

CIVIL WAR

OREGON VS OREGON STATE

OSU: Defense highlights sub-par season

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were just one or two plays between winning and losing. Although things haven't gone our way, [it is important] knowing we have been right there."

After beating Idaho 14-7 in their first game of the year, the Beavers dropped close games to North Texas (30-27), California (13-12) and Arizona (14-9). Oregon State's defense has held its opponents to under 100 yards rushing in half of its games this year including Arizona, as the Wildcats only rushed for 53 yards against the Beavers.

Oregon State's offense has succeeded in running the ball, as its wishbone offense has averaged 214.2 yards per game en route to a No. 17 national ranking.

Against USC last week, the Beavers ran for 238 yards, and against Washington, Oregon State rushed for 348 yards but ended up losing the game 26-16.

Senior fullbacks J.D. Stewart and Sedrick Thomas lead the Beaver running attack, as Stewart has gained 398 yards this season and Thomas has run for 242 yards.

But the Beavers just couldn't live up to preseason predictions as their wishbone offense has proved to be ineffective against most teams. The inconsistency of their quarterbacks — Don Shanklin, Rahim Muhammad and Tim Alexander — has hurt them, as the Beavers have only scored 20 or more points once this year and have been held to under 15 points in eight of their

10 games.

According to Pettibone, as the losses piled up, the team morale went down and it became harder and harder to muster up a win.

"As it happened more and more it became more difficult," Pettibone said. "With the pressure at the beginning of the season it was tough on the players."

The Beavers have also had an inconsistent kicking game, as kicker Randy Lund has made only eight of 17 field goals and has missed 8 point after attempts. But despite his inconsistency, Pettibone says that he is still confident that Lund can get the job done.

"Usually it has been the kicking that decides our games," Pettibone said. "[Lund] is a good kicker, but he has been very inconsistent this year. However, if it called for a final kick to win the game I would go to him."

All records and previous performances are out the window now, however, as the Civil War match up has historically proved to be a hard-fought game no matter how the two teams have fared outside of the intrastate match up.

Oregon leads the series 48-40-10, but in the last seven years the Beavers have won three of the games and played tough in all of them. Pettibone is undefeated at Autzen Stadium and, he said, he and his team take this game and the pursuit of state bragging rights seriously.

"It means an awful lot to me and the players," Pettibone said,

adding that he would like to give his first full recruiting class a graduation win. "It's our traditional rival. More than anything it would be a great thing for our seniors [to win]. I'd like nothing more than to send our players out with a victory."

And the Ducks know that they are not in for a cake walk to a bowl game. Despite the teams' records, Oregon knows it is in for a battle and they will have to work hard at beating the Beavers for the first time at Autzen in six years.

"You have to throw the records out for this game because it is such a heated rivalry," Oregon quarterback Tony Graziani said. "Anytime a team comes in here two years in a row and beats us — especially OSU — that is definitely in the back of our minds. We are really focused and definitely ready to play."

Flanker Cristin McLemore said, the Beavers will play a tough game and are capable of upsetting the 16th-ranked Ducks.

"They play hard," he said. "The Beavers play very hard. They have a unorthodox style offense — not saying that in a derogatory or negative way at all, but meaning that they throw a lot of speed at you that we might look at and [not be] sure why they are doing that."

"They are talented, they have got some skill position players. At the same time it is just going to be another battle for us just like the last two weeks."

Preview: Weather could play big role

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the entire team to accomplish, it helps get us to things. Guys like Whittle and McLemore benefit from guys like Eric Reid because they would not be able to set those records and leave those marks without the help of the people up front."

For the past five years, the home team has not had the advantage, as it has lost each time. But Bellotti believes it is the weather, not the field, that

will win or lose the game for a team.

"I believe that it will be the home team's advantage this time," he said. "I think the weather has been a bigger factor than the site. I can't control the weather, but I'm glad that we're playing at Autzen and so is our team."

The Ducks and the Beavers will battle it out for state bragging rights this Saturday at 3:38 pm.

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