

## THE BOX

### Total Offense

(Pac-10 rankings)

OREGON 1st  
WSU 6th

### Total Defense

OREGON 3rd  
WSU 10th

### Passing Offense

OREGON 3rd  
WSU 2nd

### Rushing Offense

OREGON 3rd  
WSU 9th

### Passing Defense

OREGON 1st  
WSU 5th

### Rushing Defense

OREGON 1st  
WSU 7th

### Turnover Ratio

OREGON +9  
WSU -2

### QUOTABLE

"He's a winner. Even when his stats aren't pretty, he's a competitor and he finds a way to win. That's definitely his best attribute — he wins."

-Oregon offensive coordinator Jeff Tedford on quarterback Joey Harrington

"They came and smacked us in the face. It wasn't X's and O's; it wasn't M's or S's; it was standing up, going toe to toe and kicking your ass."

-WSU head coach Mike Price on the OSU defense

### Key Player Maurice Morris

Oregon's tailback hasn't had a game over 120 yards since rushing for 152 against Washington more than a month ago. Morris had only 91 yards against Arizona State last week, and only 85 in a nail-biter at USC.



Washington State's Jason Gesser leads the Pac-10's second-best passing offense against the Ducks this week. Gesser ranks 23rd in the nation in total offense. Courtesy Washington State Media Services

## Gesser and Co. do it through the air

■ Washington State's high-powered aerial attack will meet the Pac-10's toughest passing defense in Saturday's matchup

By Peter Hockaday  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Washington State is, basically, a one-dimensional football team.

This season, the Cougars have found out that a team needs more than one dimension to win games in the Pacific-10 Conference.

Washington State (3-5, 1-4 Pac-10), to give them credit, could have a better record. They dropped overtime thrillers to Arizona and Arizona State on consecutive weekends before being blown out by Oregon State 38-9 last Saturday.

Besides putting up a load of points on the Cougars Saturday, the Beavers also shut down Washington State's high-flying offense for only the second time this sea-

bling and buying time," Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said about Gesser. "One of the things that [Washington State coach] Mike Price talks about is '1-800-DIAL-GESSER.' He's probably one of the quickest kids on the field."

The Washington State offense has benefited from Gesser's outstanding play. The Cougars have the most touchdown passes in the conference, and their passing offense is second in the Pac-10 to Jeff Krohn and Arizona State.

On the ground, Washington State has a dual threat behind Gesser in tailbacks Deon Burnett and David Minnich. But the threat comes only when the passing game needs a rest, because Burnett and Minnich average only 104 yards per game combined.

The other side of one of the Pac-10's best offenses is the Pac-10's worst defense. The Cougars have the league's worst rushing defense (174 yards/game), give up the most points (31.1 points/game) and have the league's worst total defense (404.6 yards/game).

Just looking at the Cougars' scores, it's easy to see their shortcomings. They lost 38-34 to Idaho. They dropped a game to Arizona 53-47 in triple overtime. Before the Oregon State game, the Cougars had played five games that were decided by less than seven points, but Washington State scored at least 20 points in each.

But last Saturday, the Cougars had a role reversal with Oregon State.

"It was bad football," Price told the Seattle Post-Intelligencer. "The defense hung in there. The offense was miserable."

The Beavers shut down Gesser, who went 11 of 29 for 104 yards and two interceptions. The Cougars had only 240 total yards of offense in that game, 184 through the air. Washington State's

nine points were the least they have scored all season.

Spirits are low in Pullman as the prospects of going to a bowl fade from view. The Cougars need to win the rest of their games to become bowl-eligible, and the road is tangled with thorns.

Price told the Seattle Times that his team needs to look forward, not backward, calling the Cougars' final games a "three-game season."

"To heck with the last game," Price said. "I'm not even going to show it [on videotape] to the players."

After Oregon, which is undefeated in Pac-10 play this season, Washington State faces Southern California — the only team below

the Cougars in the conference — and No. 8 Washington in the Apple Cup.

Washington State's only Pac-10 win came against California two months ago. Since that game, the Cougars have beaten Boise State, and then lost four straight Pac-10 games.

USC is the only other Pac-10 team with three consecutive conference losses this season. Washington State also has the second most losses overall in the conference; only USC, with five losses, has more.

The Pac-10's best team against the Pac-10's worst defense? You do the math.

“It was bad football.

The defense hung in there.

The offense was miserable.”

Mike Price  
Washington State  
head coach

son. Discounting that game and the Cougars' 24-10 loss to Stanford to start the season, the men from Pullman have scored nearly 34 points a game.

The emergence of Washington State's offense has come thanks to Jason Gesser, the Cougars' sophomore quarterback, whose statistics are almost mind-boggling. The signal caller has a 136.9 pass efficiency rating, the best in the Pac-10 and 23rd in the country. He throws for 241.5 yards per game, the best in the Pac-10. Gesser averages 248 yards per game of total offense, slightly lower than Joey Harrington's 249.5, but still 21st in the nation.

"He does a great job of scram-

## DISCOUNT SPORTS & VITAMINS

(VITAL FOOD)

BEST PRICE & SELECTION

255 E. 18TH, EUGENE 343-0971

EAS.com

M.D. LABS

Lucent Labs

HYOPLEX

American Sports Nutrition  
Bio-Tech  
Pinnacle  
Champion Nutrition  
Sportspharma  
ProLab  
Muscle Tech  
Optimum  
Nature's Best  
Twin Lab  
Atkins  
LaBrada  
Gen  
Cybergenics  
Metiform  
Isopure  
Next Nutrition

BEST SELECTION OF BRANDS AND  
PRICES N. OF SAN FRANCISCO