

'Buddy Boy'



Talkative senior Caleb Smith leads the defensive line.
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Arizona State vs. Oregon Ducks

Game Day



3:30 p.m.
Saturday
at Autzen Stadium

Ducks happy back at home

■ Just off a three-game road stretch, Oregon plays three of its final four games at Autzen Stadium

By Mirjam Swanson
Oregon Daily Emerald

Arizona State might not know quite what it's getting into. Certainly the Sun Devils (4-3 overall, 3-1 Pacific-10 Conference) expect that Autzen Stadium will be raucous Saturday afternoon. They know it's going to be loud. And they're figuring that it will probably be wet as well.

What they don't realize is how intense it's all going to be. "[We're] glad to be back home," said flanker Tony Hartley, one of 26 Oregon seniors determined to make their last few home appearances particularly good. "Talking with players across the Pac-10, they say that Autzen Stadium is the worst place to play.

"They don't know what the weather's going to be like, so I'm sure that's on [Arizona State's] mind. And they gotta play against us. In Autzen. [We're] coming off a big win. All our fans are behind us. If they can beat us up here, then I'll tip my hat to them.

"But I don't think it's going to happen." Saturday, the Oregon football team (4-3, 2-2) returns from an extended, grueling road trip to play its first home game in 36 days, and its first day game since Sept. 18.

There were the painful back-to-back losses at Washington and UCLA that started the trip. There was an all-important bye week that the Ducks used to rest bumps and bruises, strains and sprains. And then, last Saturday, there was the thrilling 44-41 shootout victory at Arizona.

So Oregon returns home, still a Rose Bowl contender, as long as it wins its remaining four games — and as long as Stanford, Washington and Arizona State all get tripped up sometime before the end of the season.

But the Ducks are ignoring any hoopla involving the wacky Pac-10 standings.

"The only thing we can focus on is controlling our own destiny," head coach Mike Bellotti said. "We need to focus on winning one game at a time to put ourselves in a good position."

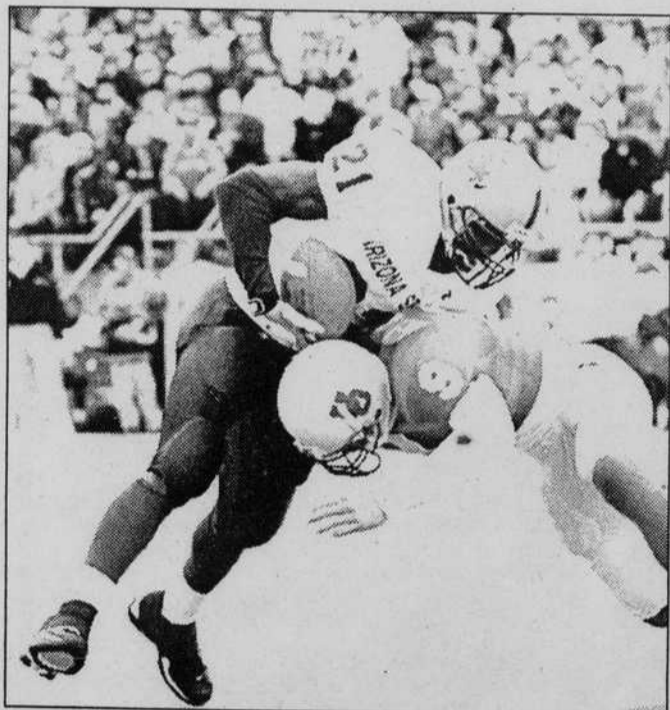
The Sun Devils are merely the first of the four remaining steps in the Ducks' game-by-game approach to the rest of the season.

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Placekicker Josh Frankel has stepped up in place of the injured Nathan Villegas to become Oregon's unlikeliest hero.

Scott Barnett Emerald



J.R. Redmond, one of the nation's top running backs, poses a major threat.

Emerald

Wounded Devils still battling

■ Arizona State needs to overcome several key defensive injuries to fulfill its quest to win the Pac-10 and reach the Rose Bowl

By Jeff Smith
Oregon Daily Emerald

On the outside, things appear to be rather sunny for Arizona State as it travels to rainy Eugene this weekend.

Last week's come-from-behind 33-21 win over Washington State gave head coach Bruce Snyder his 50th career Pacific-10 Conference win, making him only the 12th coach in the 84-year history of the conference to accomplish that feat. The Sun Devils (4-3 overall, 3-1 Pac-10) are one of only two teams in the conference that control their own destiny in the hunt for the Rose Bowl.

But the win against the Cougars came at a price, as Arizona State's already thin defense was further depleted by injuries. Most notable was the loss of senior defensive tackle Junior Ioane, whose college career ended last Saturday when he suffered a third-degree tear of the anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee.

Snyder, a former Duck linebacker and fullback from 1960-62, realizes how crucial defense is to his team's chances of a Rosy postseason.

"What has dampened my enthusiasm is the fact that this last game was really a costly game defensively," Snyder said.

The Sun Devils' defense must come together in a hurry as the team closes out the season facing offensive-minded Oregon, Southern California, Stanford and Arizona.



"As you look at the four teams we have to play — two on the road, two at home — all four are high-powered offenses," Snyder said. "Right now, we're suffering personnel-wise. The timing and the coincidence of that is not good for us."

"But we've got a chance, and we'll have to win it on defense and slow down those other offenses."

A big concern lies in the safety position where freshmen Alfred Williams and Brandon Falkner are nowhere near 100 percent. Williams is listed as probable with stingers. Falkner is questionable with a left ankle sprain.

"If one of them were to play, I think it would be Alfred over Brandon," Snyder said. "Brandon has a damaged ankle, and it's so hard to come back from that. Alfred is the kind of injury that on any single play we could lose

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quick HITS

Sizzling Stats

Scoring Offense	Scoring Defense
Oregon 37.9	Oregon 29.1
Arizona St 23.9	Arizona St 25.0

Quotable

"J.R. Redmond is a great running back. He's as talented a football player as there is in the United States because he does a lot of different things."

— Mike Bellotti, Oregon head coach

"We're ready to be home. We play really well here. We feel really good when we're playing here. And to have the next three of four at home, you can't ask for more than that."

— Peter Sirmon, Oregon linebacker

Key Player
A.J. Feeley

After consecutive off games on the road, Feeley should rebound back in the friendly confines of Autzen.

