

California's comeback win unbearable for Oregon

By Robert Collias
Of the Emerald

On a weekend where the Oregon State Beavers proved that parity in college football is certainly here and that no lead is big enough, the Oregon Ducks provided exhibit A to the cause as they jumped to a 21-0 lead in the first quarter and then went into hibernation against the Bears of California before losing, 27-24.

Oregon fell to 2-2 in the Pac-10 conference and 2-4 overall, while Cal improved to 1-4 and 3-4.

This game saw the Ducks at their best as they jumped ahead of the Bears 21-0 before Cal had run 12 offensive plays.

It also saw Oregon at its worst as the offense became almost non-existent in the second and third quarters and the defense surrendered the lead bit by bit to the tenacious Bears, who chipped away before finally overtaking the Ducks on Tyrone Moore's touchdown run with 7:22 remaining in the game.

"We jump out to a big lead like that (21-0) by taking advantage of their turnovers," Oregon coach Rich Brooks lamented. "Then we make enough mistakes of our own to lose two or three football games."

Cal won the coin-toss, and for a while at least that looked like the last thing the Bears might win after they decided to relieve the opening kickoff.

The Bears got one first down on Ed Barbero's 11-yard run, but on their fifth play from scrimmage Oregon linebacker John Wolf blitzed and sacked Cal starting quarterback Kevin Brown forcing Brown to fumble and Matt Brock recovered to put Oregon's offense in business at the Cal 10.

Oregon took two plays to score as Miller hit Eric Elliott for a gain of seven to put the ball on the three yard-line.

From there Tony Cherry, who had 137 yards rushing on the day, took it in and Oregon led 7-0 with just 1:46 gone in the ball game.

After Moore returned Dean Otto's kickoff to the Cal 29, the Bears took little time giving the ball right back to the Ducks.

On second and seven from the 32 Ed Hulbert picked off a Brown pass and returned it four yards to the Cal 23.

It took the Ducks just two plays to punch it in again as Miller hit Scott Holman for 17 to put the ball on the six. Miller then hit Holman for the touchdown.

Oregon 14, Cal 0, with 11:24 left in the first quarter.

Cal seemed to be bent on self destruction as they took three plays then punted short to give the ball to Oregon on its own 45.

Nine plays later Cherry had his second touchdown and the

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Ducks were sitting pretty at 21-0 and 6:51 left in the first quarter.

Actually it was more a case of Oregon being sitting Ducks as Cal seemed to reach down for something extra while the Ducks flew south for the winter.

"I don't know if we were having too much fun or enjoying ourselves too much," Oregon quarterback Chris Miller said. "But we sure did let down."

"For Oregon it was probably unfortunate they got up 21-0," Cal coach Joe Kapp said. "They probably got a little complacent."

Cal got on the board under the leadership of reserve quarterback Brian Bedford with a 39-yard field goal from Leland Rix culminating a 30-yard, six play drive and made the score 21-3 with 14:04 left in the second quarter.

The Ducks were still clinging to a 21-10 lead late in the first half when Miller found a wide open Lew Barnes for what looked to be a possible score over the middle. Barnes made a nifty cut at the ten to break free, but he was tackled by Cal's Derek Taylor. Barnes fumbled the ball and it rolled into and out of the end zone to give Cal the ball and a touchback with only 53 seconds before halftime.

After Cal had pulled to within 21-13 on another Rix field goal Bedford engineered a 14-play drive that took 6:07 off the clock and made the score 21-19 with 14:57 left in the game.

By now Oregon fans were beginning to wonder if the Ducks might ever score again, or if by some chance the clock might expire before the Ducks inevitably did.

No such luck.

Oregon did get three points on a Matt MacLeod field goal to go ahead 24-19 with 11:37 left. More importantly though was a call by an official on what appeared to be a touchdown by Barnes in the end zone. Barnes came down with the ball over

Darryl Stallworth who preceded to knock Barnes out-of-bounds.

Replays later showed that Barnes had indeed been in bounds, but the official ruled otherwise so instead of a 28-19 lead it was 24-19. Unfortunately for the Ducks, that wasn't good enough.

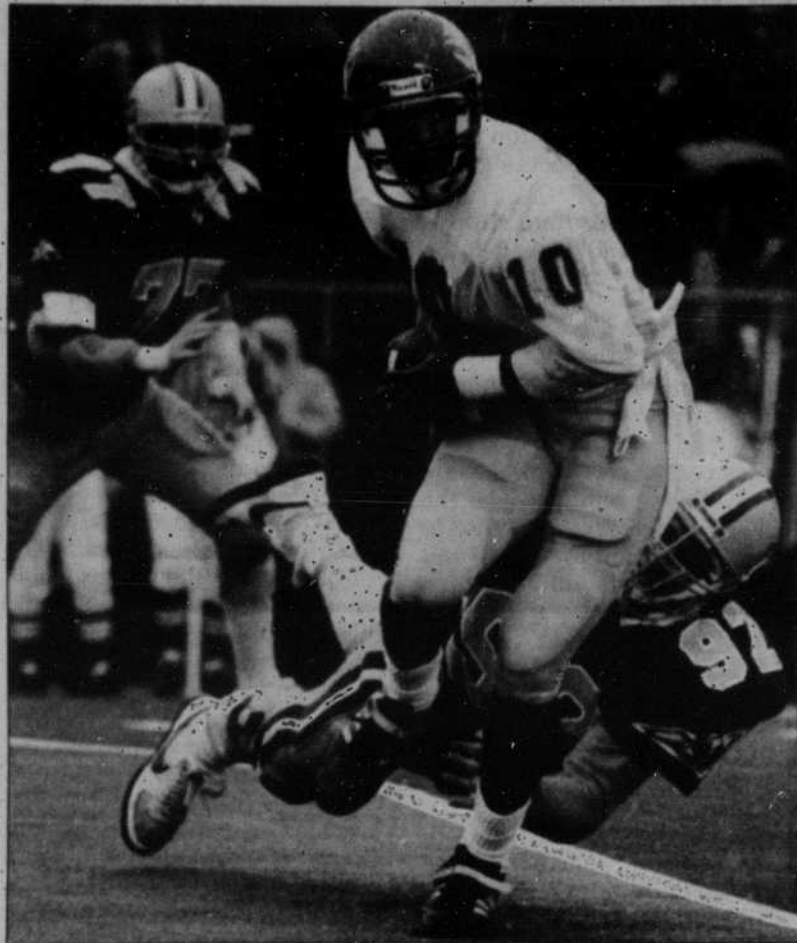


Photo by Ross Martin

Cal quarterback Brian Bedford (10) escapes Oregon's Matt Brock (92) while Rob Marshall (77) pursues. Cal also escaped with the win Saturday in Autzen Stadium, 27-24, after the Ducks opened the game ahead 21-0.

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