

Ducks shoot for 4-0 start

By Allen Lazo
Of the Emerald

There's one thing that kept Oregon from being 1-0 last season, and there may be one thing that keeps the Ducks from being 4-0 this year — the University of the Pacific Tigers.

"I don't know if you would call it 'revenge,' but we are going to make a strong determination to not let it happen again," says Oregon strong safety Doug Judge about the 1 p.m. matchup at Autzen Stadium Saturday.

"We were very optimistic about last season, and they burst our bubble right away," says Judge about Pacific's 21-15 win in Eugene in last year's season-opener.

The Tigers, a Pacific Coast Athletic Association team, won despite losing starting quarterback Paul Berner in the second quarter with a season-ending knee injury. Without Berner, coach Bob Cope's Pacific team finished at 3-9.

This year with Berner healthy, Pacific has a 2-1 record and would like an instant replay of last year's win.

"We're potentially better, but we're not playing better at this point," says Cope.

The Tiger's are coming off a 38-28 victory over Northern Arizona University. Pacific's only loss was against another Pac-10 opponent, the University of California, 28-12.

The key to the Pacific-Oregon matchup will be the play of each team's quarterback.

Pacific's Berner has completed just under 50 percent of his passes this year for 503 yards and four interceptions. Berner's stats aren't impressive, but they should be helped Saturday with an improved Tiger running attack.

Oregon quarterback Chris Miller has a 57 percent completion mark and 448 yards passing, but more importantly, the sophomore hasn't thrown an interception this season.

"I think there'll be a lot of offense," says Miller. "Hopefully more on our side than theirs."

Although Oregon's defense may have to watch the dangerous Berner, they must also contend with Pacific's revitalized running game.

"The thing that concerns me most about Pacific is that Berner is a great quarterback, but they also have a running game to go with him," says Oregon Coach Rich Brooks.

Pacific's rushing game is led by sophomore James Mackey who exploded for 161 yards last week. Mackey is 25th in the nation in rushing with 313 yards on 66 carries.

Defense has been the big question all week for the Ducks

after coming off a lackluster performance against Cal. Oregon's defensive unit allowed 446 total yards last week, 193 of those on the ground against a supposedly weak running Cal team.

"We're going to have to do a good job on defense which will give the offense the ball," says Brooks, who hopes to see the Duck offensive unit continue their explosiveness on the scoreboard.

Cope recognizes that one way for Pacific to stay out of trouble may be to steer clear of Oregon's patented big plays.

"With guys like (Lew) Barnes and (Tony) Cherry, we're not going to stop them, just slow them down to where they don't kill us," says Cope.



Emerald file photo
University of the Pacific running back James Mackey leads an improved Tiger team into Saturday's clash against the undefeated Ducks.

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