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PETTIBONE

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tant with Oklahoma, Nebraska and Texas A&M. The Sooners, in particular, have traditionally run an option-oriented offense or wishbone formation better than any team in the country.

Pettibone's last job was as the head coach at Northern Illinois, where he coached since 1985. His 1990 Husky triple option led the nation in rushing offense with 344.6 yards a contest, and in 1989, Pettibone's Northern Illinois squad was sixth in the nation with 330.7 yards a game and finished with a 9-2 mark.

"1989 was the year we just exploded on everybody," Summers said.

Pettibone said in addition to bringing his new offense, he brought his entire offensive staff, including Summers, with him from Northern Illinois to Corvallis — a lot of luggage. He also retained three members of Kragthorpe's coaching staff.

The triple option apparently took a couple of years to pay dividends itself at Northern Illinois, however. Pettibone experienced his best years in his last three seasons as the Husky coach, when Northern Illinois set seven NCAA records.

Does that necessarily mean Oregon State will lead the nation in rushing given five more years? Who knows, but Pettibone has no doubt the Beavers' new offense will improve in the long run.

"I saw it at Northern Illinois," he said. "Once they get experience, they will improve."

Improvement is the only goal Pettibone set in front of his young team prior to the start of the season. He felt any higher expectations of a team so young, so green and so inexperienced with the new coach and his system would be unfair to the Beavers.

With that goal in mind, he has not been disappointed.

The Beavers were the most penalized team in the Pacific-10 Conference last fall but have become the least penalized under the watchful eye of Pettibone.

"They have played hard; they just haven't played smart at times," Pettibone said. "I feel good that even though we haven't won a game, we've improved a lot."

That may have shown in the moral victory against Cal, but a 58-6 home whipping at the hands of second-ranked Washington brought the team back to reality last week.

Oregon cornerback Muhammad Oliver, who is part of the first-team "Duck," said the Oregon State offense presents an entirely new ball-game.

"It's like a whole different mind-set out there," Oliver said. "This is the first time I've ever had to prepare for a game and not focus so much on the pass."

OPTION

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didn't hurt us a bit," Schuler said. "I don't anticipate any major problems."

Schuler said Oregon's defense will likely play most of the game in its "Duck" formation, the team's first-down defensive package.

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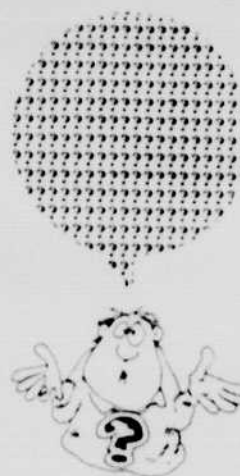
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