

SPORTS

Ducks seeking a new quarterback

Spring football drills open Monday for Coach Brooks' squad

By Jake Berg
Emerald Sports Reporter

Losing a quarterback the quality of Bill Musgrave is enough to cripple any offense.

Except for Oregon's. Musgrave's face will be the most notable of those absent from Oregon's spring football practices, which begin Monday. Four candidates are in line to assume the departed position, a spot offensive coordinator Mike Bellotti says is presently a toss-up.

"It's going to be very interesting," Bellotti said. "For the time that I've been here Bill Musgrave has always been the returner and there's never been a real concern or question about who's going to play there. It's truly a wide open situation."

The four in line to assume the quarterback role are junior college transfer Brett Salisbury, redshirt sophomore Doug Musgrave, the younger brother of Bill, and redshirt freshmen Kyle Crowston and Danny O'Neil.

Crowston, Musgrave and O'Neil, having worked with the program last season, may be more familiar with Oregon's offensive system, but Salisbury, the top-rated junior college quarterback in the nation last year, has the edge in experience, Bellotti said.

"He is the standard that the others shoot for because he has proven at a junior college level that he can do the kinds of things that Bill Musgrave did for us," Bellotti said. "The question is, 'Can he do it at this level?' We tend to think he can."

Both Bellotti and Coach Rich Brooks would like to finish spring practice with a clear idea of who their starting quar-

terback will be come September.

"We're going to go in the first week and try to limit it down to where two of the four quarterbacks are getting a majority of the reps, to insure that we come out of spring ball with a number one and a number two quarterback," Bellotti said.

"I would certainly like to come out of the spring with the top two quarterbacks, and further, I'd like to have number one figured out," Brooks said. "We'd also like to figure out the other question marks."

The most challenging question mark on offense, besides quarterback, will likely be at center.

"If you talked about the two biggest question marks on the offensive side of the ball, it would be the offensive center position and the quarterback position," Bellotti said. "The two guys that handle the ball the most."

Scot Boatright, the Ducks' starter at center last fall, and the entire left side must be replaced, leaving Oregon's offensive line vulnerable. A host of players will attempt to fill the holes left by their graduated predecessors.

Joe Baguio, a former defensive lineman, and Tom Curran will work at center this spring, and Todd Gydesen, Steve Hardin, Heath Howington, Greg Phillips, Jon Tattersall and Matt Martin look to contend for the left tackle and guard positions. On the right side of the line, Bud Bowie and David Collinsworth, both starters there a year ago, return for spring practice.

Likely anchoring the line will be returning tight end Jeff Thomason, who was second-team all-Pacific-10 Conference last season. The 6-foot-4, 230-

pound senior says he hopes to improve his blocking and receiving during the spring practices.

"We all can improve," Thomason said. "I want to be the best I can be."

"Jeff Thomason is the premiere tight end in the conference and one of the best in the country," Brooks said.

Trying to beat out Thomason at tight end will be Vince Ferry, who started the last three games in place of an injured Thomason last season. Willy Tate and O.B. Babbs.

If the quarterback position is one with an air of mystery this spring, the remainder of the offensive backfield should not be.

Tailback Sean Burwell, who broke the single season rushing record for a freshman last year, is back, as are fullbacks Juan Shedrick and Brandon Jumper.

Jumper, after sitting out most of last season because of a knee injury, will not participate in full contact practices this spring.

"Sean Burwell obviously is a quality player, and to have him for three more years is very exciting," Bellotti said.

Howard Blackwell and Dwayne Jones will also compete for a spot in the backfield.

Oregon lost wide receivers Tony Hargain, Michael McClellan and Joe Reitzug to graduation, but Ronnie Harris, Anthony Jones and Brian Brown, who all saw a substantial amount of playing time last season, return to the Ducks' air attack. Junior college transfer Derrick Deadwiler will add speed to the receiving corps.

"These players are young and somewhat untested, but they have a lot of ability," Bellotti said. "This spring will

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