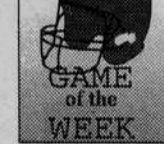


UCLA looks to end slide against OSU

■ The game is crucial for both UCLA and Oregon State in a battle of ranked Pacific-10 Conference teams

By Robbie McCallum
Oregon Daily Emerald

There are only two battles this week in college football that involve two top-25 ranked teams. The game here in Eugene is one of them and the UCLA-Oregon State matchup is the other.



The No. 19-ranked Beavers head south this weekend to face off with the No. 23 Bruins. The teams are heading in opposite directions, as UCLA hasn't been the same since falling to Oregon Sept. 23.

The Bruins barely edged Arizona State and lost in overtime to California last weekend after a 3-0 start. Oregon State, however, is 5-1 for the first time since 1964 and has been looking impressive in Pacific-10 Conference play.

With a win, Oregon State could move into a tie for second place in the conference standings. But a victory would mean so much more for head coach Dennis Erickson and the Beaver program. Should Oregon State win, it would get more national recognition as well as the sixth win of the season, making the Beavers bowl-eligible.

With a loss, however, the Beavers would essentially end their Rose

Bowl hopes.

"Obviously we are still in the thick of the Rose Bowl race right now, and we must continue to play like we've been playing," Erickson said. "UCLA slipped against California, and we know that we will be running into a buzzsaw going down to play them."

UCLA needs a win to get back on track in the Pac-10 chase, especially with games at Arizona and Washington just around the corner.

"My concern at this point is more us than them," Bruin head coach Bob Toledo said. "We are our own worst enemy."

The game will feature two of the most potent offenses in the Pac-10, with Oregon State and the Bruins both ranking near the top of the conference in scoring.

Oregon State junior tailback Ken Simonton is the nation's fourth-leading rusher with 149 yards per game. In the air, quarterback Jonathon Smith is equally dangerous with targets like wide receiver T.J. Houshmandzadeh and split end Chad Johnson.

UCLA receiver Freddie Mitchell leads the nation in receiving yards with 122.7 per game. Junior Brian Poli-Dixon is also a receiving threat behind quarterbacks Cory Paus and Ryan McCann.

The Bruins will be out for revenge this season. Last year, Oregon State recorded its biggest rout over UCLA in the history of the series. The Beavers smashed the Bruins, 55-7, in Corvallis, on 261 yards passing by Smith. UCLA still leads the overall series 34-12-4, dating back to 1930.

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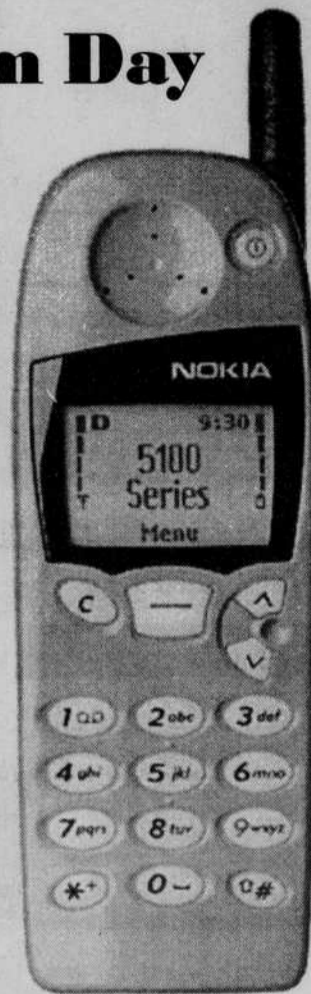
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