

Don't count on wins over OSU for much longer

Over the years the Oregon State Beavers have proven they can do one thing well — lose. It has been a long and arduous journey to get to the point they have reached, but for 27 seasons, counting this one, the Oregon State Beavers have failed to finish the season with more wins than losses.

It has gotten to the point where Pacific-10 Conference prognosticators don't rate the conference's 10 teams from 1-10, they rank them 1-9. It has become a given that Oregon State will finish at the bottom of the conference, as if it were a parking space reserved for them.

OPINION



Ryan Frank

But year in and year out, the Beavers and their fans are always saying,

"This is our year. There is no way we can't break that string this season."

Yet they never do.

In short, the state of college football in Corvallis is, and has been, very sorry, much to the pleasure of the Duck fans.

Those Oregon fans should enjoy the domination of the Beavers while they can because it isn't going to last forever. In fact, I would not be surprised to see Oregon State climb out of the cellar before the turn of the century and work its way into the middle of the Pac-10 pack in 10 years.

Don't get me wrong, I have an ingrained dislike for the Beavers as much as any Duck fan. I grew up rooting for the Ducks and therefore against the Beavers, and I contemplated writing another story on how horrible Oregon State has become and poke fun at their tradition, or lack there of, but I really think the school and community is on to something in Corvallis.

What had always stuck out in my mind as holding Oregon State back from any kind of success was its lack of quality facilities.

There was no Casanova Center, no indoor practice facility and no stadium that appeared to look anything like the home of a Division I-A football team.

I always thought if the school decided that success in football was a priority and began to put money into the facilities a Division I-A football program needs, the Beavers would begin to reap the benefits.

After extensive reconstruction early in the decade, Parker Stadium has been improved. True, it must still be considered one of the conference's most unattractive places to watch a game, but it is improved nonetheless.

The addition of a Jumbotron also helped the look of the 43-year-old stadium.

While the additions and improvements to the stadium are nice, the construction and completion of the Valley Football Center, a building much similar to Oregon's Casanova Center, is what will really put Oregon State back in the recruiting game.

Think of yourself as an in-state recruit choosing between Oregon and Oregon State early in the 1990s.

The Ducks have the beautiful brand new Casanova Center to house football operations, a first-of-its-kind building, and a 44,000-seat stadium.

The Beavers, on the other hand, have no central building for football operations, nothing to compare to the Casanova Center, and a hideous stadium with wooden bleachers.

Which school do you choose?

Now with the Valley Football Center, the Beavers are back on the map with recruiting. They have something they can show recruits, a place players want to be.

