

# Beavers

Continued from Page 1B

Oregon linebacker Dietrich Moore said Oregon State is a much better team than its record indicates. And, he said, the Ducks will have to prepare for them just like they would any other team.

Oregon State's defense will face its biggest challenge of the year — defending against Akili Smith. Smith broke Oregon's record for touchdown passes in a season (26) against Arizona State last week, when he threw four touchdown passes, three of which came in the first quarter.

"It's going to be important for us not to allow them to get a big jump or to have a big first quarter," Oregon State head coach Mike Riley said.

Oregon State's defense has been anchored this season by

defensive end Inoke Breckterfield and cornerback Andrae Holland. Breckterfield was touted by the Sporting News as "the most underrated player in the Pac-10" and will be hungry for a win in the last game of his career. Holland boasts seven career interceptions and 41 career passes broken up.

"Basically, the key is constant pressure that makes the quarterback throw the ball on time with no extra time," Riley said. "Allowing him to move with extra time, that's where you get killed."

If Jonathan Smith can connect with his receivers, the 102nd Civil War may be closer than the Duck fans expect. And with a five-win season on the line, the Beavers are surely going to go all out for the upset.

# Ducks

Continued from Page 1B and UCLA.

"In this situation, Oregon State has a tremendous advantage in that they've had two weeks to prepare for us," Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said. "They have most of our films, and they have a week to get healthy."

The Ducks took their bye week between the first and second Pac-10 games of the season and could have sorely used an off-week later in the schedule.

Offensive tackle Marco Aguirre should play about half of Saturday's game after missing the last four, Bellotti said. Freshman tailback Herman Ho-Ching will continue his return from a knee injury suffered more than two months ago.

Ho-Ching returned with 47 yards on 17 carries against the Huskies, then followed that with 68 yards and a touchdown on 27 carries against the Sun Devils.

Ho-Ching will start for the sec-

ond time in his career on Saturday after filling the backup role in the first three games.

"The reality of it is, Herman played one quarter against Michigan State, one half against UTEP and then two plays against San Jose, so he really doesn't have any backlog of experience to draw from," Bellotti said. "He's a very talented young man, very strong and well-prepared, who is playing on a knee that was injured, and he's still in the process of rehabbing that knee."

Ho-Ching strained ligaments in his left knee on his second carry against the Spartans on Sept. 19.

Trying to slow Ho-Ching this week will be a defensive line that presents the week's most important matchup problems for the Ducks, Bellotti said.

Oregon State defensive ends Inoke Breckterfield and Jamil Braithwaite have combined for 87 tackles — 22 of those for a loss —

and 13 sacks this season.

"Those two guys have made a tremendous amount of plays for their defense, and a lot of their defensive pressure starts right there," Bellotti said. "It'll be a tremendous challenge for our offensive tackles."

Which puts added pressure on Aguirre, who has not played since injuring his knee against UCLA on Oct. 17. But should the Beavers get through the line, Bellotti has faith in the scrambling ability of quarterback Akili Smith.

After averaging just more than four rushes per game in the season's first four contests, Smith has at least seven in each of the last five games. He averaged two yards per carry in his 89 rushes last season.

"The biggest thing this year about Akili is that he is scrambling more as a result of comfortable decisions where he understands the protection," Bellotti said.

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