Ducks could clinch winning year against ASU

By Allan Lazo
Of the Emerald

With a win Saturday against Arizona State University, the Oregon football team could clinch its first winning season since 1980 and set themselves up for a shot at the school's best record in the last 20 years

The Ducks, 5-4 overall and 2-4 in the Pac-10 Conference, will be counting on a repeat performance from the offense that put two touchdowns on the scoreboard against UCLA in a 20-18 upset win. Oregon's offense rose to the occasion without its leading pass-catcher, flanker Lew Barnes, who injured hia knee in the second quarter.

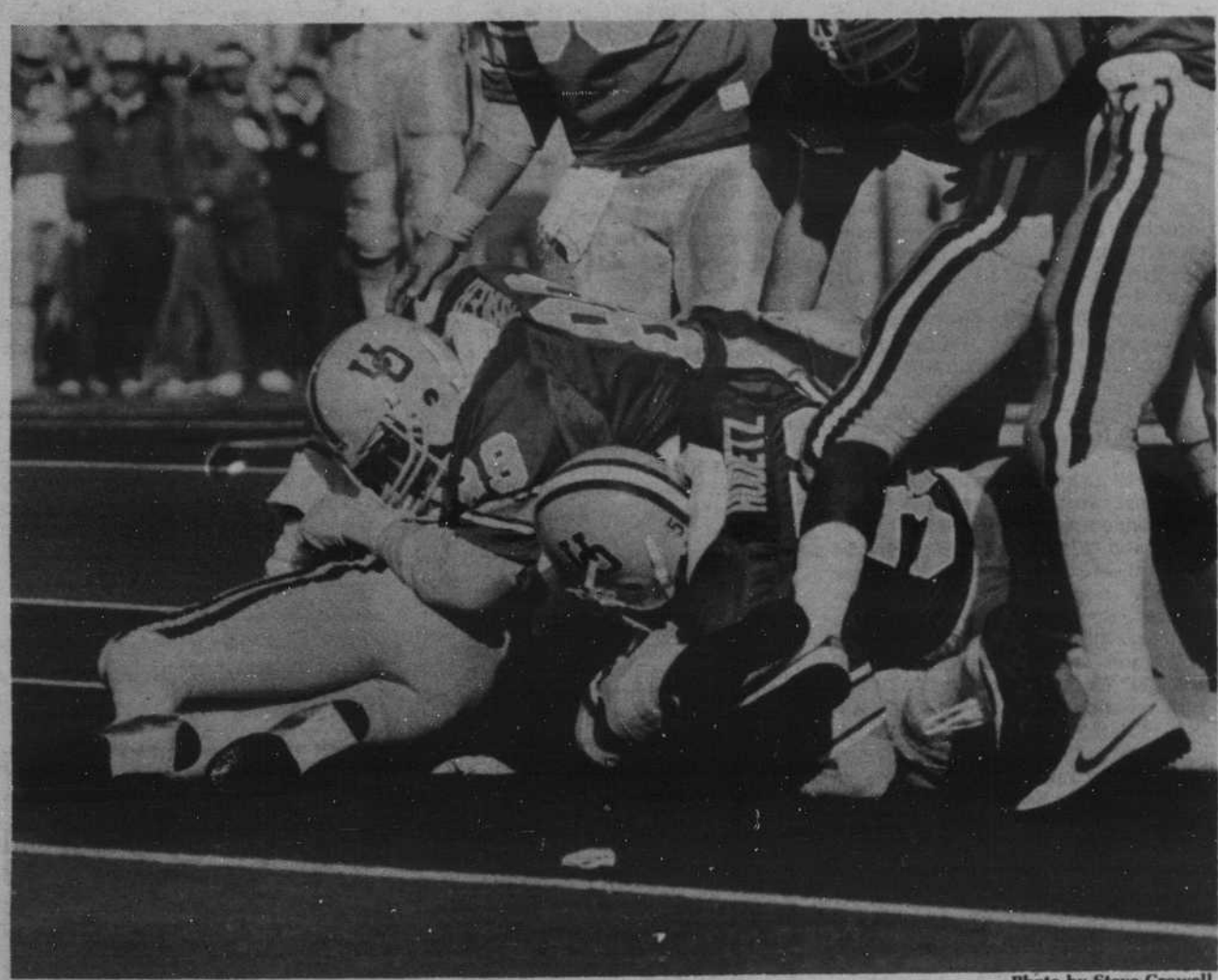

Photo by Steve Crowell

Linebacker Bob Hudetz (59) and freshman defensive end Tim Parker (89) hope to provide another big day for the Oregon defense, as Arizona State University comes to Autzen Stadium for a 1 p.m. Pac-10 matchup.

