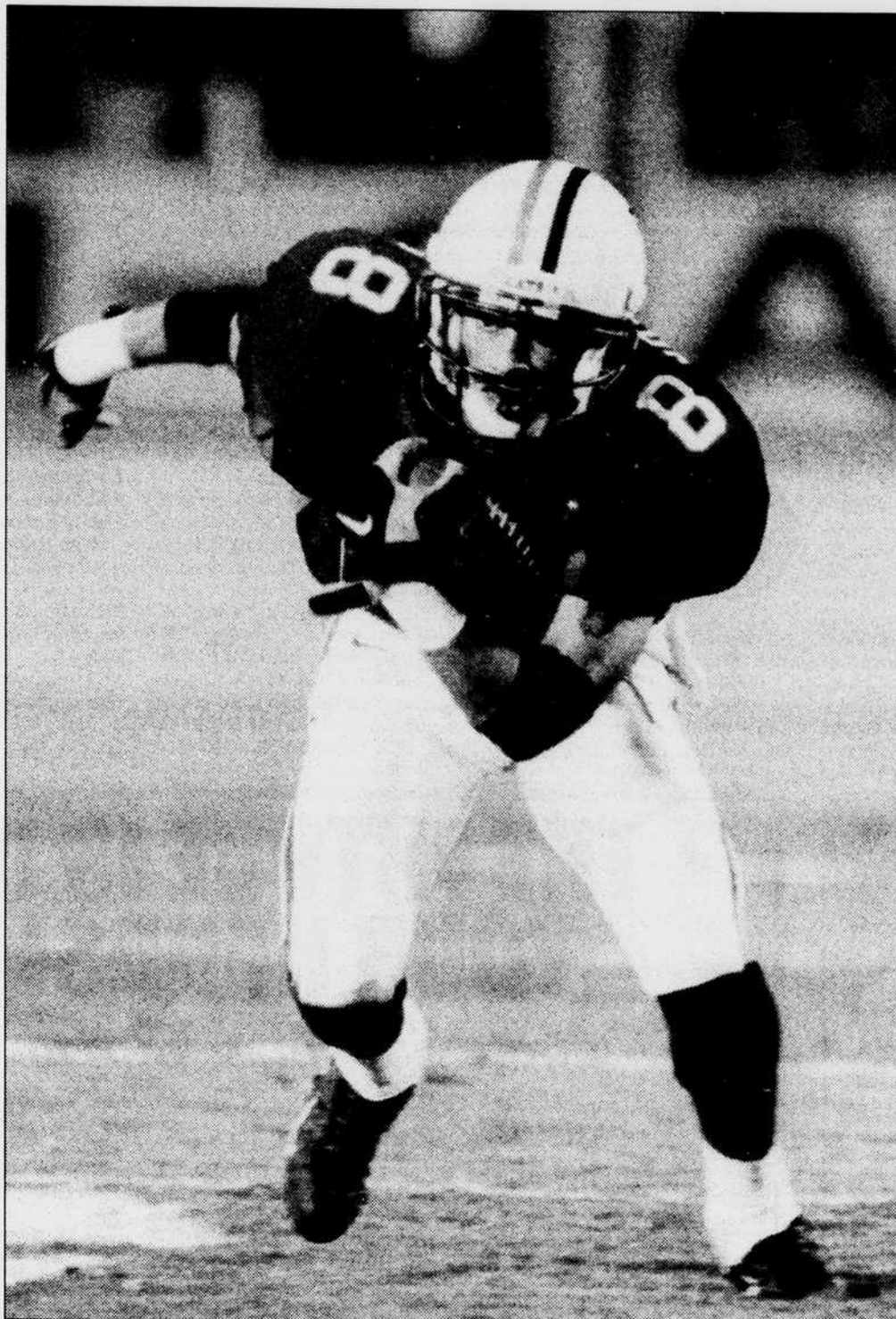


THURSDAY
Oct. 29, 1998**Best Bet**NCAA football
San Diego State at BYU
8 p.m., ESPN

After some uncertainty, Northcutt settles in

"They knew I could make plays happen, so they gave me a chance to play receiver."

Dennis Northcutt
Arizona wide receiver



Arizona wide receiver Dennis Northcutt leads the Wildcats against Oregon this Saturday in Tucson. Northcutt is third in the Pac-10 in receiving yards per game and has caught a touchdown pass in 11 of his last 15 games.

Daily Wildcat

Northcutt says playing several positions early in his college career helped him become a better receiver

By Scott Pesznecker
Oregon Daily Emerald

On his own time, Dennis LaMont Northcutt is a nice guy. He enjoys the same pastimes that others do, including dancing, reading, weight lifting and basketball.

