



Photo by Steve Crowell

Tailback Tony Cherry and Oregon's offense found the going tough Saturday as the University of Southern California dropped the Ducks 19-9 at Autzen Stadium.

# Ducks had their chances

By Allan Lazo  
Of the Emerald

Opportunity knocked on Oregon's door Saturday afternoon, and no one answered.

The Ducks had numerous opportunities against the University of Southern California, but Oregon's failure to capitalize gave them their second Pac-10 loss as the Trojans marched to a 19-9 victory at Autzen Stadium.

It wasn't that the Ducks couldn't get their hands on the football this week, as was the case in the loss to the University of Arizona last weekend, but Oregon just couldn't hang on to the ball at the right times against the Trojans.

"The key factor was that we turned the ball over," said tailback Tony Cherry who finished the game with 37 yards on five carries. "We handed them the ball and the ball game with it."

The Ducks finished the game with four turnovers, two lost fumbles and two Chris Miller interceptions, both of which were deflected off of Oregon receivers.

As a result of Oregon's four turnovers, the Trojans put points on the scoreboard.

"I think the key to their victory was our mistakes and their taking advantage of our mistakes," said fullback Alex Mack who led Oregon rushers with 97 yards on 11 carries. "We had too many turnovers to win any game."

On the other side of the football, Oregon also received the ball three times on Southern Cal mistakes but managed only three points in the three drives.

On each of the three Trojan fumbles, the Ducks received the football inside USC territory.

Heading the list of Oregon's squandered opportunities was the Ducks' first touchdown — the one that was called back.

Opportunity presented itself to the Ducks when a Mike Preacher punt hit USC free safety Jerome Tyler in the back on the punt coverage. Oregon's Greg Aitkenhead recovered the pigskin in early moments of the first quarter to give the Ducks a big break.

Oregon had a first down on the Trojan 37-yard line and on the first play of the drive, Miller hit flanker Lew Barnes for what appeared to be their sixth magical connection of the season. However, the touchdown was called back because of an illegal receiver downfield penalty.

"We killed ourselves time after time," said Mack. "It is so frustrating when you know you're better than the way you're playing, and when the team you're playing isn't really better."

The fact that Oregon may have outplayed USC was the prevailing feeling in Autzen Stadium as darkness settled in after the game.

After all, the Ducks came limping into the game with numerous injuries from the previous week and also lost four more players before game's end. Despite the troubles, the Ducks outgained the Trojans offensively 292 yards to 261.

"We feel very fortunate to get out with a win," said USC Coach Ted Tollner whose Trojans have won three Pac-10 road contests.

"But, it's a win. I don't care about statistics and all that stuff, what you care about is what's on the scoreboard," said Tollner.

In a game of lost opportunities, Oregon needed the man who had provided new hope for this Oregon team, but even quarterback Chris Miller was unable to capitalize on some very key situations.

Oregon offensive coordinator Bob Toledo said there was "no question" that Miller should have taken some of the opportunities to run the ball when he had open field ahead of him. Miller passed instead of ran which accounted for his negative 30 yards rushing for the game that included three sacks.

"If you don't run and make that threat, then people don't come up and respect that," said Toledo who saw Miller finish the game with a 16 of 40 passing performance for 177 yards.

"They'll just stay back and cover you," said Toledo of what USC did against Oregon's passing attack. "So, when you have the opportunity to run, you have to take it."

USC All-American linebacker Jack Del Rio saw things a little differently.

The 6-4, 235-pound senior thought that a little old-fashioned Trojan intimidation may have kept Miller behind the line of scrimmage.

"You come up and get your tail knocked off by some linebackers and you think twice about running the ball again," said Del Rio. "It's dangerous to turn upfield, and I'd stay in the pocket and throw if I was a quarterback."

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One opportunity was wasted when Oregon linebacker Todd Welch made Trojan fullback Todd Steele cough up the ball early in the third quarter.

However, Oregon was unable to put the ball in the end zone, and had to settle for a 24-yard Matt MacLeod field goal.

The Ducks had another chance to score when Welch sacked USC quarterback Tim Green causing him to fumble the ball to Oregon's John Byrne.

Then Miller threw a costly in-

terception that was deflected off McCall into the hands of USC cornerback Tommy Haynes.

"We made some poor decisions on offense," said Brooks.

Jordan hit his last field goal of 22-yards to put USC up 19-9 with 10:25 remaining in the game, but Oregon tried unsuccessfully to get back in the game.

"The loss was frustrating," Brooks said of the injuries in which defensive tackle Dave Maley was lost for the season.



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