

Defense will key Duck win

By Brent De La Paz
Of the Emerald

Saturday's Homecoming football game against Washington State University will be a classic battle of offense against defense.

The Pac-10 matchup will pit the Cougars' high-scoring offense against the Ducks' stingy defense, and one of them will have to compromise when the two teams meet at Autzen Stadium at 1 p.m.

"Our ballgames with Oregon have never really been big scoring games," says WSU coach Jim Walden, downplaying his team's scoring potential.

The Cougars are leading the Pac-10 in scoring offense with an average of 26.4 points per contest. The Ducks are allowing only 18.4 points on defense.

Oregon coach Rich Brooks knows the Ducks, 4-3, will need some offensive firepower themselves if Oregon's defense can't contain the WSU option offense.

"We are going to have to score 30 points in order to win," Brooks says after seeing the Cougars light up the scoreboard for 49 points last week against Stanford.

WSU, 3-4, took a come-from-behind victory over Stanford, 49-42, in Palo Alto. The Cougars collected the win after climbing back from a 42-14 deficit late in the third quarter. WSU scored 28 points in a furious fourth period blitz to win their first Pac-10 game against three losses.

"I think Washington State is back on track," Brooks says. "They are a great offensive team which will be difficult to contain on defense."



Photo by Kirk Hirota

Oregon's stingy defense gave No. 1 Washington a bad time Saturday, but it'll be tested again this week by Washington State's league-leading scoring offense.

While the Cougars can score, the Duck defense will be put in the hot seat for another week. Oregon made an outstanding defensive effort against the University of Washington Saturday.

Oregon's defense allowed the Huskies only three first downs and 109 yards on total offense, despite losing 17-10 because of 14 points scored for the Huskies by their defense and special teams.

"Their (Oregon) defense always seems to answer the challenge, and I know it will be a hard-nosed game," says WSU's Walden.

Oregon finished the Washington game without starting quarterback Chris Miller, who suffered a concussion in the first quarter of the Husky encounter and is listed as "questionable" for Saturday's game against WSU.

If Miller is unable to play, backup quarterback Mike

Jorgensen should start for the Ducks. Jorgensen filled in for Miller Saturday, moving the Oregon offense effectively against Washington.

WSU's offensive attack is spearheaded by quarterback Mark Rypien and running back Rueben Mayes, who had 216 yards and five touchdowns against Stanford.

"WSU does so many things on offense," Brooks says. "They do a great job on spreading the defense on the field in covering the option play."

The Cougars' offense is well taken care of. It's the WSU defense, ranked last in the Pac-10, which has caused headaches for Walden this season.

"We haven't shut anybody down," says Walden after his defense gave up 42 points to Stanford, 27 points to UCLA

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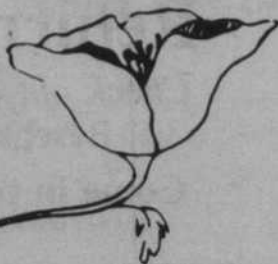
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