

Duck freshman making his mark

True freshman Rashad Bauman is learning on the fly as a starter in the Oregon defensive backfield

By Chris Hansen
Assistant Sports Editor

We'll call it "The Tackle." Saturday, Sept. 20, Oregon was at home against Fresno State leading 37-34 with 2:05 remaining in the game and the Bulldogs had the ball at the Oregon 25-yard line.

Fresno State tailback Michael Pittman took the handoff, burst through the left side of the line, shook off a tackle and with no other Oregon defenders in sight, headed for the end zone and what would have been the go-ahead touchdown.

But when Pittman reached the six-yard line, out of nowhere came No. 17 to make a sensational open-field tackle, spearing Pittman's legs and upending the Bulldog tailback to save the touchdown. Oregon went on to win the game 43-40 in overtime.

Meet true freshman Rashad Bauman, Oregon's starting right cornerback.

He is not very tall (5-foot-8), not very big (156 pounds), not very old (18) and a is little wet behind the ears.

But when you are tied for third on the team in total tackles (27), including that touchdown saver against Fresno State, and through the first four games of the season you had the team's only interception, none of those other things really matter.

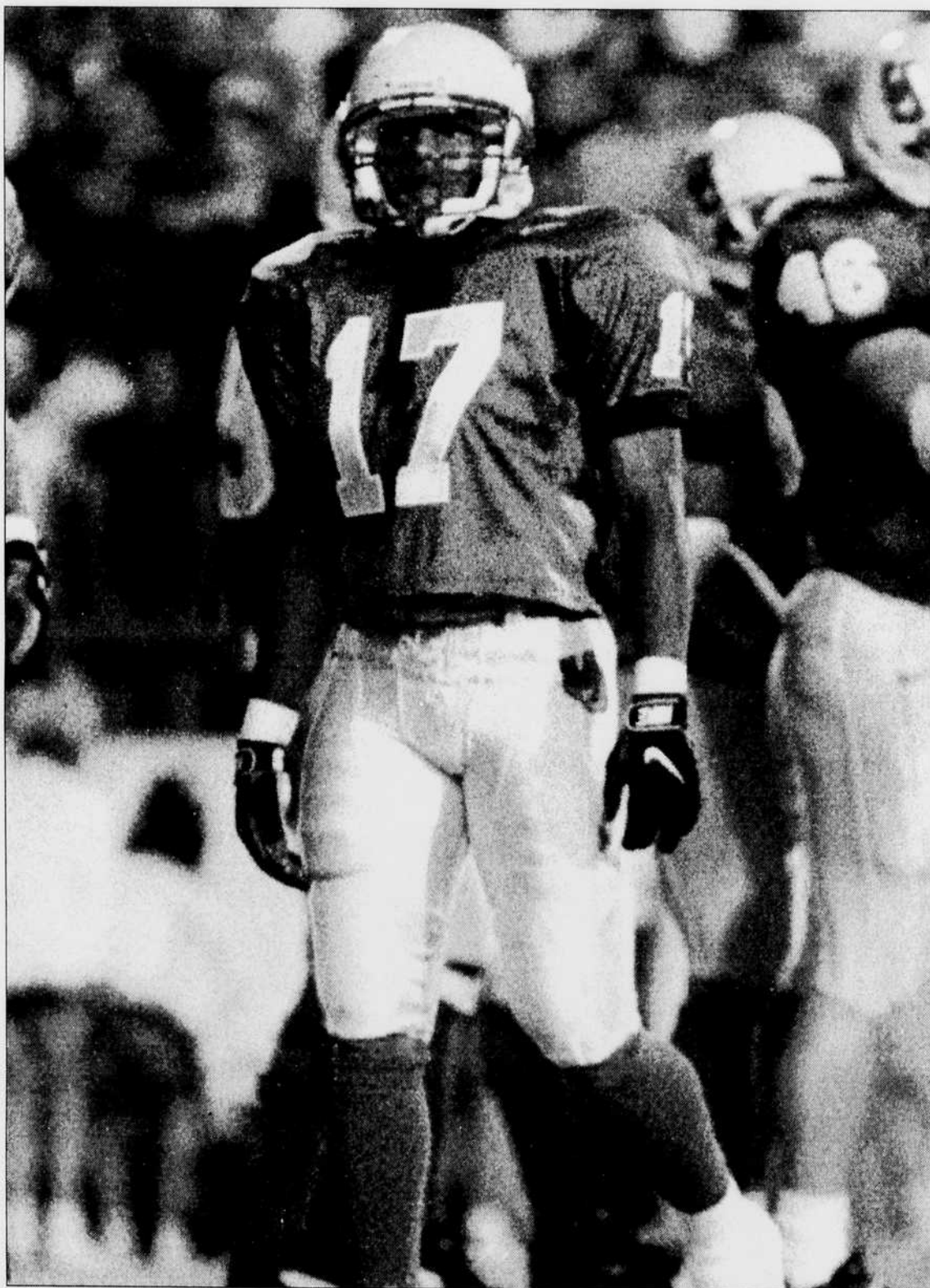
"He's fast, he can tackle, he can cover, and he's everything you could ask for in a corner," says Jaiya Figueras, Oregon's only senior defensive back. "He's a play-maker."

