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Oregon receiver Derrick Deadwiler caught two passes, including the winning touchdown, in the Ducks' season-opening 23-9 win at Colorado State.

Duck football earns costly victory, 23-9

By Steve Mims

Oregon Daily Emerald

Oregon came out of its season-opener at Colorado State unbeaten, but not unscathed.

The Ducks broke open a 9-9 tie with two second-half touchdowns to beat the Rams 23-9, but lost at least one — and maybe more — key players to injuries in the game.

Junior cornerback Herman O'Berry suffered Oregon's most crucial injury when he was lost for the season with ligament damage to his ankle. O'Berry was coming off of a spectacular 1992 season when he led the Pacific-10 Conference with six interceptions.

"This is a crushing blow for Herman and our football team," Oregon head coach Rich Brooks said. "He had worked very hard to get ready for this season, and I feel extremely bad for him."

Tailback Sean Burwell suffered an ankle injury as well against the Rams, but he was not expected to be out long. With Ricky White already out because of a knee injury suffered in fall drills, the once deep Oregon backfield is now in question.

Tight end Willy Tate, tackle Justin Starck and center Tom Curran were also injured against Colorado State, and their status is in question. In addition, former Oregon football coach and current athletic director emeritus Len Casanova suffered a heart attack during the trip to Colorado State, but returned to Eugene five days later.

On the field, Oregon moved the ball well in the first half, but was unable to get a touchdown, instead settling for three Tommy Thompson field goals to tie the game 9-9 at halftime.

The Ducks took a 16-9 lead when quarterback Danny O'Neil capped an 11-play, 80-yard drive with a 13-yard touchdown pass to wide receiver Derrick Deadwiler in the third quarter. The Ducks put the game away with 4:35 remaining in the game when O'Neil tossed a 32-yard touchdown pass to receiver Cristin McLemore.

"It is always a pleasure to win on the road anytime and certainly the season opener after the difficult start we had last year," Brooks said, referring to Oregon's 0-2 start last year.

O'Neil had a big game for the Ducks, completing 21 of 33 passes for 307 yards and the two touchdowns. Burwell paced the team with six receptions and 73 rushing yards, and fullback Juan Shedrick added four catches, twice as many as he had all last year.



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