

Preview: Secondary will have to step up against ASU

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 ■ safety Brian Collins have been thrown in and out of the lineup as Lewis, Wheaton, sophomore strong safety Jaiya Figueras and senior cornerback Alex Molden have come and gone with injuries.

"When you're down already three members of the secondary," Bellotti said, "then it puts the pressure obviously on Issac, Brian, LaMont, Alex and Ronnie. I think those guys have to be ready to go."

The Ducks have been striving all season to meet the goals they hope to achieve. Beating Washington State brought Oregon its first goal — a win-

ning season. Now the team will begin to concentrate on a bowl berth, a Pac-10 championship, and their highest goal — a repeat trip to the Rose Bowl. Bellotti said this weekend's game was crucial to fulfilling the goals.

"All of those things are down the road," Bellotti said. "We work one day at a time, one game at a time. And as I've said before, those other games [against Washington and Arizona] won't be big games unless we win this weekend. Those other games don't count at this point, they don't matter to us because what matters is this weekend's game against Arizona State."

Bowl scenarios start to take shape

■ **FUTURE:** Saturday's games look to play a key role in what the post season holds for the Ducks

By Trevor Kearney
 Sports Editor

Before the 1995 football season began, Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said at the Ducks' media day that above all else, he wanted his team to be a winning team.

"Bottom line goal for me is to have a winning season," Bellotti said. "Then the next goal is we would like to get to a bowl game. The third goal is to obviously win the conference championship outright and get to the Rose Bowl."

Having clinched that first goal, Bellotti and his team find themselves in a strangely familiar position — in the thick of the Rose Bowl race. Having lost only one Pacific-10 Conference game and won all three of their non-conference games, the Ducks are behind only Washington and USC in the league standings. And come Saturday, when the Trojans head to Seattle to take on the Huskies, the Ducks will be behind only one Pac-10 foe — providing they beat Arizona State.

Providing USC, Washington and Oregon do not lose over two more conference games, the two deciding games in the race will prove to be this weekend's Washington-USC game and next weekend's Oregon-Washington game.

If USC beats Washington Saturday and goes on to win the rest of its games, it wins the conference title outright with an overall record of 10-1 and a perfect league record of 8-0. If the Trojans do beat Washington but lose a different league game — their only serious competition

after Washington comes when they host UCLA on Nov. 18 — the chance for Oregon to win the Pac-10 title opens up. The Trojans' loss to Notre Dame, however, has eliminated the possibility of a tie because Oregon didn't lose a non-conference game. So, if the Ducks and Trojans tie for first in league competition, the nod will go to Oregon. If Washington wins this weekend, there are two possible outcomes that could take place. If they beat Oregon on Nov. 4, the Ducks are basically eliminated from the race, barring upsets of both USC and Washington. If the Huskies then beat UCLA and Washington State the following weeks, they win the conference championship with a 9-2 overall record and an 8-0 league record. But if Washington loses to Oregon and the Ducks win the rest of their games, the Ducks win the conference championship with an overall record of 10-1 and a league record of 7-1.

If all three teams tie with league records of 7-1 or even 6-2, Washington will be eliminated because of its two non-conference losses and USC will bow out because of its loss to Notre Dame.

If the Ducks lose one more game this season, however, they will most likely have to settle for one of three other bowl games open to Pac-10 teams.

The Cotton Bowl pits the No. 2 team from the Big 8 against either the WAC champion or the No. 2 team in the Pac-10. If Oregon loses one more game this season but places second in the conference, they will have a good chance at gaining the Cotton Bowl berth slated for Jan. 1, 1996 in Dallas, Texas.

According to Rick Baker, the executive director for the Cotton Bowl, one of the main factors in

what officials look for in a team is the fan following it will bring.

"From a Dallas perspective, how many fans a team will attract is very important," Baker said, adding that Bowl officials look at ranking and league record when deciding who they want at their game. "We have talked to the Rose Bowl and the Independence Bowl, where [Oregon] has been in the past couple of years, and they said that Oregon fans are great and travel really well."

Baker also said that if a team wins its last two games of the season, it gains momentum for the postseason and is thus more appealing to Bowl officials.

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 If the Ducks place second in the Pac-10 but either their record isn't better than the WAC champion or they don't meet some of the criteria that Cotton Bowl officials are looking for, they will probably earn a spot at the Plymouth Holiday Bowl on Dec. 29 in San Diego.

According to Bruce Binkowski, the assistant executive director for the Holiday Bowl, the Ducks have already been considered for the Holiday Bowl.

"You certainly want a team with a good record, a good fan following and one that puts on a good show on the field," Binkowski said. "Oregon certainly falls into that category."

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 If the Ducks place third in the Pac-10, they will automatically travel to the Sun Bowl in El Paso, Texas. The Sun Bowl pits the No. 3 team in the Pac-10 against the No. 5 team in the Big Ten.

The Sun Bowl had been part of the coalition the last three years, but entered its agreement with Pac-10 and Big Ten this season.

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