

sports

Injuries plague Ducks

Oregon confronts potent SJSU attack



Emerald Photo

Defenseman Steve Baack and the rest of the Oregon defense hope to shut down San Jose State at Saturday's game.

By Steve Turcotte
Of the Emerald

It will be a clash of offenses when the Oregon football team tangles with San Jose State University Saturday night in San Jose, Calif.

The game, which will be televised by KEZI-TV beginning at 7 p.m., matches two offensive-minded clubs in search of a final win heading into conference play.

Last season the two teams met at Autzen Stadium, with San Jose State coming out on top by an 18-13 count. That win helped the Spartans finish the season with an 8-3 record, while the Ducks tumbled to 2-8-1.

This season, the cast of characters for SJSU is a bit different from last year. A season ago, the Spartans had one of the nation's top quarterbacks in Steve Clarkson, who has since graduated to the Canadian Football League. One of Clarkson's favorite receivers, Tim Kears, also has graduated. Kears caught a touchdown pass against Oregon to key SJSU's victory.

But the quarterback-receiver arsenal replacing Clarkson and Kears is shaping up quite well, according to Spartan coach Jack Elway.

The new quarterback is 6-1, 192-pound junior Jon Carlson from Pacific Grove, Calif. Carlson is in his first year with the Spartans, having transferred from Monterey Peninsula College. Carlson will have a veteran to throw to in wide receiver Eric Richardson.

"I am really impressed with their passing attack," said Oregon coach Rich Brooks. "But what scares me is their improvement with the running game."

The bad news for the Spartans is that they have just four starters returning on offense. Both tackles — Ken Delgado and Henry Ramelli — and halfback Bobby Johnson are 1982 holdovers.

"Obviously, we are a young football team," said Elway, whose Spartans are 2-1 this season with wins over Stanford and Nevada-Las Vegas. "But we have a heck of an attitude.

And that has kept us going this season so far."

Defensively, San Jose State is in the same boat, with only five starters returning.

It would seem the Ducks could take advantage of SJSU's youth and inexperience and put some points on the scoreboard, but Brooks isn't so sure.

"They may be young on defense but they are still good," said Brooks. "They sacked the Cal quarterback nine times in their game. They are scary there, too."

Against Houston, the Duck offense showed signs of life, gaining 328 yards — the most total yardage for the Ducks since Nov. 21, 1981 (a 47-17 thrashing of Oregon State).

The passing game appears to be coming around. Quarterback Mike Jorgensen, although not throwing for a staggering percentage, is completing the big ones when necessary.

"That 328 yards was only done in 60 plays, so we are making progress," said Brooks. "But the progress is painfully slow."

Injury problems continue to plague the Ducks. Against Houston, offensive tackle Greg Schwab went down with a knee injury. He is doubtful for this weekend. Running back Kevin Willhite is also questionable with an injured ankle.

"We are still really thin at the tackle spot," said Brooks. "We'll just have to go with what we have."

On top of the Duck offense showing consistent signs last weekend, the defense came up with big play after big play. Houston did gain 251 yards on the ground, but that mark was well below their team average of over 300 yards.

"I wouldn't say our defense has come of age," Brooks said. "But it is improving and looking better."

Oregon and San Jose State have the obvious incentive of winning Saturday's game on their minds, and there are also underlying incentives which will drive both teams in search of a victory.

