



Catharine Kendall Emerald

Defensive tackle Jed Boice (50), defensive end Jason Nikolao (98), defensive end Seth McEwen (43) and the rest of the Oregon defense will have to play at a higher level without their faithful Autzen crowd in attendance.



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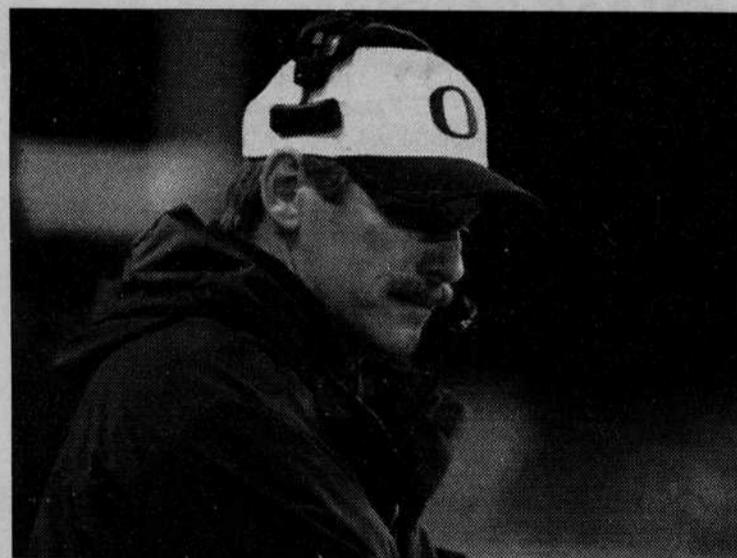
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Emerald

Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti looks down in defeat at least season's 34-20 road loss at Washington. He said facing the USC Trojans on the road will test the No. 9 Ducks.

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they shouldn't have gotten."

The Ducks did not seem their normal selves in Madison, as crowd noise contributed to confusion and miscues.

"As soon as we lost that fame, the team just hurt a whole lot," Nikolao said. "Everybody just regrouped and said 'We're going to try and never feel that way ever again.'"

"I do think that we learned some things from the Wisconsin game about what we have to do to win on the road," Bellotti said. "You can't have a breakdown or lapse in any aspect; offense, defense or special teams, which we contributed in all of those areas to our demise at Wisconsin."

Oregon will face a much less menacing crowd in Los Angeles, where USC's Coliseum has seen many empty seats and an embarrassing 31-15 loss to Arizona.

Although USC ranks third in the

Pacific-10 conference in average attendance at 57,013 fans per game, that figure is deceiving. With a capacity of 92,000, Memorial Coliseum averages 34,986 empty seats per game, including a lackluster 49,342 on hand for last week's loss to the Wildcats.

Added to the mix is Oregon's connection with Southern California. More than half of the Oregon team — 52 Ducks in all, claim California as their home state. That means that more Oregon fans will be able to make the trip to the Coliseum.

"I want as many people down there as we can get down there," Nikolao said. "We need all the people we can, all those extra cheers to keep us motivated and keep playing. It's our 12th man on the field."

"This group of kids proved they could win on the road last year," Bellotti added. "I'm not worried about that, but I think every year you have to re-establish the ability to win at home and on the road, the mindset that it takes."