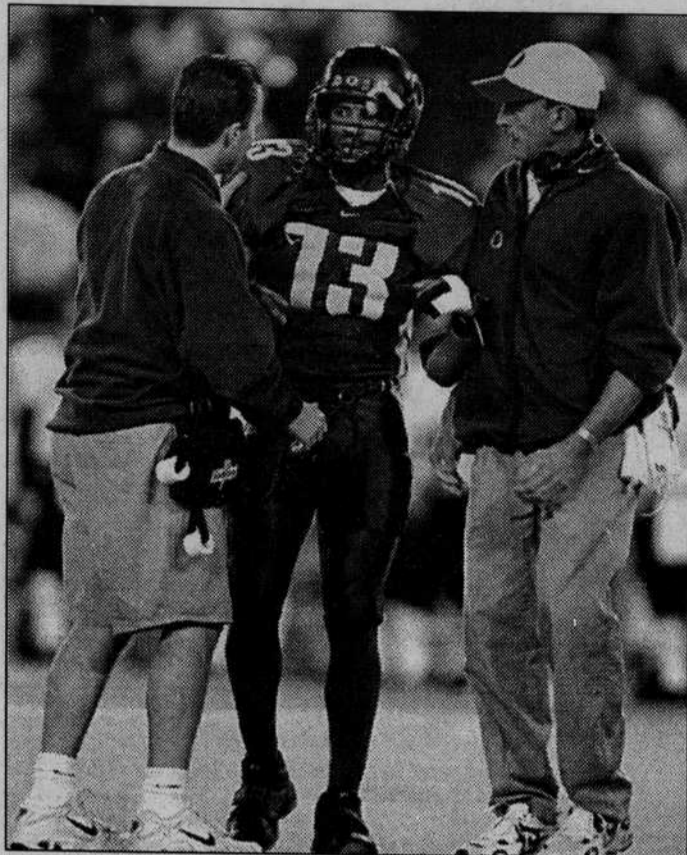


Oregon Daily  
**Emerald**Editor in chief: Laura Cadiz  
Sports Editor: Tim Pyle

# Sports

**Best Bet**  
College Football  
Kentucky vs. Mississippi State  
5 p.m., ESPN

Scott Barnett Emerald

Cornerback Brian Johnson was banged up last Saturday but will play this weekend.

## Bellotti not revealing QB

■ Head coach Mike Bellotti said he probably won't name the starting quarterback until game time

By Mirjam Swanson  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Mike Bellotti is experiencing déjà vu, and he likes it.

With three games to go, the hubbub over Oregon's quarterback situation is as intense as it was before the season began — but in a slightly different way.

No longer is A.J. Feeley or Joey Harrington facing pressures associated with having to replace superstar Akili Smith.

Instead, one or both quarterbacks will face a different burden — leading the Ducks to victory in a must-have game.

"We're obviously considering who's gonna start this week and who's better coming off the bench," Bellotti said. "All those questions are great for the press, [but] actually, not as bad for the coaching staff as people think. It's nice to have the

dilemma of having two very good — and potentially great — quarterbacks that can both get the job done."

Feeley has been the Ducks' starter all season. And despite having two consecutive rocky performances, he still ranks first in the Pacific-10 Conference with 14 touchdown passes, second with 134 completions and third in passing with 241 yards per game.

Despite limited playing time, Harrington is second in passing efficiency with a 183.3 rating. He's also fresh off directing his second-straight game-winning drive.

So who's gonna start, Coach?

"Probably after Thursday's practice I'll know," Bellotti said. "But I may not announce it anyway, just to keep Washington State off-balance."

And again, just like he had all spring and summer, Bellotti finds himself being asked to compare and contrast his two starting candidates. And again, he's mostly comparing.

"They're about the same size," Bellotti said. "They're about the same speed. Joey may be a half-step

quicker. A.J. may possess a little bit stronger arm. They're both students of the game. They both understand defensive fronts and secondaries and the way they work. There's not a lot of difference."

**In the game, probably**

They might not be 110 percent — as tailback Reuben Droughns likes to say — but Bellotti said there's a good chance they'll be out there.

They are fullbacks Todd Brooks and Chad Chance, defensive tackle Zack Freiter and cornerback Justin Wilcox, who've all been suffering from a variety of injuries.

"My gut feeling is that all of those kids will play," Bellotti said.

Wilcox separated his shoulder in the win against Arizona State, but he was up and jogging at Wednesday's practice.

"I'm gonna see if I'm able to run a little bit and see how it feels," Wilcox said.

**Not so close**

These incredulous, down-to-the-

Turn to **Football**, Page 8A

## Ducks hope to solve NCAA puzzle

■ Both Duck teams hope to gain at-large berths to the NCAAs, but don't ask them how

By Jeff Smith  
Oregon Daily Emerald

If you think college football's Bowl Championship Series system is confusing, wait until you read this.

All season, the Oregon men's and women's cross country teams have been eyeing Nov. 22. On that day, the NCAA Championships will be held in Bloomington, Ind., and both teams plan on being there.

But it's not a sure thing, and here's why:

In the recently expanded championship field of 31 teams — increased from 22 before last fall — there are 18 automatic entries. To qualify automatically, a team must finish in the top

two in its region. There are nine regions, so there are 18 automatic qualifiers.

With the talent the Duck men possess, Oregon should be a sure thing. But in the Pacific-10 Conference there is talent galore.

"In order for us to advance to nationals we will probably have to receive at least two to four at-large bids," men's head coach Martin Smith said.

Here is where it gets confusing.

With the 18 teams in, that leaves 13 "at-large" schools who are chosen by a NCAA committee based on specific criteria. Both Duck teams have performed well enough throughout the fall, gaining at-large points in order to get in the right position to be selected.

There are four main criteria in the at-large qualifying formula. The most important is a team's regional finish, which makes the Western Regional race on Nov. 13 in Portland the most important race of the season for the Ducks. A finish lower than sixth place could prove to be costly.

"We're going to have to run up to our abil-

Turn to **Cross country**, Page 9AJeffrey Stockton Emerald  
Freshman Heather Gilmore has been one of the few bright spots in a dark season for Oregon.

## QUICK Learner

Although she began playing volleyball just four years ago, Heather Gilmore has emerged as a force for the Ducks

By Scott Pesznecker  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Heather Gilmore's volleyball career began four years ago at an outdoor court in Salt Lake City, Utah.

With such little time to gain valuable playing experience, Gilmore could not have expected to end up where she is now.

She had no idea that her letter to Oregon head coach Cathy Nelson would be answered so quickly. She didn't expect for Nelson to fly to Salt Lake City to watch her play. She must have been thrilled to take a recruiting trip to the Oregon campus and receive a scholarship, thus securing a spot in the coveted Pacific-10 Conference.

But most of all, Gilmore probably didn't expect to be in the Ducks' starting lineup.

"Cathy said something about it when she recruited me, but recruiting is kind of like a sales pitch," Gilmore said. "She said I would be subbing in off the bench, so I expected this year — especially since Mo [Monique Tobbagi] and Amy [Banducci] are such consistent players — I'd be the first person off the bench, but I wouldn't be starting."

Gilmore made her starting debut against California on Oct. 1. Her play in that match wasn't spectacular — she had no kills, one error and a dig — but she had earned the position the previous night against nationally-ranked Stanford.

"The first time I started, I was nervous," Gilmore recalled. "It was like, 'Oh gosh, I'm starting in my first college Pac-10 game,' but after awhile you get a little more used to it ... You're just thinking to start off strong, maybe be the first to score

Turn to **Gilmore**, Page 9A