

# Cougar offense, defense falters against Ducks

Brigham Young fails in executing game plan

By Paul Morgan  
Emerald Sports Reporter

Brigham Young linebacker Alema Fitisemanu summed up the feeling in the Cougars' lockerroom after Oregon's 32-16 victory Saturday.

"It just wasn't there today," he said. "It just wasn't there."

Indeed, few aspects of BYU's game went according to plan. The offense, one of the most productive in the nation, faltered under the pursuit of a quick Oregon defense. While the BYU defense was tight at times it still allowed Oregon several big plays.

"You just have to credit Oregon," BYU Coach LaVell Edwards said. "I thought they did a great job."

It was also quarterback Ty Detmer's injured hand that played into BYU's

fate. Detmer suffered a sprain in the back of his right hand - at the end of the throwing arm which has carried the Cougars' hopes this season - and was not able to practice hard last week. He did get some warm-ups in, but he did not get a full-scale workout.

Edwards and Detmer acknowledged that the injury and lack of practice time influenced Detmer's play. He did finish with 442 yards passing, but threw five interceptions.

"I threw 'em," Detmer said of the interceptions, "and they caught 'em. I'll take the blame. I should have been out there practicing."

But the injury should take nothing away from the performance of the Oregon defense, Edwards added. BYU was held to minus 2 yards of total offense in the first quarter, largely due to BYU's

inability to run the ball. The Cougars had minus 41 yards rushing for the quarter, and minus 47 yards for the game.

Detmer was sacked three times by the Ducks in the first quarter for 35 yards lost - one time by Oregon nose tackle Marcus Woods in the end zone for a safety. The BYU offense mounted drives of four plays, three plays and four plays to start the game, and suffered an interception at the goal line before mounting a serious second-quarter drive that ended in a touchdown.

Meanwhile, the BYU defense was struggling as well. Pinned in its own territory, the Cougars gave up a touchdown and a field goal, with the only solace being an interception in the end zone.

But Edwards still felt the Cougars could win the game, despite Oregon's early 12-0 lead.

"We got out of the first quarter down by only 12 points and I felt good about that," he said. "I thought we could get right back in it."

After the touchdown in the second period, it did look like the Cougars were going to be able to move the ball. But BYU punted twice, had an interception in the end zone, and went into halftime down 12-7.

For the first time this season, BYU dug itself a hole it could not climb out of. The Cougars have prided themselves on being a second half team, often letting the opposition build a lead in the first half and then turning on the offense to earn a victory in the second half.

That didn't happen against the Ducks.

"The thing that hurt us," Edwards explained, "was getting off to a shaky start. Then it was just one thing after another."

Turn to **BYU**, Page 17

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