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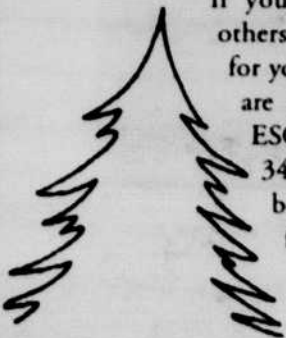
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ESCAPE

Duck frustration is back again

I knew it would happen. I really did. I mean, I didn't expect it to be quite so devastating, but I had a feeling it was too good to be true.

Of course, I'm talking about Oregon's 30-point lead over California and the Golden Bears' subsequent biggest comeback in Pacific-10 Conference history on Saturday. The third biggest comeback in NCAA Division I history.

California 42, Oregon 41.

I had just woke up and was sitting at home all alone listening to the game on the radio.

Boom! One touchdown. Boom! Another touchdown. Boom! Yet another touchdown.

My phone rings. "Can you believe it?," my friend says. "This is the greatest day in Oregon history. We're kickin' their ass."

I told my friend I was coming over because I was desperately in need of someone to give a high five to, so I quickly jumped into the shower. By the time I got out, Oregon was up 24-0.

I jumped on my bike and rode to my friend's place. It took me about four minutes to get to his apartment, and when I walked in, everyone was sitting around the radio with big smiles on their faces.

"Thirty to nothin'," one of my friends said. I started cracking up.

It was unbelievable. "This could be Oregon's year," I thought to myself.

Everyone else must have been thinking the same thing, because soon we were all talking about making our reservations in Pasadena. Or better yet, renting a motorhome for a week, leaving the day after Christmas, partying our butts off and then watching the Ducks beat the crap out of Michigan in the Rose Bowl.

Sometime while we were fantasizing about our New Year's plans, Cal scored.

So it's 30-7. Big deal.

"So you think O'Neil has a shot at the Heisman if he keeps this up?"

"Not this year. But if Oregon goes undefeated this year and wins the Rose Bowl, he'll be a top candidate next year."

I'm not kidding. This is what they were saying. But then something happened. A warning sign.

Oregon had the ball deep in Cal's territory with time running out in the first half. For some reason, the Ducks let the time run out on the clock without even attempting a field goal.

Stuff like that simply should not happen. I don't know whose fault it was, but it doesn't matter because the fact is no one on the Duck team had the brains enough keep an eye on the clock. Stupid, stupid, stupid. Oregon, Oregon, Oregon.

I've followed the Ducks since 1978, and I've seen them fold way too many times. It was at this point I could see what was coming.

In the second half, Cal scores quickly. 30-14. Ore-

gon comes back and scores. We all sit back and sigh. Now it's 38-14. No way Cal can come back.

Three minutes later, Cal throws a bomb. Touchdown. We're fine.

Moments later, Cal blocks a punt and recovers it in the end zone. Now it's 38-27. This is starting to suck bad.

The Ducks drive down to the two yard line. Fourth down.

"Come on Brooks, you wussy, go for it," someone yelled. (It may have been me).

Yes, Oregon goes for it. O'Neil takes the snap and **DROPS BACK TO PASS!**

Incomplete. We go nuts. A yard from the end zone, a foot from a first down, and they pass! (In hindsight, the Ducks should have just gone for the field goal.)

Way to show confidence in our vaunted running attack.

All right, we're still up by 11, and the fourth quarter is starting. We'll be fine.

Once again, the Ducks stall deep in Cal territory. Field goal. It's 41-27, and five minutes left.



DAVE CHARBONNEAU

We got it in the bag.

Boom! Seventy-two yards on the bomb. Oregon broadcaster Jerry Allen can't believe it, and neither can we. Oregon 41, Cal 34.

From here it was inevitable. Ducks stall again. They punt, leaving Cal with just under three minutes to score, go for two, and win. We all saw it coming, so with one minute and 17 seconds left in the game, Cal burns Oregon's secondary for seemingly the 40th time in the game, and it's 41-40.

The two points were basically automatic as far as we were concerned. They were, of course.

No partying tonight. We sat in a daze for about five minutes.

"We suck."

"I feel sick."

"I'm embarrassed to even go here."

"We have no idea how to keep a lead."

"Let's get drunk."

"At least Shannon Doherty's on *Saturday Night Live* tonight."

All that and more was said as we sat around the radio waiting to hear what Brooks had to say.

Oops, there have been some technical difficulties, Jerry Allen informs us. Brooks will not be able to participate in the post-game interview. Yeah, right.

No Pasadena. No motorhome. No Heisman candidate.

As I'm walking out the door, I look at the TV screen one more time. I see a score.

Oregon State 30, Arizona State 14. Good God.

Dave Charbonneau is a sports reporter for the Emerald.

Bears reflect about big comeback

BERKELEY, Calif. (AP) — Dave Barr had a simple answer for how California pulled off one of the biggest comebacks in college football history.

"Everyone believed," said Barr, whose three second-half touchdown passes helped Cal overcome a 30-point deficit in Saturday's 42-41 victory over Pacific-10 Conference rival Oregon.

"When things weren't going well, we kept our composure," Barr said. "We didn't throw in the towel. We kept going."

The third-biggest come-from-behind win in Division I-A history kept the Golden Bears (5-0, 2-0 Pac-10) unbeaten and moved them up one place to 16th in the Associated Press poll released Sunday.

Saturday's game had all the makings of a rout after Oregon (3-1, 0-1 Pac-10) exploded for 24 first-quarter points, 17 coming after Cal turnovers.

A second-quarter flea flicker in which Danny O'Neil lateraled to Cristin McLemore, who threw 20 yards to Willy Tate for the

score, put the Ducks up 30-0.

"I thought, 'Somebody wake me up, this can't be happening,'" Cal coach Keith Gilbertson said. "We're better than this."

The Bears showed that in the second half, when they outscored Oregon 35-11.

Barr's 26-yard touchdown pass to Iheanyi Uwaezuoke with 1:17 left, followed by Mike Caldwell's reception for the two-point conversion, completed Cal's greatest comeback ever. It surpassed a 29-28 win over Arizona on Nov. 4, 1989, in which a 21-point deficit was overcome.

"I don't know if I'll ever have a feeling like this again," Barr said. "We were down, beaten. We were hurting. We weren't feeling good about ourselves, and we came back. We wouldn't accept 'no' for an answer."

Being on the other side of the comeback, though, was hard to take.

"It's got to rank up there with one of the toughest defeats in my life," Oregon coach Rich Brooks said.

First-year Cal offensive coordinator Denny Schuler, who spent the previous seven seasons at Oregon as an assistant to Brooks, said the win had a bitersweet quality.

"My initial feeling was one of elation, until I saw the looks of the Oregon players and coaches," he said. "I was up there too long not to feel bad for them."

Cal trailed by one point, 41-40, with 1:17 left in the game, when Gilbertson, after some hesitation, elected to go for the two-point conversion.

Caldwell ran a fade route to the corner of the end zone and Barr lofted the ball to him perfectly, just out of the reach of Oregon defenders and just within the reach of Caldwell.

"Mike made a great, just awesome catch," Gilbertson said. "Dave made a great pass. It brought tears to my eyes. We made the plays we had to, and we won this football game. This might be the most special comeback I've ever been associated with."