Kickers boot OSU

By Steve Irvin

After a half of frustrated efforts, the Oregon men's club soccer team scored a second-half goal to punch out a 1-0 win over Oregon State in its league opener Sunday at South Bank Field.

Midfielder Tim Brugger scored late in the game to reward the shutout goaltending of David Rosenbaum and give the Ducks impetus towards an Oregon Interscholastic Soccer Association title.

The Ducks' pressuring offensive style created many one-on-one scoring opportunities, but they were either thwarted by OSU's goalie or wasted by Duck miscues.

Future Duck opponents only can hope to be as fortunate.

First-year coach Richard Paxton has assembled a talented blend of returning veterans, transfers and freshmen in an effort to improve on last year's third-place finish in the OISA.

Forward Steve Cooney and midfielder Tim Bricker, both three-year veterans, are joined by University of Portland transfer Brugger and Eric Gorelik from Warner Pacific to form the nucleus of a deeper and more gifted Duck team.

"We have a lot of skill on the team," Paxton says. So much skill, in fact, that only six players from last year's team made the 22-man roster. And Paxton adds that several good players must sit on the bench

The team's 2-1 pre-season record and the win over OSU give Paxton good reason to be optimistic about his team's talent.

Paxton's optimism is echoed by his players, who believe a league championship, and possibly an undefeated season, are within their grasp.

"We should win the league," Cooney says. "We have much stronger people and much more depth. We're just picking up where we left off last year."

"Depth will make all the difference," says Bricker. "Right now, the only thing on our mind is Nov. 12 (the OISA finals at Portland's Civic Stadium)."

Talent and depth mean nothing, however, if they can't be molded into a cohesive unit; this is what the Ducks are striving for.

Paxton says the players lack a team concept, due in part to ongoing battles for starting positions, due in part to a late first game. The coach says most teams in the state already were into their seasons when Oregon had its Sept. 13 opener.

Brugger sees the problem as one of ad-

justing to new teammates in a short time.

"I'm still getting used to these people, and I'm sure they're still getting used to me," he says.

Bricker adds, "We're still about three weeks from meshing." He emphasizes that playing together is crucial to the team's strategy of spreading opponents out by working the ball from the back line.

But according to Paxton, Oregon's strategy is a simple one.

"I prefer getting the ball to the other team's half as quickly and easily as possible," says the rookie coach.

To do that, he uses a pro-style attack consisting of four fullbacks, four midfielders and two forwards. The 4-4-2 formation takes advantage of South Bank Field, one of the biggest fields in Oregon at 80 yards by 110 yards.

Because most teams use a 43-3 setup, Paxton says the 4-42 attack forces opposing teams' midfielders to cover more ground than normal, tiring them out and leading to greater scoring opportunities for Oregon.

Newcomers Brugger and Gorelik are not strangers to the 4-4-2 — both encountered it at their previous schools. Brugger, in particular, thinks the Ducks are well-suited to the formation.

"We have guys who can take it to the front and score," says midfielder Brugger. "I like that."

For transfers Brugger and Gorelik, next-door neighbors and teammates at Portland's Wilson High School, the biggest adjustment has been adapting to the tight budget of a club sports team after being on scholarship at other schools.

At the University of Portland, "soccer and basketball are the only thing," Brugger says. "We'd all get free cleats. We'd get free everything."

Gorelik, also a midfielder, expected more when he came to Eugene after playing for Warner Pacific, which has Louisiana Pacific as one of its main sponsors. "The money is there," he says.

At Oregon, the players pay for almost everything, including their uniforms and transportation to out-of-town games, a contrast hammered home to Gorelik when he was traveling to a pre-season game against Oregon State.

The car Gorelik was in broke down, forcing he and his teammates to hitchhike to Corvallis.

Such are the trials and tribulations in a program where one plays, as Bricker says,"for the love of it, not the money."





Photos by Polly Kaplar

Oregon's Tim Bricker paces the Oregon attack against Oregon State (above) and leads the cheers (below) after the Ducks beat the Beavers 1-0 at South Bank Field Sunday. Oregon is tentatively scheduled to play at home against Oregon Institute of Technology Oct. 19. The kickers are 1-0.

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