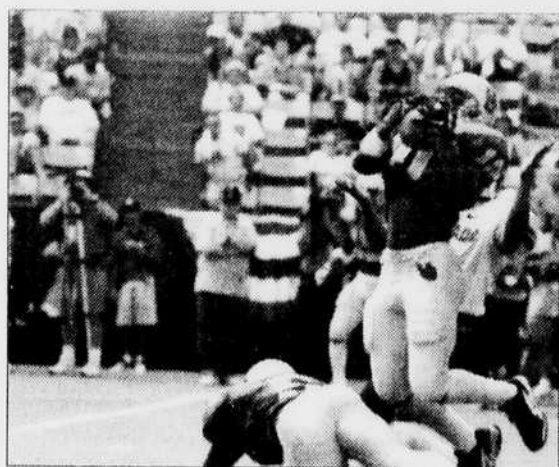
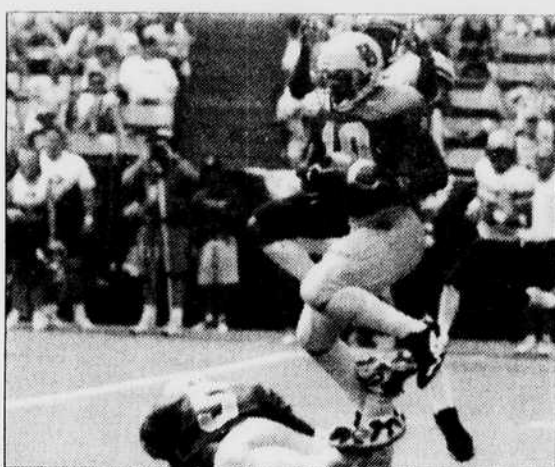


PARADISE LOST



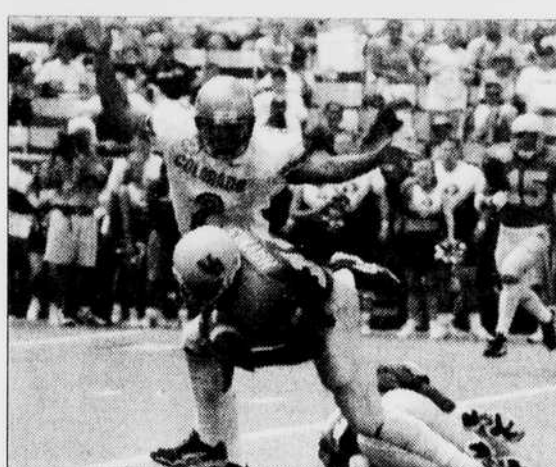
Ryan Yamashiro for the Emerald

Oregon senior receiver Donald Haynes hauls in a 35-yard Akili Smith pass that first deflected off fallen teammate Damon Griffin.



Ryan Yamashiro for the Emerald

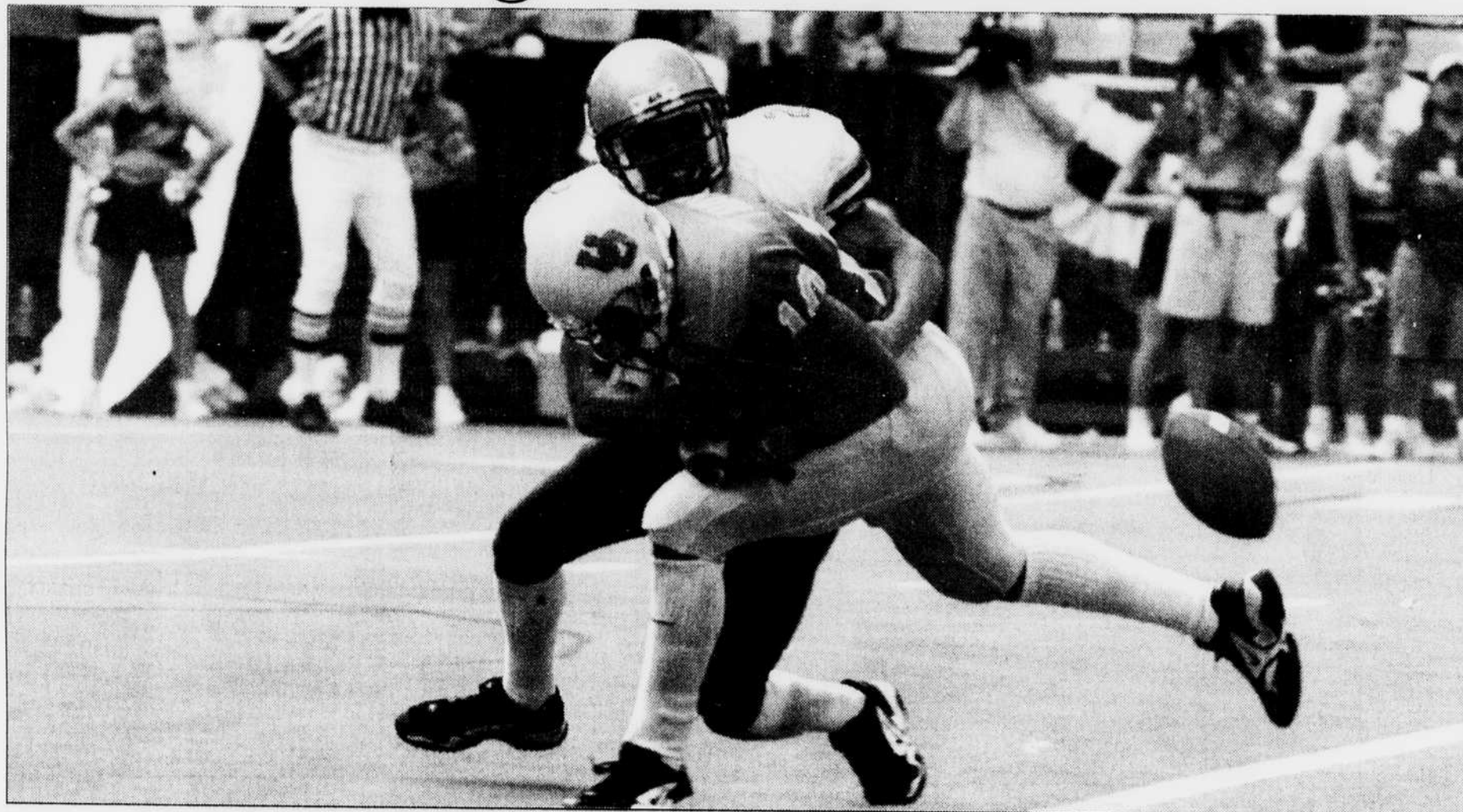
Haynes hurdles Griffin while gaining control of the ball and begins to head toward the end zone to cut the Oregon deficit to 44-28.



