

Preview

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"We really want to end up with a victory," Oregon senior receiver Damon Griffin said. "Especially after losing the last game."

The Aloha Bowl, won last year by the Huskies over Michigan State, will be a rematch of the 1996 Cotton Bowl. The Buffaloes won that game 38-6, but it will be remembered more by Duck fans for a play that occurred when the game was well out of Oregon's reach.

Up 32-6 with less than five minutes to play, Colorado faced fourth and 14 at its own 43-yard line. Punter Andy Mitchell completed a 28-yard pass on a fake punt, and the Buffaloes scored with just more than a minute remaining to add insult to injury.

Although some players, particularly tight end Josh Wilcox, were infuriated after the game, Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti refused to comment, calling the play "great coaching," and remains diplomatic.

"The opportunity to play Colorado again is a great motivating factor for our team," the coach said.

This year's matchup came as somewhat of a surprise to the Oregon players and coaches, who expected to be in San Diego for a Dec. 30 Holiday Bowl matchup with Nebraska.

But after UCLA lost on Saturday, dropping the Bruins from the Fiesta Bowl national championship game to the Rose Bowl and Arizona to the Holiday Bowl, the Ducks learned they would be

spending Christmas in Hawaii.

"The only person who's really unhappy is Akili Smith, just because he wanted to go home for Christmas," Bellotti said of the San Diego native who attended Grossmont Community College.

"My parents are going to be at the game, but I really wanted to play at home in front of family and friends," said Smith, the nation's second-leading passer who has completed 191 of 325 for a school-record 30 touchdowns and seven interceptions. "But we're going to Hawaii, so we should have a good time."

The Ducks faced the possibility of a rematch with WAC-champion Air Force, which lost to Oregon 41-13 in last season's Las Vegas Bowl.

Although the Falcons are the top-ranked team of the four Hawaii participants, Bellotti said it would have been tough to motivate the Ducks for a second straight postseason matchup with Air Force.

"I'm not sure it would have been the best for us or them," Bellotti said. "They might want another shot at us, although I'm not sure I'd want that. I think it worked out for the best."

The coach said the only film he had seen of Colorado this season was the first half of its 16-14 loss to the Cornhuskers last month.

Bellotti did note the Buffaloes' excellent team speed on defense, which will be matched up with an Oregon running game that has been anemic of late.

Pac-10 Picks

	Aloha Bowl	Dahu Bowl	Holiday Bowl	Sun Bowl	Rose Bowl	Orange Bowl	Sugar Bowl	Fiesta Bowl
 Joel Hood 34-34	Oregon	Air Force	Arizona	USC	UCLA	Syracuse	Ohio St.	Florida St.
 Rob Moseley 40-28	Oregon	Washington	Arizona	USC	UCLA	Florida	Ohio St.	Florida St.
 Tim Pyle 38-30	Oregon	Washington	Nebraska	USC	UCLA	Florida	Ohio St.	Florida St.
 Allison Ross 39-29	Oregon	Washington	Arizona	USC	UCLA	Florida	Ohio St.	Tenn.
 Scott Pesznecker 28-40	Oregon	Air Force	Arizona	USC	UCLA	Florida	Ohio St.	Florida St.
 Ryan Frank 41-27	Oregon	Washington	Arizona	USC	UCLA	Florida	Texas A&M	Tenn.
 Matt Garton 43-25	Oregon	Washington	Nebraska	TCU	Wisconsin	Florida	Texas A&M	Tenn.

Last time Emerald student activities editor Kristina Rudinskas went 2-5.

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Colorado continues recent success

The '90 national champs return to their 12th bowl game in 14 seasons

By Tim Pyle
Oregon Daily Emerald

Last season was an aberration in Colorado's recent escalation to a football power.

But now, the Buffaloes are back on track as they head into their 12th bowl game in the past 14 seasons against Oregon in the Aloha Bowl on Christmas Day in Honolulu. That impressive streak of bowl-game appearances includes a 10-9 win over Notre Dame in the 1991 Orange Bowl that helped Colorado claim its first national championship, which it shared with Georgia Tech.

Following a 5-6 finish in 1997 that marked their first losing season since 1984, the Buffaloes used a 5-0 start to end the regular season 7-4 and secure a postseason berth.

Fourth-year Colorado head coach Rick Neuheisel said he is pleased with the opportunity to return to a bowl game this season, where he will try to boost his post-season record to 3-0.

"We're excited about being on ABC, and hopefully a nation of people can celebrate Christmas by watching a great football game between the Buffs and the Ducks," Neuheisel said.

Colorado generates much of its offensive production through the arm of quarterback Mike Moschetti, who has started all 11 games and was named third-team all-Big 12 at the end of the season. Moschetti has completed almost 59 percent of his pass attempts for 2,104 yards and 15 touchdowns versus just seven interceptions.

Wide receivers Darrin Chiaverini and Javon Green have combined for 91 catches, 1,169 yards and nine touchdowns as Moschetti's top targets.

Although he has played in just six games, tailback Marlon Barnes has accumulated 572 rushing yards and three touchdowns. He averages 95.3 rushing yards per game.

Overall, the Buffalo offense is averaging almost 23 points and

more than 325 yards per game.

Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said he is concerned with the threat Barnes presents.

"They've run the ball very well," Bellotti said. "And they also have a junior-college transfer in Mike Moschetti who has at times played very well."

The Buffaloes rank No. 13 nationally in total defense, allowing just 296 yards and 19.1 points per game.

Bellotti said the Colorado defense's collective speed is what makes it so effective.

Through the air, the Buffalo defense has been especially tough, permitting only 148.5 yards per game and ranking fourth in the country in pass-efficiency defense. Cornerback Ben Kelly, who is also a dangerous kick returner, was named first-team all-Big 12 for both defense and special teams and has made four interceptions.

Neuheisel said he knows that his pass defense will have to be at its best against the Ducks' record-breaking quarterback, Akili Smith.

"Our strength has been pass defense, and their strength has been the passing game," Neuheisel said. "It should be a great game."

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