

Adam Amato Emerald

Tailback Maurice Morris (9), fresh off an 81-yard performance against California last week, returns home to host the Pac-10's fifth-ranked defense. In six games this season, Morris has a team-leading 528 yards on 106 rushes.

■ Maurice Morris and Onterio Smith are running Oregon's offense to a new level

By Adam Jude  
Oregon Daily Emerald

**J**ust like last year, the numbers will tell the story this season for Maurice Morris. At least, that's the hope.

En route to being named to the all-Pacific-10 Conference second team last year, Morris rushed for 1,188 total yards, the fifth-best single season mark in school history.

But nearly 60 percent of those yards — 710 to be exact — came in the first half of the season. And even more exhausting are the school-record 286 carries the senior tailback had in 2000.

Enter Onterio Smith, the solution to Morris' late-season ailments. From now on, there'll be no more running down Morris, so to speak.

Morris said that injuries and fatigue played a big factor in his second-half slowdown last season, but with another star back eager for playing time, Morris knows he'll have a stronger ending this year.

# BACK -TO- BACK

"I'm definitely stronger (than last year)," said Morris, a 6-foot, 208-pounder from Chester, S.C. "Me and Onterio, we go in there with fresh legs, and that's the most important thing. The defense is going to get tired. And if we go in there and keep poppin' six, seven, eight (yards), you're going to break one every now and then because the defense is going to be wearing down, and the running backs have fresh legs. It's a big help."

With "fresh legs," Morris and Smith have led the Ducks to 178.6 yards per game on the ground,

third-best in the Pac-10.

"You can see the difference from last year to this year by having fresh legs in there at all times," senior fullback Josh Line said. "Right about now last year is when our running game really started to taper off because Maurice was really banged up."

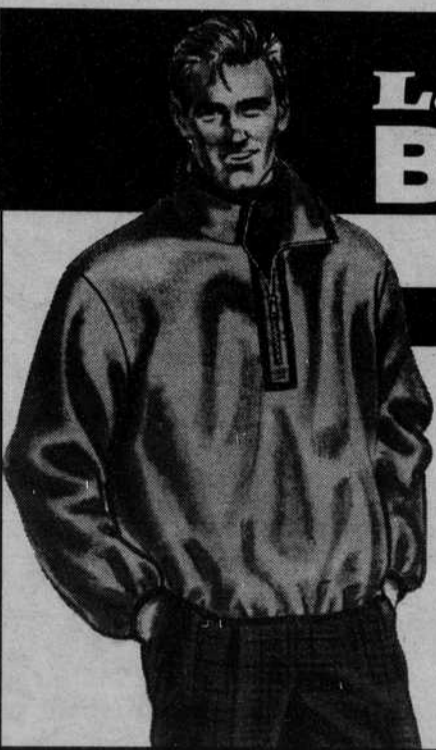
On 106 carries so far this season, Morris has rushed for 528 yards. Smith, who scored 60 touchdowns in his senior year of high school in Sacramento, Calif., has 69 rushes for 434 yards this year. Oregon has never had two 1,000-yard rushers in the same season.

"The thing I respect the most is that they run hard," Line said. "They don't go down easy. The thing I need to remember to do is that I need to stay on my blocks a long time because you never know what can happen."

Listed generously at 5-foot-11, 200 pounds, Smith's elusiveness and speed have brought a dimension to the back field that Oregon has never seen before.

"It's working great," Smith said of the shared playing time. "You got Maurice coming in there and with his moves, you never know

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