

ROSES

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be viewed in two different lights. Sure it was disappointing for the players, the coaches and the thousands of Oregon fans to see their team of destiny fall. To come this far and not be disappointed by the end result would be highly unusual to say the least.

But at the same time, it wasn't that bad.

After all, Oregon — the same team that lost to Hawaii earlier in the season ran step-for-step with arguably the best team in the nation for three quarters.

"We didn't come here to earn respect by losing and playing hard," Oregon quarterback Danny O'Neil said. "We came here to earn respect by winning."

Statistically at the half, the Ducks edged the Lions in almost all key offensive categories with one glaring exception — the score, Penn State 14-7.

"Everybody was pretty upbeat at half-time," Oregon linebacker Jeremy Asher said. "We weren't out of it."

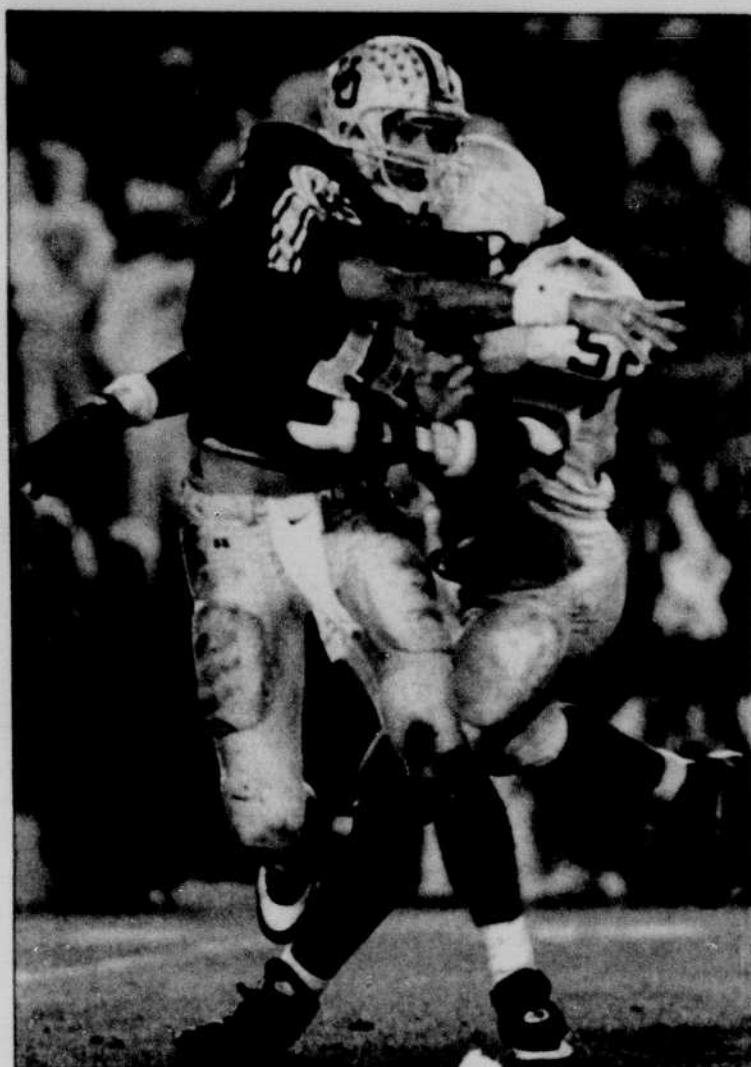
But for all the fight that Oregon had, the combination of Penn State's powerful offense and Oregon's weary defense finally turned the tides for good.

"I think the key was we wore out in the fourth quarter," Asher said. "That's sad but (Penn State's) offense is a good offense."

So as expected by most, the Ducks became the latest victim of the No. 2 team in the nation. Oddsmakers can pat themselves on the back for the razor-sharp accuracy on the point spread. Penn State fans and so-called college football experts can spit out the words "I told you so."

"Football's a game of the way the ball bounces," Oregon tight end Josh Wilcox said. "I guess it was weighted to the Penn State side."

But for all the disappointment that a loss brings with it, the



JEFF PASLAY/Emerald

Oregon quarterback Danny O'Neil left it all out on the field Monday. He set six Rose Bowl records, but came up short of a win in his final game.

Ducks will bring just a little bit more away from the game than most teams on the losing end of an 18-point loss would.

"This was a great experience until the final score," a relaxed Oregon head coach Rich Brooks said. "The way our state and fans responded was tremendous and I couldn't be any prouder of our team."

Not only did the Ducks prove that they indeed could play the No. 2 team in the nation, they did so in explosive offensive fashion.

O'Neil finished his career at Oregon by taking to the air early and often with uncanny accuracy for the better part of the contest as the senior quarterback led the Oregon offense to 501 yards of total offense. His 456 yards passing broke Wisconsin's Ron VanderKelen's old mark of 401 yards and was one of six Rose Bowl records that O'Neil was to claim on the day.

After the game, though, O'Neil was quick to defuse any talk of individual glory in the

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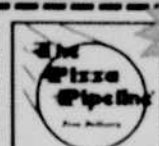
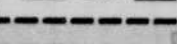
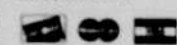
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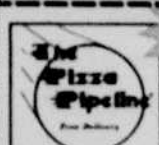
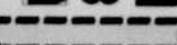
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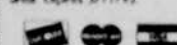
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