



Ducks and Devils leave everyone exhausted



Jeff Davids State Press

Oregon quarterback Joey Harrington lunges for an extra yard in an emotionally draining game in Sun Devil Stadium.

■ A combined 111 points is put on the scoreboard in one of the most wacky football games in Oregon history

By Jeff Smith
Oregon Daily Emerald

It's been said continuously over the past few weeks that Oregon controls its own destiny.

Well, after the Ducks' astonishing, ridiculous 56-55 double-overtime victory over Arizona State Saturday, a case could be made that the Ducks not only control fate, but they have it on their side.

Oregon stayed unbeaten in Pacific-10 Conference play (7-1 overall, 5-0 Pac-10) by miraculously beating Arizona State (5-3, 2-3) in front of 53,085 fans at Sun Devil Stadium. It's the first 5-0 start for Oregon since the 1957 season.

"We're going home with an empty tank," junior quarterback Joey Harrington said. "We left everything — physically and emotionally — on the field."

After everything that transpired on the field, it's hard to argue against the notion that Oregon is a team of destiny.

How else to explain the Ducks battling back from three separate 14-point deficits — with the latter taking place with under four minutes to go in regulation time as the Sun Devil crowd chanted, "Overrated."

How else to explain Oregon getting the ball back with 2:16 to go in the fourth quarter and courageously driving downfield; facing a fourth-and-goal from the nine-yard line; completing a pass to tight end Justin Peelle, only to have Peelle stuffed at the one-yard-line to turn over possession of the ball.

And then to have Sun Devil tailback Mike Williams fumble while running out the clock to give possession back to the Oregon offense with 33 seconds to play.

"I don't know how, but somehow by the grace of God, that ball popped out and we recovered and took advantage of that opportunity again," Harrington said.

On the very next play, Harrington connected with Peelle for a 17-yard touchdown pass to tie the game at 49 and send it to overtime.

Overtime proved to be just as crazy as regulation when Oregon cornerback Steve Smith intercepted a Jeff Krohn pass, setting up a potential game-winning field goal by Josh Frankel. Of

course, the game couldn't end on that note because that would be too simple, so Frankel missed the field goal — his eighth miss in 12 attempts — to send it to double overtime.

The Ducks' offense continued to sizzle as Harrington drilled wide receiver Keenan Howry for 18-yards down to the seven-yard line. A few plays later, tailback Allan Amundson — filling in for Maurice Morris, who left the game with bruised ribs — outran a herd of Sun Devils toward the left corner of the end zone for the one-yard touchdown run to give the Ducks the 56-49 advantage.

Then Arizona State, faced with a crucial third-and-seven, converted a 22-yard touchdown pass from Krohn to tight end Todd Heap to presumably send the game into a third-overtime.

But Sun Devil head coach Bruce Snyder had a different idea. On the extra-point attempt, the ball was snapped to Krohn, who was the holder. Krohn stood up with it, rolled to his right and threw toward Heap in the end zone.

The ball bounced off Heap's hands and onto the ground to officially conclude the four-hour-and-14-minute game.

"We had a feeling of the fake," Smith said. "We just played our technique and batted the ball down."

"They battled, never gave up," head coach Mike Bellotti said about his team. "They believed, no matter what the scoreboard said or how much time was left on the clock. We felt we had a chance to win. That is the mark of a winner."

The mood was obviously a little different in the Arizona State locker room.

"I feel very badly for the players," Snyder said. "I just felt like it would be a great victory for them. How heartbreaking this is."

Last week against Arizona, the Oregon offense sputtered and its defense came through and saved the day. Saturday, it was reversed, as the offense shone and the Pac-10's top-rated defense surrendered a combined 667 offensive yards and 55 points. It was the most points Oregon had ever given up in a

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What in the world is going on?



PEZ SEZ

SCOTT PESZNECKER

I'd call it madness. Absolute, total madness.

Craziness.

Who would have thought that the Ducks would overcome a 14-point deficit with about 4 minutes left to come back and win? By one? In double overtime?

