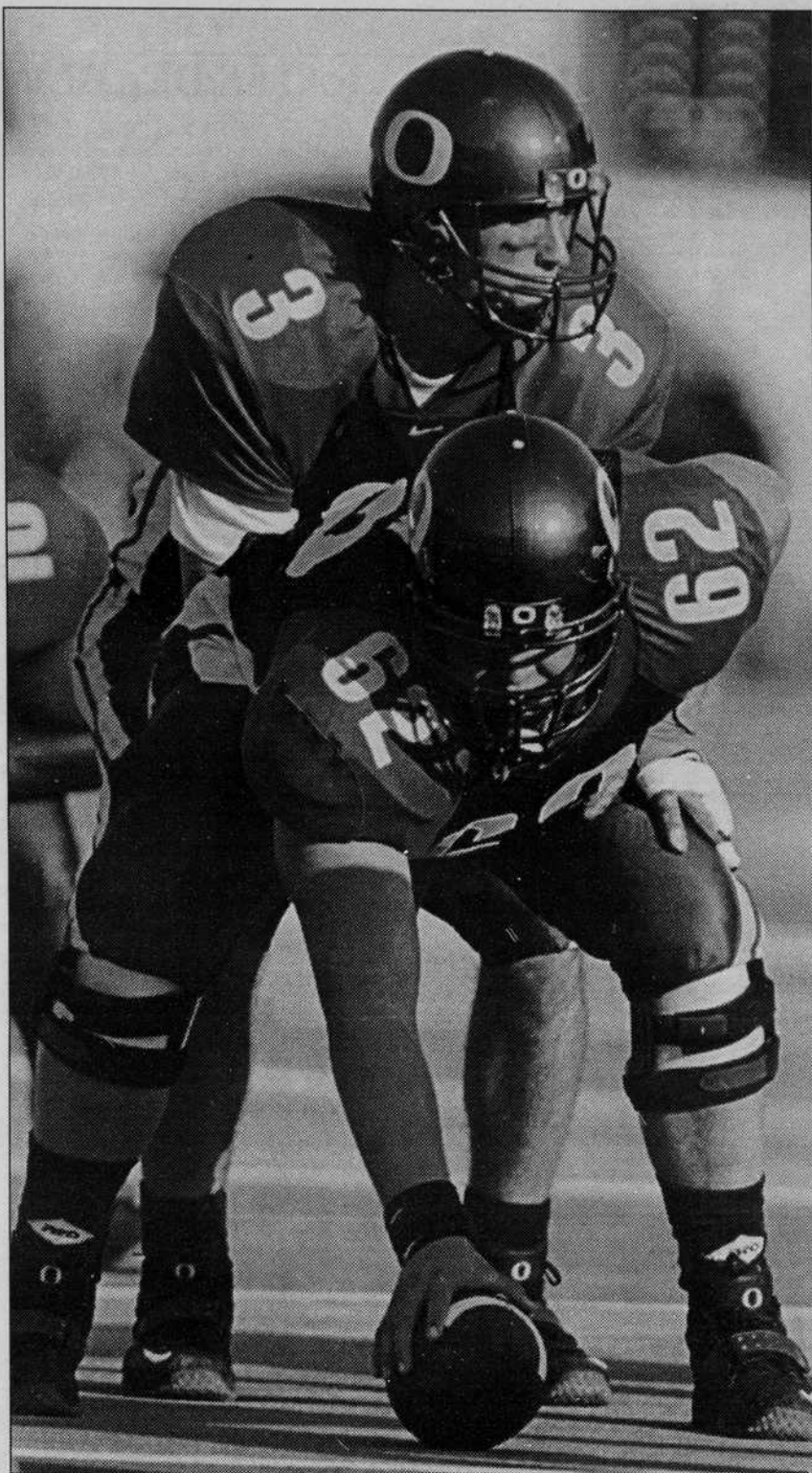


Sports

Best Bet

World Series
Atlanta vs. N.Y. Yankees
5:20 p.m., NBC



Sophomore quarterback Joey Harrington played the relief role to near perfection Saturday night in Tucson, Ariz. Scott Barnett Emerald

Droughns, Harrington answer Ducks' call

■ Tailback Reuben Droughns and quarterback Joey Harrington come through when Oregon needs them

FOOTBALL NOTES

By Tim Pyle
Oregon Daily Emerald

The player expected to be the Oregon football team's workhorse, leader and biggest star was indeed all of those things Saturday night.

Add to that mix the Ducks' desperate state following consecutive losses and the tender state of the hero's ribs, and the performance tailback Reuben Droughns generated to spark a 44-41 win at Arizona becomes all the more epic.

In Oregon's three Pacific-10 Conference games before Saturday, Droughns had carried just 19 times for 66 yards because of a rib injury suffered during the first half of the Ducks' win over Southern California on Sept. 25.

