

Oregon reserves will have to step up

■ **INJURIES:** Despite their injuries, the Ducks feel they have a chance to win

By Ryan Halvorsen

Sports Reporter

It probably couldn't get much worse.

Oregon players have been dropping like flies in recent weeks, and the depth chart keeps getting shallower as the season progresses. Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti, listed five players as definitely out for this Saturday's game against UCLA, two of those are starters, and 12 are doubtful, including 10 starters.

Safety Michael Fletcher, who went down against Arizona State, will not play this weekend and running back Jerry Brown broke his hand in practice on Tuesday and is expected to be out four to six weeks. Fullback A.J. Jelks along with tailbacks Saladin McCullough and David Crump are listed as doubtful for Saturday, leaving the Ducks thin in the offensive backfield.

McCullough says his knee is well enough to go, but Bellotti doesn't want to rush into anything and has him listed as doubtful for this week.

"It's been frustrating," McCullough said. "I'm not 100 percent, but I'm good enough where I can make things happen. I'm coming back because I want to come back. I can't take it any more, just sitting out and watching."

The defensive backfield isn't fairing much better. Besides losing Fletcher, safety Brandon McLemore is listed as doubtful and didn't practice on Tuesday. Reserve safety, Justin Wilcox is also listed as doubtful, leaving only redshirt freshman Chris Young and true freshman Ray Brust to step up to the task.

Defensive coordinator Rich Stubler doesn't seem to be too worried about throwing young guys into the mix, considering their performances last weekend against Arizona State.

"We had Ray Brust playing who had never stepped out on the

field before as a safety, and he got better as the time went by," he said. "Michael Fletcher was down so Chris Young played really well."

Senior outside linebacker Derrick Barnes, who came back from an injury last week, also has confidence in the less experienced players who will be filling against the Bruins.

"They'll be fine. I think that our program is at a level that if someone goes down, there are going to be people who can back them up," Barnes said.

Others who are definitely out are reserve defensive end Leie Su-alua, reserve guard Josh Beckett and reserve defensive back David Coyle. Dameron Ricketts, Matt Lofrano, Bryant Jackson, Mark Schmidt, Willie Rife and Michael Klews are all doubtful. Quarterback Tony Grazian is listed as probable, and coach Bellotti didn't rule out the chance of him playing against the Bruins. Ryan Perry-Smith will start for the Ducks at quarterback.



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