

when he became coach to employ an option attack on offense, reasoning that his chances of wresting a pro-type prospect from the pass-happy California schools were slim. In 1979 Reggie Ogburn burst on the scene and made it seem like a very wise move.

Ogburn guided the Ducks to their first back-to-back winning seasons in 16 years, posting a 6-5 mark in 1979 and a 6-3-2 record in 1980. It was the best of times for Oregon football, but Brooks was still frustrated in his efforts to turn the corner.

That frustration was perhaps best indicated when the Ducks hosted USC on Oct. 18. Two apparent touchdowns were disallowed by the officials, who gave the Trojans a controversial touchdown ruling, and Oregon was forced to settle for a 7-7 tie.

"We still should have beaten them," Brooks said as he tapped on the telephone receiver.

Still, the Ducks were 6-2-2, and only a road victory over Arizona State stood between Oregon and postseason play. The subsequent 42-37 defeat was particularly disappointing to Brooks.

Those teams were, according to Brooks, "the best I've had in terms of balance between offense and defense. It was a fun two years because we were competitive."

Perhaps it was the pressure to retain that competitiveness that led to the problems that surfaced in 1981, when the Ducks found themselves on NCAA probation and ineligible for postseason play. A range of violations from players using WATS telephone lines to the discovery of a slush fund resulted in Oregon losing five scholarships for five years and being ineligible for television or bowl games for three.

"I don't know if you ever personally get over something like that," he said, his fingers again moving towards the telephone.

"The step from being a 2-9 program to becoming a .500 one is difficult, and the next step is even tougher," Brooks noted. "We had built the program up to a certain level and then got

whacked. We fell back down and just now are getting back to where we were in '79 and '80 as a viable football team."

In retrospect, the punishment levied against Oregon seems harsh to Brooks, particularly in light of recent revelations at Southern Methodist University and other national powers. The impact was immediate, as the Ducks skidded to marks of 2-9 and 2-8-1 in 1981 and 1982, respectively.

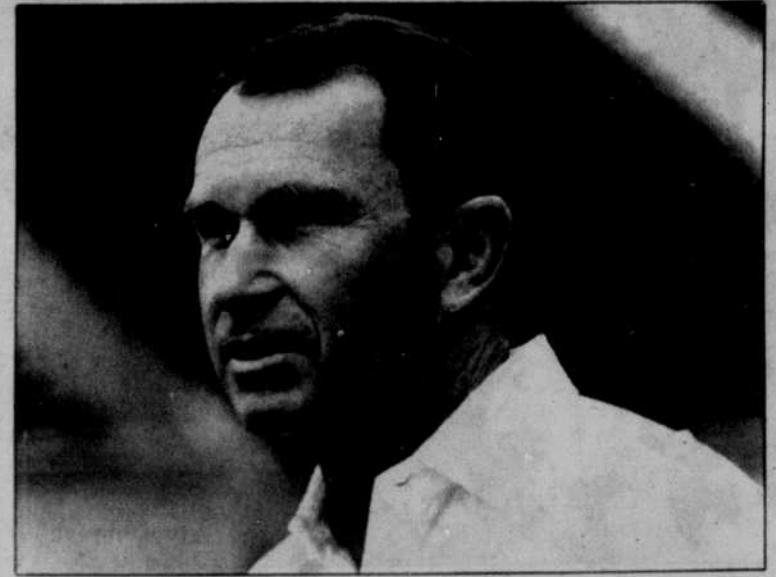
In 1983 change seemed in order, and Brooks brought in Bob Toledo to coach the quarterbacks in the new pro set. One of the players who benefited from the change was a lightly recruited freshman quarterback named Chris Miller, who started the last two games that season after Mike Jorgenson suffered a broken leg.

Miller "was inconsistent, which you expect from a young quarterback. But the talent was there, and the level of ability could be seen. He just had to put it together, and obviously he did," Brooks said.

With Miller at the helm, and a supporting cast that included NFL products Tony Cherry and Lew Barnes, the Ducks found an offense. But they gave up points as quickly as they scored them, beginning a trend which continues to this day.

After a 4-6-1 record in 1983, the Ducks jumped out quickly in 1984, winning their first four games. After giving up 50 and 44 points to Washington State and Arizona State, respectively, Oregon wound up just 6-5.

A number of factors con-



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— Rich Brooks

tributed to the Ducks defensive demise, Brooks believes. Injuries, recruiting gambles that didn't pan out, and a change in offensive philosophy around the Pac-10 all had an effect.

"The level of talent dropped just a little bit at the same time the other teams in the league opened up their offenses," Brooks recalled. "Southern Cal and Washington used to line up and pound you, but you could hold on and match up with quickness. When they opened up it put more pressure on our defense. Then you're thin and if you get hurt you really have to scramble," Brooks said.

That scramble continues. Miller has moved on, leaving back-to-back 5-6 seasons in his

wake. Brooks looks forward to the day when the schedule does not include two nonconference games a year with national powerhouses but makes no excuses, saying if Oregon wants to be a good team it has to win those games.

"We're playing too many of what I call 'athletic director games.' They are lucrative. They help pay the bills. They don't help you win games or go to bowls."

The Oregon mentor denies aspirations to move off the sidelines to an athletic directorship or another administrative position.

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Defense *Continued from Page 9D*

ed a lineman for a linebacker.

"We'll have more speed and more mobility. The disadvantage is going to be having one less big guy on the line."

Going into the Ducks fall camp, the three starting defensive linemen are expected to be Matt Brock and Devin FitzPatrick on the ends, and Putzier at nose tackle, with Chris Leupold as Putzier's backup. Brooks said that Putzier may see time at one of the end spots.

Senior Tom Talbot and sophomore Mark Kearns are

slated to start at the two inside linebacker slots, with juniors Scott Kozak and Mike Blakey on the outside.

Brooks is also high on linebacker Scott Whitney, who played at Ventura Community College in California.

"The key players will be the three down linemen — Putzier, Brock, and FitzPatrick. And hopefully we'll have David Cusano back," Brooks said. Cusano is recovering from knee surgery.

KITES AND OTHER DELIGHTS

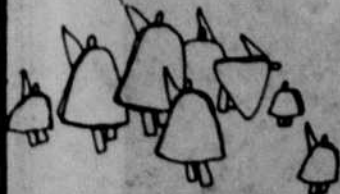


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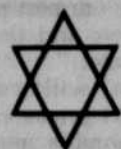
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