



Laura Goss/Emerald

Oregon quarterback Akili Smith (11) will have an extra week to practice handoffs to tailback Reuben Droughns (22) with the Ducks having a week off before taking on Washington State on Oct. 10.

Bye week lets Oregon recharge

The Ducks look to weekend off as an opportunity to relax and heal

By Rob Moseley
Oregon Daily Emerald

While the rest of the nation is in action this Saturday, the Oregon football team will join California as the two Pacific-10 Conference teams to sit the week out.

So just what have the Ducks been doing in the week leading up to its bye?

"We're still going full out," said junior rover Michael Fletcher, who is spending the weekend at his brother's wedding in Southern California. "We're trying to get the guys who're hurt some rest, and trying to get some other guys who haven't played as much so far some looks. The intensity's still

been high. Guys are practicing like it's game week."

Can it be that a team that has scored 121 points in its last two games could be looking forward to taking a week off?

"Yes," head coach Mike Bellotti said. "As hot as we seem to be, still I think the bumps and bruises had gotten some people to where we were not going to be as effective. We needed the time to get truly healthy. There's a couple of lingering things—Garrot Sabol, Reuben Droughns, a lot of our offensive lineman, Dietrich Moore—where I think a couple of days of not hitting, a weekend where they can rest and relax, will be good. Sort of recharging the batteries."

Droughns, who managed to rush for 214 yards and three touchdowns in the Ducks' 63-28 win against Stanford last week-

end, is recovering from a sprained ankle suffered in Oregon second game, at UTEP on Sept. 12. Moore, who had five tackles and a fumble recovery against the Cardinal, is nursing an injured wrist.

One other important factor, Fletcher said, is the opportunity for the Ducks to concentrate on academics after the first week of fall term.

Still, won't it be frustrating come game time on Saturday? "True, we're playing very well, so it's hard to say let's sit back and watch some other people play," Bellotti said, "but hopefully it gives us a chance, too, to focus on Washington State, the defending conference champions. And we have to go up there and play on the road."

The Ducks' first Pac-10 road game of this season begins at 2 p.m. at Martin Stadium in Pullman, Wash. on Oct. 10.

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