

Gridders face final spring exam

Intrasquad game on tap

By Steve Turcotte
Of the Emerald

After sitting in its Autzen Stadium classroom for three weeks, the time has come for the Oregon football team to be tested.

And that test will come tomorrow as the Ducks break camp with the annual spring game Saturday at 1 p.m. at Autzen.

In the past three weeks, the Ducks have been busy learning a new offense and adjusting to a new defense under a new defensive coordinator.

Bob Toledo, brought in from the University of the Pacific to coach the offense, has converted the Ducks from a running team into a passing outfit. This season, Oregon should have a bit more success on offense moving the ball and scoring points than last year.

On the defensive side of the coin, Joe Schaffeld, who was the defensive line coach the past four seasons, takes over the defensive reins on a traditionally rich Oregon defense.

Although both Toledo and Schaffeld may want to show off their wares, it may be a bit difficult because of the various injuries incurred by several players.

On offense, running backs Alex Mack and Kevin Willhite will sit out Saturday's intrasquad game as will offensive guard Craig Kaylor.

On defense, tackle Dan Ralph, linebackers Lerry Wilson and Todd Welch and strong safety Dan Wilken all are ailing and will miss the game.

Even though the Ducks will not be at full tilt, head coach Rich Brooks maintains that the game is important.

"This gives us a good chance to look at our personnel and evaluate what we have done this spring," Brooks said. "This is about the best opportunity to check on our progress."

Although the Ducks are still adjusting to a new system, Brooks feels they have made great strides in becoming acquainted with the new offense.

"There is no question we have made good progress but we are still not where I want us to be," said Brooks.

The Ducks will be divided into two different teams — one team comprised of the No. 1 offense and No. 2 defense while the other squad will be made up of the No. 2 offense and No. 1 defense.

Quarterbacks Mike Owens and Mike Jorgensen will call the signals for the offenses. Both have battled for the No. 1 job all spring and it appears that Owens may have a bit of an edge heading into the spring finale.

"I feel good about both Jorgensen and Owens," Brooks said. "Owens has thrown the ball a little better than Jorgensen but both have looked pretty good."

Brooks will also be taking a hard look at the running backs. There have been a couple of bright spots in the backfield in walk-on tailback Kevin McCall and fullback Ladaria Johnson.

The offensive line appears to have just one hole — at left tackle where Brooks indicates that he is looking for some consistency.

The defense has been both good and bad this spring.

"The defense hasn't done all that well this spring," Brooks admitted. "Our depth on defense is a real concern, but some of the younger players are starting to look real good."

One area of worry was at linebacker where the Ducks graduated all three starters from last year. A couple of the young players have stood out and have proven that they will fit in.

"E.J. Duffy and Dan Devaney have looked pretty good this spring," said Brooks. "They have shown that they can play."

The defensive backs have all had a good spring and all are healthy with the exception of Wilken. The kicking game also looks good at this point with Tim Wise and Paul Schwabe battling for the placekicking duties and Kevin Hicks handling the punting.

Wise and Schwabe have each looked sharp during various scrimmages throughout the spring drills. Wise has booted a couple of 50-yard field goals while Schwabe has been getting consistency on his kickoffs and field goals.

Hicks, who set a school record last season with a 70-yard punt, is being challenged by Wise for the punter's job.

But Brooks isn't worried about the kicking as much as he is about the snapping.

"We just haven't had good snapping on our special teams this spring," Brooks explained. "Lerry Wilson, the regular snapper, has been out with an injury and we haven't gotten anyone to do it with any consistency. It may be a freshman who snaps for us next year on special teams."

Admission to the intrasquad game is \$2 for adults and \$1 for children. There is no cost for University students and faculty showing fee or identification cards.



Rich Brooks will be grading his team's progress this spring at the intrasquad game concluding spring practice Saturday, beginning at 1 p.m. at Autzen Stadium.

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