

Ducks' postseason fate hinges on BCS bids

■ Oregon may not know who or where it plays in which bowl game until Dec. 3

By Scott Pesznecker
Oregon Daily Emerald

One day after suffering the biggest loss in his coaching career, Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti tended to his weekly conference call with reporters from around the state.

But Bellotti, like everyone else, was unable to answer the big ques-

tion: Where will the Ducks play next? "We want the best bowl game possible to play the best opponent possible," Bellotti said. "I don't have anything more to say on it until I know more."

Oregon's Civil War loss Saturday ended all hopes of the Ducks playing in the Rose Bowl. Washington received the automatic bid to Pasadena when it routed Washington State, effectively beating out Oregon and Oregon State by way of tiebreakers.

Under normal circumstances, the Beavers would go to the Holiday Bowl in San Diego, Calif., usually reserved for the second-place Pacific-10 Conference team, and Oregon would play at the Sun Bowl in El Paso, Texas, as the third-place Pac-10 team.

However, this season is anything but usual.

If Oregon State gets a BCS bid to play in the Fiesta or Sugar Bowl, then Oregon would play in the Holiday Bowl instead of the Sun Bowl.

But other teams, such as Virginia Tech, will probably receive at-large BCS bids before the Beavers.

Also, the Sun Bowl — like the Holiday Bowl and the two bowl games in Hawaii — has a "no repeat" clause. If implemented, the clause would prohibit Oregon from playing in the Sun Bowl because it played there last season. In that case, the Sun Bowl would replace the Ducks with a Pac-10 team from either a Hawaii bowl or the Holiday Bowl.

The Sun Bowl could also refuse

Oregon if Wisconsin made it to El Paso. The Ducks and Badgers have already played once this season, and play again early next season. Bowl commissioners may fear that the matchup may be unexciting and fail to draw a profitable crowd.

So when will the Ducks know where they'll go? Probably Dec. 3, when football action wraps up and BCS bids are determined.

"We are the co-Pac-10 champions," Bellotti said. "As such, we deserve to play in a great game."

Cross country sends four to national championships

■ The cross country team wraps up the 2000 season at the NCAA meet today

By Robbie McCallum
Oregon Daily Emerald

In the sport of cross country, it's hard to predict when or where an athlete will run his or her final race. But for four Oregon seniors, the final race is today.

Now it is certain; Hanna Smed-

stad, Katie Crabb, Rhiannon Glenn and Michael Kasahun will close out their cross country careers at Oregon today at the NCAA Championships in Ames, Iowa. The men's race begins at 11 a.m., followed by the women's race at 11:45.

The four seniors weren't quite

sure of their fate ten days ago. The Oregon women's cross country team was a dark horse in earning an NCAA-meet berth coming into the Western Regional meet in Fresno, Calif., and Smedstad, Crabb and Glenn faced an unknown fate.

The day after the Regional meet, the Oregon men's team was left out of the NCAA field. That left senior Kasahun with an unknown fate as well.

Fortunately, Kasahun and the women's team performed well enough at Regionals to earn NCAA berths. The unranked women's team placed fourth in the team standings to qualify. Although the men were snubbed by the NCAA selection committee, Kasahun and sophomore Jason Hartmann received individual bids.

The Ducks are familiar with the national course, having ran at the

Iowa State Memorial Classic on Oct. 14. Both the 6,000-meter women's course and 10,000-meter men's course are the same as the national course.

At the Iowa State meet, the Oregon women finished in a disappointing 21st, but have made significant improvements since then. On the men's side, Hartmann placed 30th, followed closely by Kasahun at 36th place.

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Luke Ridnour stole the ball in the backcourt and dished to Norwood, who streaked in for the two-hand dunk. After a MVSU timeout, Nor-

wood continued his dominance by draining three more of his 15 points with just under 16 minutes left.

The Ducks' dominating 21-4 run was capped on a Bracey bucket that gave Oregon the 61-39 advantage.

