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Oregon Daily Emerald Sports -

Ducks smash Cal; two more to go

→ Oregon moves one step closer to a bowl bid after 37-17 victory over the Bears

By Steve Mims

The Oregon football team overcame its biggest remaining obstacle Saturday on the way to a bowl game by defeating California 37-17 at Autzen Stadium.

The Ducks used a strong defensive effort and big special teams play to boost their record to 3-3 in the Pacific-10 Conference and 5-4 overall.

A season that seemed doomed at the beginning now appears to include a possible postseason bowl appearance. The Golden Bears and Ducks entered the game with identical records, knowing that a loss for either team would probably end postseason hopes

California took advantage of Oregon's defense right away. The Ducks began the game playing defense like they ended last week's game at Washington State, where they gave up 14 points in the fourth quarter. Cal running back Russell White ran for 40 yards during the Bears'first drive, including a nine-yard touchdown run only 2:03 into the

Oregon's first drive stalled, but punter Tommy Thompson booted a 76-yard punt that rolled dead at the California two-yard line. It was the second-longest punt in Oregon history and gave the Ducks the lift they

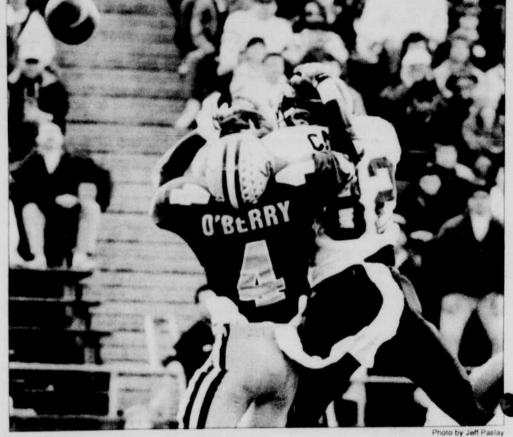
'I placed the ball just right, and it hit perfect on my foot," Thompson said. "I hit it dead-solid perfect."

'Our momentum turned with the big Thompson punt," Oregon head coach Rich Brooks said. "From then on we played better, he is phenomenal."

The Oregon defense stopped California on three downs, and punt returner Ronnie Harris returned the Cal punt 19 yards to the California 29-yard line. After a 28-yard pass to Anthony Jones, Sean Burwell ran one vard for a touchdown to tie at 7-3

Harris came up big again for the Ducks

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Oregon cornerback Herman O'Berry missed this one, but he did pick off three other California passes Saturday at Autzen Stadium.

Harris, Thompson set pace

Two Ducks give boost with play on special teams

By Dave Charbonneau

If Oregon wins, Ronnie Harris and Tommy Thompson will play big parts in the victory

At least that has been the case this season, and it was the case Saturday in Oregon's 37-17 win over California.

Thompson kicked three field goals and Harris scored a touchdown and set up two other Duck touchdowns with big punt returns.

But that's nothing new for the receiver and the kicker, who look on their way to probable all-conference seasons. Oregon head coach Rich Brooks said Thompson

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