

# Brunell to start against Oregon

SEATTLE (AP) — The top-ranked Washington Huskies made a quarterback change Monday, moving Mark Brunell ahead of Billy Joe Hobert because of Hobert's lackluster performance against California.

Brunell, a senior, will start in place of Hobert on Saturday for the 5-0 Huskies at 3-3 Oregon.

The timing of the announcement was surprising because Washington has a 19-game winning streak, including 17-0 with Hobert as its starting quarterback.

"It's not like we wait until something is broke before we try to fix it," offensive coordinator Jeff Woodruff said.

Coach Don James said Brunell outplayed Hobert, a junior, in Washington's 35-16 victory over Cal last Saturday. Hobert completed just three of 12 passes for 36 yards and lost a fumble.

Brunell came off the bench to spark Washington to two touchdown drives in the third quarter as the Huskies broke a 7-7 halftime tie. He was four for 11 for 83 yards and also had a 37-yard run.

"Mark had a higher grade," James said.

"I'm excited to get a chance to start again," Brunell said. "But I don't think there's any quarterback controversy here. I think it's just a case where we

have good depth at a position. We have two guys who can play. Now, we've just got to keep winning games."

James and Woodruff attempted to downplay Hobert's demotion. They pointed out that Brunell, as Hobert's backup, had been getting a lot of playing time this season.

Hobert was not immediately reachable for comment at Washington.

Woodruff said Hobert took the news hard but that was to be expected because Hobert is a perfectionist.

"But Billy's a very confident person," Woodruff said. "I don't think this will bother him at all. It's still a long season and there are a lot of plays left. There's no doubt in my mind that we're going to need both of them."

"It's just a matter of the reliever becoming the starter and the starter becoming the reliever," Woodruff said. "Of course, it could switch back next week just like it did this week."

"We have two quarterbacks who are very good, two quarterbacks who are very even," James said. "Both players have been fine. They've got good attitudes. They work hard. They both want to do well. They

both want to play. They both want to win."

Brunell got his starting job back that he lost to Hobert because of a severe knee injury in spring practice last year after leading Washington to a 10-2 record in the 1990 season. Brunell was the MVP of the 1991 Rose Bowl.

Hobert quarterbacked Washington to a 12-0 record and the USA Today-CNN coaches' national championship last season. He was the co-MVP in the 1992 Rose Bowl.

In 1992, Brunell is completing 55 percent of his passes and Hobert 54 percent. Brunell is 27 of 49 for 320 yards with no touchdowns and no interceptions. Hobert is 64 of 119 for 649 yards and five touchdowns with two interceptions.

Hobert has a 60-yard touchdown run this season. Brunell's 37-yard run against Cal was his longest since the 1990 season and set up a touchdown.

"Both of us are going to play," Brunell said. "Both of us are going to get to contribute. He's been nothing but supportive for me and I'm going to be nothing but supportive for him."

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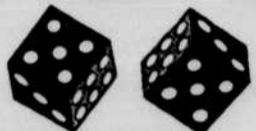
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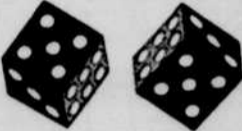
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