

## The Box

### Total Offense

(Pac-10 rankings)  
OREGON 3rd  
ASU 6th

### Total Defense

OREGON 1st  
ASU 7th

### Passing Offense

OREGON 6th  
ASU 2nd

### Rushing Offense

OREGON 3rd  
ASU 9th

### Passing Defense

OREGON 1st  
ASU 5th

### Rushing Defense

OREGON 3rd  
ASU 8th

### Turnover Ratio

OREGON +7  
ASU +8

### QUOTABLE

"We don't have a successful team without a successful offensive line, and they're doing a great job. I think they deserve a lot of credit."

-Oregon junior QB  
Joey Harrington

"We have no control over Oregon. It isn't a surprise that they are the first in our conference. They are a fine football team."

-ASU head coach  
Bruce Snyder

### Key Player Ducks' secondary

Oregon's top-ranked passing defense will go head-to-head with Jeff Krohn and ASU's second-ranked passing offense.

## Football isn't everything in life



PEZ SEZ

SCOTT PESZNECKER

It's easy to lose perspective on life's big picture when one becomes too focused on the here and now.

And recently, the sport of football has captivated the lives of many in the state.

The Oregon football team rose from the depths of the unranked to No. 7 in the Associated Press poll following a flurry of emotional wins this season. Only once before, in 1964, have the Ducks ever garnered so much national attention.

One of those emotional wins came at the hands of arch-rival Washington. But the first conference win against UCLA was even better, as it drew ESPN's College GameDay to Eugene and told a national football audience exactly where Eugene was.

(It's that relatively small town, two hours south of Portland. Just follow the noise and you'll find it.)

Win after win after win after win, the Ducks lead the Pacific-10 Conference midway through the season.

Face it — everywhere, Oregonians are smelling roses. How can they not — the Ducks have never been so hyped, and their defense has probably never been this good. And the offense, while sputtering at times, is just as dangerous as it ever was.

The best Oregon team ever? Maybe.

Now, the Bowl Championship Series standings are out. Oregon's No. 8, Washington's No. 9. And fans also learn that if the Ducks win out but lose to Oregon State, and Washington wins out, then the Huskies go to the Rose Bowl. Talk about a slap in Oregon's face, but it could happen.

Not to mention that the Ducks are being mentioned as a candidate for the national title.

Really, all this makes for an exciting football season. A very exciting season. A very, very, very exciting season.

The national response to Oregon's Cinderella story in the making has been astounding. Everywhere you look, they're talking about Oregon. Fox Sports, ESPN, Sports Illustrated. Name it, and they're probably talking Ducks.

From a player's perspective — and even from a fan's perspective — the predominate collective thought since Oregon's heart-pounding win over Arizona last Saturday has turned to Arizona State.

Stay focused. Concentrate. Ponder Oregon's defense against a broken Sun Devil offense. They can't lose. Too much is at stake. They mustn't lose.

Many Duck fans know somebody who is either a Beaver fan or a Husky fan. It's all about pride and bragging rights. If you're not winning on the field, well, then you need to win off of it

## ASU

continued from page 2C

Crawford, takes over at center and snapping duties for junior Scott Peters.

"We're beat up a little bit," Snyder said. "What happens with lack of depth is that kids have to play every snap, not only in games but in practice, and our offensive line is five guys plus two, and that's it. And that kind of problem is creeping up on us, and we're on thin ice, and we're scared a bit about that."

Arizona State's demise this season is reminiscent of Oregon's fall-apart two seasons ago. After a 5-0 start, the Ducks lost four of their last seven games, in part because of the loss of stars Reuben Droughns and Peter Sirmon to injuries.

So far the Ducks have been relatively

— and when you're team wins, you win.

Really, that's what it all comes down to. All this success, all the hype and all the attention. The crowds, the rowdiness — think Autzen Stadium was such a madhouse 10 years ago?

It's all about winning.

Imagine that you're on a plane trip home from a football game your team has just won. Not just won, but emerged victorious, 23-20, in overtime. You're a winner — like Oregon fans, storming the field after another win at home — and you feel like you can conquer the world...

Until your fragile aircraft is hit by lightning — twice.

That was the case for the Arizona State football team, which was no doubt engulfed with its win in Pullman, Wash., just hours earlier. I'd be willing to bet that many of them forgot about the game once that lightning hit.

"It definitely made us feel small and helpless," Sun Devil tailback Tom Pace said. "One of the first things everyone did was pray."

"I looked around and the whole cabin was stunned," head coach Bruce Snyder said. "The power of what it did — a lot of chatter, and then it hit again. The plane moved, I thought maybe the motor failed. You don't know."

"You could see the fear in the eyes of virtually everyone on board, with many passengers frantically engrossed in prayer," said Tim Healey, the "voice of the Sun Devils."

Imagine the vast parking lot outside of Autzen Stadium, two hours before game time. From border to border, Duck fans rally together and prepare for the next game of their life amidst a forest of barbecues, RVs and green flags. Nowhere else in our society can such a passionate turnout of followers be seen on a consistent basis.

Imagine what would happen if an earthquake suddenly tore that lot in two. Chances are that in the fleeting moments, most people there would forget all about the football game, which was, moments before, the soon-to-be high point of their lives.

Not to say that being a fan isn't a great thing, because it is. There's nothing wrong with being passionate about a team or a sport.

But it's easy to lose sight of what's important in life when it seems as if the entire world is in your hands.

When you watch your favorite football team go at it this weekend, remember that it's just a game. Remember what almost happened to Arizona State. Remember all the high school injuries that have happened in Oregon this year, one of which left an up-and-coming quarterback paralyzed for life. Remember that San Jose State player who lost part of his leg earlier this week.

Football may seem like everything. But the moment lightning strikes, it can turn to nothing really fast.

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injury-free this season. They lost defensive tackle Walker Templeton for the season when he tore an Achilles tendon against Washington.

Besides Templeton's setback, Oregon has only had to deal with nagging injuries to a few players.

Despite all the turmoil that has surrounded the Sun Devils this season, they are still in the hunt for a bowl game. Arizona State needs only one more win to become bowl-eligible. Beyond Oregon, the Sun Devils have cellar-dwellers Southern California and Stanford before a much-needed bye week.

"What gives me hope and strength is our team," Snyder said. "I think we are just going to keep pounding it and we'll get better."

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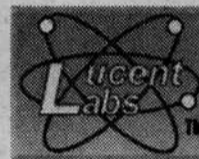
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