

22 preps sign on Oregon's dotted line

By Steve Mims
Oregon Daily Emerald

Oregon head football coach Rich Brooks introduced his 1994 recruiting class Wednesday afternoon, and once again it was not rated among the top groups in the country or even the Pacific-10 Conference.

However, Brooks is used to experts ignoring his recruiting classes and says he likes his group just fine, thank you.

"Although I'd like to say somebody's telling me I have one of the top ten classes in the nation, I feel very good about our recruiting class," Brooks said. "Even if it may not be rated as high as others that we've had. Contrary to what I've been hearing or what some of the supposed experts are saying about our recruiting class, I believe it is stronger than the classes we've had the last two or three years."

Heading this year's balanced class are a pair of players who can fill in the jobs of both kicker and punter that will be left open with the departure of Tommy Thompson this year. Matt Belden from Glendale High School in Glendale, Ariz. and Josh Bidwell of Douglas High School in Winston both signed on the dotted line for the Ducks Wednesday.

The signings were a big relief for Brooks, who had to start thinking about the possibilities of non-scholarship players or even quarterback Danny O'Neil trying out for special teams duties. Brooks, who evaluates the high school kicking prospects himself, is impressed with what he's seen from Belden and Bidwell.

"Kicking was the most obvious void on our returning team," Brooks said. "Matt and Josh both have outstanding legs. They are both capable of competing for both jobs. One or both of them will be on the spot next year; they are coming into a position that is crying for help."

Belden connected on only five of 11 field goals last year, but

four of the misses were in excess of 60 yards. He booted five field goals of 50 or more yards in his career and averaged 47.8 yards per punt as a senior.

Brooks described Bidwell as an all-around athlete who could even play tight end or linebacker for the Ducks if needed. In addition to being a punter and kicker in high school, Bidwell also played option quarterback and free safety.

With the major need filled, Brooks filled out his recruiting class with a balanced unit that features at least two players at each position. This year's class has 22 players, including only two junior college transfers.

The two junior college players are both on the defensive end — defensive back Kip East from San Jose, Calif. and linebacker Matt Sailors, from Vista, Calif. Brooks said he wanted the 6-foot-2, 224 pound Sailors out of high school three years ago, but Sailors elected to go to Brigham Young before transferring to Palomar College.

East had four interceptions and was named first-team all-Coast Conference last year for Gavilan College. Brooks said East could have an immediate impact for Oregon next season.

"I was not pleased with our secondary at times last year," Brooks said. "Kip East is one of the best one-on-one defenders we saw in junior college. If he doesn't play right away, somebody else will have to play real well to beat him out."

The only area where balance is not seen in Oregon's class of 1994 is location, as 16 of the 22 recruits are from California. This year was considered a down year for high school prospects in Oregon, and as a result the Ducks signed only three in-state players.

"The in-state recruiting was not as plentiful as it was in recent years," Brooks said. "I am disappointed to have four in-state players going to other schools, two to Stanford and two to Washington. It's too bad, because with a population as

small as Oregon's, you want to get most players that you want."

In addition to Bidwell, this year's in-state representatives for the Ducks were Chad Normoyle, a 6-foot-5, 240-pound defensive lineman from West Linn and Chris Vandiver, a 6-foot-2, 195-pound linebacker from Lebanon.

The position Oregon attacked the most was linebacker, and the Ducks ended up with five of them. Joining Sailors and Vandiver at linebacker are A. J. Jelks, a 6-foot-2, 227-pounder from Sacramento, Calif.; Ryan Klaasen, a 6-foot-2, 233-pounder from San Clemente, Calif.; and Marty Murphy, a 6-foot-4, 224-pounder from Clearlake, Calif.

"On defense I'm concerned at linebacker," Brooks said. "We recruited outstanding athletes there that can be factors early in their career."

Brooks brought in two quarterbacks who he said are at two different stages right now. Jason Maas, 6-foot-2, 178 pounds from Yuma, Ariz., completed 111 of 203 passes for 1,930 yards and 15 touchdowns, compared to only three interceptions.

