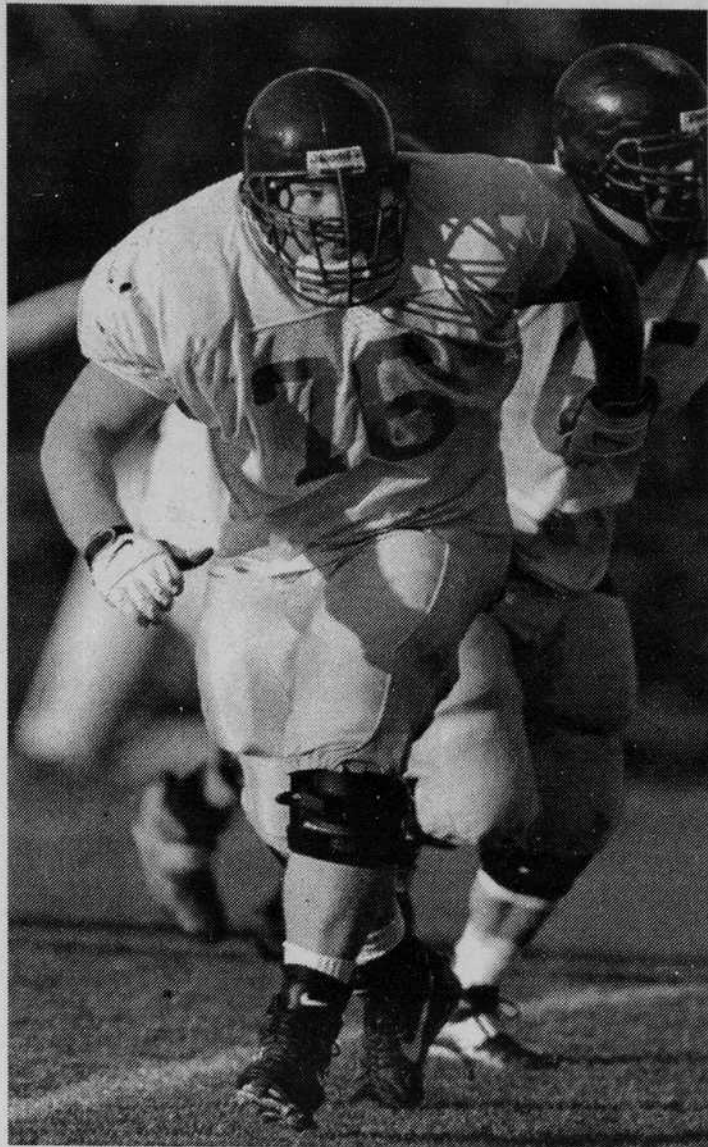


Oregon's O-line planning to play big against ASU



Lee Gundy and his fellow offensive linemen look for a second straight strong performance. Scott Barnett Emerald

■ The Ducks' depleted offensive line got the job done last week, and they're ready to do it again Saturday

By Scott Pesznecker
Oregon Daily Emerald

When the Oregon offensive line took its position in Arizona Stadium last Saturday, it carried the burden of a seven-game road losing streak.

Its mission was to create holes for the recovered Reuben Droughns, to contain a very mobile Wildcat defense and to play hard through the entire game — despite a thinned lineup.

Mission accomplished.

The Ducks' offensive line had its best performance of the season last Saturday, allowing the Ducks to collect 435 yards of total offense and making space for their star tailback to carry 45 times for 202 yards.

"We just executed our game plan," senior Josh Beckett said. "We have great coaches. They gave us a very detailed game plan, and we ran it the way they wanted us to. That's why we won the game."

But the line's success isn't reflective of the depth chart.

Trouble hit the offensive line in the Ducks' emotional, triple-overtime win against Southern California on Sept. 25.

Starting left tackle Al Cotton sustained a concussion against the Trojans. Although he made his return to the field the following Saturday against Washington, he only aggravated the concussion.

And he's been sidelined since. The line's job became more difficult because Droughns (ribs) and tailback Herman Ho-Ching (foot) also sustained injuries against the Trojans.

Ho-Ching has yet to play, but Droughns is definitely back. Offensive line coach Neal Zoumboukos said Droughns' ability to manipulate openings makes the

line noticeably better.

"Reuben Droughns can make yards through a small crack in the line," Zoumboukos said. "Other backs need a little more room, and you can't always give them all the room they need, unfortunately."

Oregon's linemen have had to

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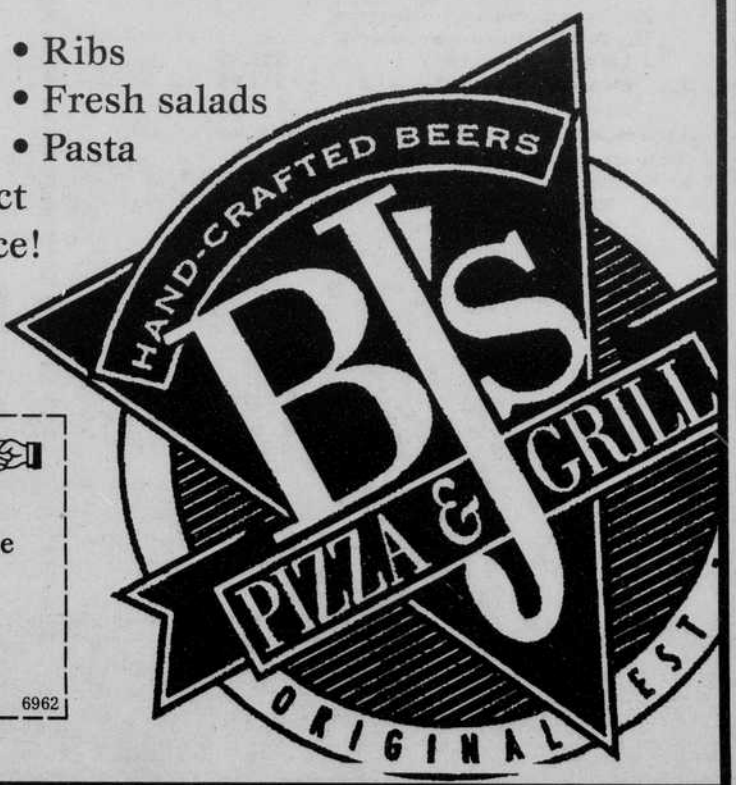
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