And Droughns' health was still in question heading into the meeting with the Wildcats, who had been the preseason Pac-10 favorite. In fact, Droughns did not start for the third straight game Saturday. But he definitely finished.

After 45 carries, 202 yards rushing, two touchdowns and one important two-point conversion against Arizona, Droughns was named the conference's offensive player of the week.

His yardage total — his fourth at Oregon that has eclipsed the 200-yard mark — is the top rushing performance in a Pac-10 game this season.

All of which left Droughns feeling "pretty good" before practice Monday.

"[The Wildcats] started banging me toward the end real hard," said Droughns, a 6-foot, 210-pound senior. "But other than that, I felt real good."

Still, Droughns admitted he was not expecting to be handed the ball 45 times. "It was a surprise to me," Droughns said. "I'm sure it was a surprise to a lot of people on the team, too."

Surprised or not, Droughns' teammates were nonetheless grateful.

"Reuben was amazing," said quarterback Joey Harrington, who himself was heroic in playing the final 1 1/2 quarters

for the Ducks. "In my 21 years, I have never witnessed anything like that. That was just toughness and just courage and just guts. And he... oh, wow."

No QB controversy here

Despite Harrington's play in relief Saturday, head coach Mike Bellotti said A.J. Feeley indisputably remains Oregon's starter at quarterback.

Harrington, who completed six-of-11 passes for 144 yards with one touchdown and one interception, said he didn't expect anything different.

"He's still the guy," said Harrington, a sophomore from Portland. "He's proven himself, he's a qualified starter and he's led the team in the six games before this."

"I just came in and did my job."

Feeley, who has thrown for 1,797 yards and 14 touchdowns this season, said he also was anticipating Bellotti's decision.

"If that wasn't the case, I'd be very surprised," said Feeley, a junior from Ontario.

Bellotti told The Register-Guard that Harrington's performance simply "reinforces in my mind that we have two quarterbacks who can play."

"You dream of getting a shot like that," Harrington said. "I'm still on cloud nine."

"There was no indication that they were leaning toward a decision. I came off the field after one of the field goals, and Coach grabbed me and said, 'You're in.' Oh, OK. Sure. I'm not gonna complain."

Speaking of heroes...

Senior rover/return-man extraordinaire Michael Fletcher also received acclaim from the Pac-10 for his performance Saturday.

Fletcher was named the conference's special teams player of the week for accumulating 147 yards in return yardage, 81 of which came on five punt returns. Fletcher also made an interception, a sack and six tackles on defense.

"It's a great honor, especially in a victory," said Fletcher, a native of Compton, Calif.

"We feel like that's where we have the biggest advantage versus any team is on our overall special teams."

In tandem with Sonny Cook, Fletcher helped the Ducks to 288 yards in kick return yardage and an average starting field position of their own 42-yard line.

Now that's special.

Oregon's first performance leaves Russell excited

Ducks head coach Chris Russell feels encouraged following his team's first event of the season

MEN'S TENNIS NOTES

By Matt O'Neill
for the Emerald

After one tournament of the fall slate, Oregon men's tennis head coach Chris Russell is happy with the way his team is playing. Although he has just the Fresno Bulldog Classic to judge off, Russell feels his squad is looking good.

"The Fresno trip was very positive for us," Russell said. "It was revealing what we need for competition before the regular season starts up."

The fall schedule is being used by Russell and his staff to get some of the program newcomers much-needed experience before the Pacific-10 Conference season in January. Some of those newcomers are surprising the staff with the quality of their play. Freshman Oded Teig of Israel is one of those such players.

"Oded has played very solidly for us,

without even being in the best condition," Russell said.

Russell expects big things from Teig, who played well at the tournament before he went down with fatigue and cramping.

Another newcomer who Russell looks to provide big things for the team is Leslie Esinga.

"I think that Leslie is going to be a good player," Russell said. "He showed us that he can be a bright spot for us this year."

Some of the returning players are off to great starts as well. David Becker and Cedric Vanhaver have come back to school in good shape and ready to compete.

"David has really improved his game, he is going to have a good year," Russell said.

Vanhaver has impressed with his improved doubles play, often teaming with freshman Jason Menke.

"I really feel the Cedric and Jason will

make a great doubles team," Russell said. "I was pleased with the way they played at Fresno."

Menke has not only shown that he will contribute on the doubles teams, but he will also contribute in singles play.

"Menke showed me some good stuff," Russell said. "He competed great in California."

Russell wants his team to continue to improve and grow, but he likes what he sees in both the newcomers and the returnees. If the Ducks continue to train hard and blend the new and the old, Russell feels they will have a good season.

"We're looking promising with the newcomers; they showed what they can do," Russell said. "And with the improving level of the guys who are coming back, then I think that we have a good team."

The Ducks return to action when they travel to Seattle Nov. 6-9 to compete in the ITA Regional tournament.

"We're looking promising with the newcomers; they showed what they can do."

Chris Russell
men's tennis coach