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Gang Green was alive and well in the Spring Game, holding the White team to 35 yards of total offense.

FOOTBALL

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threw two of those errant passes and threw for only one touchdown despite throwing a solid 46-yard pass to Dameron Ricketts in the first half. The White team scored its only touchdown in the third quarter on junior quarterback Ryan Perry-Smith's fumble in the end zone.

"I'm disappointed, not discouraged," Bellotti said. "We can perform better than that. We are not where we need to be. We are not ready to defend this conference championship."

"I don't think I played as well as I could have or should have," said Graziani, who graded his 15-for-24 passing performance a C-minus. "When the weather cooperated and there wasn't such a wet ball, I threw pretty well. I spotted the ball pretty well, and I think I ran the offense well."

And considering a few penalties, including a holding call that negated an impressive touchdown run from senior tailback Ricky Whittle, the offense came close to scoring several more times than it crossed the end zone.

"The first-team offense was their own worst enemy in the first half," Bellotti said of the penalties. "They are all correctable mistakes. The best part is that those are things that can be worked on."

As 41 points would indicate, the Ducks did, at times, show what their offense promises for next year. Whittle ran for 69 total yards and two touch-

downs, including a 30-yard run in the second quarter. Redshirt freshman tailback Kevin Parker ran the opening kick of the third quarter 87 yards for a touchdown and put the Green team on top 34-0.

"We've started to take the next step," Oregon offensive coordinator Al Borges said. "For the most part, we made some progress today."

But barring a halfback option pass from Whittle to senior flanker Cristin McLemore, the offense just tried to execute the basics.

"The theme for me is to put in the nucleus of your offense and see if you can execute your offense to the purest form," Borges said.

"We gave them the basic stuff and tried to execute that," Graziani said. "If you can't do the basic things, you're going to have trouble doing the fancy stuff."

And as far as the team is concerned, this is only a small preview of what next year holds.

"We are just touching the tip of the iceberg now," Graziani said. "This offense and this team has unlimited potential."

"All along this spring I have been very encouraged and impressed by the attitude, the enthusiasm and the effort level of our football players," Bellotti said. "We did not showcase a lot of things that we believe in and can execute because we wanted maximum repetition and exposure to some new football plays that will give us a new dimension in the fall."

METZ

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What it boiled down to on Saturday was just another intra-squad scrimmage. And while it was hard to take in the game and at the same time watch the Lakers-Sonics game on the press box TV, Saturday's Spring Game was encouraging, yes. Exciting? Not really.

But Saturday's festivities were not without their reward.

The real excitement of Saturday's game came away from the game itself — it came from the attitudes of the intra-squad combatants.

After achieving such an unthinkable goal in 1994, one possible path that the Ducks could take in 1995 would be the path of complacency. Knowing that they finally won the Pac-10 and gave it their all against an overwhelming Penn State team would probably be enough for a lot of teams.

Maybe it's the brand new coaching staff or maybe it was the weird weather, but this group of soggy Ducks left little question as to what their goals are for the upcoming season.

"It's the same feeling that we had last year," Oregon defensive end Troy Bailey said. "Hopefully it will carry us back."

Back? The Ducks took 37

years off after their appearance in the 1958 Rose Bowl, so the real challenge now is to bury the myth that 1994 was a fluke and break the mathematical formula that would see the Ducks make their next trip to Pasadena in the year 2031.

The Ducks return a hearty contingent from last year's squad. Some of the losses are easier to absorb than others, but for the most part, the Ducks are in a good position.

Danny O'Neil is gone. But in his absence, Tony Graziani has established himself as a true team leader, despite an up-and-down spring.

With the new coaching staff comes the task of having to prove themselves all over again to secure starting positions. In this way, nobody on the team is taking anything for granted.

"I might be the one coming off the bench next year," Bailey said.

Players like defensive lineman Desmond Byrd, LaMont Woods, Brian Collins and Dante Lewis all have impressed the coaches in the spring, helping fuel the competition that is a necessary component to any strong team.

"The thing that continues to impress me is that these guys play like they've still got something to prove," defensive coordinator

Charlie Waters said. "They've got confidence. They know what the big show is all about."

The Duck defense looked as slick as the drenched OmniTurf on Saturday. One of the strange sights as the first-team defense took the field was the noticeable absence of No. 50, No. 4 and No. 7, but the defensive line has been one of the bigger surprises in spring drills. Things could be worse in the secondary as an experienced Alex Molden takes the reins on a back wall that should gel nicely by the time the Ducks take the field for real in 124 days in Salt Lake City.

This is a team that looked, and acted, like it was prepared to do whatever it takes, again. For as much energy as it took to piece together such an incredible season last year, watching and listening to these guys for an afternoon, you really feel like they could do it again.

That, of course, is yet to be seen. A lot of things went right for the Ducks in 1994 and it will take an equal amount of good fortune to win the Pac-10 title again this season. But if the Ducks play as good as their attitudes, it's going to be another banner year for football in Oregon.

Chris Metz is the sports editor for the Emerald.

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