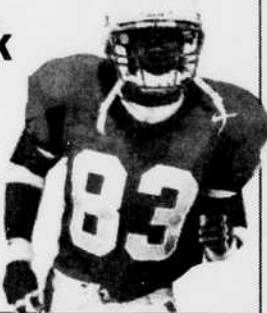


On the fast track

Pat Johnson wants to be known as more than a speedster

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Game Day



Oregon Ducks vs.
Washington State Cougars
at Autzen Stadium



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The Numbers

Pts. Allowed

Oregon 31.8
WSU 19.3

Pts. Per Game

Oregon 33
WSU 39.5

Rushing Defense

Oregon 134.8
WSU 114.8

Pass Defense Eff.

Oregon 143.5
WSU 88.5

Total Defense

Oregon 442.0
WSU 298.5

Quotable

"Chad Hutchinson needs to work on his public relations there, don't you think?"

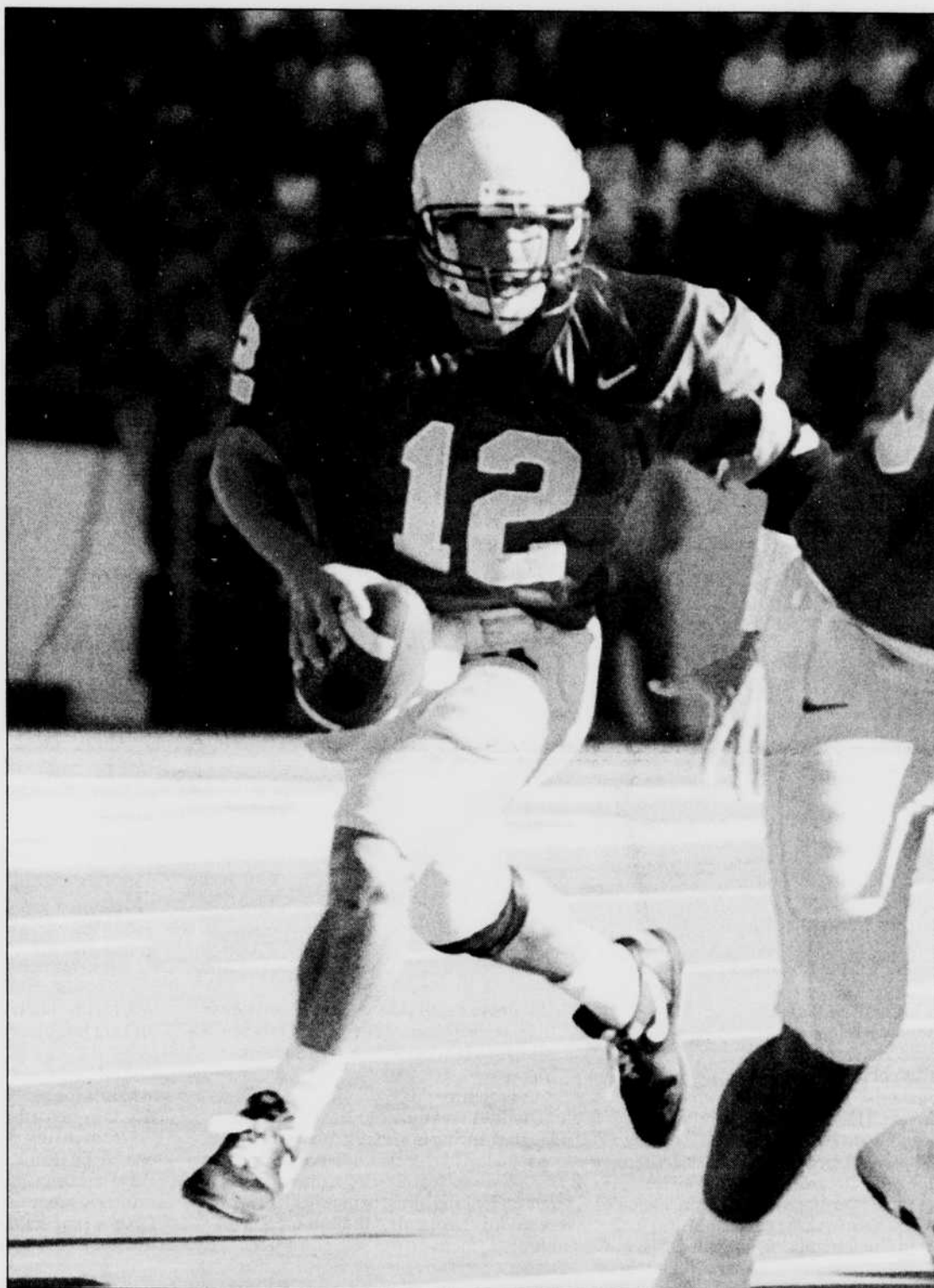
-- Ryan Leaf, who admitted to intentionally throwing a ball near a reporter's head, in reference to Hutchinson's comment after the Oregon-Stanford game: "Knowing you're going to score every time you get the ball is fun."