However, put him on offense in a football game and suddenly Northcutt isn't so nice. And when he found his niche at wide receiver for Arizona last year, he became a nightmare to his opponents.

"He's really quick off the line," Oregon cornerback Eric Edwards said. "His quickness in getting in and out of routes is exceptional. He's a big-play receiver, and you have to account for him being a long-ball threat."

Northcutt's contribution to the Wildcats this season has been undeniable. He ranks fourth in the Pacific-10 Conference in receiving yards per game with a 94.8 average and has caught a touchdown pass in 11 of his last 15 games.

The 5-foot-11, 170-pound junior is also Arizona's punt returner, and his 160.4 all-purpose yards per game ranks him third in the Pac-10.

With a career total of 1,620 receiving yards and 117 receptions, Northcutt's ability to catch the ball has made him one of the most successful receivers to ever wear a Wildcat uniform. He ranks eighth on Arizona's all-time yardage list as a receiver and fourth in total receptions.

But success as a wide receiver did not come instantly for Northcutt.

Starting as a freshman in 1996, he was bounced around to tailback, cornerback and wide receiver. While some players may have found this frustrating, Northcutt found it beneficial.

"I had an advantage then because I got to play different positions," he says. "In high school, you play all different positions. I felt good because I got to keep doing what I had been doing before."

The Wildcats first glimpsed Northcutt's athletic potential three games into the 1996 season when he had two interceptions playing back-up cornerback. In his fifth game, Northcutt played wide receiver.

"From there, the coaches felt that I needed to play," Northcutt says. "They knew I could make plays happen, so they gave me the chance to play receiver. I started making things happen."

At the beginning of his sophomore year, Northcutt was on the roster as the third receiver. But when Jeremy McDaniel went down with a hamstring injury in

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Ho-Ching could return to practice before Washington game

Head coach Mike Bellotti said freshman tailback Herman Ho-Ching is 80 percent recovered

By Rob Moseley
Oregon Daily Emerald

Oregon faces its second straight game without the services of its top three tailbacks when it travels to Tucson to face No. 12 Arizona on Saturday.

Derien Latimer will make his third start of the season against the Wildcats, and Jason Cooper and Jerry Brown will come off the bench again.

"I thought Derien made a very strong showing in the second half last week and won that job," Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said. "But we'll still do some things with the other tailbacks to utilize their abilities, but Derien will be the starter."

Latimer ran for 87 yards, 79 in the second half, against Southern California last weekend and is now the Ducks' second-

leading rusher.

While leading rusher Reuben Droughns is out for the year, freshman sensation Herman Ho-Ching could return from strained knee ligaments as early as next week.

Bellotti said Ho-Ching is 80 percent healthy and back practicing, although not in pads.

"If he goes the entire week and has no setbacks, I would hope he would start to be able to practice next week full-go," Bellotti said.

"And if he survives that, then I'd love to have him back and believe he might be able to play next week."

Oregon faces Washington on Nov. 7, the current target date for Ho-Ching's return, according to Bellotti. The Huskies boast the Pacific-10 Conference No. 3 defense and are giving up just 133 yards on the ground per game.



Oregon Football Notes

Ho-Ching opened the season with 54 yards on 12 carries against Michigan State and displayed a punishing, upright running style. He followed that game with 117 yards and two touchdowns on 13 carries against Texas-El Paso, against whom he scored three third-quarter touchdowns, including a 50-yard score on a screen pass.

The Long Beach, Calif. native injured his knee the following game, when he recorded six yards on two carries before being injured against the Spartans.

UO's Bellotti nominated for coach of the year

Bellotti was one of three Pac-10 coaches recently nominated for the coach of the year award, the Football Writers Association of America announced Tuesday.

Rich Brooks received the same award after leading the Ducks to the Rose Bowl in 1994, when the coach of the year honor was named for legendary Alabama coach Bear Bryant. The award was recently renamed for just-retired Grambling coach Eddie

Robinson

Among the 10 finalists are UCLA's Bob Toledo and Arizona's Dick Tomey. Washington State head coach Mike Price was honored last season when he directed the Cougars to the Rose Bowl.

This year's winner will be announced at the 1998 College Football Awards Show in Orlando on Dec. 10 and presented with the trophy Jan. 14 in Tempe, Ariz.

The voting process involves the more than 800 members of the FWAA, while the final decision will be made by the FWAA All-America Committee.

Mr. Smith comes to Oregon

For those fans confused by the presence of yet another Smith on the Oregon football team, the latest being linebacker Matt, who had six tackles last week, here's a quick primer.

The 6-foot-4, 240-pound sophomore from Grants Pass originally signed a letter-of-in-

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