

Brooks sees 17-point spread over Oregon State as 'crazy'

By Tracy Sumner
Emerald Sports Editor

Heading into Saturday's Civil War game with Oregon State, Oregon (6-4) seems to have all the advantages over the 4-5-1 Beavers.

The Ducks are third in the Pacific 10 Conference in total offense, third in total defense, second in passing offense and boast one of the conference's best quarterbacks in Bill Musgrave.

Oregon State, on the other hand, is dead last in the conference in total offense, and eighth in passing behind only the lethargic UCLA Bruins and run-oriented Arizona Wildcats.

Besides all this, the Beavers have been blown out the past two weeks by a cumulative 99-20 score.

Obviously, the Ducks fully deserve the 17 point spread odds-makers have given them for the game.

That is, of course, unless Oregon football coach Rich Brooks knows anything.

"I think it's crazy," Brooks said of the point spread at his weekly phone press conference Wednesday. "There's no way that makes any sense to me."

Brooks said Oregon State, despite its sometimes sluggish offense, will offer the Ducks some challenges when it has the ball. Beaver fullback Pat Chaffey and quarterback Matt Booher were among the threats Brooks mentioned.

"There are several things that concern me," Brooks said. "Pat Chaffey is a major threat both as a

runner and a receiver coming out of the backfield. He's an excellent football player and he's rushed for more yards already this year than he has in any other year.

"In every game they've won, he's been a significant factor running the ball," he said. "That's a major concern."

"Booher is a tremendous athlete. He has great speed," Brooks said. "He's become better and better as a passer and he is a tremendous threat as a runner."

"Containment of him and covering their very fine receivers and not allowing Booher to scramble and find anybody open on the run is a major concern," he added.

Oregon State, despite its offensive problems this season, has played respectably on defense for most of the year. The Beavers are fourth in the conference in total defense coming into the game, just one spot behind the Ducks.

"Oregon State's defense is obviously a very fine defense," Brooks said. "They've been at the upper division of defensive stats in the Pac-10 all year long. They have some outstanding players."

"Esera Tualo is an outstanding nose guard," Brooks said of the 6-foot-3-inch, 270-pound junior. "He may be the best nose guard we've lined up against this year."

"You throw in Pellom McDaniels and a secondary that is doing a good job, not just of getting interceptions, but of supporting the run, and it adds a lot of problems," he said.

"They're just a very fast unit," Brooks said. "Their defensive front has tremendous speed and quickness. They've done a very good job for the most part of containing running games and putting pressure on the quarterback."

Oregon State broke a 13-game Civil War winless string last season in a 21-10 win in Corvallis. While Brooks wouldn't use the word "revenge," he did point out that the loss to the Beavers hasn't been forgotten by him or his players.

"I can't tell you there's not some talk about what happened last year and that we don't want it to happen again," he said. "The premise of this football game from our standpoint is that our seniors want to beat Oregon State in the Civil War game."

No Oregon team has won seven games in a season since 1964 when the Ducks went 7-2-1. The Ducks didn't go to a bowl that year and very probably won't go to one this year. Brooks didn't want to talk about the bowl situation.

"I can't control bowl things," Brooks said. "All I know is if we win (against Oregon State), this team should be in post-season play based on some of the other teams that are."

Brooks had high praise for the seniors on the Oregon football team who will be playing their final games in Oregon uniforms.

"We've got an outstanding group of seniors," he said. "They have really done a great job with their careers here and brought respectability and credibility to Oregon football."

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