Barnes status is still listed as "questionable" as the Ducks meet ASU in the home finale at 1 p.m. in Autzen Stadium.

"If any team loses a player like that it's going to affect them, and we are just going to have to play like we did after he got hurt last week," says quarterback Chris Miller who threw touchdowns to Scott Holman and Doug Herman in the UCLA victory.

"We had people come in and do a good job last week, but it will definitely have an effect on us," says Miller of the loss of Barnes who has been Oregon's instant offense.

The Ducks will need another top defensive effort against the Sun Devils who are have a disappointing season. ASU, highly touted in the preseason polls, stands at 3-5 for the year and 2-3 in the Pac-10.

Overshadowing the Devils' lackluster year is the fact that Oregon could have its first winning season since 1980 with a win Saturday. The Ducks suffered through a four-game losing streak in October, but a win against ASU and Oregon State in the Civil War clash could bring Oregon its best record in 20 years.

The Ducks still have a chance to capture seven victories, a feat last accomplished by Len Casanova's 1964 squad that went 7-2-1.

"It's a big game because this could be the stepping stone to possibly having the best record that Oregon has had in 20 years," says Oregon coach Rich Brooks, who also has a personal stake in the game. Brooks has never beaten a Sun Devil team (0-3) and Saturday he would like to end the winless string.

"I'd rather go into the final game, the Civil War, looking for a 7-4 record rather than a 6-5 record," says Brooks who could also lock up his third winning season as Oregon head coach with a victory over the Sun Devils.

Beating the Sun Devils also means a great deal to 14 Oregon seniors who will be playing their final game at Autzen Stadium.

"It's kind of disappointing that the season is just about over and that this does have to be the last game here," says defensive tackle David Culp.

The Sun Devils biggest strength Saturday will be their passing defense, which is ranked fifth nationally. Strong Safey David Fulcher leads the stiff ASU secondary, which has been stifling the passing lanes for opponents.

"They have a lot of speed, especially in their defensive backs," says Miller. "They will have a chance to get to a lot of the passes because they are so tough with all of their team speed."

Miller needs only 140 yards to move up to third on the Oregon all-time single-season passing yardage chart. Miller has 1,536 yards which ranks him fourth behind the legendary Dan Fouts' who had two 2,000-plus seasons.

Like Oregon, ASU also has a high-powered offense. The Sun Devils racked up 651 yards of total offense last week in a 52-44 loss to Florida State University. This explosive passing attack is led by sophomore quarterback Jeff Van Raaphorst.

Last week, Van Raaphorst passed his way to the Pac-10 single game yardage record with 532 yards through the air, upping his totals to 1,075 this season with nine touchdowns and a 62.7 percent completion rate. Van Raaphorst has missed most of the season because of injury, but showed what he could do when healthy.

In addition to Van Raaphorst, the Devils feature kicker Luis Zendejas. Zendejas is currently third on the NCAA all-time scoring list with 343 points. He needs 14 points to break Tony Dorsett's record of 356 points.

ASU also has a strong running attack with tailback Darryl Clack who turned in three straight 100-plus yard performances against Stanford, California and Oregon State this season.

Finley honored top coach award

Oregon wrestling coach Ron Finley was named Coach of the Year by USA Wrestling, the sport's governing body, in a recent awards banquet in Stillwater, Okla.

The award, which is given annually to the top coach in American amateur wrestling, was presented to Finley who coached the United States Greco-Roman team at the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. Finley's squad won four medals at Games, the first time an American team had won any awards in that competition.

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