Sound similar to a former Oregon cornerback who is now playing in the NFL, who made a name for himself early in his college career with an interception against Washington that has become known solely as "The Pick"?

"One of the main reasons why I came to Oregon was because of him," Bauman says of his cousin, Kenny Wheaton. "I wanted to come here and learn some of the ropes from him."

Instead, Wheaton opted out after his junior season and was selected last April in

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CHAD PATTESON/Emerald

"He's stepped up and made some big plays for us, plays that even veterans wouldn't be making."

Jaiya Figueras
UO safety

Rashad Bauman started for the first time in game 2 against Nevada and has held the position ever since. He has the only interception by a Duck defensive back this season.

McNown has matured into one of the Pac-10's best QBs

After a slow start, junior quarterback Cade McNown has developed into a starring role for the 3-2 UCLA Bruins

By Alex Pond
Sports Reporter

Just three games into the 1995 season and about three months after donning a cap and gown during his high school's graduation ceremony, Cade McNown found himself staring down one of the toughest defenses in the Pacific-10 Conference's recent history.

McNown was the Bruins' starting quarterback against Oregon, a team that was fresh off a Rose Bowl appearance the season before and coming at him with the vaunted Gang Green defense.

Welcome to Division I and Pac-10 football, Cade.

It is a precarious position for any true freshman to find himself in, much less one with the responsibility of leading and directing an entire offense.

McNown went 12 for 24 for 183 yards on the day and threw one interception. Not overly impressive, but not bad. More impressive was the fact he directed three second-half touchdown drives and moved the Bruins from their own seven-yard line to the Oregon one-yard line trailing by seven

in the final minute before they were stopped short of the goal line.

The fact that he was even starting was a tribute to McNown.

"Most people aren't really ready to play as a freshman," UCLA head coach Bob Toledo says. "They don't know enough about the game."

McNown returned to the bench for one game, but came back to start against Fresno State, and has started every game at quarterback for the Bruins since.

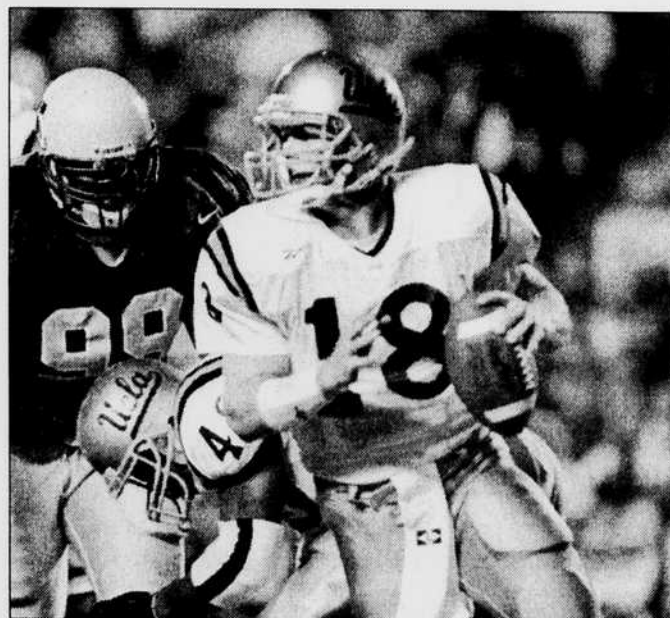
He comes to Eugene on Saturday to face Oregon a little more than two years after that first start.

This time he faces the Ducks as a seasoned veteran, hardened by games in such places as Knoxville, Tenn., Ann Arbor, Mich., and Austin, Texas.

He showed flashes of brilliancy during his freshman and sophomore seasons, but was inconsistent, displaying his youth and inexperience at times. Last season, he threw 12 touchdown passes, but he also threw 16 interceptions.

"He's obviously learned a lot because of

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With 11 touchdown passes this season, Cade McNown leads the No. 18 Bruins into Autzen Stadium Saturday.