

Oregon rugby team pummels Corvallis, 56-0

By Steve Mims
Emerald Contributor

The Oregon Rugby team got off to a quick start on Saturday, and never looked back, defeating the Corvallis Killer Bees 56-0.

The opening game of the season turned out to be the game of a lifetime for Kazuto Nakakoshi, who scored six tries, including the first four of the game.

The game was scoreless for the first ten minutes, then Nakakoshi got hot. He scored four tries in the remainder of the first half, most of them on assists from Mark Rolland.

Rolland made it look easy as he got the ball outside, then Nakakoshi used his speed to get it in the goal. Nakakoshi scored all of Oregon's first-half points, giving them a 16-0 lead at break time.

Bob Pierce, a transfer from England, got the Oregon team going in the second half with a pair of three-yard scores, stretching the lead to 24-0.

A couple of minutes later, the Duck defense pushed Corvallis past their own goal for another try. After the conversion, Oregon led 30-0, and the rout was on.

After assisting on almost every goal, Rolland finally got one past the goal himself. Nakakoshi finished up the scoring with two more tries, giving him six on the day and the Ducks a 56-0 victory.

Praises were flowing for the Duck team. First-year head Coach Bob Snyder said, "It's nice to see how good this team really is. We have a lot of desire and talent."

"It's a team game, and today we were passing to the open player. When you have 15 guys playing as a unit, you're unbeatable."

Snyder is president of the Oregon Rugby Union and an ex-Duck player from 1978-82.

The man everyone was talking about on this day was Nakakoshi. This was his first game for the Ducks, and he impressed everyone.

Nakakoshi, a transfer student from Japan, has been playing rugby for years. After only one game here, Nakakoshi has become a big crowd favorite for his exciting play.

Oregon has 45 rugby players this year, split into two teams. The Ducks are members of the Northwest League, which in-



Photo by Andre Danesi

Oregon rugby players shut out the Corvallis Killer Bees in a stunning first game of the season.

cludes Oregon State, Washington, Washington State, Central Washington and Western Washington.

Early predictions had the Corvallis team cast as favorites,

but Oregon's performance has turned a lot of heads. The top two teams from the league go to the Pacific Coast Championship, and the winner there advances to the National Club Championship.

The Ducks' next home game is Oct. 19 against the Oregon Sports Union at Southland Field, next to the Autzen foot bridge. Their league-opener is Nov. 16 against the University of Washington.

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on seven of the Trojans' 10 total plays during their first touchdown drive, including the touchdown itself on a five-yard run.

"They maybe could've run with us," Royster said, "but we knew they couldn't play smash-mouth football with us."

The Ducks really wanted to forget about the previous weekend's loss at Utah, and guaranteed, when Oregon was down 30-6 in the fourth period, it was USC, not Utah, on the Ducks' minds.

Oregon a second-half football team? Not Saturday.

Injuries have taken perhaps a larger toll on the Ducks now than at first estimated.

Oregon is now 0-2 without tailback Sean Burwell, who was sidelined with an ankle injury, and Oregon Coach Rich Brooks said Burwell is already "doubtful" for next week's home contest against New Mexico State.

Center Greg Phillips is the latest Duck added to the ranks of the wounded. Phillips left the game early after injuring his leg.

Even O'Neil's condition was questionable until Saturday. The freshman quarterback is suffering from a staph infection in his elbow that limited his throwing abilities during the game.

With all the injuries and disappointment stemming from the Ducks' four September games, New Mexico State could be how the Ducks spell relief

before traveling to California and Washington later in October.

Although New Mexico State is far from a football power, Oregon linebacker James Bautista knows how important it is for the Ducks to make a good showing this weekend.

"There's a sense of urgency to beat New Mexico State," he said.

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