"We're in danger of having a big play happen at any time. They're a threat to go the distance every time."

-- Brandon McLemore

Key Player

Jaiya Figueras



CHAD PATTESON/Emerald

Jason Maas will likely start against Washington State on Saturday at Autzen Stadium. Last weekend against Stanford, Maas threw for a season-high 264 yards and five touchdowns, one short of the school record.

Oregon-WSU to be offensive battle

Heisman hopeful Ryan Leaf is next in line to test struggling Oregon defense

By Chris Hansen

Assistant Sports Editor

All those who prefer to watch a hard-fought, defensive-oriented football game had best stay clear of Autzen Stadium Saturday afternoon when the No. 15 Washington State Cougars square off against Oregon.

This game is going to be a shootout. Considering that both teams are in the top 20 nationally for points per game (No. 11 Washington State at 39.5 and No. 20 Oregon at 33) and that the Cougars put up the fourth-highest number of yards per game in the country, the odds are these

two teams are going to score a little bit.

Last season, Washington State (4-0 overall, 2-0 Pacific-10 Conference) and Oregon (3-1, 1-1) combined for 99 points in the Cougars' 55-44 win in Pullman. Expect more of the same Saturday.

"Washington State is a very, very explosive team," said Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti. "I tend to think it's going to be tough to keep up with them. I hope it's not the same shootout [as it was against Stanford], I don't think that favors us. We talked a lot about last year's game. We don't want a game like that."

But with the Pac-10's last-place defense, Bellotti and the rest of the Ducks might not have much of a choice against the No. 1 offense in the conference.



Oregon vs.
Washington
State

Time: 1 p.m.
Where:
Autzen Stadium
TV: None
Radio:
590 AM

Two-headed quarterback working as one

What started off as a little competition for the starting quarterback spot has now turned into a two-headed monster, a monster that could throw either head at the opposition at any time, even in the middle of a series.

That monster, however, is not necessarily bad.

Akili Smith came to Oregon as the top junior-college quarterback in the nation, having thrown for 3,212 yards and 32 touchdowns in his senior season.

Jason Maas was highly recruited out of high school in Yuma, Ariz., but played a very limited role in his first two seasons as a Duck, mostly picking up garbage time at the end of blowouts.

Early in fall camp, Smith proved he had learned the offense, a liability for him in the spring. And Maas had patiently waited for his chance for three seasons, one as a red-shirt, as Danny O'Neil and Tony Graziani led Oregon to national recognition.

Both had proven they could perform at the needed level, and both deserved to start. The obvious problem was: Only one guy can start.

Smith started the first game, against Arizona, and did a decent job. Maas also played two quarters, and played a little better than Smith, but still not good enough to earn the starting spot.

The two continued to improve each week.

Against Nevada, Maas had a big day with 255 passing yards. Smith, on the other hand, didn't have much of an opportunity as Saladin McCullough fumbled twice inside the 20-yard line on drives Smith was quarterbacking.

Maas' performance against Nevada earned him his first-ever start in the Fresno State game, but he still shared time with Smith.

Both improved once again, but Maas earned his second start the next week at Stanford.

That's when things started to get weird.

In the second quarter, with the Ducks facing third and goal at the four-yard line, Bellotti pulled Smith, who had led the Ducks on a seven-play drive that got them in position to score, and put Maas in.

Maas promptly hit Tony Hartley in the end zone to bring the Ducks within 14.

But the in-series switching didn't stop there.

Twice in the second half, Bellotti pulled Smith in the middle of a series and put Maas in.

If you thought it was odd that a starting quarterback hadn't been chosen by the third game, now you're thinking the Ducks are crazy.

True, this quarterback rotation has gotten a little extreme, but is it really all that bad?

Consider the fact that despite their con-

OPINION



Ryan
Frank