









The Oregon State offensive line stares down the Oregon defensive front in last season's 48-18 Duck victory at Autzen Stadium.

Civil War hype fuels heated rivalry

A rejuvenated Oregon State team hopes to break Oregon's four-year streak

By Scott Pesznecker

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In the state of Oregon, there is only one Civil War.

The combatants are not soldiers, they are bigger and stronger. Their battlefield is not the size of a small country, but only 100 yards in length.

And this war will not drag on for five or more years, it will end in a matter of hours with clearly defined winners and losers.

Throughout Oregon's history, the Ducks and Beavers have fought this Civil War for state bragging rights. It always has been the most vicious rivalry in our state's sporting history.

But the Ducks have dominated the Beavers each year in the 1990s, with the exception of 1993. Which prompts the question: Is the Civil War still a rivalry?

This season will likely be no different as the Ducks are, on paper at least, the better team.

Both teams rank near each other in defense in the Pacific-10 Conference, but Oregon ranks first in total offense and Oregon State ranks eighth. And that's really only the tip of the iceberg.

However, that fact does not make this game any less important for Oregon linebacker Dietrich Moore, who points out in their last three games, the Beavers have lost twice by only one point and by a last-minute touchdown against UCLA.

"We don't look at OSU's record, we just look at what they've done this year," Moore said. "To me they've had success even though their record doesn't show it. It's not going to be hard at all for us to get up for this game."

Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti agrees Oregon State is a better team than its record indicates.

"This will be a very motivated team from Oregon State, which has proven that it doesn't give up," Bellotti said. "They are capable of beating any team in the conference. I don't think there are any problems at all [getting motivated], and that comes from my players, not from me telling them."

Don't try telling anyone at Oregon State that there is no longer an in-state rivalry. Beaver quarterback Jonathan Smith acknowledged the rivalry is not as intense as it used to be, but he believes it still exists.

"We have a real solid senior class that deserves to go out with a win," Smith said. "It would bring something back to the state rivalry that already exists between these two schools and would certainly help us in recruiting."

But when it comes down to it, the rivalry has never been about simple wins or losses. It has been about state pride and state bragging rights.