Obviously, Oregon's players thought they could do it, and they did.

Like I said. Insanity.

Yet there they were, seemingly getting their hearts shattered when tight end Justin Peelle caught Joey Harrington's

pass, then was promptly stopped on Arizona State's one-yard line. Had he gone just one more yard, it would have been the game-tying touchdown with less than two minutes remaining.

And then there were those Ducks again, leaping in celebration just moments later when Jermaine Hanspard recovered the fumble on what would have been a Sun Devil first down and, more importantly, Arizona State's assurance that it could win the game on quarterback Jeff Krohn's knee.

Next play, Peelle redeemed himself with a touchdown catch.

Unbelievable.

Then, the first overtime. Oregon's depleted defense trudged into the extra period. Watching from the sideline was defensive end Jason Nikolao, who suffered

a torn medial collateral ligament in his right knee during Arizona State's first possession of the game, and Rashad Bauman, who jammed his arm against Sun Devil receiver Richard Williams. As Bauman fell in pain, Williams broke free, caught Krohn's pass and ran for a 90-yard touchdown.

So it could be argued that the Ducks were playing the overtime periods without two of their four best defenders. One in stopping the run, the other in stopping the pass.

It would have been easy for ASU to score, but cornerback Steve Smith would have none of that. Interception.

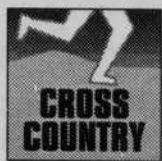
Astonishing.

Then, the low point of the game hit for Oregon. For whatever reason, the Ducks decided to abandon Harrington's dead-

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Men impress at Pac-10s

■ All-around good performances by Duck men lead to a second-place finish at the Pac-10 meet



By Robbie McCallum
Oregon Daily Emerald

Some may have wondered how the Oregon cross country team would fare at the Pacific-10 Conference Championship without All-Americans Steve Fein and Andrew Bliss, the squad's two best runners from the previous season.

On Saturday, the Ducks made a strong, responsive statement.

The young, green and yellow pack of two seniors, a junior, a sophomore and three freshmen exceeded all expectations at the Pac-10 championships in Seattle, edging No. 10 Arizona by four points to finish in second place with a score of 66. Stanford won the team title with 21 points by placing five runners in the top

seven.

This year marks the fourth time in five years that Oregon trailed only Stanford in the Pac-10 meet.

"Coming in, I tried to convey the intensity of what a conference meet is," Oregon head coach Martin Smith said. "Today they rose to that challenge. We have a really young team, and a key was that the freshmen kept their cool and followed the plan."

The losses Fein and Bliss left the Ducks with a young and unproven team this season, but Smith's team has earned a No. 13 ranking and posted three impressive performances at large meets.

Super sophomore Jason Hartmann led the Ducks at the championship meet, placing second in

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Meet leaves women frustrated

■ The lady Harriers' NCAA hopes are in a holding pattern after their mediocre Pac-10 season finish

By Robbie McCallum
Oregon Daily Emerald

Continuing struggles by the Oregon women's cross country team has put the Ducks in a difficult position: Facing the possibility of missing the NCAA meet for the first time since 1996.

A seventh-place finish at the Pacific-10 Conference championships is Oregon's worst placing at the conference meet since its inception in 1975.

The Ducks began the season ranked No. 12, but after three disappointing performances at ma-

nor meets, Oregon has dropped completely out of the top-25 polls, which has an effect on which teams are selected for the NCAA meet.

All is not lost, however. Last season, Oregon overcame a sixth-place finish at the Pac-10s to earn a NCAA bid, where they placed 19th out of 31 teams.

"Ironically, all we've got to do at regionals is edge Washington State and UCLA to get a spot at nationals," head coach Tom Heinonen said. "If we don't beat one of them and get fifth then we don't get selected."

Oregon trailed fifth-place Washington State by only 16 points. In the much larger regional meet, the Cougars could get

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“I think we're a better team than this. Our last chance to prove that will be at regionals.”

Tom Heinonen
head coach