

# Tim Pyle

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a difficult dilemma.

Should the fifth-year head coach forfeit a full season's worth of contribution from Bauman for the sake of immediate success?

It's a tough call, and Bellotti knows it. "Would I like to have him out there? Absolutely, yes," Bellotti said. "But do I think it's gonna happen? Probably not."

"We have five games left right now, with the hope of getting a sixth. If I thought Rashad could play this weekend and we could get five games in, I'd be willing to say, 'Yeah, let's pass up a year later on."

"But I don't think one or two games is gonna be worth it."

Senior defensive tackle Caleb Smith knows Bauman would give the defense a considerable boost but also realizes the delicacy of the situation.

"His confidence carries over onto us as a defense, so getting him back, if we get him back for this game or any game in the near future, will help us be able to do some different things because of his coverage ability," Smith said. "But no one wants him to come back before he's ready."

Smith added the team understands it's Bauman's decision because "it's his future."

## Skin and bones on the offensive line

The health of the offensive line — a season-long problem — continues to plague Oregon heading into the last of its three-straight road games Saturday night.

Starting tackle Al Cotton, a sophomore, will not play because of reoccurring concussions, the worst of which happened during the Oct. 2 loss at Washington. Backup guard Corey Chambers, a freshman, is also out because of an injured shoulder suffered during practice.

"Those guys are both questionable probably for the remainder of this season," Bellotti said. "That is a major concern for our offense."

On a brighter note, Bellotti said freshman center

Josh Jones is "healthy maybe for the first time since fall camp."

## Reuben's return

After missing the Washington game altogether and being limited in his availability at UCLA because of a rib injury, senior tailback Reuben Droughns is feeling as good as he felt before the Sept. 25 win over Southern California, according to Bellotti.

That does not mean, however, that Droughns will be playing pain-free Saturday.

"He's a tough kid and wants to play," Bellotti said. "He certainly brings a spark and brings an attitude onto the field with him that I think is infectious for our team."

Despite his ailments, Droughns has accounted for 45 percent of the Ducks' rushing yardage, gaining a total of 343 yards on 81 carries. He also leads the team in touchdowns with five.

## Out of sight, but not out of mind

Oregon has been in the rankings but once this season, but that doesn't mean the Ducks are completely out of the national media's collective conscious.

In ESPN.com's array of midseason reports this week, Oregon earned mention in two rankings of a different sort.

Among his top-five "Surprising Players," ESPN.com's John Crowley ranked Duck quarterback A.J. Feeley third.

"A year ago he was the No. 3 quarterback on campus," Crowley wrote. "Today he's the leading passer in the Pac-10..."

And in Crowley's list of "Top 10 Games," Oregon again received props.

The Ducks' 33-30 triple-overtime win over USC is ranked No. 7.

"Someone had to lose this demolition derby of a football game," Crowley wrote. "...Oregon walked, or rather, limped off with the wildest win in a Pac-10 season characterized by unpredictability."

*Tim Pyle is the sports editor for the Emerald. He can be reached via e-mail at tpyle@gladstone.uoregon.edu.*

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## RECYCLE

# Jeff Smith

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baseball juices flowing. What a classic way to end a great century of baseball, I thought.

But alas, when game 1 of the 1999 World Series opens up Saturday night, it will do so not at Shea Stadium, but rather Turner Field.

Yaawwwwn! Snooze...

I'm sorry, I love baseball with all my heart. But an Atlanta-New York World Series just doesn't excite me.

Sure, it makes for the great debate over who is truly the team of the decade. In my mind, the winner takes that claim.

Based purely on their record throughout the 1990s, Atlanta (925-629, .595) holds a commanding 73 1/2 game lead over the Bronx Bombers (851-702, .548).

But where it all matters is the number of giant rings you have on your hand. And not those silly little league championship rings either, I'm talking about the real deal.

Atlanta will now appear in its fifth World Series of the decade, a feat that shouldn't go unnoticed. But what should be noted, however, is its number of championships: one.

Along the way, it fell to the mighty Minnesota Twins of 1991; the Toronto Blue Jays of 1992; and a certain team in pinstripes in 1996, the Yankees. Atlanta's lone series victory came in 1995 over Cleveland.

Then there are the Yankees. In the first half of the decade, the team's nucleus was centered around the likes of Mike Pagliarulo, Steve Sax and Don Mattingly. But then Joe Torre came on board as manager in 1996 and created the present-day squad. New York has been in the Series twice since and has two championship rings to show for it. In 1996, Atlanta took a 2-0 lead in the series, before the Yankees reeled off four in a row for the win. And then a year ago, in the Yankees' landmark 125-win season, New York swept the San Diego Padres, who were outmatched and simply happy to be there.

So the winner of this Series gets to claim the decade and have its franchise ego stroked some more.

But really, do you all care?

As a die-hard baseball fan, I was loving the possibilities that the league championships presented us. Every possible combination of potential World Series combinations made for an intriguing matchup.

Consider a New York Mets and Boston Red Sox World Series. The memory of the ball trickling through Bill Buckner's legs still leaves Red Sox fans shrieking. This would have been Boston's chance to gain some revenge from that 1986 Series and exorcise those demons.

Or how about an Atlanta versus Boston matchup? Long before it made a home in Georgia, the franchise was known as the Boston Red Stockings in the 1870s before taking on their present nickname in 1912. The team shared the city of Boston with the Red Sox until 1952 before moving onto Milwaukee. And aside from all of the historical factors, seeing Pedro Martinez go head-to-head with Atlanta's pitching staff would have been fun to watch.

And lastly, the Series that would have been an amazing spectacle: the "Subway Series." Words can't describe the intensity and emotion that would have been associated with this Series. We would be feeling the heat waves generated from Shea and Yankee Stadium all the way here in Eugene.

But it's time to face reality.


Granted, Atlanta and the Yankees are the two best teams. Yes, they both deserve to be here and both are qualified to duke it out for decade champion.

But still... there's that thought in my mind that thinks about what could have been.

All I know is that on Saturday night, when these two teams grace our television sets as they have many times throughout the decade, my attention will be elsewhere.

I will be following our Oregon Duck football team as they battle the Arizona Wildcats down in Tucson. You can e-mail me the baseball score if you wish, but to tell you the truth, I don't care.

*Jeff Smith is a bitter San Diego Padres fan. He can be reached via e-mail at smittside@aol.com.*



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