

Oregon Football

Battling for Position



MARK McTYRE/Emerald

Tailback Kevin Parker holds the starting spot right now, however, to ensure he'll have it when the season begins, the sophomore will have to continue to prove he's the best the Ducks have to offer.

Now that Oregon star Ricky Whittle is in the NFL, the Ducks' coaching staff must decide who will fill his shoes

By Chris Hansen
Freelance Reporter

Ricky Whittle probably never knew his shoes were so big.

But the Ducks' all-time leader in all-purpose yards, and last year's star running back, left behind a gaping hole in Oregon's backfield when he graduated and moved on to the New Orleans Saints and the NFL. A hole that could be filled by one, or even all, of five tailbacks that are currently fighting it out for the starting job.

"We have some young running backs with tremendous talent but who don't have a lot of experience," said Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti. "I don't know if you can replace Ricky Whittle with just one guy."

Chances are that if they do go with just one guy, that would be sophomore Kevin Parker, who, playing in a limited capacity last season, showed flashes of brilliance. His heftiest competition will come from sophomore David Crump, who also saw limited duty last year. Freshmen Jerry Brown and Derien Latimer, and junior college transfer Saladin McCullough, round out the rest of the competitors.

The fierce competition is a driving force of motivation for Parker to show that he is ready to take over the starting position.

"I got to go out everyday knowing that they are trying to take my job," he said. "I'm going to try and show that I can play."

But while they are competing against each other, the good of the team and helping to improve the tailback position is also important.

"We are all vying for the starting position," Crump said. "But the way I see it, the more the better. We've got a lot of talented backs. Teams are going to have a hard time with us because we will always have fresh legs in the game. They won't know what to expect from us."

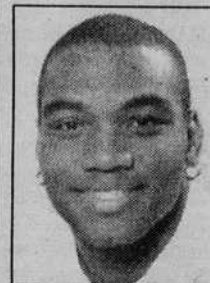
"No matter who gets the starting job," added Brown, "we're still going to help each other out because we want four good backs."

And that means being able to take constructive criticism from teammates.

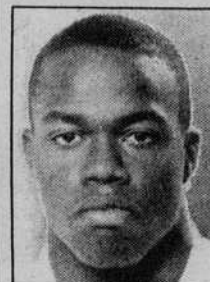
"When somebody does something wrong," said Crump, "we let the person know what he did. We help to critique each other."



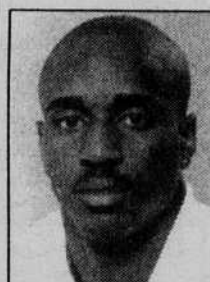
OREGON TAILBACKS



CRUMP



BROWN



LATIMER

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ESPN anchor drowns during rescue attempt

■ DEATH:
Sportscaster Tom Mees died Wednesday while saving his 4-year-old daughter from drowning in a pool

The Associated Press

SOUTHINGTON, Conn. — Tom Mees, one of ESPN's original sports anchors, drowned Wednesday rescuing his 4-year-old daughter from a next-door neighbor's pool. He was 46.

Mees jumped in the pool to save his daughter, Gabrielle, after she fell into the deep end, said Lt. James Tortora, a police spokesman. His other daughter, Lauren, 8, ran home to get her mother.

They returned to find Mees at the bottom of the pool and Gabrielle safely out of the water, Tortora said.

Mees' wife, Michelle, then began screaming for help. A lawn maintenance man pulled Mees from the water, police and fire officials said.

Mees had no pulse or respiration when he was brought to Bradley Memorial Hospital at 2:50 p.m. and efforts to revive him failed. He was pronounced dead at 3:15

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Rage of bungee jumping spreads to Oregon

■ OUTDOORS: Bungee jumping has become an activity anyone can do be part of

By Brian Vanneman
Freelance Reporter

Just why are so many people so excited to throw themselves head first off a bridge?

Bungee jumper Myk Brown of Eugene can't explain the rationale, but he knows that when he first did a swan dive off a bridge near Portland, he got an "awesome sensation of ground rush."

Thousands of new bungee jumping Oregonians like Brown are taking the dive every year. In fact, Bungee Masters Inc., a Portland company, has overseen over 40,000 jumps since it started seven years ago.

According to Bungee Masters, "there seem to be as many different types of people who jump as there are reasons they jump."

But certainly, one big reason is that bungee jumping is the biggest rush one can find.

Brown believes that the sport can be made even more thrilling by trying out different jumps. He has tried the "pendulum" jump, in which "you wrap the bungee under the bridge, then... run off the opposite side," in order to get a big swing instead of a vertical bounce.

For Casey Dale, founder of Bungee Masters, jumping is more intense than skydiving, because he gets a better

perception of his speed and how quickly he's approaching the ground. When you jump off a plane, there's nothing to compare your speed to, he says, and you feel as if you're floating, not falling.

Urban Moore, owner of Eugene Skydivers, solved the problem by offering "para-bungee" jumps.

"In para-bungee, two people jump out of a plane, and one bungee jumps off the other," he explained.

He emphasized that both are wearing parachutes, but the person who bungee jumps opens his later. Moore said that although para-bungee is safe, it's only for those with experience.

However, Dale says that even people who don't think of themselves as risk-takers can have fun jumping. Dale, an Oregon graduate, is a reliable source on the topic. After all, in 1994 he was declared the world record holder for the most personal at with over 2,500.

Brown hauled one buddy who had no intention of jumping from the bridge, where eventually his friend was overcome with curiosity and jumped.

"People who have the most fun are those who overcome the most; they get the best rush in the world," Brown said.

Even usually subdued groups such as the Springfield City Government have jumped.

Perhaps bungee jumping has appealed to such a surprisingly wide range of people because it can be much

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