

Kevin Mitchell (39) and David Moretti (44) sack USC quarterback Carson Palmer in Oregon's 24-22 victory Saturday.

Adam Amato Emerald

# Close loss leaves Carroll, USC 'sick'

■ After trailing by 15 points in the second half, the Trojans make a late run and nearly end Oregon's home winning streak

By Jeff Smith  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Opposing players typically speak with great respect towards the atmosphere at Autzen Stadium after playing the Ducks on their home turf.

Don't expect Carson Palmer to do the same.

"This place is overrated," Palmer said. "The noise doesn't affect you as long as you are prepared for it, and it didn't affect us."

Perhaps, but despite putting up quite a fight, USC again fell just short against Oregon, 24-22, Saturday night for its fourth straight loss against the Ducks.

While the Trojan players have been through these types of heart-break defeats in their careers, the loss was a first for new USC head coach Pete Carroll, and he took it hard.

"I guess the people who've come here in the past, that have seen USC play up here would say this is like all the rest of the games," Carroll said. "I wouldn't know anything about that because I've only been here once. I thought that was a fine effort to get back and get the lead, and I'm just sick that we didn't finish the game."

The Trojans trailed 21-6, but still believed they had a chance to win. That belief would be bolstered when Trojan tailback Sultan Mc-

Cullough showed off his track speed and sprinted 75 yards for the touchdown.

Two drives later, Palmer punched the gut of Oregon and its fans when he connected on a 93-yard touchdown pass to Kareem Kelly, who broke free from the Oregon secondary and was never touched. The pass play was the longest touchdown throw in Autzen Stadium history.

And then on the Trojans' next drive, kicker David Davis was true on a 40-yard field goal to give his team the 22-21 lead with 10:20 remaining and put Oregon's 22-game home winning streak in serious jeopardy.

The Ducks battled back in the final moments and attempted a 43-yard field goal with 1:21 to go, but it was blocked by 6-foot-4 Bobby DeMars.

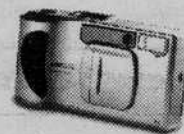
"We were all confident, we thought we had the game won," said Palmer, who completed 25 of 40 passes for 411 yards, two touchdowns and three interceptions. "But Joey got them into field goal range, and that was it."

Added USC defensive tackle Bernard Riley: "We knew (Joey) had the ability for a comeback. We went out there and we knew that we had to get some pressure on him."

It wasn't enough pressure, and Harrington did what he had to do to give the Ducks a win and send the Trojans back to L.A. with the frustrating feeling of falling just short.

"We make one stop or get a first down and we have the victory," Carroll said.

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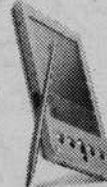
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