

## Pez Sez

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the game for Oregon.

Evidence: A fake punt attempt that would have worked, had the pass actually covered more than half the distance to the receiver, or the end-around by receiver Jason Willis that resulted in the winning touchdown.

And when quarterback Joey Harrington handed off to receiver Keenan Howry, who passed it back to — Harrington? Who then barreled into the end zone for his first-ever touchdown catch?

That Howry-to-Harrington play must have been scripted not by offensive coordinator Jeff Tedford, but by the writers of "Top Gun," who, back in 1986, came up with another clutch play that worked just as well: "Hit the breaks and he'll fly right by."

Heck, Bellotti could have borrowed a line from Maverick in his

postgame interview: "You don't have time to think up there. If you think, you're dead."

Anyway...  
"Top Gun" is a movie about a gung-ho fighter pilot at an elite dogfighting school who, every time he flies, pushes the envelope to almost out-of-control levels. The Ducks took a similar game plan into the Holiday Bowl, and even though they may have appeared out of control at times, they weren't, and they won.

But, of course, there's more linking the Holiday Bowl to Top Gun than comparisons.

When football teams travel to new places to play in postseason games, sight-seeing is a given. In San Diego, popular tourist sites included Sea World and the World Famous San Diego Zoo.

Oregon did that. They also went to a military base.

There, they talked to a real-life Top Gun instructor.

"We had a great speaker this

week that was a fighter pilot," defensive end Jason Nikolao said as his team celebrated its bowl victory on the field. "He talked to us about how he was really a part of that life and death experience, and he made us feel that this game, right here, was really going to be about life and death.

"So we talked about that with each other, and it was great to come out here and perform."

I don't know if I'd ever call a football game a life-or-death experience, but whatever that instructor told those players did the trick. The defense flew around the field with reckless abandon, and the offense continued to out-wit its opposition.

Oregon proved it still had that love and feeling, even after losing an outright Pac-10 title and a trip to the Rose Bowl in a crushing Civil War loss.

The day before the Holiday Bowl, players, coaches and alumni

from Oregon and Texas gathered in the San Diego Convention Center for a luncheon. Each team showed a highlight video of their season's best plays.

The Ducks set their video to the emotional music from "Gladiator."

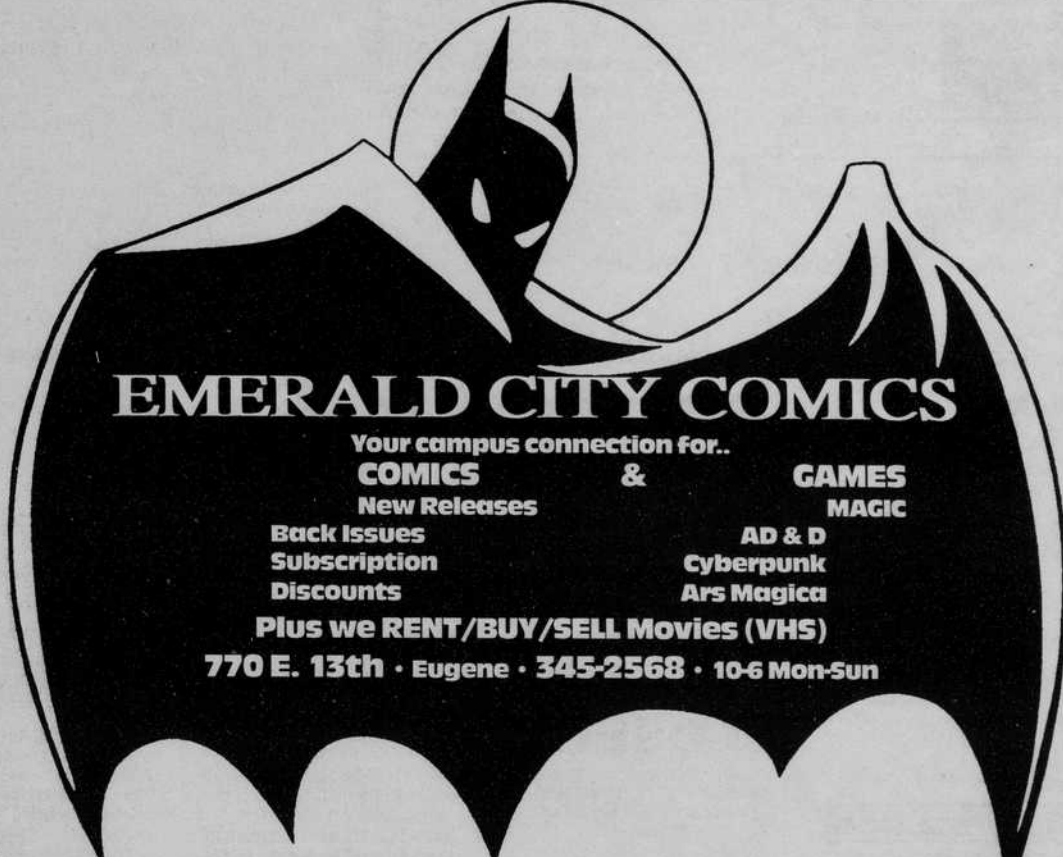
"Highway to the Danger Zone" would have been more appropriate.

