

FRESH START

An apparently untroubled O'Neil looks ahead to USC

By Jake Berg
Emerald Sports Editor

The sports anchors and cameramen wouldn't endure a 90-degree oven for just anything. And they aren't.

As they stand outside the entrance to Oregon's football practice field, the only thing that the newsmen are getting is sun, not interviews.

But when the first of the football players begin to file across the street that divides their locker rooms from the field, the cameras are hoisted onto shoulders and the tripods are drug onto the grass, where the glass eye of sports fans across the state try to get a quote from the latest media darling of the Ducks, quarterback Danny O'Neil.

O'Neil arrives on the field in full uniform about halfway through the emigrating pack, and the cameras prepare themselves for the smiling No. 16.

Upon his arrival, O'Neil is escorted to the front of a camera.

What happened in the loss at Utah? one newsman asks.

"I've learned a lot from Utah," O'Neil says, looking at the blue sky. "I learned how to prepare better."

A few questions later, the 20-year-old redshirt freshman is moved into the view of another camera.

How should you prepare for a team like USC? the newsman asks of the Saturday night game.

"I don't think there's a special way to approach USC," he

says into the microphone.

Cameraman #3 steps into the picture next, focusing on O'Neil.

How important is the game against USC? the newsman inquires.

"It's a big game," O'Neil says. "Obviously the biggest one so far."

Cut. Three-o'clock. Time for practice.

And come 8 p.m. Saturday, the biggest game of O'Neil's young career. More than just three local newstations will have him in their sights. The nation will be watching ESPN's live broadcast from Autzen Stadium and a projected record crowd will be on hand to watch the evening contest.

All this for a redshirt freshman.

But his whole plan coming out of high school was to play four years at a major college, and that major college was almost not Oregon, but USC, nonetheless.

O'Neil, a native of the Los Angeles area, was recruited heavily by the Trojans during his senior year at Mater Dei High and was No. 2 on their recruiting list. That was when O'Neil visited Eugene.

What O'Neil had to say following his trip might have been a shock to his parents, who were leaning toward USC.

"I came home (from Oregon), and I told them I had committed," O'Neil said. "They are very happy now with (my decision)."

Who isn't? Considering his



Photo by Andre Ranieri

Freshman quarterback Danny O'Neil says he's put last week's defeat in Utah behind him. O'Neil and the Ducks face USC Saturday night at Autzen Stadium.

lack of experience at the college level, O'Neil did a terrific job of filling in for departed god Bill Musgrave in the Ducks' first two wins.

"Danny O'Neil has matured very quickly," USC Coach Larry Smith said.

O'Neil looked like anything but a freshman in leading Oregon to two straight wins to open the season, over Washington State and Texas Tech. His numbers in the two contests were impressive as he completed exactly half his passes for 421 yards, had only one interception, and threw for six total touchdowns, including a

school-record-tying four at Texas Tech.

Then came last weekend's loss at Utah.

O'Neil's performance in the Ducks' 24-17 downfall at Utah is hardly one anyone would want before such a game as USC. O'Neil saw nine of 23 passes completed for only 103 yards. He threw an interception, and had a fumble that ended the Ducks' fourth-quarter comeback.

He was sacked eight times and left the pocket 18 times, for a net gain of nine yards.

"You never know how a young quarterback will react in

a game," Oregon Coach Rich Brooks said. "I was feeling pretty confident that he wasn't going to have those freshman jitters."

He did have the shakes, but at least he got it out of his system.

"Individually, I think I played poor," O'Neil said. "I don't know what happened, but it's going to be an exciting game (against USC), and I think everybody will be ready to play."

O'Neil better be ready because Brooks says the weight of the win sits on the freshman's

Turn to O'NEIL, Page 7B



Photo by Jane Katlin

Listeners of the Oregon Sports Network will still hear Todd McKim, who switched from KEZI-TV to KVAL-TV. KVAL acquired the rights to Oregon sporting events from KEZI this year.

OSN broadcasts available on KVAL

By Jayson Jacoby
Emerald Sports Reporter

Oregon football and men's basketball fans needn't worry when they can't find Oregon Sports Network broadcasts of the Ducks on the television station KEZI. They just need to turn to KVAL.

That's because earlier this year the OSN signed a new contract with Eugene's CBS affiliate station to broadcast Oregon athletics.

The OSN's three-year contract with KEZI ran out at the end of last year, said Dave Heeke, Director of Broadcasting and Marketing for the university's Department of Athletics. Because the OSN falls under the administration of the state's higher education system, every local television station was given the opportunity to submit a bid for the next three-year deal, and KVAL won the bidding process.

At present, KVAL is scheduled to show only one football game this season, the Arizona State game at Tempe, Ariz. on November 9. Heeke said four Pacific-10 Conference men's basketball games will be aired

as well.

This University is unusual in that it has its own self-supporting broadcasting network, Heeke said.

"The OSN is really a strong benefit, not only financially but also promotionally," said Heeke. "It's a great public relations tool for the entire univer-

'It's been great. Everybody's been real cooperative. We're picking up where we left off.'

— Todd McKim,
KVAL sportscaster

sity."

Because the OSN broadcasts on 23 radio stations across Oregon, as well as on affiliates in Anchorage, Alaska and Mt. Shasta, Calif., many university alumni can also follow the Ducks live, said Heeke.

Some women's basketball games will also be aired by the OSN on radio, although those games will be carried only by the Eugene AM station KPNW.

Even though the OSN is restricted as to the games it can broadcast because of competition from much larger networks, Heeke said the cable sports channel Prime Sports Northwest often uses OSN broadcasters Todd McKim and Mike O'Brien in its own telecasts. Prime Sports shows Oregon football games on tape delay, and plans to show Oregon men's and women's basketball, volleyball, wrestling and track, as well as golf and tennis preview shows.

Television viewers shouldn't expect any major changes in OSN coverage this year, as McKim also made the move from KEZI to KVAL. Heeke said because of McKim's experience covering Oregon athletics, the move is logical.

"It's been great," said McKim, "everybody's been real cooperative. We're picking up where we left off."

Heeke, who started work in his current position in mid-July, said the OSN is committed to broadcasting Oregon sports. "We would love to do as many Oregon sports as possible," he said.