

WISHBONE

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we have to come out and play tough defense."

The person who has benefited most from the option is Oregon State halfback J.J. Young, who has run for 890 yards on 119 carries, an average of 7.5 yards per carry. Young has taken advantage of his speed as pitch man, breaking numerous long runs down the sidelines. Young has seven touchdowns and seven runs more than 33 yards.

Oregon State currently ranks second in the nation in rushing at just over 303 yards per game, just behind Nebraska. The Beavers rushed for an incredible 667 yards against Pacific earlier this season.

"This team has grasped the system really well," Pettibone

said. "It is a system that takes a little longer to learn. The only problem has been injuries at quarterback."

The negatives about the option that non-believers usually bring up include the lack of a passing game or the fact it is difficult to comeback if a team falls behind. Oregon State has proven the latter claim wrong by coming back to defeat Wyoming and coming back in losses to Stanford and USC.

As for the passing game, it has struggled this year. Oregon State has not thrown for more than 65 yards in a game this year and is below 300 yards passing on the year. So, Jerry, do you think there are any weaknesses to the system?

"No," Pettibone said. "The reason we are not throwing the ball more is because of the injuries at quarterback."

SENIORS

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and better. He is also one of the bright aspects of a practice because he doesn't grumble and moan."

Derrick Deadwiler, receiver — Deadwiler transferred to Oregon for his junior year after two years of junior college. Deadwiler made an instant impact for the Ducks, catching 29 passes for 414 yards. He led the team in receptions before an injury six games into the season, and returned for the Independence Bowl.

Deadwiler needs four catches Saturday to eclipse the 50-reception mark for the season. He's averaging 16 yards a reception and has five touchdowns.

Mike DiFonzo, offensive guard — DiFonzo jumped into the starting lineup last season after transferring from junior college. DiFonzo has been a consistent starter ever since.

Ernest Jones, outside linebacker — In his four years at Oregon, Jones has established himself as one of the best Duck defenders ever. This season, Jones broke the school record for career sacks (29). His knee injury in the 1991 season was one of the crushing blows for the Ducks that season. Last season, Jones had 11 sacks, and he already has 13 this season.

David Massey, inside linebacker — Massey played sparingly his first two seasons with the Ducks, but became a major contributor to the Oregon defense last season. He recorded 68 tackles last season and is sixth on the team in tackles this season with 45 tackles despite missing two games.

Grady O'Connor, free safety — O'Connor, who is also a star for the Oregon track team, earned a niche for himself on special teams for the Ducks. O'Connor suffered a shoulder injury last season but held off on surgery until after the season was over.

Bryon Rockwell, inside linebacker — A shoulder injury sidelined Rockwell from 1991 until late last season. He has played sparingly for the Ducks this season, but has 12 tackles and a



JEFF PASLAY/Emerald

Oregon offensive tackle Justin Starck has provided much-needed depth to the Ducks' offensive line the past two years.

quarterback sack.

Juan Shedrick, fullback — Shedrick has made a career with the Ducks leading the way for tailbacks. As one of the best blocking fullbacks to ever play at Oregon, Shedrick cleared the way for Burwell and Ricky Whittle. In addition, Shedrick has averaged over four yards a carry over the last four years. This season, Shedrick has battled injuries and has played in only seven games, but has still managed to stack up 25 yards a game.

Justin Starck, offensive tackle — Starck played well in a reserve role for the Ducks on the front line last season. This season, he's started every game and has played well.

John Taumoepeau, inside linebacker — Taumoepeau suffered an injury last season that cut his year short, but has been a rock this season, playing every game and coming up with 24 tackles, a sack and a fumble recovery. Taumoepeau was a member of Oregon's Freedom Bowl team,

when he played sparingly on special teams.

Tommy Thompson, place-kicker/punter — Often referred to by coach Rich Brooks as the "the greatest kicker I've ever coached," Thompson started to make a name for himself when he kicked 21 field goals for the Ducks, including a 56-yarder against Washington. Thompson has kicked 15 field goals this season and has only missed three attempts. He also has doubled as Oregon's punter, where he has averaged nearly 40 yards a punt over four years, including a 76-yarder against Cal last season.

Gary Williams, defensive end — Williams has been a member of the Ducks since 1990, and has become an increasingly important part of the Duck defense. Last season, Williams moved over from nose tackle to fill in at end. Williams is having his best year for the Ducks this season with 26 tackles and will likely finish his Oregon career with more than 100 tackles.

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