

COURTESY PHOTO

Arizona head coach Dick Tomey brings his young, but talented team to Autzen Stadium Saturday, looking to add to Oregon's five-game losing streak. A Wildcats' win would move Arizona closer to a possible bowl bid.

## Preview: Ducks try to get back on track

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derstanding of defense. If after the game on Saturday they've given everything they had and they've played as hard as they could, good things will happen."

One of the changes for Arizona has been the meteoric rise of their redshirt freshman quarterback Keith Smith. Last week against California, Smith set the school record for total offense in a game by racking up 418 yards passing, completing 25-of-36 passes and five touchdowns. He also ran for 84 yards and two touchdowns, giving him a total of 502 all-purpose yards. In the last four games Smith has started, he has thrown for six touchdowns, ran for four and averaged 194 yards in the air and 74 on the ground. He is also the leading rusher on the team for the season.

"I don't think we've faced anybody that has the combination of speed, agility and ability to throw the football like Keith Smith," Bellotti said. "I think that he presents

probably the greatest problem that we've faced in terms of one player in the eight years that I've been here."

"I think his progress from week to week has been nothing short of phenomenal," Arizona coach Dick Tomey said. "He brings a lot to the team, with not only his arm but also his legs and his poise. All people wanted to talk about before last week was how he was such a good runner, and they made it sound like he was just an incapable thrower. I knew that there was going to be a day when he was going to light it up throwing, and it happened sooner than I thought."

The road has been getting rockier for the Ducks in recent weeks, knowing that — after two of their most successful seasons ever — they aren't playing for any kind of bowl this season. Bellotti doesn't think that the team is letting itself down in any areas, it's just not getting the lucky breaks it has enjoyed the past two seasons.

"I don't think that anybody has

let up or given up, but you always have to guard against the fatigue that sets in without being rewarded, and our kids haven't been rewarded," Bellotti said. "They've tried hard and played hard and are playing hurt. We need to make some breaks. Good teams find a way to make their own breaks."

Bellotti still refuses to believe that this is going to be the end of the Ducks as we know them, and this season just follows along with the history of Oregon football after winning seasons. The last time the Ducks only had three wins for the entire season was in 1991. Three years later they were in Pasadena.

"I've been here eight years and I've seen the good and the bad days," Bellotti said. "If we can pull off a winning season this year, it will be the first time since 1964 that we've had three winning seasons in a row. I think that's something great to shoot for and something that can be a rallying cry."




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