

SPORTS

TUESDAY
Oct. 27, 1998

Best Bet

NHL
Buffalo at N.Y. Rangers
4:30 p.m., ESPNWatching
the game from
a higher view

Sitting in the Autzen Stadium press box for the first time during Saturday's Oregon-Southern California football game, I could not help but marvel at the fact that I was working.

When one generally thinks of work, fun is nowhere in the vicinity. Especially if that work occurs on a Saturday.

But covering my first Division-I college football game definitely could be classified as fun. Actually, it was a blast.

I got to watch my — rather, our — Ducks battle the storied Trojans from one of the best seats in the house, and I was getting paid for it.

It did not really hit me that I was doing something that I had not done in my 1/2 previous years until I had flashed my dull red pass to a security guard and passed through the media personnel door. Whether my nonchalance was because of being engulfed in a cloud of detachment or a misty hangover, I'll let you decide.

As I ascended the concrete stairs to press heaven, I half expected to find Harry Caray and Jim Murray mingling at the top. Instead, my colleague Rob Moseley was the first person — no, I did not mistake him for an angel — waiting for me on the other side.

After helping ourselves to lasagna and salad, Moseley escorted me to our seats on press row.

The first thing I noticed was that the press box was not enclosed. Instead of plexiglass and controlled temperatures, I could see the field without any obstruction, hear the crowd clearly and feel the crisp autumn air. The only thing artificial was the patchwork turf a couple hundred feet below.

The second thing I noticed was a glare to my left. I turned to see a FoxSports crew performing its pregame commentary amid manufactured brightness.

I soaked in the atmosphere and glanced at televisions displaying the UCLA-California and Tennessee-Alabama games on either side of me for a few more minutes

