

Cougars win wild one over Oregon, 50-41

By Brent De La Paz
Of the Emerald

Washington State University outlasted Oregon in a thrilling 50-41 victory Saturday at Autzen Stadium in a game that marked the emergence of WSU running back Rueben Mayes as a single-man demolition unit.

Mayes had a day most running backs dream about. Mayes rushed for a record-setting 357 yards on 39 carries to break the old NCAA Division I-A single-game rushing mark of 356 set by Eddie Lee Ivery of Georgia Tech in 1978.

The Cougars needed every one of Mayes' yards as Oregon countered with its own offensive barrage. The two teams lighted up Autzen's newly installed scoreboard before 24,874 rain-soaked fans.

The Ducks, 4-4, had no trouble rolling up 41 points on WSU's defense with 478 total offensive yards. However, it was the inability of the Oregon defense to contain Mayes in WSU's option defense which was the difference in the game.

"I don't think we have ever missed so many tackles in a football game before," said Oregon coach Rich Brooks who saw his defense turn in its worst performance of the season after the Cougars piled up 663 yards in total offense. "We looked like we had no fundamental teaching on defense."

WSU kicker John Traut nailed a 39-yard field goal with 56 seconds left to clinch the victory for the 4-4 Cougars who weathered a Duck comeback bid. The loss was Oregon's fourth straight as the Ducks dropped to 1-4 in the Pac-10.

"Mayes had a great, great game," said Brooks who saw the WSU junior rack up 197 yards at halftime. "But that is no excuse for our shoddy tackling."

Oregon fell behind early against WSU as the Cougars tallied 21 points in a first-period explosion. Rick Chase's 77-yard TD run on a fake punt highlighted the WSU outburst and set the tone for the rest of the game.

"We had a non-existent defense," said Brooks. "It was like Washington State

was running against air."

WSU was ahead 21-6 early in the second quarter, but Oregon rebounded with its own offensive arsenal. Flanker Lew Barnes caught a flea-flicker TD pass of 36 yards from split end Scott Holman to close the gap to 21-12. Later, Oregon quarterback Chris Miller hooked up with Barnes for a 9-yard strike to move the Ducks within seven, 27-20 after a successful two-point conversion.

The Cougars went into the halftime leading 30-20, but WSU has been famous for scoring in bunches in the second half. WSU didn't score an avalanche of points in the next two quarters (20), but it was enough to survive the Ducks' comeback attempt in the fourth period.

"At halftime, we still felt we had a chance to win," said Brooks as the Ducks closed the gap 30-26 on two Matt MacLeod field goals early in the third period. "We (defense) fell back off the ball and started missing tackles."

WSU countered MacLeod's points with two TDs drives of 66 and 47 yards.

the last one a 12-yard touchdown run by Mayes that put WSU on top comfortably, 44-26, early in the fourth.

Mayes' third TD score had been set up by Tony Cherry's fumble on a kickoff return at the Oregon 47. The turnover was a key turning point in the game.

"He (Cherry) looked like he was down," said Brooks who felt the turf knocked the ball loose. "Obviously the officials felt differently."

Despite being down 44-26 with 13:49 left in the game, the Ducks rallied within six points on two Cherry TDs. Cherry's last score was a fourth-and-goal from the three. MacLeod added the extra point to draw the Ducks to 47-41 with 5:24 left in the game.

WSU went to Mayes in its final drive which started at the Cougar 34: Mayes ran the ball on five consecutive plays, which eventually put the Cougars in field goal range and set up Traut's clinching three-pointer.

"We got within striking distance," said Brooks. "We just could never stop them."

Runners vie at Pac-10s

The Oregon men's cross country team is in Palo Alto Calif. for the Pac-10 Conference Championships starting today at 11:00 a.m.

Oregon will try to knock off defending Pac-10 champion, the University of Arizona, in hopes of winning its first championship since 1982.

The Ducks could possibly win the conference championship if they receive strong performances from Chris Hamilton and John Zishka.

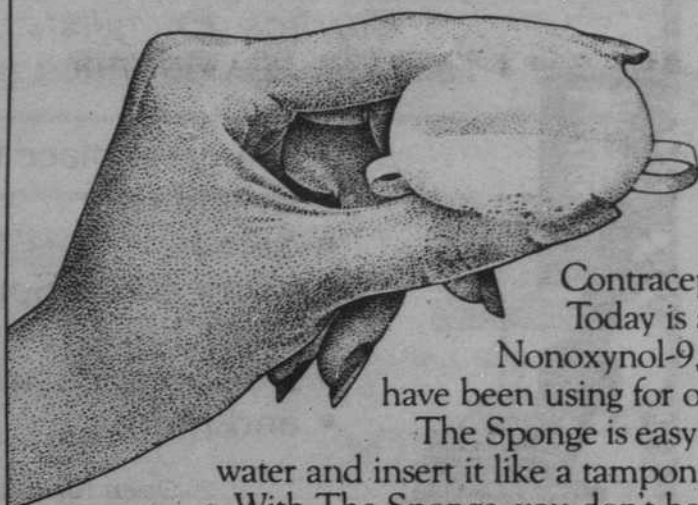
"They will be our top two runners," says Oregon coach Bill Dellinger. "It should be a good meet to see how we do against the competition."

The Ducks will compete on a 10,000 meter distance at the Stanford Golf Course. Joining Hamilton and Zishka on the seven-man team will be Dan Nelson, Matt McGuirk, Doug Benevento, Dub Myers and Harold Kuphaldt.

One of Oregon's top runners, Mike Blackmore, will not compete because of a foot injury.

Zishka has had the best finish at the Pac-10s after posting a fourth place effort in 1982. Hamilton has the best returning effort after finishing in 24th place in 1983.

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