

Lambright enjoying life as second-year coach

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Oregon Daily Emerald

Most second-year college football coaches are struggling to lead their teams to the .500 mark and are trying to figure out what to do to improve next year. Then there are a pocketful that have their hearts set on a second or third-place finish in their division.

But Washington head coach Jim Lambright is staring right in the eyes of having the best record in the Pacific-10 Conference this season.

Lambright took over as Washington's head coach just two weeks before the start of the last season, and led his team to a 7-4 record. The seven wins are more than any other first year Washington coach, and Lambright's 26-consecutive years in the league ranks the highest among active Pac-10 coaches. Last year's success, however, is being far overshadowed by the Huskies performance and overall situation this year.

"It's the difference between day and night," Lambright said of the



LAMBRIGHT

comparison between the two seasons. "Last year was still negative. You're constantly trying to catch up from taking over just a couple weeks before the opener.

"This year is a situation of progress made over spring," said

Lambright, noting that the coaching staff was better adjusted this year. "The team is a reflection of the coaching tranquility to this point."

"I believe Washington is a better team than it was a year ago, (from) everything that I've seen so far this year," Oregon head coach Rich Brooks said. "Any team that can go into Miami and beat Miami, and beat them convincingly, obviously is an outstanding team. They are firing on all cylinders on offense right now, and I just think that they are one of the premier teams in the country."

The Huskies are 5-1 this season overall, and 3-1 in the Pac-10, but are on probation because of recruiting violations, and cannot win the Pac-10 title or compete in any postseason competition.

Despite the sanctions, the team has made it a point to show everybody that it is still one of the best teams in the country. Most notably, the team broke Miami's record home-win streak

of 58 games earlier this season. Last week, the team easily beat Arizona State 35-14 without a strong performance from star tailback Napoleon Kaufman, dispelling any myths that without him the team could not win. According to Lambright, this performance showed Kaufman's true colors.

"The Arizona State game and the Miami game were both examples of Napoleon as a team player," Lambright said. "He is very, very prepared to do whatever it takes for us to win."

"He's as good of a back as I've seen in this league in years," said Brooks of the All-American senior, "and he's certainly got world-class speed."

And in terms of a game plan, Lambright is consistent with his feelings that Kaufman is only one part of the win, not all of it.

"It's a matter of how we can get Napoleon the ball. If they are going to stop him, it gives us the balance," Lambright said of Oregon concentrating on Kaufman.

"I think our main objective is

just to contain (Kaufman) and not have him make the big play," Brooks said of beating the star tailback and the Huskies. "I think if you do concentrate too much on him, Washington's got too much other offense that can hurt you. I just don't think that you can gang up on one guy and expect to stop Washington's offense."

After an 87-game series with the Ducks, which the Huskies lead 54-28-5 including 22 of 32 games on the road, the two teams have developed a rivalry that, in many people's eyes, surpasses that of Oregon and Oregon State or Washington and Washington State. Lambright believes the long-standing rivalry will provide extra spark that will keep his team from looking past the Ducks.

"Our main concern is knowing the history of our games with Oregon, and they are such ferocious, hard fought games, that you can pretty much throw out everything (they) have done up to that time," Lambright said.



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