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Defense: UA secondary go for the picks

■ Continued from Page 2B

Oregon was down 10-0, Gang Green began to take over. Safety Brian Collins intercepted two passes, had six tackles and added two pass deflections, and the Ducks' defense stopped Arizona on a goal-line stand to win the game 17-13.

But that was last season, and many things have changed. The faces on Arizona's defense that are now dominating include inside linebacker Chester Burnett, tackle Joe Salave'a and cornerback Chris McAlister. These guys are not nationally recognized or even well-known throughout the conference, but soon will be if they continue to play like they have in recent weeks.

Burnett has accumulated 62 tackles in the last four games, bringing his season total to a team-best 90 tackles. He has already tied Arizona's leading tackler for all of last season and is one-up on the leading tackler's numbers from 1994. Last weekend, in the thrilling quadruple-overtime loss at California, Burnett recorded a career-high 20 tackles, including 17 solos.

The defensive line is anchored by Salave'a, who is making a name for himself after the departure of Tedy Bruschi and Chuck Osborne. Salave'a has 35 tackles, including 10 for loss. Pressuring the quarterback is his strong suit — he has collected six sacks and broken up two passes. Against USC, Salave'a was Brad Otton's worst nightmare. He sacked the quarterback three times.

Arizona's new Desert Swipe scheme is what the Ducks are worried about most. The Wildcats have intercepted 12 balls this season after grabbing only six all last year and four in 1994. Even more threatening is the fact that four INTs have been returned for touchdowns.

McAlister not only leads his team with five interceptions this season, but he is ranked first in the Pac-10 and fifth in the nation in INTs, and has one less pick in eight games this year than the whole Arizona team did all of last

season.

Oregon tight end Josh Wilcox said the receivers will have to make more of an effort to read the defense.

"The receivers and tight ends need to get open," he said. "That means we might have some one-on-one coverage with the linebackers and safeties, so it's going to be our job to get open and catch the ball. It will also take recognizing the defensive schemes and knowing what we're up against. They bring a lot of different styles at you. They play a basic defense but bring a lot of variables to it. We have to understand and read each situation."

Quarterback Tony Graziani knows the passes he throws will be eagerly eyed by the Wildcats' defensive backs.

"This is definitely going to be the best secondary we have faced this year," he said. "They have two of the best corners in the league, so it's going to be a challenge."

Wilcox, who has watched the Wildcats for the past four years, said their defense has changed in the past couple of years.

"I think this defense is different because it goes for takeaways," Wilcox said. "They use their speed and quickness, where in the past they have used their whole line. They were so physical and brutal; now they do a lot of twisting and stunting to the point where they are blitzing guys all over and trying to get guys loose and swipe the ball away from them."

Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti seems to be most concerned with the defensive line and linebackers.

"They always play great defense," he said. "They have great personnel. They play with a lot of intensity up front and create a very good pass rush."

The Wildcats have only given up five rushing touchdowns this season.

Oregon ran the ball all over the Wildcats last season with Ricky Whittle picking up 107 yards and a touchdown, and Kevin Parker

rushing for 63 of his own.

This season, Oregon has been unable to run well on a consistent basis. But the Ducks cannot avoid running the ball this weekend, because of the strong Arizona line. The passing game still has to contend with the strong secondary.

"I think Cal did a lot of good things [last weekend] against their defense that other teams weren't able to do," Graziani said. "One of those things was run the ball, so one of the things we're going to have to do Saturday is get our running game going."

"It's very crucial," Wilcox said of Oregon's running game. "We don't want to rely on the pass to get us a first down. We haven't had healthy backs, and we haven't had the holes."

"It's been coulda-woulda-shoulda all season long. If we can establish the run this week like we did last year on them, it will help our game tremendously."

Even though Arizona has been giving up more than 350 yards per game, Graziani knows it will take a lot of scoring to win the game.

"I think [statistics] are a little misleading," he said. "People say that stats mean a lot but I think that they are playing a lot better than that. They are Desert Swarm and they are playing just as well as they have the past couple of years."

"I think we're going to have to score a lot of points. We're going to have to run the ball, we're going to have to throw the ball. We're going to have to make plays that we haven't made the last couple of weeks."

Wilcox said there are a few simple areas that the Ducks need to concentrate on in order to get past the defense and get the win.

Desert Swipe may be slowly making a name for itself with players like McAlister, Burnett and Salave'a, but if the Ducks have any hope of winning on Saturday they will have to get past the Wildcats' defense and into the endzone.

Homecoming to offer fun for all

■ **FESTIVITIES:** Head coach Mike Bellotti and many others will be part of this year's pre-game events

By Jennifer Carter
Managing Editor

The Ducks will give the Wildcats a beating Friday morning — but not on the football field.

Instead, a piñata of the Arizona mascot will be pummeled at the 11:50 a.m. rally that officially kicks off Homecoming weekend.

Oregon football head coach Mike Bellotti, along with members of the football team and Jerry Allen, the "Voice of the Ducks," will be featured at the rally. The University marching band and rally squad will get the crowd pumped up for Saturday's Homecoming game.

Kelly Lynch, the Student Alumni Association's Homecoming chairman, said the weekend's events are important to the University atmosphere because they create shared pride among members of the University community.

"People need to show a little school spirit," he said. "They should come out and support the team. Even though they've had a tough year so far, they've still got a few games left, and we should all come out and support them."

Before the game on Saturday, Duck fans can travel with the cheerleaders to Autzen Stadium. The march will feature a KDUK disc jockey and the Oregon Duck. Once at the stadium, fans can eat, drink and be merry at one of the game's

many tailgate parties.

The University Alumni Association is one organization hosting a tailgater. In addition to the traditional food and beverages, University merchandise also will be available at this pre-game event.

Dixieland bands and Homecoming memorabilia from years past also will be at Autzen. A new addition to Homecoming, this year's Expo will function as an interactive showcase of University programs, including 11 University academic schools and the Student Alumni Association.

Lynch said the Expo will expose members of the University to a variety of ways they can get involved and show their Duck spirit.

"It's kind of a way to get our names out," he said. "Our group has about 35 members, and we want to let students know what we do and how they can get involved in our activities."

Duck fans also can get their pictures taken with a wooden version of the Duck mascot and University cheerleaders and test their knowledge of University history in UO Trivia contests at the Expo.

Amy Schroeder, Homecoming Expo coordinator for the University Alumni Association, said the event provides greater access to pre-game events because it includes activities for Duck fans of all ages.

"Free admission makes the Expo a great alternative to tailgating," she said. "We invite everyone to drop by."

GAME-DAY EVENTS

- **CAMPUS FUN RUN:** 3K and 5K, 9 a.m. at Johnson Hall; \$10 for Alumni Association members and \$12 for non-members
- **AUTZEN MARCH:** Go with the cheerleaders to Autzen Stadium, 11 a.m. EMU East Lawn
- **EXPO:** Music, memorabilia and programs, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., across from Autzen alumni tent
- **TAILGATE:** All-Alumni Pregame event, 11 a.m. in alumni tent; food and beverages available