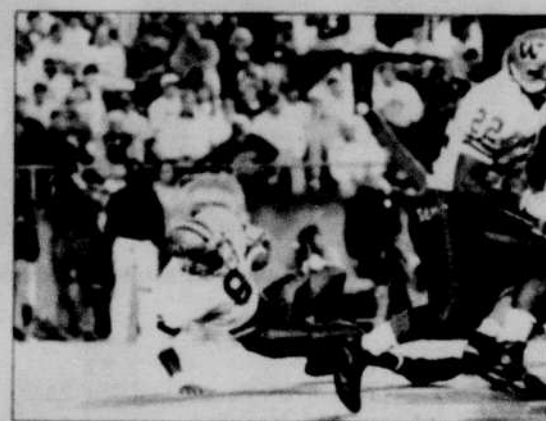


Charge!



Falling down: The Ducks hope to trip-up Kaufman this year.

JEFF PASLAY/Emerald

Chris Metz
Oregon Daily Emerald

The University of Washington's Napoleon Kaufman is perhaps a defensive coach's worst nightmare. Measuring a bit short of the ideal size for a star running back (5-9, 185), Kaufman's play is no small affair.



KAUFMAN

THE RECORDS: No. 1 in all-purpose running and rushing at Washington.

THE SEASON: Second in the nation in rushing. Second in all-purpose yards.

THE COUNT-DOWN: 345 rushing yards to become 40th player in NCAA history to rush for 4,000 yards in a career. 296 rushing yards needed to set single-season record. 157 all-purpose yards to move into fifth place on Pac-10 career list.

"The thing about Napoleon Kaufman is he can go all the way in a heartbeat," Oregon defensive coordinator Nick Aliotti said. "It's going to be a heck of a challenge for our defense."

Kaufman has three times been named Pacific-10 offensive player of the week this season, largely on his ability this season to break away for the long touchdown. He has had

four of the five longest rushing touchdowns in the Pac-10 this season with a 76-yard scamper, two 79-yarders and a 91-yard marathon against San Jose State.

Three times this season Kaufman has gained over 200 yards in a game, leaving no doubt in the opposition's mind that a key to stopping the Huskies lies in shutting down Kaufman.

"You shut Napoleon down," Oregon strong safety Chad Cota said, "and you're doing pretty good."

Few teams have found the answer to stopping the all-time Washington career rushing leader. Kaufman's low running mark this season was 80 yards in both the win over Miami and last week's victory over Arizona State.

Cota views the task of slowing down Kaufman as a total team defensive effort.

"You can't just give that guy any lanes," Cota said. "The whole defense has got to contain him."

Kaufman's 167.3 yards per game average puts him second



JEFF PASLAY/Emerald



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in the nation behind Colorado's Rashaan Salaam. The Heisman Trophy talk has followed Kaufman all season and is really starting to heat up as many

view last week's 80-yard effort as a major setback for the senior tailback from Lompoc, Calif.

Kaufman downplays the hype and concentrates on just

The thing about Napoleon Kaufman is he can go all the way in a heartbeat.

—Nick Aliotti
Oregon defensive coordinator

Kaufman's accent to greatness since he was a freshman.

"He's a lot more physical now than when he first came into the league," Brooks said. "He's much stronger now. He now has the physical strength to pound into linebackers. He takes the fight to the tacklers."

The Washington tailback believes that his increased productivity and output has been affected not only his increased strength over his time in Seattle, but also a better mental approach to the game.

"I feel like I'm making some pretty good decisions running the ball and blocking," Kaufman said. "Every game I feel like I'm blocking a little bit better."

Kaufman has been selected to the All-Pac-10 team twice and earned All-American honors last year. Both seem likely once again this season as Kaufman hasn't disappointed.

The Huskies have rallied around his success and have been one of the best teams in the nation this season. The ninth-ranked Huskies cannot go on to postseason play but, according to Kaufman, the team is confident and ready to play each week.

"I think it has a lot to do with attitude," Kaufman said. "There's a lot more commitment this year."

Kaufman gained 142 yards in the 1993 battle between Oregon and Washington, and Brooks admires Kaufman's style of running but doesn't look forward to defending against it.

"I've enjoyed watching him on film," Brooks said. "I'm just disappointed that I'll have to watch him from the sideline trying to stop him."

The trend these days for star college players has been to opt out early and join the ranks of the NFL, but Kaufman came back for his senior year, adding that it wasn't a very difficult choice.

"I just wasn't ready to go on to that yet," he said. "I'm having a great time in college, and I'm happy I stayed."

No doubt the Huskies are too as Kaufman has helped them to a 5-1 record and powered them to a 211 yards a game average.

"He's the real deal," Brooks said. "He's fast, he's tough."

The Ducks were unable to corral Kaufman last season as he ran for 142 yards and two touchdowns, including a 58-yard dash.

going out and playing his game.

"I think it's kind of what you make it," Kaufman said of the Heisman hype. "I mean there's so many guys up for the running right now in the Heisman race. It's kind of hard to think about it much."

The 1994 season has seen Kaufman improve in all facets of his game. He needs just 295 yards to eclipse last year's mark and has seen improvement in receiving, punt returns and kick returns.

All this comes as no surprise to Oregon head coach Rich Brooks, who has witnessed