Maas appears to be further along than Mike Phelps, who is bigger at 6-foot-4, 222 pounds. Phelps threw for 2,233 yards and 24 touchdowns and didn't turn 17 years old until partway through his final year.

"Maas is a better athlete," Brooks said. "He has better feet and is an outstanding competitor. He throws accurately without a lot of mistakes. Phelps is young but not as experienced at quarterback. He will continue to grow and has an extremely strong arm."

Brooks also had strong praise for 5-foot-10, 180-pound running back David Crump from Stockton, Calif., who could give depth to a backfield that has suffered numerous injuries the past few years.

"Crump is one of the best looking running backs we've brought in in recent memory," Brooks said. "He could play

even though we have good players returning there."

Here is a list of the rest of Oregon's recruiting class:

- Michael Armendariz, 6-foot-3, 255-pound offensive lineman from Cucamonga, Calif. Earned all-South Section honors by the *Los Angeles Times*.

- David Coyle, 6-foot-0, 180-pound defensive back from Loomis, Calif. Ranked among his team's leaders with four interceptions.

- Stefan de Vries, 6-foot-4, 252-pound defensive lineman from Salinas, Calif. Instrumental to an offense that churned out 313 yards rushing in a playoff victory.

- Eric Edwards, 6-foot-0, 170-pound defensive back from Pasco, Wash. Signed with Oregon a year ago but delayed enrollment to improve academic standing.

- Damon Griffin, 5-foot-10, 160-pound wide receiver from Monrovia, Calif. Paced the team with 43 pass receptions for 812 yards and five touchdowns.

- Patrick Johnson, 5-foot-10, 160-pound wide receiver from Redlands, Calif. Hauled down 31 passes for 312 yards and three scores as a senior.

- Michael Klews, 6-foot-5, 304-pound offensive lineman from Castro Valley, Calif. Increased size over the last two prep seasons from sophomore dimensions (6-foot-4, 240 pounds).

- Kevin Parker, 5-foot-9, 170-pound running back from Oakland, Calif. Started at tailback only as a senior but finished with more than 1,100 yards on the ground.

- Matt Schuetz, 6-foot-4, 220-pound defensive lineman from Dana Point, Calif. Missed all but one game of final prep season with a broken foot after outstanding junior year.

- Leie Sualua, 6-foot-2, 236-pound defensive lineman from Santa Ana, Calif. Finished his first season as a defensive starter with 53 tackles, two quarterback sacks and 14 tackles for lost yardage.

Basketball ticket sales going well

Ticket sales for this weekend's Oregon men's basketball game have been "pretty good," Oregon director of ticket sales Hunt Holsapple said Wednesday. But plenty of student tickets are still available.

Holsapple said 4,500 tickets have been sold for tonight's game against Stanford and 6,000 tickets have been sold for Saturday afternoon's game against California. Holsapple said that number could reach 9,000 before Saturday's tipoff.

Bi-Mart is sponsoring Thrilling Thursday against Stanford, with two reserved seats for the price of one. Saturday's game against Cal is Pom Pom Day. Pom Poms will be given to the first 5,000 fans attending.

Meanwhile, student ticket sales have been very slow, and more than 90 percent of available student seats have not been sold. Only 165 student tickets have been sold for tonight's game, and 317 have been sold for the Cal game, out of a possible 3,600 seats.

Holsapple said students should have winter term stickers to get their tickets. If they don't, they have to be checked off the computer, which usually results in slower lines.

Stanford is off to a surprising 4-3 start in the Pacific-10 Conference, and the 19th-ranked Golden Bears are 5-2 after upsetting then-No. 1 UCLA 85-70 on Saturday.

Tonight's game is scheduled for a 7:05 p.m. tipoff, and Saturday's game begins at 3:08 p.m.

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"Ann and John," The Student University Relations Council is recruiting new members. They do cool events like the blood drive late week and the Mentorship class you're both in. We can get applications in room 204 Johnson Hall. Bet-cha I can get mine in first! —Steph

Jennifer, I Met you in Reno. You're 24 yrs. old and a Psychology major. I'd like to talk again. John 916-758-1373.

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