

MICHAEL SHINDLER/Emerald

Dino Philyaw's big-time play will be one of the keys to upsetting a Washington team that has dominated the Ducks over the years.

Oregon prepares for Husky attack

Mark McTyre

Oregon Daily Emerald

This Saturday the Ducks will be facing the ninth-ranked Washington Huskies as Oregon has a chance to do something no other Oregon football squad has done in six years, beat a nationally ranked Husky team and position themselves in a race for the Pacific-10 lead.

Last year the Ducks traveled to Husky Stadium and put up a good fight against the 22nd-ranked Huskies in a 21-6 loss. The Ducks compiled 294 yards of total offense and quarterback Danny O'Neil was 18 of 32 for 198 yards. A factor that is hidden among these roughly favorable stats are the six interceptions that O'Neil threw.

In the last 20 meetings between the two teams, the Huskies have chalked up 17 victories. The Huskies have entered the last nine meetings as a nationally ranked team.

"I'm very, very impressed with the way Washington is playing defensively," Oregon head coach Rich Brooks said. "(They do) a great job of taking the football away."

This year the Huskies defense is ranked one step below the Ducks defense corps in the Pac-10 at fifth, allowing 328 yards per game. The misleading factor in this stat is that the Huskies have faced many more nationally ranked teams than the Ducks.

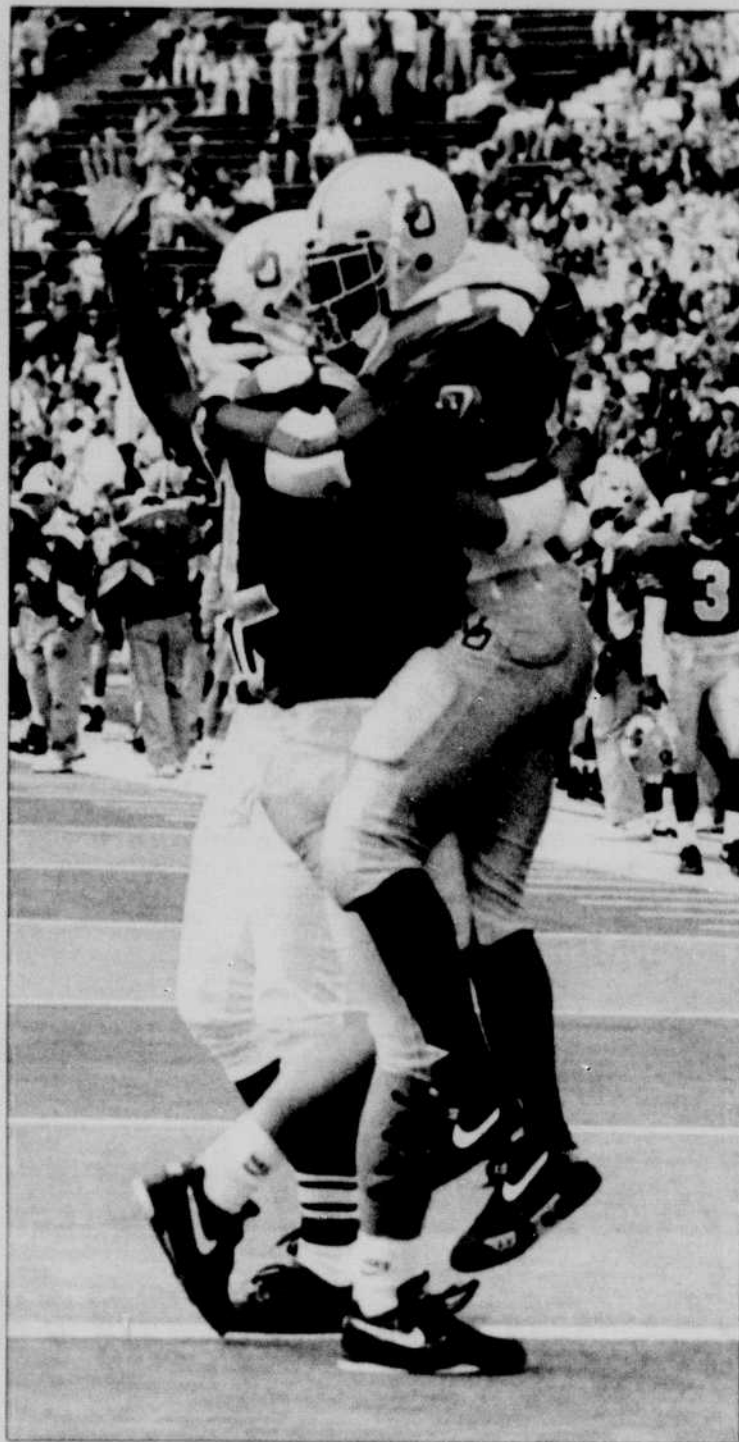


"Washington's defense has always been difficult for us to move the football (against)," Brooks said.

Although the Ducks have to worry about the Huskies tough defense, Oregon's biggest worry will come in Heisman Trophy candidate, Napoleon Kaufman.

Last year Kaufman had 219 all-purpose yards in the Huskies' victory over the Ducks, and so far this season Kaufman has carried for 1,004 yards and seven touchdowns. Kaufman is second in the nation in rushing, averaging 167.3 yards rushing and 210.3 all-purpose yards a game.

"Napoleon Kaufman can't be



GARY GRASS/Emerald

Ricky Whittle (above) embraces Blake Spence after Whittle's fifth touchdown of the season last weekend. Whittle's return is essential to Oregon's running game and the Ducks will also look to stay on the positive side of turnovers and special teams play (left) against Washington.

given too many vertical cracks in your defense because he's gone," Brooks said. "I don't think you stop Napoleon Kaufman. My hope is to stop him from making long runs, to somehow find a way to not have him break our defense."

While the Ducks are worrying about the threat that Kaufman poses to Oregon's 15th-ranked rushing defense, the Ducks' back field of Dino Philyaw and Ricky Whittle plan to show everybody that there are other running backs in the Pac-10 besides Kaufman. Last week Philyaw welcomed Whittle's return as the two carried for over 100 yards each and combined for the most yards by

two players in school history.

"Me and Ricky will be going head to head together against him," Philyaw said. "We might not have as many yards as he does or have a better line as he has, but there are still many other good running backs in the Pac-10."

The rushing half of the Ducks' offense is playing better than anybody could have expected, but Oregon's air attack of the past has not yet returned.

After turning his first start last week after sitting out due to an infection in a finger on his throwing hand, O'Neil has proved to be as ineffective as he was prior to the infection.

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