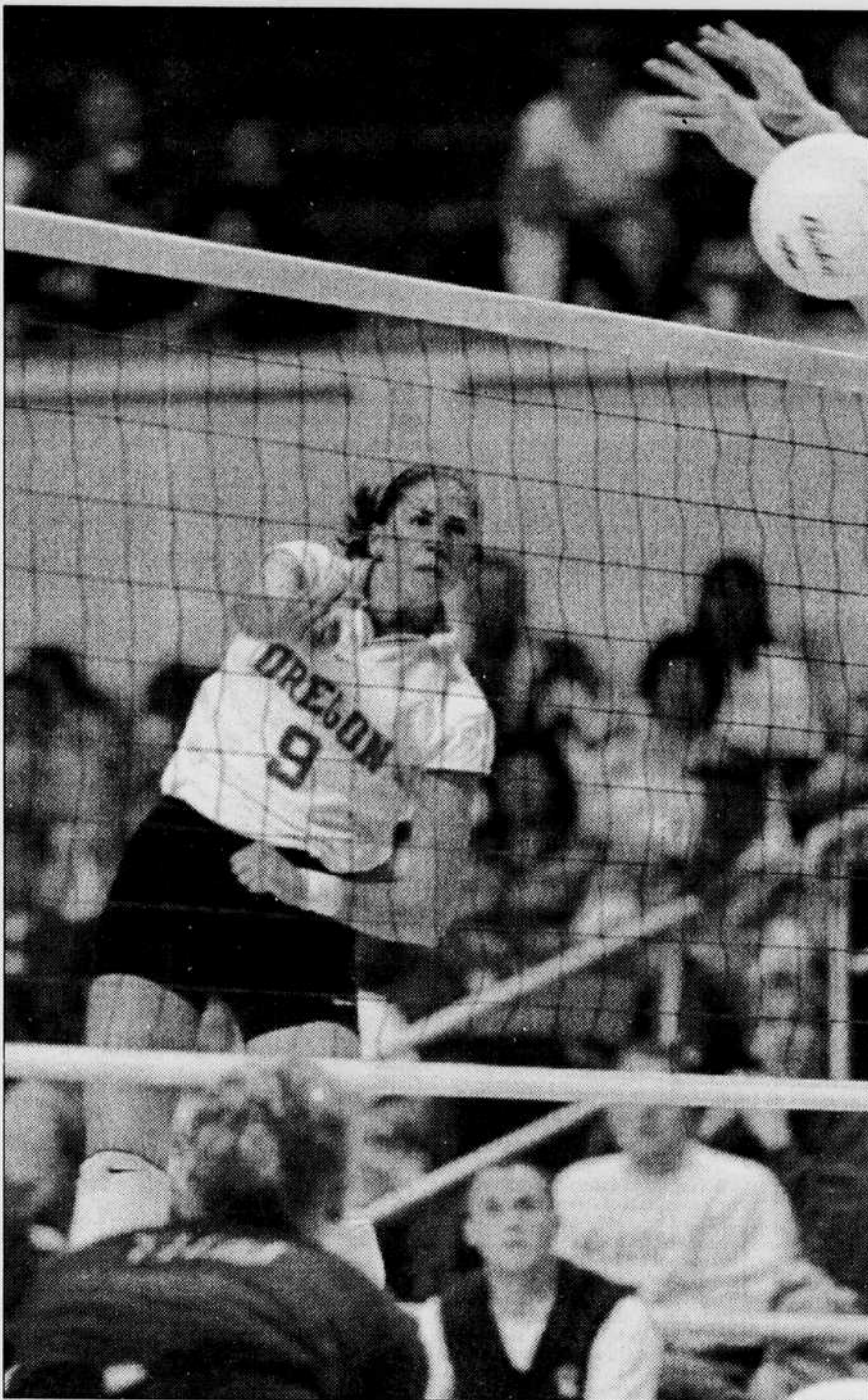
Opinion

Tim
Pyle

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OREGON VOLLEYBALL

Tobbagi shows her fearlessness



Monique Tobbagi, who has started the last six games at outside hitter, slams a kill past Stanford Oct. 18.

The freshman outside hitter brings skills honed in high school to Oregon

By Allison Ross
Oregon Daily Emerald

Monique Tobbagi can't stand it any longer. The volleyball season is more than halfway over, and she hasn't said anything yet. Today she is going to set the record straight.

"That's not how you spell my name," the 6-foot freshman says, referring to the Oregon volleyball media guide. "There's supposed to be two b's and one g."

Good thing she said something when she did because the media won't be able to avoid this former junior Olympic star any longer.

Tobbagi, a native of San Jose, Calif., has recently become one of the Oregon volleyball team's fearless freshmen. After a disappointing loss to Portland on Oct. 6, Oregon head coach Cathy Nelson felt a change was needed and inserted Tobbagi into the starting line up.

"There are two things I really like about Monique," Nelson says. "Her athleticism and her attitude. She's competitive and fiery but not out of control."

Tobbagi knows about competition. As a high school senior she helped Archbishop Mitty defeat rival St. Francis in a five-game match that landed her squad in the state finals.

"It was a three-and-a-half hour match that kept going back and forth," Tobbagi says. "The place was packed and people were going crazy. That was a big deal for us."

Tobbagi recorded 10 kills and nine digs in the championship game against Marina High and earned all-tournament recognition. Her powerful jump serve was also a force as she had a career high 12 service aces in the finals.

During her sophomore year, Tobbagi began receiving letters from interested colleges, including Stanford and Colorado. But it was after a visit to Oregon that she knew Eugene would become her new home.

"I didn't feel like I would fit in with the team in Colorado," Tobbagi says. "I had to think about if I got injured and

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Harrington receives rude welcome from USC's Claiborne

Redshirt freshman Joey Harrington had an inauspicious debut against Southern California Saturday

By Rob Moseley
Oregon Daily Emerald

After Saturday's 17-13 win over Southern California, Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said he gave a formal welcome to linebacker Matt Smith, who contributed six tackles, one more than his season total entering the game.

"Matt Smith did a great job," Bellotti said. "I told him after the game, 'Welcome,' officially in a sense, because he truly got a baptism under fire."

Joey Harrington should have been so lucky.

While Smith received his welcome in

the comfort of the Oregon locker room after dishing out some punishing hits, Harrington was on the receiving end of a vicious welcome by Trojan linebacker Chris Claiborne.

With four minutes, 35 seconds remaining in the third quarter and the game tied 10-10, Harrington, an all-state quarterback at Portland's Central Catholic in 1997, entered at tailback for his first collegiate play.

Akili Smith took the snap and pitched to Harrington, who threw incomplete to Tony Hartley.

Just after releasing the pass, Harrington was flattened by the 6-foot-3, 250-pound Claiborne, recognized recently by Sports Illustrated as one of the nation's 10 hardest

hitters.

"Joey should sue a couple of our linemen for nonsupport on that one," Bellotti joked. "And his receiver fell down too, so it was a rather ignominious debut. But the good thing is it can only get better."

Kicking woes carry over from '97's Oregon-USC game

For the second straight year, the winner of the Ducks' matchup with the Trojans was the beneficiary of some questionable kicking by the opposition.

On Saturday, USC's Adam Abrams missed three of his five field goal attempts, including chip shots from 28 and 36 yards out in the first quarter.

Seeing as how the Trojans lost by four points, converting just two of those three misses would have meant victory.

Last season, Oregon fell 24-22 in Los An-

geles after its kicker left a 36-yard attempt short with just three seconds remaining.

"The longer you coach, the more whatever goes around comes around," Bellotti said. "I'm hoping that there are still some out there that people owe me."

Hartley's TD looks familiar

Moments before Harrington was so rudely greeted by Claiborne, Oregon tied the game on a 55-yard bullet from Akili Smith to Hartley. The touchdown came on a play that should be familiar to Duck fans.

"I've caught five touchdowns this year, and I think three of them have come on that play," Hartley said. "I have a deep post and on that play, [USC cornerback] Daylon [McCutcheon] came up and tried to bust me, and he fell. So our tight end was able to get a push and clear the safety out, and I came behind him on the post."

