

Line-up Continued from Page 3

stay healthy this season."

The concern is not as great at the center and guard positions. "I feel very good there, both in starting line-up and depth."

"The offensive line will start as a better group than a year ago," Brooks continued. "If we can stay healthy, we will have a very good offensive line as the season progresses. We return more experience than people think."

There is still one big question looming over his offense that can only be revealed as the season progresses, Brooks said. "Are we going to be a consistent offensive team that can actually put the ball into the end-zone more than we did a year ago?"

The defensive line has its problems as well. Brooks is in need of a player to come to the forefront of the defense, and be a leader for the squad.

"I'm hoping that either (John) Byrne, (Dave) Maley or (Dale) Dorning, because of their experience, will take the next step and be a dominant player," Brooks said. "I think they have the ability, but they still have to emerge."

Inexperience is a major concern to Brooks at the defensive tackle, end and guard positions. "We have some young players that I think could be good players, but need to gain experience," he added. "What we need to do early this season is develop depth in the defensive line. I think we have some capable people."

Because of the inexperience on the line, Brooks is concerned about what an injury would do. "In the defensive line, an injury right now would really hurt us."

One part of the team Brooks isn't worried about is the linebacking corp. The Ducks return seasoned junior, Lerry Wilson, and Bob Hudetz, a senior this year, at the middle linebacker positions. The outside positions are filled with junior E.J. Duffy, and sophomore Dan Devaney. "I think our linebacking corp is the most solid of our defensive unit," he said.

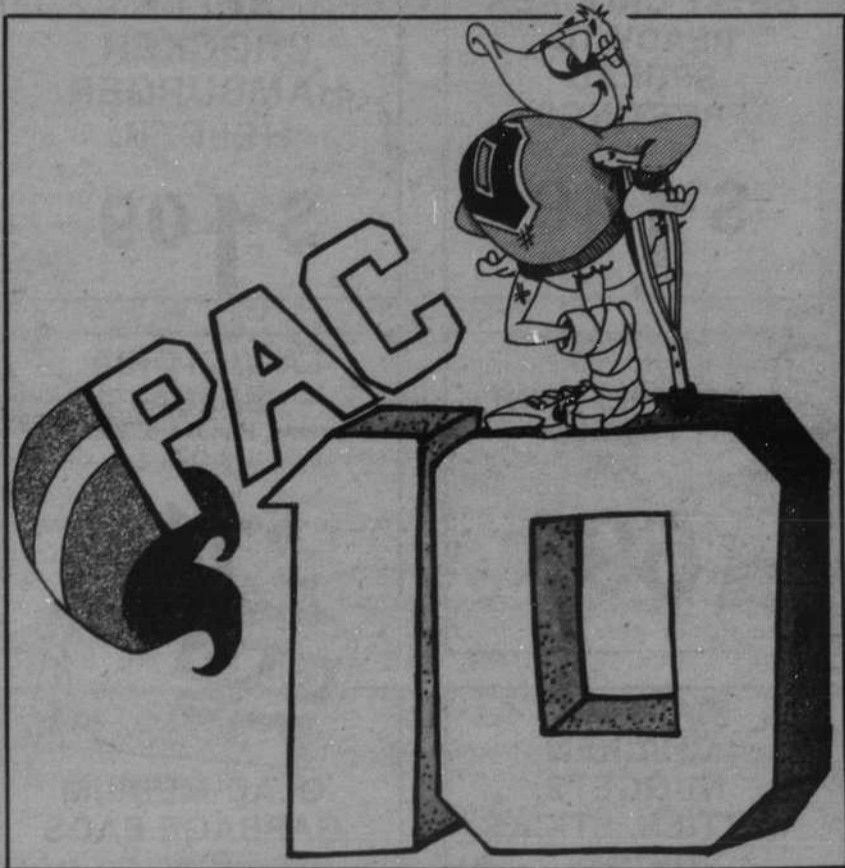
The defensive secondary is led by senior, Wendell Cason, who will start in one of the cornerback positions. The other cornerback position would have been filled by junior transfer, Donny Brown, but he broke his ankle in practice on Aug. 29th and is expected to miss the entire season.

The starters in the safety positions have some injury setbacks haunting them, also. Doug Judge, a junior, returns this season having been out since the Arizona game last year where he was injured while returning a kick-off. Judge will be battling senior Jeff Williams for the free safety position. Another junior, Dan Wilken, will start at strong safety.

The special teams are hurting because of graduation, Brooks pointed out. The Ducks lost both punter, Kevin Hicks, and

All in all, Brooks believes he's got a better lineup this year, but he's unwilling to predict how that will translate into wins and losses. However, he is willing to reveal what he feels has to be done to ensure a winning year for Oregon.

"We've got to make sure that our pass defense is sound and that we've got a good pass rush," he said. "More importantly, we've got to control the ball a little bit more and score points."



Emerald file graphic

placekicker, Paul Schwabe, which Brooks said leaves a big question mark as to where the Ducks strength will lie in the kicking phase.

"The return phase is strong because we've got Lew Barnes and our kick-off returners rank at the top of the conference."

"I believe our kicking game will be in good shape," Brooks said. "Our field goal accuracy will definitely improve this year. Our punting, I hope, will be as good, at this point, we'll still have to see."

The punting position is between Mike Preacher and Paul Fitzgerald. And the placekicker position is between transfer, Mike MacCleod, and freshman, Kirk Dennis.

Brooks also believes Oregon has an outside chance at the conference title. "We're probably a dark horse," he added.

"The rest of the league is going to be better than a year ago, and the battle will be a very heated one for the conference championship. We need some things to go our way. We also need some luck in the injury department."

