

Surprise — Oregon humbles Cal

By Doug Levy
Of the Emerald

After his Bears tied Arizona 33-33 Oct. 1, California football coach Joe Kapp said his team sniffed roses and proclaimed, "We're in the conference race."

Saturday at Autzen Stadium, Kapp inhaled the foul smell of defeat as Oregon used two trick plays and a new-found running game to pin a 24-17 defeat on the Bears.

The Ducks, 2-3 and 1-0 in this year's wacky Rose Bowl race, controlled the offensive line of scrimmage against Cal, 2-2-1, 0-1-1, enroute to 279 rushing yards.

"We controlled the line of scrimmage the best we had in any of our games this year," said Oregon coach Rich Brooks, who won his first Pac-10 opener in seven tries.

The 279 yards were part of 449 yards total offense. One has to go back to Reggie Ogburn and 1980

to find numbers like that.

It was two trick plays that really set Oregon apart from the Bears. First, third-string tight end Dave Christensen, his arm discovered by Oregon coaches in practice, hit speedster Lew Barnes with a 48-yard scoring bomb 1:34 into the first quarter.

Three minutes and 11 seconds later, quarterback Mike Jorgensen sneaked one yard to put the Ducks up 12-0.

Jorgensen's touchdown was set up by something offensive coordinator Bob Toledo called "the swinging gate" play.

With Oregon on the Cal 48 and the Bears in a defensive huddle, Jorgensen took a Ryan Zinke snap and pitched wide to Barnes, who romped 41 yards past the stunned Cal defenders. Jorgensen scored three plays later.

"I first used that play in a game against South Carolina," said ex-Pacific coach Toledo. "The key is

to catch the other team off-balance. We did, and it looked like 22 guys running the Boston Marathon."

Brooks certainly liked Toledo's idea. "I couldn't wait to use those plays," he said with a grin.

Besides trick plays, Oregon kept Cal off guard with passes on the first six snaps of the ball.

"I'm glad we did that," said offensive tackle Scott Shepard. "All those passes at the start took some of the pressure off us (the offensive line). A lot of times we try and establish a running game first, and if it doesn't work all the pressure is on us."

On this day, the passing game set up the run, and Oregon's backs continually burst into the Cal secondary. Sophomore fullback Todd Bland rambled for 65 yards on 13 carries, Ladarja Johnson for 63 on nine.

"We finally established a semblance of a running game," said Brooks.

Defensively the Ducks did something they failed to do in a 44-34 loss to San Jose State — stopped the third down conversion.

The Bears converted just four of 15 times on third down; San Jose State burned Oregon on 13 of 19 third-down conversions.

As the defense shut down Cal, the offense churned out the yardage. Oregon led 12-0 six minutes into the game — the Ducks had scored just 12 points in the first quarter in their first four games combined.

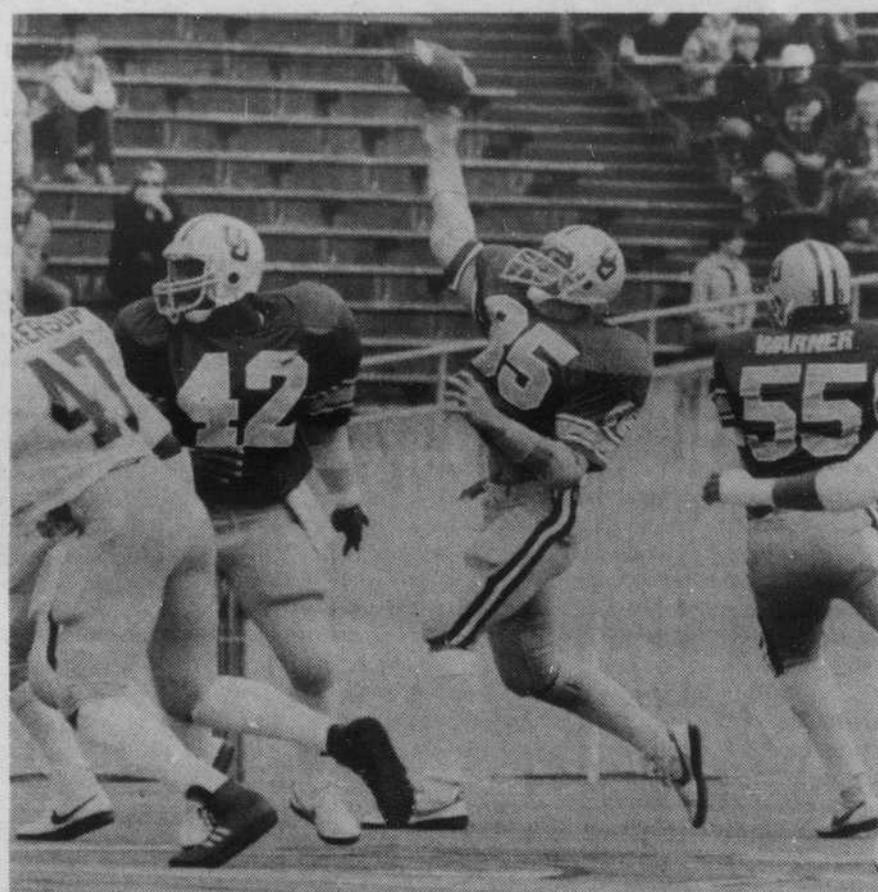
It was 14-10 Oregon at half, and it could have been worse. The Ducks blew no less than five scoring opportunities, including a first-and-goal at the Cal one-yard line which vanished in the form of a Kevin Willhite fumble.

The fumble was recovered by Cal linebacker Ron Rivera, the Bears' version of Superman. All Rivera did was recover that fumble, make 12 tackles, steal the ball from Jorgensen on a sack, and intercept a late handoff on his way to a 36-yard touchdown run.

"You are one great goddamned player," Brooks told him after the game.

Brooks had more to say after the game than Kapp. "Give Oregon full credit — they just beat us," he said.

It was as simple as that.



Dave Christensen gave Oregon a quick 6-0 lead with this option pass...



Photos by Dave Kao

...to Lew Barnes on the right sideline, who outran two Cal defenders into the end zone.

Defense didn't rest

While Oregon's offense was rolling up 449 yards against Cal in a 24-17 win, the Duck defense was excelling on the other side of the ball.

The Bears' offense only mustered one touchdown against Oregon, shredded for 44 points by San Jose State a week earlier. Cal had 265 yards passing, but just 65 on the ground, and the Ducks intercepted two Gale Gilbert passes while forcing three fumbles, two of which they recovered.

The key? Rich Brooks, Steve Baack, Don Brown and E.J. Duffy were all in agreement. The Ducks tightened up on Cal when third down came around.

In a 44-34 loss to the Spartans, Oregon's defense was on vacation during third downs.

Brooks was sure the turnaround was pivotal.

"We stopped Cal on a lot of key third down plays, the thing we didn't do a week ago," said Oregon's coach.

"I don't know if people noticed, but on third downs we held up three fingers. We knew what we had to do," said Duffy, the outside linebacker who had two unassisted tackles and a sideline-tightroping interception to halt a Bear drive. "I think this is the first time the offense and the defense came together in the same game."

The Ducks held Cal to four of 15 on third-down conversions, and when Cal completed passes or broke runs, sure Oregon tackling prevented back-breaking plays.

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