



Catharine Kendall Emerald

Senior defensive end Jason Nikolao, who missed last week's game with a torn ligament in his right knee, is expected to start in his final game at Autzen Stadium Saturday.

Game preview

continued from page 1B

Especially a team such as Cal, which boasts a defensive end in Andre Carter who should give the Oregon offensive line fits, and a quarterback in Kyle Boller who passed for a career-high 349 yards against Oregon State last week. The Golden Bears played the Beavers as tough as anybody has this year in their 38-32 loss, which eliminated them from bowl contention.

"It's going to be a tough challenge for us this week," Oregon quarterback Joey Harrington said.

The Ducks will be looking to add another notch to the nation's second-longest home winning streak (currently at 19), and help 27 seniors end their Oregon careers at Autzen Stadium on a bright note. This class is a special one to Bellotti, as the fifth-year seniors in the group were a part of Bellotti's first recruiting class.

The seniors, who were members of the Las Vegas, Aloha and Sun Bowl teams, respectively, admit that playing in their final home game will evoke some strong emotions.

"Yeah, it's a big game," senior defensive end Saul Patu said. "There's a lot of memories here, so we definitely want to end it with a bang."

Even for the non-seniors, returning home to the Autzen faithful is a good feeling, especially after a trip

to Tempe, Ariz., that involved plane delays and a weekend in the Palouse that was filled with nasty weather.

"It's a lot better at home because all those people are rooting for you instead of booing for you," sophomore tailback Allan Amundson said. "You make a good play and the place goes wild. It adds to the excitement and pumps you up."

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Allan Amundson
Oregon tailback

Amundson has played a crucial role for the Ducks lately, as he has helped spell starting tailback Maurice Morris, who is still dealing with sore ribs. Morris, who did not play in the second half last week, is scheduled to start Saturday. The junior college transfer is just 37 yards shy of the 1,000-yard rushing mark for the season.

Also expected on the field is sen-

ior defensive end Jason Nikolao, who was projected to be out for a few more weeks after tearing a ligament in his right knee against Arizona State Oct. 28. Nikolao was seen in street clothes firing up his teammates on the sidelines during the Washington State game.

His presence, however limited it may be, will bring an added emotional boost to an Oregon team that will have its eyes on Cal during the day and on the television sets at night.

"We're going to go out against Cal and handle our business and hope Arizona handles theirs," cornerback Rashad Bauman said. "It would definitely be nice to know where you're going to go before it's been announced. We're excited about all of this."

A few Oregon players — Harrington and Bauman, in particular — have voiced their complaints about the team's play as of late. The two helped instigate a players-only team meeting earlier in the week that appears to have refocused the team. The players know they shouldn't be living on the edge and playing overtime games against teams such as the Sun Devils and Cougars.

And maybe, just maybe, they say, the Ducks can actually play just four quarters this time around and avoid the extra session.

"That'd be nice, wouldn't it?" Harrington said.

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