

1998 Oregon Football



LAURA GOSS/Emerald

With the addition of the new \$15 million Ed Moshofsky Sports Center, Oregon coaches say the Ducks' sports practice facilities rival any in the country.

Moshofsky center, scoreboard added to Eugene skyline

By Joel Hood
Oregon Daily Emerald

The project was completed months behind schedule and it cost nearly \$2 million more than its original estimate.

So why is Mike Bellotti smiling?

Because with the construction of the Athletic Department's new \$14.6 million indoor practice facility now officially behind them, the 103rd season of Oregon football promises to be dryer and more comfortable than ever before — that is, prior to Saturday's kickoff.

The Ducks were able to practice inside the Ed Moshofsky Sports Center for the first time on Aug. 26. And while players and coaches raved about the amenities inside the state-of-the-art, 117,000-square-foot facility, Bellotti said he was just happy to have the 17-month project completed.

"I'm really just happy it's here," Bellotti said. "It's the best of its kind in the country, but most importantly it shows the commitment to excellence in athletics at the University."

Bellotti said he expects the indoor facility will have an immediate impact on the football team this season because it ensures dry and comfortable conditions for practice and allows the coaching staff to completely close practices prior to bowl games.

However, Bellotti hopes the biggest impact the facility has on the football program will be in nailing down blue-chip recruits for future seasons.

"I expect that this facility, and the other improvements the athletic department has made to the program, will greatly help our recruiting in the long run. The football program will reap the benefits

from this facility for many years to come," Bellotti said.

In the short run, Autzen Stadium's west end is now equipped with a new scoreboard that features a large-screen video display that Oregon officials say represents the "cutting-edge" of stadium technology.

Manufactured by the Opto Tech Corp., the \$4 million MegaVision system is only operating in one other Division I-A stadium in the country (Pittsburgh's Pitt Stadium) and is considered to be the most technologically advanced of the outdoor stadium screens.

Funds for the scoreboard were secured prior to its completion in August and were all made possible through private gifts to the University. And that, Athletic Director Bill Moos said, allows the school to retain all sponsorship revenue immediately from the six sponsorship

panels, which is estimated to bring in an additional \$300,000 to the University each year.

"The fact that we have the scoreboard completely paid for means that we will be immediately looking at profits," said David Heeke, associate director for media relations and marketing.

The finalization of the scoreboard and video display package goes hand-in-hand with Oregon's announcement in June to enter into a partnership with ESPN Regional Television as a sales and marketing tool for the athletic department. A subsidiary of ESPN Inc., ESPN Regional Television will be in charge of securing sponsorship packages for the scoreboard which measures 88 feet in width and 56 feet at its highest point.

"This enables us to take Oregon Sports Network to a new level and serve the community better,"

Moos said. "The Pac-10's television contract is still with ABC and Fox, but ESPN will help us to bring national advertisers to Autzen Stadium."

Moos said the indoor practice facility and the mammoth new scoreboard could be just the beginning of the improvements to enhance Autzen Stadium.

Currently there are plans for Autzen Stadium to have natural grass by the 2000 season, and the athletic department is beginning studies to expand the 31-year-old stadium by 10- to 15,000-seats shortly after.

Although these plans are only in the beginning stages, Moos said the new seats would probably consist of a combination of luxury box seats and general seating, possibly by adding a second tier of seats around the east end of the stadium.

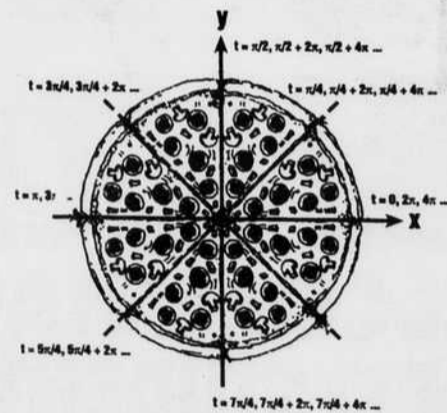
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