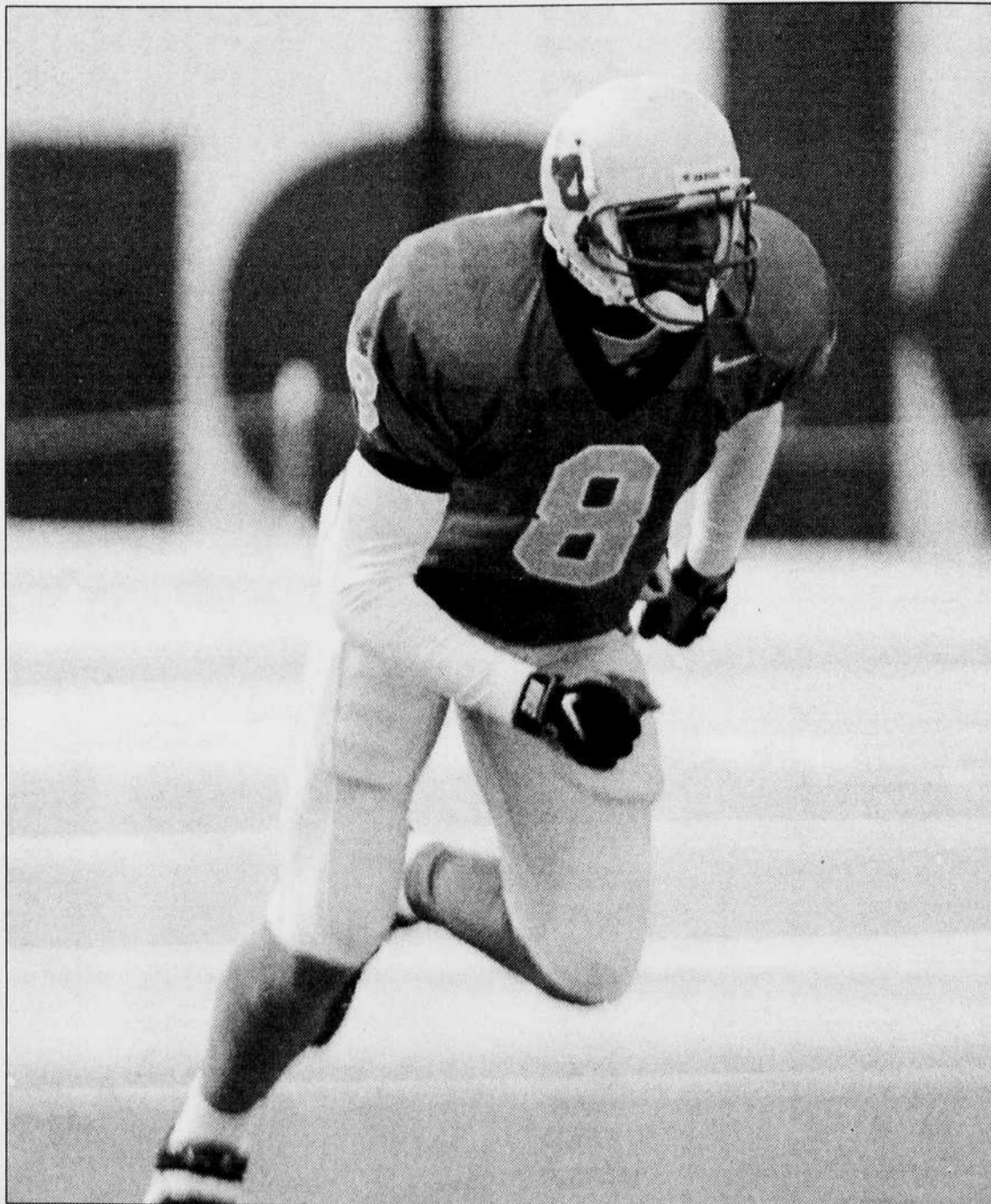
And it will pay off.

If you look back to when the Ducks started making regular appearances in

OREGON FEATURE

"The sky's the limit for LaCorey, but it's going to take discipline and maturity and until he has that, he'll just be regular."

Akili Smith
UO quarterback



MICHAEL CRISP/Emerald

The most impressive numbers LaCorey Collins has still revolve around his size. The 6-foot-4, 220-pound red-shirt freshman has 15 catches and two touchdowns in 11 games for Oregon.

Great EXPECTATIONS

Wide receiver LaCorey Collins has struggled to live up to all the hype that followed him to Oregon two years ago

BY CHRIS HANSEN
Assistant Sports Editor

Keyshawn Johnson, J.J. Stokes and ... LaCorey Collins? Believe it or not, it was only two seasons ago that the Oregon wide receiver's name was being mentioned in the same breath as the two former All-Pacific-10 Conference and now professional receivers.

It was a comparison that was easy to make the minute Collins inked his name on a letter of intent to play for Oregon. As a Parade All-American and Gatorade Player of the Year in California in 1996, Collins came to Oregon as one the most decorated

recruits ever.

He was one of the new breed, standing an imposing 6-foot-4 and weighing 220 pounds with soft, reliable hands, cut from the same mold as Stokes and Johnson.

The hype that followed him to Oregon was so thick it was palpable. People questioned whether he would even stay his full four years or if he would leave for the NFL early.

But two seasons and a meager 15 catches later, Collins hasn't lived up to expectations. A nagging high school knee injury forced him to redshirt last season and he is slowly learning what it takes to play major college football. Not to mention that

the Ducks are loaded with talent at wide receiver, limiting his game-time experience.

Calling Collins a bust so early in his career would be irresponsible. To say that he has disappointed, though, would be appropriate.

But Oregon head football coach Mike Bellotti insists that Collins is right on track.

"I think development wise, he is doing fine," Bellotti says, "I said this two years ago when he came here that his body type is going to require more maturity to the position than the average guy. He's a big, coltish kind of kid who is still growing into

Turn to RECEIVER, Page 11B

Turn to FRANK, Page 4B