



Courtesy of Stanford Sports Information Department

Junior Jason Palumbis has overcome a severe shoulder injury to return to the starting quarterback job he had as a redshirt freshmen.

QB has roots in Oregon

Palumbis returns heading Cardinal

By Robert Weber
Emerald Sports Reporter

Oregon's Homecoming Game isn't being played until next weekend against UCLA, but don't tell that to Jason Palumbis.

Saturday's Stanford-Oregon game will be a homecoming of sorts for Palumbis, Stanford's strong-armed junior quarterback, who will be playing football for the first time in Oregon since his days as a prep all-American at Lakeridge High School in Lake Oswego.

There will be a small gathering of friends, family and former coaches in Autzen Stadium tomorrow, but Palumbis doesn't expect the pressure to bother him.

"It's a big game for the team and for me individually because I'm coming home," Palumbis said, "but I'm not worried about the pressure. I'm just happy to be coming home."

The 1990 season has been much kinder to Palumbis than to the Cardinal team as a whole. Despite Stanford's 36-31 shocker over then No. 1 ranked Notre Dame, the majority of the attention recently has been focused on Palumbis due to the club's 2-5 start.

The victory over the Irish was nice, Palumbis said, but nothing for him and his teammates to dwell upon.

"It was great to be able to go back there and beat them, especially when they're the No. 1 team in the country," he said, "but we have to be able to come back and win some more games."

Palumbis has racked up some eye-opening numbers this year but is much more concerned with what happens with the team.

"We've lost some games lately and it's partially my fault," he said. "I try to ignore the stats and just play."

Palumbis' 136.4 passing efficiency rating is tops in the Pacific-10 Conference and the 13th best mark in the nation while his 227.0 passing yards a game ranks him third in the conference

and 18th nationally.

Those numbers are even more impressive when one considers that Palumbis didn't take a single snap during the 1989 campaign. After starting seven games as a redshirt freshman in 1988, Palumbis slipped down, and almost off, Stanford's depth chart last season due to a shoulder problem that has bothered him since his senior year at Lakeridge.

"I really couldn't throw the ball effectively last year," Palumbis said. "It got progressively worse until I had surgery last November. When they operated, they found no cartilage in there and a bunch of bone spurs, so they just cleaned it all up and now my arm is getting stronger."

Stanford Coach Denny Green credits the new and improved shoulder for Palumbis' ability to regain his starting position.

"Jason had a bad shoulder last year that should have been operated on three years ago," Green said. "Now he's throwing the ball accurately and is able to show that he's capable of leading the team."

Green isn't the only coach to praise Palumbis' game. Oregon Coach Rich Brooks was quick to praise the job that the Stanford quarterback has done.

"I think Jason has done a tremendous job. I think he is an outstanding player," Brooks said.

Palumbis' statistics have placed him alongside some pretty select company at the top of most of Stanford's season and career passing records.

He has completed 154 of 225 passes this year for a .684 completion percentage putting him on pace to break Turk Schonert's single-season record of .670.

Palumbis' .624 career completion percentage leaves him second behind Steve Dils on the all-time Cardinal list that includes such current and former NFL stars as John Brodie, Jim Plunkett, Dils and John Elway.

That's pretty select company for somebody who sat out an entire season, but being around select company is nothing new for Palumbis.

While at Lakeridge, Palumbis rewrote

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