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A statistician's dream come Saturday

A shootout? That would be an understatement. If you have a ticket to this weekend's Oregon-California football game, expect to see a game that will end up with a final score similar to the score from the Oregon men's basketball game Thursday night.

Just take these stats into account: California comes in with the 11th-ranked offense in the nation, while Oregon has a defense that ranks 102nd in the nation.

Oregon's offense: 17th in the nation. California's defense: 104th.

If stats mean anything, watch out.

We could be watching flanker Damon Griffin running wind-sprints all day Saturday for 842 yards receiving and 14 touchdowns. And we could also witness LaMont Woods backpedaling for hours while trying to catch up with the Bears' star wide receiver Bobby Shaw.

While the Ducks have faced the powerful offenses of Arizona State, Washington and UCLA, California comes in with greater numbers than all three of those teams.

The Golden Bears have five players ranked in the top six of five different Pacific-10 Conference offensive categories.

Quarterback Pat Barnes rivals Arizona State's Jake Plummer as the best quarterback in the Pac-10 and Shaw has surprised everyone by outperforming Arizona State's Keith Poole this season.

Oregon cornerback Kenny Wheaton said Barnes has earned his respect.

"Not taking anything away

from Jake Plummer or Tony Graziani, but he's right up there with them," Wheaton said. "He is a very good quarterback. He is a guy you have to respect and he has been putting up big numbers the past couple of weeks."

Big numbers?

In the past four games, Barnes has thrown for a combined total

of 1570 yards, which translates to 392 yards per game.

A big problem for the Ducks could not only be Barnes' passing ability, but also the options that he has when passing.

Any one of three receivers can be counted on to catch 10 or more passes Saturday afternoon.

Shaw is joined by Na'il Benjamin and Tony Gonzalez in the Bears' receiving corps. Shaw tops California's, and the Pac-10's, list of receivers in receptions per game and receiving yards per game. But Benjamin and Gonzalez are close behind, both ranked in the top 10 of the Pac-10 in both categories.

While the Bears have been putting up astronomical offensive numbers, the Oregon offense has been no slouch itself.

The Ducks come into this weekend with the third-ranked offense in the Pac-10, after producing 49 points last weekend against an Arizona defense that has been known for its toughness for the last five years.

As good as the Bears' and the Ducks' offenses have been this season, that is how bad their de-

fenses have been. And there is absolutely no reason to expect a change in that this weekend.

California has played well enough this season to garner the title of the 104th-ranked defense in the land, giving up more than 460 yards per game.

You know if your offense gains almost 400 yards per game, yet your defense gives up 450 yards — you're in trouble.

Last weekend, Arizona State's Terry Battle ran for 165 yards on the susceptible California defense. And two weeks ago, the Bears allowed Arizona's Keith Smith to throw for 418 yards.

For Oregon, last weekend was its best performance of the season. The Ducks held the same Arizona offense to less than 300 yards in total offense. But you don't have to look too far beyond last weekend to see the Ducks' demise from the famed Gang Green.

Corey Dillon and the Huskies ran for a lifetime and half against the Ducks at Autzen Stadium not too long ago, and before that it was Stanford's Chad Hutchinson throwing for more than 350 yards against the Ducks' defense.

So, if you are looking for a game featuring a five-yard run and a cloud of dust every play, I wouldn't be at Autzen Stadium Saturday afternoon. But, if you are looking for a game featuring two teams combining for more than half a mile in total offense — have the Bears and Ducks got a game for you.

Ryan Frank is a sports reporter for the Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper. Ryan can be reached at redog@gladstone.uoregon.edu

McTyre: A new defensive era begins next fall

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nine tackles (six unassisted), Young recorded six tackles (three unassisted) and Chevront sprang onto the scene with a quarterback sack and a total of three tackles.

Coaches, fans and the media have been waiting for the younger players to make their mark. As it was when the Baileys, Cotas and Ashers were here, a sudden rising up of the younger players didn't just happen — they followed in the footsteps of the elder players. Vandiver, Young and Chevront have teammates that they've learned from in Derrick Barnes, Reggie Jordan and Kenny Wheaton.

When Barnes, Jordan and Wheaton held the roles of newcomers they had someone there to learn from, and now they're passing their experiences on to their successors. It's a revolving door that each player must enter and then go through, to exit four

or five years later.

The end of the 1995-96 season will likely mark the exit of the remaining cast from the legendary Gang Green squad. Beginning next fall, a host of new players will join Vandiver, Young and Chevront to form something different — maybe something better than Gang Green. However, for them to accomplish this we must let them earn their own title, so they can be their own squad instead of standing in the shadows of what used to be.

Enjoy these final two games and then let Gang Green go. It's time for everyone that follows Oregon football to move on, as the players are, when the season comes to its conclusion.

Mark McTyre is the sports editor for the Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper.

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