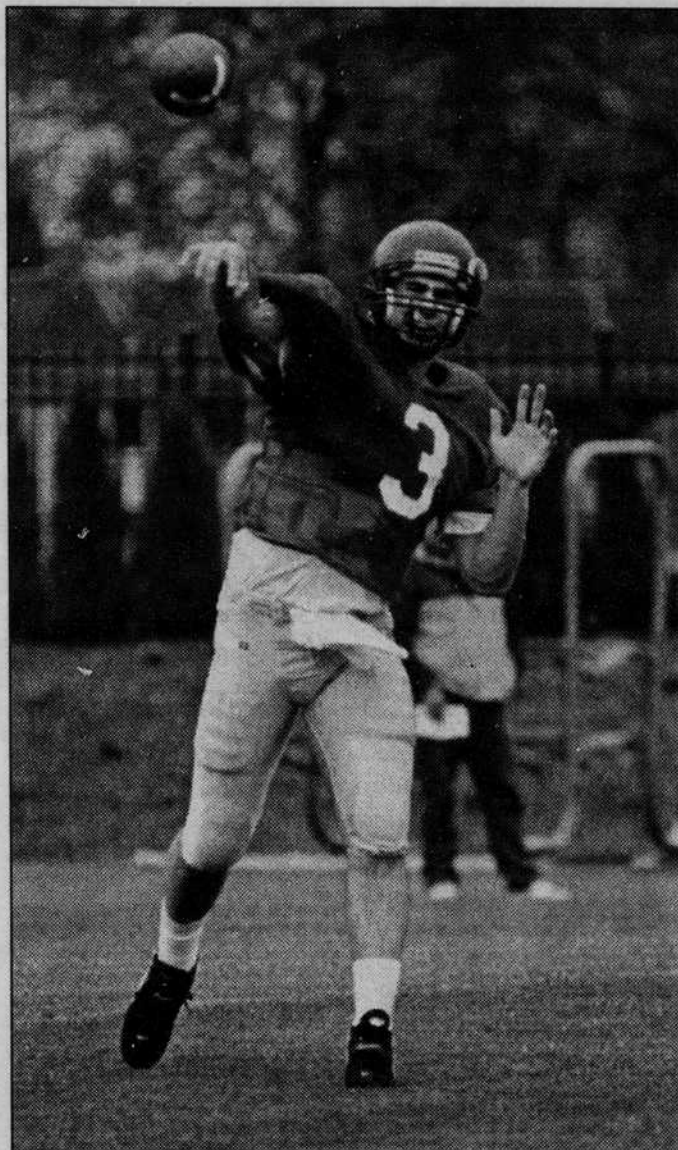




QBs strive to put quack back in attack

"They're throwing the whole playbook at us, so it's kinda tough to pick up on everything real quick."

Joey Harrington
UO quarterback



Portland native Joey Harrington earned prestigious accolades as a prep.

Nick Medley/Emerald

Another spring blooms another starting quarterback race for the Oregon football team

By Tim Pyle
Oregon Daily Emerald

Quick — what is the easiest way to tell that it is spring at the University?

Disregarding the burgeoning cherry blossoms, rumble of lawn mowers and intermittent breaks among the clouds, one thing stands out.

A quarterback controversy on the Oregon football team during spring practice.

For the third straight year, Ducks head coach Mike Bellotti finds himself considering two candidates for the starting quarterback spot. The last two seasons it was Akili Smith vs. Jason Maas.

After a successful platoon during the 1997 season, Smith quieted the debate with a sparkling performance against Michigan State to open last season and went on to enjoy perhaps the finest season ever by an Oregon quarterback in earning Pacific-10 Conference co-offensive player of the year honors.

Now, A.J. Feeley and Joey Harrington are squaring off for the right to follow in Smith's immense footsteps.

How are the two newest candidates adjusting to life under the possible-starting quarterback microscope?

"What's different about it is the media, mostly," Feeley said. "And there's a little more pressure — a lot more, actually, that comes with the position. You're expected to step up and fill the shoes of Akili Smith."

Harrington agreed with Feeley.

"It's a little more nerve-wracking," Harrington said. "The last couple years I was able to just sit back, watch and pick up on things. It's night and day sitting and watching from the sideline vs. being in there, taking it myself."

With the spring season one practice into its third week, head coach Mike Bellotti said the battle is equal so far.

