

# Ducks have no room for error

**B**ill Moos said that when he woke up Saturday morning, he had a wish list for the day's key Pacific-10 Conference games.

First and foremost, have Oregon beat Arizona State. Check.

But almost as important in the Oregon athletic director's mind, he said, was for Washington to beat Stanford. Check.

And, for that tasty icing smothered on top of the cake, it might be nice for Washington State to beat UCLA. Check.



**Jeff Smith**  
Hakuna Matata

Those three "checks" could add up to one big, fat "cha-ching" as the No. 7 Ducks reclaimed the comfortable driver's seat in the race for the Fiesta Bowl and the \$12 million distributed around the Pac-10 for being associated in one of the four Bowl Championship Series bowls.

"The big win for us was Washington over Stanford," Moos said.

"With our tiebreaker advantages over the Washington teams, we're sitting in real good shape right now.

"It's a real tribute to this team that they could rebound from that disappointing loss at home and put that behind them."

Oh yes, that loss. That loss that came on a cool October afternoon amid a festive Homecoming atmosphere. That loss that somehow was put on the Ducks despite a 14-point lead in the fourth quarter over a team using its backup quarterback. And that loss that knocked Oregon off the undefeated pedestal and off the easiest path to a

shot at the national title in the Rose Bowl.

Think these Ducks have forgotten about that loss?

Check out Oregon cornerback Rashad Bauman's reaction when a reporter brought up the Stanford game.

He smiles, closes his eyes, winces his face and bends down and back with a groan reflective of a golden opportunity lost.

"That Stanford loss hurt, it really did. It still hurts," Bauman said. "I look at that Stanford team, and I think if we played them again, oh my God, we would smash them! But we don't. This ain't basketball.

"You don't get a chance to redeem yourself and go to their house and play them."

But thanks to the Ducks' 42-24 victory over Arizona State on Saturday night, Oregon has its second chance. Before that Stanford loss, the Ducks were dreaming of lofty destinations that ended with the highest possible ranking in front of their name and the lowest loss total at the end of it.

Then things were clouded. Now, with the events of the past two weeks, the clouds have split down the middle, gone separate directions and cleared up things considerably.

Should Oregon beat UCLA and Oregon State, it'd be the Pac-10 champ and would be spending New Year's Day in Tempe, Ariz.

Should the Ducks lose, well, they aren't thinking like that.

"We've been in the position of controlling our destiny before, and we weren't able to deal with it," Bauman said. "Now that we've regained it and got that opportunity, we've got to take advantage of it."

Which leaves Moos and the Ducks relieved that the only scoreboard watching they'll be doing this Saturday will be their own.

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# Football

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shift," head coach Mike Bellotti said. "It really gave our guys a sense of confidence."

From there, it was all Harrington and Howry. There was the 24-yard dart deep in the right corner of the end zone to account for the 21-10 halftime lead. There was the 13-yard pass in the left corner of the end zone for the 28-10 edge at the 11:37 mark of the third quarter.

And again in the third quarter and again from 13 yards out, there was the final connection made between the two playmakers to go up by 25.

"Essentially, we're working on two or three years of just playing catch with each other," Harrington said. "Keenan's the best I've played with."

Just for good measure, Harrington got soph-

omore receiver Samie Parker involved in the fourth quarter with a 38-yard score for Oregon's final 42nd point.

Arizona State's Flowers padded his stats with two two-yard touchdown runs to close out the scoring.

"In general, Oregon made the plays," Arizona State head coach Dirk Koetter said. "That's what separates teams in the top-10 from the rest of the field."

Now, the Ducks switch their attention to this week's huge test against the Bruins at the hallowed Rose Bowl, where wins don't come easily.

"That's the stadium that everybody goes to watch," Bauman said. "We're not scared of it. Believe that. We're anxious to get down there and take care of business."

Added linebacker Kevin Mitchell: "We're having a lot of fun now. It's time for us to keep rolling."

# Passing

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17 rushing and one receiving) are the most in school history.

"Cool, how many? That's a lot. That's cool," Harrington said. "It means I got a lot of talent around me. I'm assuming most of those are touchdown passes cause I'm not that fast, and I don't run that well. I've only got one catch, and that was ugly, too."

The talent around Harrington Saturday was everywhere. On a day when the Arizona State defense constantly packed the box in an effort to stop the run, Harrington found five different targets, each catching at least two passes.

Oregon receivers often found themselves one-on-one with ASU's defensive backs, Emmanuel Franklin and R.J. Oliver, both redshirt freshmen.

Howry, in particular, was able to take advantage.

"Traditionally, they usually have really good DBs," Howry said. "The two guys they

had out there just didn't look comfortable."

In their third year together, Harrington and Howry said they are finally starting to click like as they knew they could. Harrington said Howry — who is now tied for fourth on the school's all-time reception list with 125 — is the best receiver he's played with.

"He's so polished in every area," the senior quarterback said. "He makes catches in traffic. He makes catches on the fly diving. He makes catches in the open field and makes people miss. He's really improved on his speed. He's got it all."

While the Oregon offensive line allowed its first sack since the Southern California game on Sept. 22, Bellotti said the group's continued success has allowed the team to be successful.

"We're only as good as the offensive line allows us to be," said Bellotti, who is 10-0 in November at Autzen Stadium. "Everything, whether it's the run or the passing game, starts at the line of scrimmage. Their ability to control the line of scrimmage is the difference in having an average offense and a great offense."

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