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Beavers hire ex-Duck to run offense

■ **FOOTBALL:** Denny Schuler replaces departed Mike Summers as OSU's offensive coordinator

CORVALLIS (AP) — Looking to expand and jump start an offense that was by far the worst in the Pac-10 last season, Oregon State hired Denny Schuler as offensive coordinator on Wednesday.

Schuler, 49, served as offensive coordinator at California for three seasons before he and the rest of coach Keith Gilbertson's staff were fired at the end of last season.

Schuler replaces Mike Summers, who resigned Monday.

Although Schuler ran a pro-style attack at Cal, both he and Oregon State coach Jerry Pettibone said the Beavers would not be throwing out their option offense.

"We're not going to abandon the option philosophy. We're just going to reduce it to a degree so we can pass the ball more," Pettibone said by telephone from a recruiting trip in California. "All we're going to do is take the things we have established in the running game and balance it up with a passing attack."

Schuler, contacted at his home in California, said he had

no intention of abandoning the option that had been the basis of Oregon State's offense in Pettibone's five seasons with the Beavers.

"I think Jerry and I are on the same page in terms of this," Schuler said. "It would be my thought that we certainly keep the best things that Oregon State has done and certainly the option would be part of it."

"I've been on the other side of the ball enough to know how many problems option teams will give a defense. I'm excited about being able to keep that part of it. The one thing we've all realized is that we'd like to move toward a more balanced approach, possibly spread things out a little more and air it out a little more."

Schuler, 49, was defensive coordinator under Rich Brooks at Oregon from 1986 to 1992.

"This is a good hire for us," Pettibone said. "Denny's got a lot of experience in the Pac-10 and in coaching in general that is going to be very helpful as far as the future of our offense is concerned."

In 1993, Cal led the Pac-10 in total offense under Schuler. He will be taking over an offense that averaged 12.4 points per game. The Beavers averaged 282 yards per game, but only 72.5 through the air.

The team went 1-10 and led to Summers' decision to end his 14-year professional relationship with Pettibone.

Despite the record, Schuler said he believes there is reason for optimism in Corvallis.

"I think Oregon State is a lot closer to doing the things they want to do than a lot of people realize," Schuler said. "I would not have taken the job if I didn't feel there was some talent there."

At the top of the list is sophomore Tim Alexander, recruited from Florida as the best prep option quarterback in the country. Schuler said he believes Alexander will be able to adjust to the new aspects of the offense.

"I didn't get to see him throw the ball a great deal," Schuler said, "but I'm led to believe and I want to believe he can throw the ball well enough to truly be a run-pass threat."

Schuler is an Oregon alum, but he has no trouble switching allegiances to the Ducks' hated rival. He pointed to Brooks, an Oregon State grad, as inspiration.

"There was a guy who went from Oregon State to Oregon a number of years back and he did a pretty good job of helping them," Schuler said. "Maybe turnaround is fair play."



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