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Adam Amato Emerald

Oregon junior guard Anthony Norwood prepares to shoot one of his nine three-point attempts against Oregon State. Fifteen of Norwood's 17 points came from beyond the arc.



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## Men's

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The Ducks were led by senior forward Bryan Bracey, who scored 24 of his game-high 28 points in the second half through a barrage of three-pointers, jumpers and a smooth reverse alley-oop dunk. At one crucial five minute stretch in the second half, Bracey accounted for 17 of Oregon's 19 points.

"In the first half I was just overshooting the ball and we were kind of startled," Bracey said. "We were down and I knew I had to help my team. I can't really explain what was going on. I was just feeling it."

Oregon also got solid games from Jones and guard Anthony Norwood, who scored 18 and 17 points, respectively. Norwood connected on 5 of 9 three-point attempts, while Jones recorded his third career double-double with his 11 rebounds.

The Ducks shot 54.5 percent from the field in the second half, including 50 percent from beyond the arc. Oregon State, meanwhile, could only convert two of 11 three-pointers in the second half.

"When you talk about playing defense, spreading the ball around and shooting the ball the way we shot it against a caliber of an opponent like an Oregon State team, I was very pleased with that," Kent said.

Perhaps the biggest turning point of the game occurred when Oregon State's senior center Jason Heide picked up his fourth foul with 51 seconds left in the first half. The short-handed Beavers never really recovered once the fouls starting

piling up. Oregon State's Adam Masten and Brian Jackson fouled out in the second half.

"When Jason Heide picked up his fourth foul, I just thought that it was going to be hard to pull our guys out of that," said first year coach Ritchie McKay, who coached at Colorado State and Portland State before heading to Corvallis. "We went from aggressive to passive and as a result, Oregon became the attacker and we were the attack-ee."

"We got out of character offensively and fueled their flame."

Many of the Oregon players admitted that they probably were a little too hyped up during the early part of the game, but were encouraged with the way they fought back.

"We gotta win our home games and I think that's the biggest key," Norwood said. "At first we started off kind of slow, but then we started realizing that this was our home and it's the Civil War, let's take care of it."

Oregon's hoping that its preseason schedule against teams such as Massachusetts, Auburn and Louisville prepared them for the Pac-10 gauntlet.

The Ducks travel down to the Bay Area to take on California Thursday and second-ranked Stanford Saturday in a game that will be televised by ABC.

"This team is going to be a good road team, I can tell that already," Kent said. "If we can weather this road trip, then that's going to be huge for us. It'll take us to another level."