

# Ducks' 'D' must stop all of Huskies' options

■ Oregon's 11th-ranked defense must stay disciplined against Washington's option run

By Adam Jude  
Oregon Daily Emerald

For the first time this season, the Oregon defense will have to worry about more than just one running threat.

In quarterback Marques Tuiasosopo, tailback Paul Arnold and four other rushers, the No. 6 Huskies have one of the nation's most lethal backfields.

And Washington's strongest offensive attack has been the option run.

With the 6-foot-2, 220-pound Tuiasosopo controlling the ball, the Duck defense will have many op-

tions to defend — perhaps too many.

When the option is called, the Husky senior quarterback, who leads his team in rushing, will most likely run to the right. He will either keep the ball or pitch it to Arnold; many on the Oregon defense would probably prefer the latter.

"Tuiasosopo is a great quarterback and a great athlete," Oregon linebacker Matt Smith said. "The option does throw us off a little because it's a different look. We are somewhat concerned because we don't work at it and don't see it a

whole lot."

One positive aspect for the Duck defense is that the option run is known for creating turnovers if the quarterback tries to pitch the ball.

"If we can, on the option, try to keep the ball out of Tuiasosopo's hands and make him pitch the ball," cornerback Brian Johnson said. "With the option, they tend to fumble a lot. If we get it out of his hands, it will help our defense out a lot."

Overall, however, strategies are limited when a team tries to defend the option, Oregon defensive coordinator Nick Aliotti said.

"The key to the option is to be a very disciplined type of defense," Aliotti said. "One man has to stick with the dive, another the quarterback and one with the pitch. And we're not exclusively defending the option because they're not going to play the option every down. We just have to be disciplined."

The Huskies are also deep at the tailback position with junior Willie Hurst, the team's leading rusher last season, providing a boost off the bench. This season, Tuiasosopo, Arnold and Hurst have combined for nearly 125 yards per game.

"I think the option is a kind of offense that they're depending on the defense to make mistakes for it to be successful," Oregon defensive lineman Saul Patu said. "And so many people make mistakes when they try to cover the option because there's so many different ways to block with all the different blocking schemes. And I think right now, Marques is like the leading rusher on the team, so we're definitely going to try and key in on him and take him out of the game."

Oregon's 11th-ranked defense in

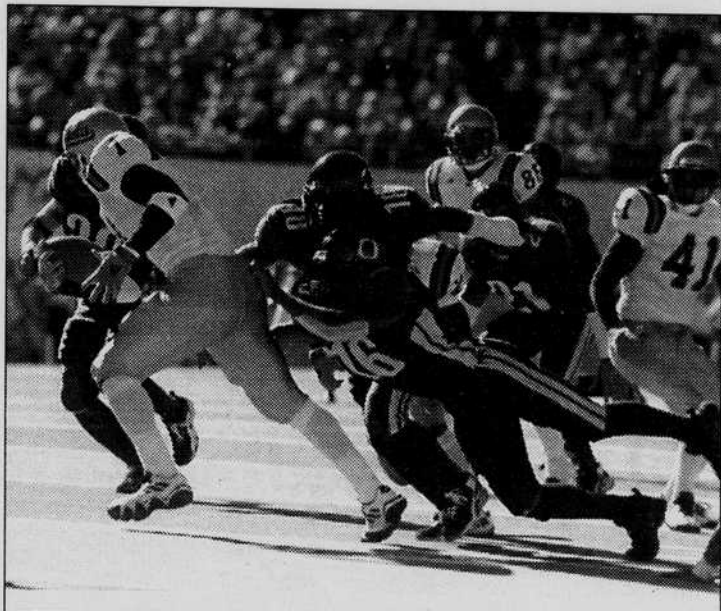
the nation held then-No. 6 UCLA to minus-nine yards rushing last week and Nevada to minus-three rushing yards on Sept. 2.

Not bad for a team that at the beginning of the season considered defense its biggest uncertainty.

"Coming into this season everyone knew that everyone was kind of shaky on the defense. We didn't know how we were going to be,"

Johnson said. "But as a whole, we knew we were going to be good. All we have to do is come out and play fast and that's what we've been doing. Our defense has fun when we play. And when we do that we pretty much shut the other team down."

Establishing the running game  
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Erin Swanson-Davies Emerald

Free safety Keith Lewis (16) and linebacker Wesley Mallard (18) stop UCLA's Tab Perry.

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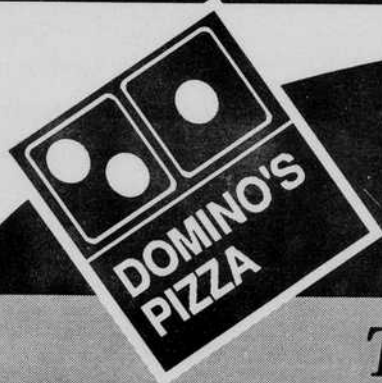


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