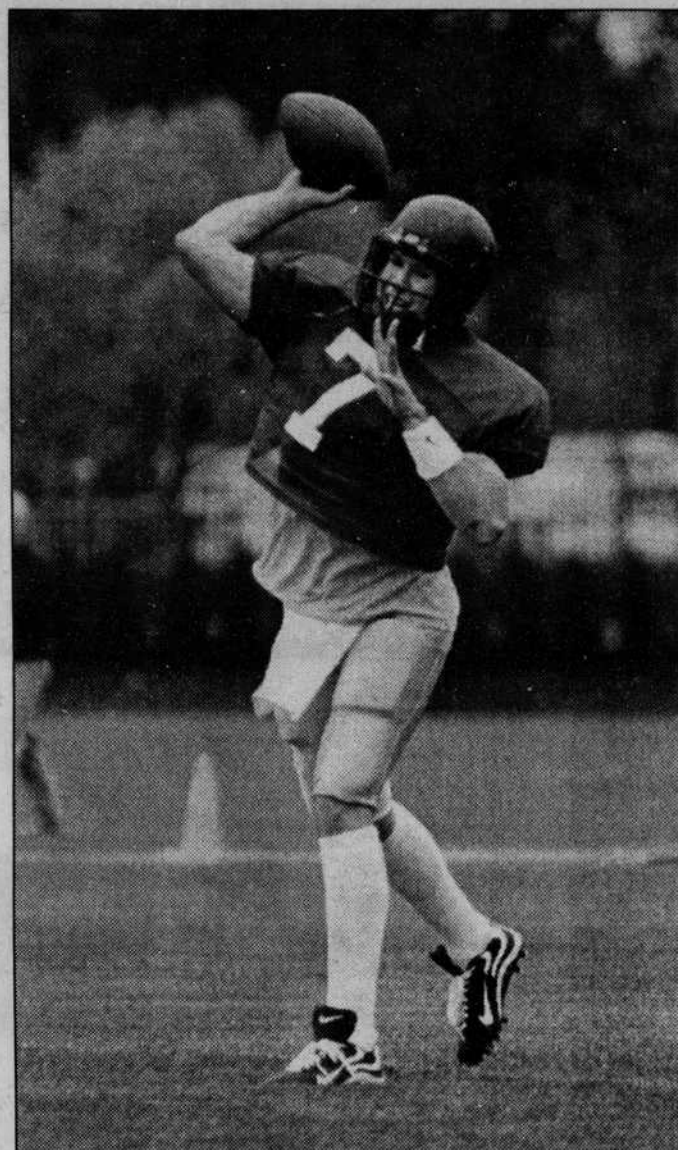
"It's too close to call certainly," Bellotti said. "We'll continue to alternate them with the first team and give 'em about equal reps until one of them distinguishes themselves or wins the job."

In fact, Bellotti said the race is so tight that if

Turn to **FOOTBALL**, Page 12

"I feel like there's a lot of things I could be doing better. Some of the things I'm doing pretty well."

A.J. Feeley
UO quarterback



Ontario native A.J. Feeley has more game experience than his counterpart.

Nick Medley/Emerald

Williams gets slighted for thug image

Opinion



Mirjam Swanson

Akili Smith used his senior season to make a name for himself, to show the world that he was 'bout it, 'bout it.

Ricky Williams didn't need a senior season to do that. He was projected to be picked in the top five of the 1998 NFL draft after his junior year. But he temporarily ignored the big bucks and returned to Texas.

There were things to accomplish before he went pro.

He intended to break Tony Dorsett's all-time NCAA rushing record. He wanted to win the Heisman. He was determined to help his team win at least 10 games. And he hoped to make the cover of Sports Illustrated.

He did it. All of it. And everyone loved him.

Williams was a well-mannered, teddy-bearish, rugged running back who everyone wanted a piece of. Local kids invited him to their birthday parties, which he attended. Pro scouts swarmed. There was plenty of speculation that he'd be the first running back picked No. 1 since Ki-Jana

Carter in 1995. Williams was golden.

Until he became a No Limit Soldier.

In January he signed with No Limit Sports Management, the firm founded by rapper-producer-entrepreneur Percy Miller, a.k.a. Master P.

Now, it's April and it's Oregon's Smith who is the cover boy. And it's Smith who cracked the top three of the NFL Draft, while Williams watched dejectedly as another running back, Miami's Edgerrin James, was drafted ahead of him in the fourth spot.

No matter, really. Smith, Williams and James will all be millionaires, raking in that mean green. They'll all be respected and adulated professional athletes.

But while Smith aligned himself with one of sports most respected agents, Leigh Steinberg, Williams teamed with a former drug dealer.

It was enough to make William's marketing manager say "Unnggh," and then threaten to quit.

More than enough to cause some drama with his mama. When she found out, she

Turn to **SWANSON**, Page 9

Smith aims to give Bengal attack claws

Former
Oregon
quarterback

Akili Smith
now begins his
transition to
the NFL after
being selected
No. 3 overall
by Cincinnati
on Saturday

By Tim Pyle
Oregon Daily Emerald

When Akili Smith approached the podium at the NFL Draft on Saturday morning and accepted his new jersey and hat after the Cincinnati Bengals made him the No. 3 overall selection, one part of his transition to the professional ranks was finished.

Now comes the tough part.

Smith's journey to becoming an NFL starting quarterback started Sunday, when he was introduced at a press conference in Cincinnati moments after getting his first taste of the Bengal offense from offensive coordinator Ken Anderson.

"I'm thankful [the draft process] is over with," Smith said at the press conference. "It started at the East-West Shrine Game, and now that part is over with. I have to start studying a new playbook and that process will start all over again, and I have to be able to deal with it."

Turn to **AKILI SMITH**, Page 12