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SPORTS

Last-minute drive falls short in Utah

By Jake Berg
Emerald Sports Editor

Halfway through the first quarter, it seemed that the Las Vegas oddsmakers' prediction of a 14-point spread was right. Except the wrong team was ahead 14-0.

Oregon, two touchdown favorites in a Saturday game at Utah, gave up two touchdowns early to the Utes and could never find its way out of the proverbial first-half hole, losing 24-17 at Salt Lake City's Rice Stadium.

Utah, 3-1, was ranked 160th in the nation in overall defense last year. But a stingy new unit ranked 13th in the country before Saturday left the Ducks with only a field goal through the first three quarters and held on in the final period for the win. The Ducks, 2-1, had a potentially game-tying comeback stopped short late in the game.

After three quarters and a deficit of 24-3, Oregon quarterback Danny O'Neil gave the Ducks their first touchdown, finding Anthony Jones for a 27-yard strike.

The Oregon defense, embarrassed in the first half but nearly flawless in the second, quickly forced Utah into a punt attempt that Doug Douglass blocked, putting Oregon on the Utah 26-yard line.

An O'Neil pass moved the Ducks to the 10 on the next play, and a play later the red-shirt freshman quarterback was dancing into the end zone with the ball in his hand. Gregg Mc-

Pac-10 Football

Team	Conf		Overall	
	W-L-T	W-L-T	W-L-T	W-L-T
Arizona St.	1-0-0	2-0-0		
California	1-0-0	2-1-0		
Oregon	1-0-0	2-1-0		
Washington	1-0-0	2-0-0		
Arizona	1-1-0	1-2-0		
Oregon St.	0-1-0	1-1-0		
UCLA	0-0-0	1-1-0		
USC	0-1-0	1-2-0		
Washington St.	0-1-0	0-3-0		
Stanford	0-2-0	0-2-0		

Callum's point after kick brought the Ducks within seven, 24-17, with 5:15 to go in the game.

Oregon's defense again stopped the Utes on their next drive, this time when nose tackle Marcus Woods hit a Utah running back for a loss on a third-and-one situation, and more hope was apparent after Brian Brown's ensuing punt return and a late-hit penalty started the Ducks on the Utah 30-yard line with just under four minutes remaining.

But Oregon's offense looked just as absent as injured tailback Sean Burwell, the Ducks' offensive star in their first two games.

An incomplete pass and two running plays later, Oregon faced a fourth-and-one that it failed to convert when Donovan Moore, Burwell's replacement, was stopped at the line of scrimmage on an off-tackle run.

The injury to Burwell may have hurt Oregon more than was previously anticipated. The sophomore tailback injured his ankle in a practice last week after becoming the Pacific-10 Conference's leading

rusher, gaining an even 300 yards in wins over Washington State and Texas Tech.

O'Neil faced pressure from the Utah defense all day as he was sacked eight times and forced to run 18 times during the course of the game. It showed in his final statistics, too — only nine of his 23 passes were completed for a meager 103 yards.

Also missing was starting defensive end Jeff Cummins, who is out for at least four weeks due to his left foot being placed in a cast because of ligament damage.

The Ducks may have lost the game in the first quarter, surrendering a pair of touchdowns to Utah in the first half of the opening period. Oregon did not even get a first down until just under 13 minutes were left in the half.

First quarter statistics tell the whole story. Utah earned eight first downs and gained 150 yards in the quarter, and Oregon had no first downs and gained only seven total yards.

Oregon's first play from scrimmage resulted in a lost fumble after Juan Shedrick was not able to handle the hand-off from O'Neil. Utah got the ball deep in Oregon territory and scored its first touchdown on the drive.

Linebacker Joe Farwell led all Ducks in tackles with 11, although he left the game in the third quarter because of an ankle injury he suffered at Texas Tech last week.



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