

## Game preview

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as we stay on top of the Pac-10, everybody's going to be gunning for us."

The significance of this upcoming game is paramount. At the start of the season, conference analysts labeled Oregon's first three games against UCLA, Washington and Southern California as the make-or-break portion of its schedule. Nobody anticipated Arizona coming into Eugene with a share of the Pac-10 lead.

**“We have everything to lose in this game, and everything to gain as well.”**

**Joey Harrington**  
quarterback  
Oregon Ducks

But here come the Wildcats, hungry for a win and in the thick of the Rose Bowl race.

"This is the biggest game we've played this year, by far," Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said. "This is the only other undefeated team in the conference. That, in and of itself, is great motivation."

Arizona is riding high after beating a surging Washington State team in triple overtime on Saturday. However, Wildcat head coach Dick Tomey is well aware of the challenge that awaits his team in Eugene.

"They'll have to be better at Oregon," Tomey said. "I don't think we've seen a defensive line like Oregon's yet. Oregon is terrific, better than last year because of its defense."

The Ducks' fate may rest on the arm of Harrington, who had the best game of his career last Saturday against the Trojans, connecting 28 of 42 passes for 382 yards and four touchdowns. Harrington and the

Oregon receivers were off-and-on through the first five games of the season.

Establishing the passing game early should be a priority for the Ducks, as Arizona has the best rushing defense in the conference. In six games, the Wildcats have held opponents to an average of 70.5 yards on the ground per outing.

In fact, Arizona's defense is fifth-best in the nation when defending the run. The Wildcats' overall defense ranks first nationally with 25 forced turnovers, has the third-best turnover ratio at +2.17 average and has recorded a whopping 22 sacks.

Arizona cornerback Michael Jolivette, a freshman, ranks third nationally in interceptions with five picks this season. A pair of senior defensive ends — Joe Tafoya and Idris Haroon — have taken turns being Pac-10 Players of the Week this season, as has Jolivette.

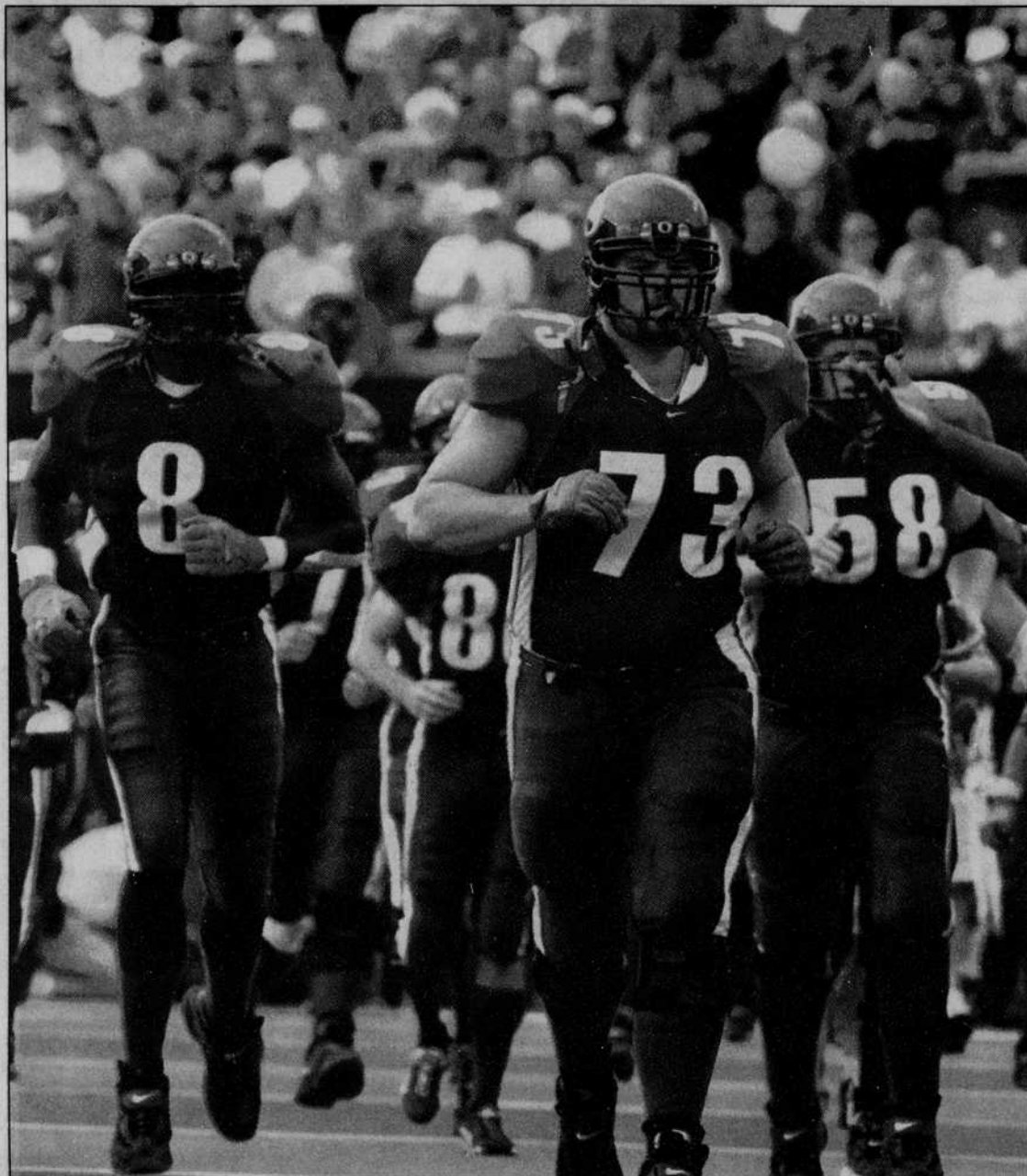
"We have to prepare for a different defense," Bellotti said. "They're a very unconventional, non-traditional defense and offense in terms of the formations and the schemes that they use."

Speaking of defense, Oregon played well enough against USC to preserve its No. 1 Pac-10 ranking, despite 152 yards rushing by Trojan tailback Sultan McCollough. On the road, the Ducks have let opponents slip some big plays through its 'D.' Wisconsin and USC rushed for a combined total of 531 yards.

At Autzen, however, Oregon's defensive line is seemingly impenetrable, giving up just 218 total rushing yards to four opponents.

"We haven't put together a complete game yet," defensive end Jason Nikolao said. "We haven't blown anybody out yet, as far as I'm concerned."

"Watch this game on Saturday. Don't miss it. You're going to see a pumped-up, angry Oregon team."



Dan Brunell Emerald

The Ducks are pumped up to face the Arizona Wildcats this weekend, as the winner will take sole control of the Pac-10 Conference.

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