

Ducks fly south in season

By Jake Berg
Emerald Sports Editor

Somewhere in the first half of the Oregon football season, the Ducks made a turn onto the wrong road.

Oregon left that yellow brick road of high preseason expectations first in a stop at Utah, where the 14-point favorite Ducks dropped a 24-17 decision to the Utes. The Ducks hoped to make a U-turn the next week in a nationally televised home game against USC, but the Trojans demolished Oregon 30-14.

New Mexico State did provide a brief vacation to the Ducks when Oregon rolled to a 29-6 home win, but the Ducks returned to reality in a 45-7 thrashing at the hands of California.

All of that after two big wins in the opening two games of the season and preseason expectations that the Ducks would likely be driving onto the freeway of postseason play for an unprecedented third straight year.

Now halfway through the season with a bye this week and a visit to third-ranked Washington on the bill next week, an Oregon team decimated by injuries is a disappointing 3-3 overall and 1-2 in the Pacific-10 Conference.

Oregon Coach Rich Brooks said his team is not on the road that he hoped it would be on at this point in the season.

"We're not where I expected us to be, obviously," Brooks said. "I felt we would be at least 4-2 or 5-1 at this point."

"I think we played well the first two games, but since those first two, we have failed to improve."

Standing in the way of Oregon's possible improvement, though, is a ridiculous amount of injuries that have sidelined many of the team's starters at some point this season. But Brooks was not about to blame the three losses on just injuries.

"If we'd been a healthy football team, we wouldn't be 3-3,"

Brooks said. "Football has injuries, and we just haven't responded very well to it."

Brooks then pointed to the fact that in those three losses, Oregon has turned the ball over 13 times but has zero takeaways. Those 13 turnovers have often put the Oregon defense in a bind as far as the opposing team's offensive field position goes.

In Oregon's three losses, Utah, USC and California have totaled 99 points, but the Ducks are still ranked third in the Pac-10 in total defense. Oregon is third in passing defense and fourth in rushing defense.

"Despite our injuries," Oregon defensive coordinator Denny Schuler said, "we (the defense) have played well for the most part. We are third in the Pac-10 in defense — I see that as a major miracle" considering the injuries and field position.

The offense, on the other hand, is performing somewhat less than miraculously. The Ducks rank eighth in the conference in total offense and are second to last in rushing offense, likely because of the ankle injury suffered by star tailback Sean Burwell after the season's second game.

"That's probably the biggest factor," Oregon offensive coordinator Mike Bellotti said. "The value of Sean Burwell to us is hard to estimate."

So was the value of Bill Musgrave. The graduated quarterback led Oregon to its first consecutive bowl appearances ever, but his leaving forced the Ducks to attempt to fill his shoes with four inexperienced players who had never taken a hike in a major college football game before the season.

Although the Ducks are stinging from injuries, have question marks on the offense and must play the Huskies next week, Bellotti said he knows what the team has to do.

"We've got to suck it up and play better overall," he said. "Saying it and doing it are two different things."

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Women

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meet.

"I've thought about it a lot," she said, "but I've been the fifth finisher in our other two meets so I'm not that worried."

Junior Erika Klein, freshman Jill Callero and sophomores Monica Davidson, Sally Maier and Joni Wareham will all be vying for spots on the team that goes to Stanford.

Freshman Melody Fairchild

was supposed to compete in the open race this weekend, but will most likely not run because of a hip injury, much to Heinonen's disappointment.

"We would be a dramatically better team with Melody running to her potential," he said.

"If Melody were running, she would probably be right up there with us (Nusrala, Karnopp and Woodward)," Nusrala added.

Last year, Oregon won the meet easily as Nusrala finished 10th, Holmen finished 17th and Karnopp came in at 20th.

Weasel's World

FRIDAY NIGHT. ANOTHER ACADEMIC WEEK IS DONE.



GOD KNOWS WHAT KIND OF DRUNKEN DEBAUCHERY IS TAKING PLACE ON CAMPUS.



LET'S TAKE A PEEK INTO THE NEAREST FRATERNITY.



ALL RIGHT... HEADS WE WATCH PERFECT STRANGERS, TAILS WE WATCH THE EIGHT IS ENOUGH SPECIAL.



Kraig Norris

PAC-10 PIGSKIN PROGNOSTICATIONS

EDITOR'S NOTE: Predictions are based on anticipated point-spread as determined by individual voters. A correct response is credited each time the favored team wins by at least the predicted margin. The numbers following each person's name represent that individual's overall record. These predictions are intended for entertainment purposes only.

	WSU at ASU	UW at CAL	UCLA at OSU	Stan at USC	Syrac at Pitt	Tenn at Ala
J. Berg (14-4)	ASU+3	UW+7	UCLA+3	USC+3	Syrac+3	Tenn+3
D. Charbon. (15-3)	ASU+3	UW+1	UCLA+10	USC+5	Pitt+3	Ala+2
J. Jacoby (13-5)	ASU+3	UW+7	UCLA+17	USC+7	Pitt+6	Tenn+4
M. Ross (17-1)	ASU+3	UW+6	UCLA+6	USC+3	Syrac+3	Tenn+3
C. Blair (13-5)	ASU+6	UW+10	UCLA+10	USC+3	Syrac+7	Tenn+7
C. Bounell (16-2)	ASU+7	Cal+1	UCLA+7	USC+3	Pitt+1	Tenn+3
P. Malach (14-4)	ASU+7	UW+6	UCLA+17	Stan+7	Syrac+4	Tenn+3

Oscar the Freshman

ALRIGHT, KID. PAY THAT FINE AND STAY OUTTA TROUBLE.



Y'KNOW, IF THIS WAS RUSSIA, YOU WOULD'NA LASTED THROUGH FIVE MINUTES OF THE COUP!



IF THIS WAS CHINA YOU'D BE BESIEGED BY OUTRAGED STUDENTS!!



BULLIES!! HEY! HE'S INSULTING AN OFFICER! CALM DOWN, FRED. THAT'S NOT A CRIME YET.



Neal Skorpen