"I thought it was a really good opening game for us," head coach

Ernie Kent said. "I was really pleased with my veteran players — particularly Bryan, Freddie, Julius and Norwood. I was pleased with how hard they played."

Jones had a positive first step toward his goal of being the team's go-to guy with 21 points, seven re-

bounds and six assists. But he was more concerned with his poor 3-for-8 shooting from the charity stripe and the team's 25 turnovers.

"Everybody knows in their heart that they weren't playing to their potential," Jones said. "We just have to go back to the drawing board and

get better."

Oregon takes its 1-0 record on the road for the first time this season after playing two exhibition games and the opener at home. The Ducks will face Denver this Tuesday.

"The biggest thing right now is to just win games," Kent said.

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49-yard line.

There's still life. Harrington drops back, fires it downfield, but it gets intercepted by Grant to seal the deal.

The scoreboard flashes the words, "It's a great day to be a Beaver!"

And as you watch the Oregon sidelines, you know exactly what kind of day it was to be a Duck.

When the clock showed 0:00, fans stormed the field as the Ducks ran off of it, trying to escape their

nightmare as quickly as possible.

As some students attempted to tear down the goal post, Oregon's Jason Nikolao stood in full pads with his family. Hugging. Kissing. And hugging some more.

The Ducks made their way down to the basement of nearby Gill Coliseum, where the reality of missing the Rose Bowl slowly started to sink in.

"It was a fatal game," senior wide receiver Marshaun Tucker said. "We had that right there in the hands and we let it slip away."

In the days leading up to this

game, Harrington didn't hide his emotions about his love for the Ducks and how much he wanted to win this game. He said he would never forget it, regardless of the outcome, and now knows that the memories will be painful. They'll be especially painful since he threw five interceptions — after only throwing eight all season.

"We had a chance to do what we wanted to do," said the junior quarterback, while he sat on a chair with his face down, trying to hide his obvious hurt. "We just didn't do it."

Meanwhile, in the Valley Football

Center, Oregon State head coach Dennis Erickson danced and talked of how proud his players should be. Those players sported grins as wide as can be and hats with the words, "Pac-10 Champs" on it.

Actually, the Beavers are Pac-10 co-champions, along with the Huskies and Ducks.

Which is where the true ironic twist comes into play. Despite having two teams in the nation's top-10 clash in a historic Civil War, the state of Oregon gets shut out in the Rose Bowl. Washington gets the berth, along with the extra money, the

added television exposure and the feeling of being a real champion.

All Oregon gets to feel is emptiness and despair, and must find a way to gear itself back up for whatever bowl game comes its way.

And for all those heart-broken Duck fans, as well as everyone involved with the Oregon football program, I leave you with a quote from poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson: "It is better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all."

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Corvallis

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points in the first half. Their first touchdown happened with 10:03 left in the first when quarterback Jonathan Smith passed 32 yards to Robert Prescott in the end zone.

Then, with 4:27 left in the first,

Smith found Prescott for his second passing touchdown.

Oregon State place-kicker Ryan Cesca kicked a 32-yard field goal to make the score 17-0.

Harrington put the Ducks on the scoreboard when he ran six yards and jumped into the end zone with 7:38 to play in the first half.

"We spotted them too many

points," Bellotti said, referring to Harrington throwing two first-half interceptions and Oregon giving up 97 yards in penalties. "They're a good football team and you can't do that. In a championship game at the opponent's field, I don't think you can spot them plays or touchdowns."

Beaver tailback Ken Simonton scored Oregon State's final touch-

down with 7:07 left in the third when he ran 20 yards into the end zone, but Cesca missed the extra point and the score was 23-7.

Duck tailback Maurice Morris answered early in the third, scoring on a 1-yard run, but he failed to run into the end zone on the two-point conversion attempt that could have set up a tie, had the Ducks scored again

with a second two-point bonus.

Oregon would not score again. "We're shocked right now, but we did know what was at stake and we knew as soon as the clock ran zero that the Rose Bowl hopes were gone," Bauman said. "We've just got to battle back, and whatever bowl game we do go to, we've got to make sure we go down and handle business."



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