"We should be a more productive offensive team," he continued. "We should be at least as good on the defensive side of the ball. I think we're going to be a very capable team that has a good chance of making a run at it. Although it appears these things are going to be better, we still have to go out and do it."

The best that Duck fans can hope for is that the offense produces the way it should, the defense is better than a year ago, and that the football "experts" are wrong again.



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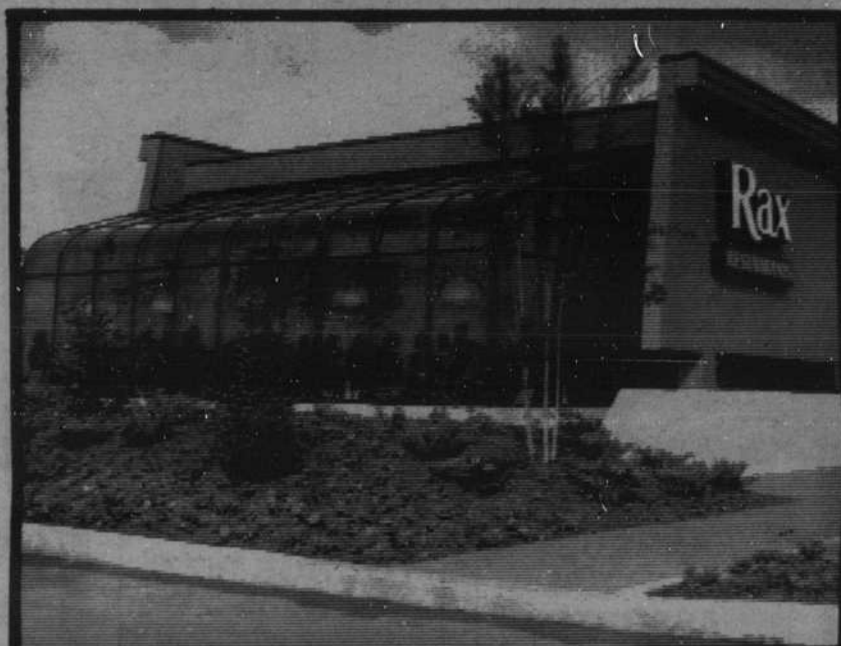


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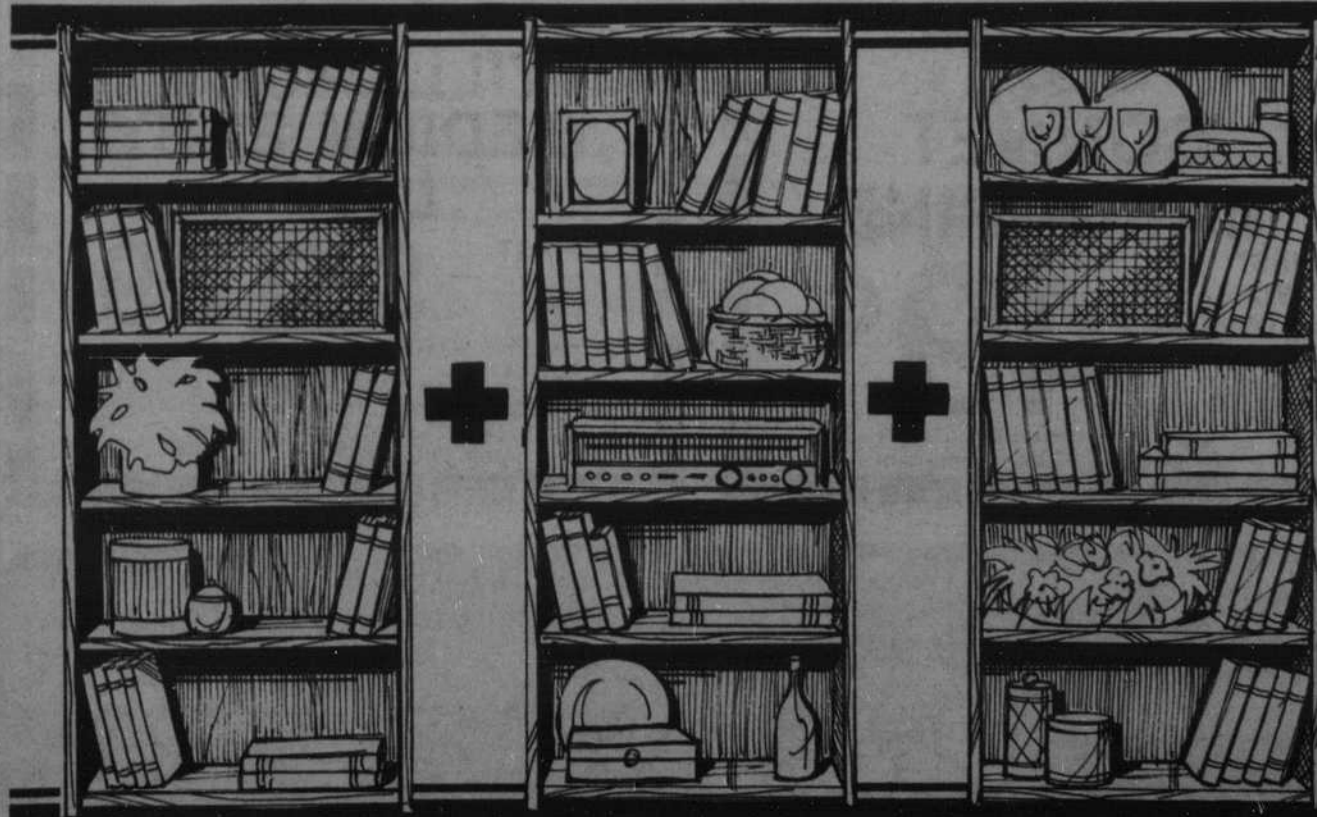
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