

# Unpredictable 'Horns looking to break top-10

■ Texas has won six games in a row headed into its Holiday Bowl game with Oregon, but the streak could be deceptive

By Peter Hockaday  
Oregon Daily Emerald

On paper, No. 12 Texas looks like a formidable football team heading into their Holiday Bowl matchup with No. 8 Oregon Dec. 29.

The Longhorns are riding the tide of a six-game winning streak, took second in the Big 12 South behind No. 1 Oklahoma, and replaced injured Major Applewhite at quarterback with Chris Simms — son of former NFL signal-caller Phil Simms.

But the Ducks may want to go back and look at tape of Texas' 27-24 loss to Stanford Sept. 16 to find the Longhorns' weak points.

"This one is tough because we made mistakes," said Texas coach Mack Brown, after that loss. "Unless we forced them to happen."

After that game, when the Longhorns rushed for only 13 yards but Applewhite passed for 330, Texas was in bad shape. The 'Horns won their next two games, against Houston and Oklahoma State, but hobbled into their matchup with Oklahoma the next week with a 3-1 record.

The Sooners proceeded to blow Texas out of the Cotton Bowl's water, 63-14.

"It was a poor performance overall," Brown said after that game. "I have to reevaluate everything I am doing this week and try to get us back on track to go to Colorado."

Texas did get back on track, as Brown had hoped, and ran the table after its loss to Oklahoma. Now, the

Longhorns will use the momentum from that six-game streak, and a strong desire to break the top-10 for the first time since Ricky Williams was in town, to upset Oregon.

Brown is most impressed with the play of Simms, the sophomore who had big shoes to fill when Applewhite went down with a knee injury at Texas Tech Nov. 4.

Simms had his best showing last Saturday, in Texas' final regular-season game, a 43-17 win over then-No. 22 Texas A&M. The sophomore signal-caller passed for 383 yards and three touchdowns in the 'Horns' blowout of the Aggies. The performance was enough to earn Simms Big 12 offensive player of the week.

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Leonard Davis  
senior offensive tackle  
Texas Longhorns

The Longhorns are unsure if Applewhite will be healthy for the Holiday Bowl, and Simms may start in his place.

Texas' running game is spearheaded by Hodges Mitchell, who is averaging just over 100 yards per game this season, but has broken out for over 200 yards twice. Mitchell ran for 264 yards against Kansas and 229 against Texas Tech. Mitchell has a touch of inconsis-

tency in him, and rushed for only 20 yards against Oklahoma, 31 yards against Louisiana-Lafayette and 50 yards against Oklahoma State.

Texas is excited to play in the Holiday Bowl, not only for the national attention and chance to break the top-10, but because the game could help the Longhorns' recruiting in southern California.

"We are obviously established in the state of Texas, but we also recruit from California, across Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona and into Louisiana," Brown said. "Playing in this game provides us with a great recruiting tool because it will be seen in every home throughout America."

The Holiday Bowl, which will be on television in the evening on Dec. 29, is not running against any other bowl games. Brown said that would help in Texas' recruiting efforts.

Texas' players are just looking forward to the vacation.

"I have never been to San Diego," said Leonard Davis, the Longhorns' senior offensive tackle. "But I'm excited for the chance to play a great team and experience what I've been told is a great city."

Finally, Texas is looking to avenge the ending to their 1999 season, when they lost three straight games — including the Cotton Bowl — after carrying a 9-2 record into that three-game stretch.

"All we heard about after last season was that we lost our last three games," Davis said. "That's a big motivating factor to play hard and win this year's bowl game."

The Holiday Bowl will kick off at 5:30 p.m. Dec. 29. The game will be played at Qualcomm Stadium in San Diego.



Photo courtesy of Texas Media Services  
Longhorn quarterback Chris Simms (1) has gone from second-stringer to star in leading Texas to a 9-2 record and a berth in the Holiday Bowl.

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## Congratulations to Coach Mike Bellotti and the Ducks on a 9-2 regular season, a Pac-10 co-championship, and an appearance in the Holiday Bowl.

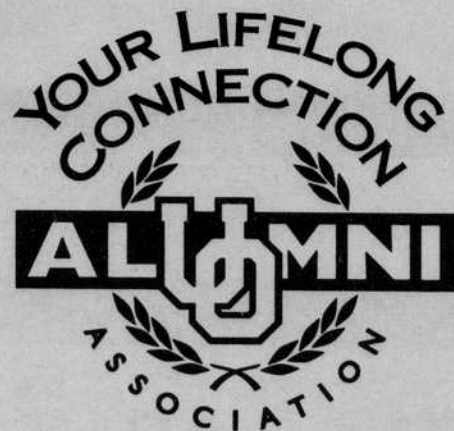
Join the Ducks in San Diego for the Culligan Holiday Bowl, December 29, 2000. Traveling with the UO Alumni Association, sponsor of the Official University of Oregon Holiday Bowl Tour and pregame party, is the best way to see all of the action.

Call (541) 346-UofO (8636) or visit <http://alumni.uoregon.edu> for more information.

Official University of Oregon Holiday Bowl Tour Information

Tour Highlights

- December 27-30 (departures from Eugene and Portland)
- Full packages and land-only (no air) packages available
- Full package includes round trip charter airfare, three nights accommodations, Duck pep rally, Duck pregame party, tour gifts and bowl souvenirs, and transportation to and from airport, pep rally, pregame party, and game.



# Go Ducks!