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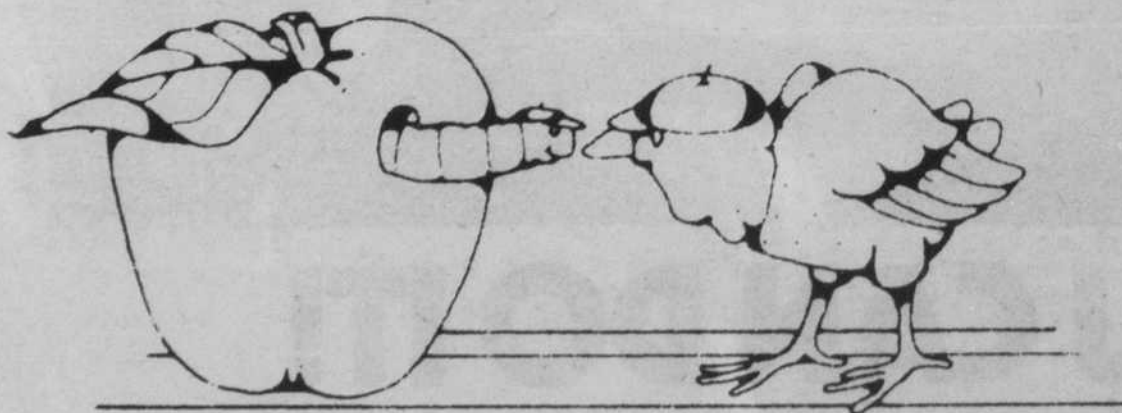
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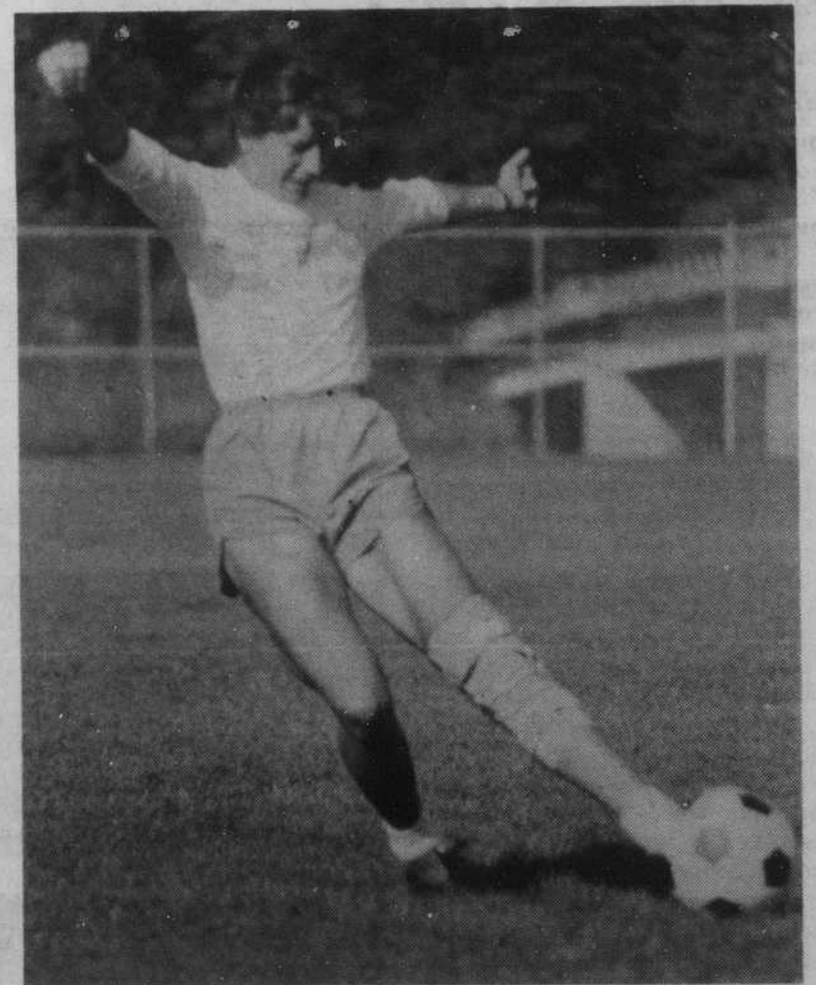
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Blasting away

Senior Karen Hege gets set to unload a shot at Oregon women's soccer practice Wednesday at South Bank Field. The women, who finished sixth at the Northwest Women's Collegiate Soccer Association Championships in 1981, will play 12 games against the likes of Washington and Oregon State.

Photo by Steve Crowell

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