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Football

Continued from Page 7A

wire games that Oregon keeps playing have good points and bad points, the Ducks' coaches and players contend.

Oh, they're great for the fans — all of those who stick it out and stay the whole time, anyway.

They're mostly great for the

“It's nice to have the dilemma of having two very good — and potentially great — quarterbacks that can both get the job done.”

Mike Bellotti
Head coach

players.

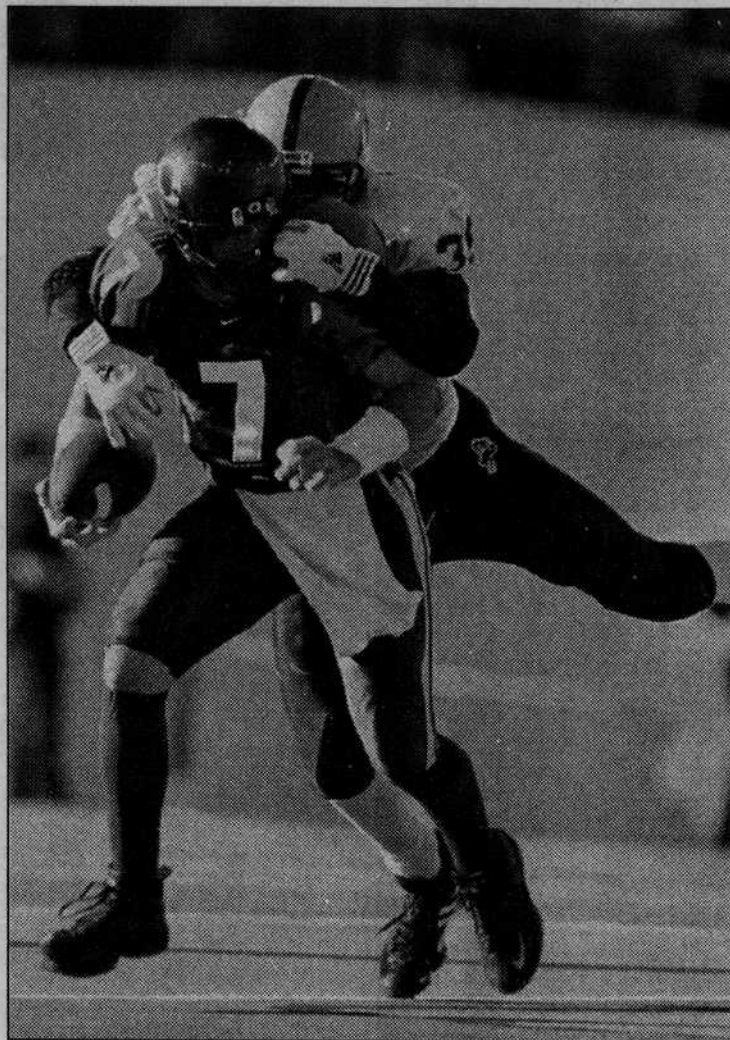
“The closeness of our games has helped us to understand the parity within this conference, and the fact that there's such a need to play good, hard, inspired football every week, or you're gonna get beat,” Bellotti said.

But they're not so great on the team's nerves.

“This is too hard on all of us,” defensive coordinator Nick Allioti said. “This is way too hard. You would hope that games are fun. But in reality, they haven't been much fun when you're nail-biting your way to the end...these cardiac kids.”

It seems that Bellotti ought to be rather used to it.

Since he became head coach in 1995, Oregon has averaged five outings per season decided by seven points or less. The Ducks



Scott Barnett Emerald

A.J. Feeley has had a tough time of late, and ASU's Erik Flowers didn't help any.

have won 18 of the 25.

However, none of those have been against the Cougars. In the previous 12 meetings, no game has been decided by less than 10 points.

Continuing that trend sounds

just fine to the Ducks.

“We've been through too many of those close ones,” senior flanker Tony Hartley said. “I'd like to have a couple games in the Pac-10 where we know what's going to happen at the end of the game.”

Deaths affect Griffey's wish

SEATTLE — Ken Griffey Jr. said the deaths of Walter Payton and Payne Stewart triggered him to ask the Seattle Mariners to trade him to a team closer to his home in Florida.

He knew both the U.S. Open golf champion and the NFL's career rushing leader, but the death of Stewart was more shattering, Griffey said in an interview in Wednesday's editions of The Seattle Times.

“While my decision was mainly about family, this is what led to my final decision,” Griffey was quoted as saying. “Payne missed the cut at Disney (a golf tournament in Orlando). On Saturday, he went to see his son play football — his first football game — and he caught a touchdown pass.”

“On Monday, his wife and daughter kissed him goodbye. Forty-five minutes later, he's not there anymore.”

Stewart died last week in a

LearJet crash.

The accident drove home Griffey's desire to spend more time with his family.

“With our travel,” Griffey said, “I play on one end of the country, and they live at the other end. I'd be flying all over the place. With Trey in school, it would even be tougher.”

He said he drives Trey to school daily and wants to be able to see him play youth baseball.

“I know people might ask about us moving to Orlando, but that's where we want to live,” said Griffey, a 10-time All-Star. “Everyone should live where they want. If we stayed in Seattle, I'd only have the offseason to do things with Trey, and sometimes it gets so wet it's tough to do things.”

Mariners' officials said Tuesday they will try to arrange a trade. Griffey has veto power over any deal.

He said he informed the

Mariners' newly hired general manager, Pat Gillick, when they met Monday.

“I had never even met Pat before,” Griffey said. “He seemed like an all-right guy. I was only there for a few minutes and told them how I felt, and that was it. There was no yelling or screaming.”

The Reds already have expressed interest in Griffey. He wouldn't say if he was interested in Cincinnati.

“So many things could jell or not on this trade,” Griffey said. “They might not find a trade they like. They told me, ‘You may not find one you like. But if there is no trade, I'll be going to spring training with Seattle at my normal time. You don't have to worry about me. There's not going to be any distractions. You'll still see me, trade or not.’”

Associated Press

DiCicco steps down as U.S. coach

He was the man behind the scenes of one of the biggest stories in women's sports. Tony DiCicco avoided the headlines, reserving them for the players on his women's World Cup soccer team.

So when he resigned as coach of the U.S. women's national team on Wednesday, it was no surprise that he did so without fanfare.

A statement from U.S. Soccer said the country's most successful soccer coach was leaving at the end of the year to spend more time with his family.

“The main reason I'm stepping down is that it's more important

for me to be a world-class husband and father than a world-class coach,” said DiCicco, who has boys of ages 17, 14, 12, and 8.

“When I looked at the generous financial opportunities available to me next year, I didn't see how they could possibly enrich my life more than spending time with my wife and boys.”

DiCicco has been asked to work with the federation as a consultant. The federation gave no indication who might succeed him, but Lauren Gregg, his top assistant, certainly will draw attention. The new coach will face a difficult

task: replacing DiCicco with the Olympics 10 months away.

“I can't think of anyone more deserving of the attention and praise brought on by the U.S. women's national team's success,” U.S. Soccer president Robert Contiguglia said.

“He has won every trophy in sight and done it with grace and style. He has been an integral part of the team's success since our first World Cup championship in 1991, and he has met every challenge head on.”

Associated Press