backfield, and receiver Eugene "Choo Choo" Young is out for the season with torn cartilage in his knee.

Also a probable no show will be freshman Eugene King, who was the Ducks leading rusher in the loss to Washington State two weeks ago with 66 yards. King has not recovered completely from the serious concussion he suffered against WSU.

That means that Harry Billups, a 5-11 junior who started the season as a tailback, then moved to receiver, will return to the backfield as a starter if Johnson is unable to go.

Johnson, who missed the WSU contest with bruised ribs, sprained his ankle in practice this week.

In the absence of Young, senior Rourke Lowe will get the nod at split end. Also guard Gary Zimmerman, who injured a knee and ankle against the Cougars, should be ready to go Saturday.

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