Ryan Yamashiro for the Emerald

As Haynes reaches the Colorado 15-yard line, Buffaloes cornerback Marcus Stiggers swoops in and attempts to knock the ball loose.

Magic to Madness



Ryan Yamashiro for the Emerald

Oregon's chance to cut the Colorado lead to 16 is derailed as Stiggers punches the ball out of Haynes' grasp. The Buffaloes' John Sanders recovered the Ducks' fourth fumble of the game to help seal Colorado's 51-43 win.

Loss

Continued from Page 1B

"Akili Smith is as advertised," Colorado head coach Rick Neuheisal said. "In terms of quarterbacks, I'm not sure I've seen anyone like him in a long time."

Smith put the Ducks (8-4) in position to tie the score by hitting a 42-yard scoring strike to former junior-college teammate Donald Haynes and an ensuing pass to Bobby Nero for the two-point conversion with 5:55 remaining.

That score came less than two minutes after Smith's one-yard scoring run pulled Oregon to within 51-35.

After Wheeler's interception gave Colorado (8-4) its largest lead of the game four minutes into the second half, Smith responded by marching the Ducks 77 yards in five plays, the last a 9-yard touchdown reception by tight end Jed Weaver.

Derien Latimer scored his Aloha Bowl record tying third touchdown just more than a minute into the fourth quarter, but Col-

orado game MVP Mike Moschetti set a record for himself by throwing his fourth touchdown pass of the game, a 20-yard toss to Daniel Graham that turned out to be the game winner. Moschetti completed 11 of 23 passes for 213 yards and no interceptions.

Oregon freshman Herman Ho-Ching, who began the game as the Ducks' leading active rusher, entered the game during Oregon's second series but accumulated no yards on six rushes while fumbling twice in the first half. Latimer, a Colorado Springs, Colo., native, started and ran for 74 yards on 19 carries.

"I'm not sure what kind of emotions to have right now," said Latimer, whose 3,150 yards during his senior year of high school was then the 10th highest single-season rushing total. "I played well, but we lost the game and now we're losing a great group of seniors. As a team, we showed a lot of character coming back."

Oregon fell into an early hole

"Akili Smith is as advertised. In terms of quarterbacks, I'm not sure I've seen anyone like him in a long time."

Rick Neuheisal
CU head coach

when Colorado sophomore Brian Kelly returned the opening kickoff 93 yards as the Buffaloes jumped out to a 17-0 lead in the first quarter.

Latimer got Oregon on the board with second quarter touchdowns from 11 and 4 yards, but Moschetti threw touchdowns of 5, 58 and 72 yards and Jeremy Aldrich tied an Aloha Bowl record with field goals of 48, 41 and 23 yards to give the Buffaloes a 37-14 halftime lead.

After Aldrich's first field goal, Moschetti connected with Javon Green from five yards out. Both

Colorado scoring drives began inside Oregon territory after fumbles by Ho-Ching. The freshman would spend the rest of the half on the bench, a decision Bellotti said had as much to do with Latimer's success and Ho-Ching's injured back as it did Ho-Ching's fumbles.

Latimer scored to open the second half, but Colorado answered with a three-play, 65-yard drive that lasted just 1:13 and culminated in a 58-yard touchdown reception by Marcus Stiggers, who doubled as a cornerback for the Buffaloes.

Jason Cooper fumbled the ensuing kickoff, and Aldrich kicked his second field goal three plays later.

"It seemed like the ball always seemed to bounce their way," said Oregon inside linebacker Chris Vandiver, who led both teams with 15 tackles.

Vandiver ended the season with a team-leading 102 after replacing Peter Sirmon, the 1997

Pac-10 tackles leader who was lost for the year to an injury.

Oregon was also playing without wide receiver Tony Hartley. Hartley led the Ducks with 1,015 yards and 10 touchdowns on 48 catches this season but didn't make the trip to Hawaii after being suspended for an unspecified violation of team rules.

Haynes and senior Damon Griffin combined to catch 15 passes for 294 yards and a touchdown against Colorado despite the claims of illegality by Bellotti.

Neuheisal, obviously miffed at Bellotti's claim that Oregon was the better team, said only: "There's an old saying: Scoreboard, baby."

Later that afternoon, the scoreboard read 35-15 as Air Force defeated Washington in the O'ahuBowl.

Bowl organizers hope the doubleheader will help spark interest in an eventual playoff Final Four similar to that of college basketball.