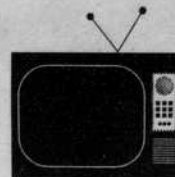


SPORTS

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Best Bet
NFL: Green Bay at Jacksonville,
6 p.m., ABC



Monday, December 3, 2001

Just trying to make some sense of it all

Oregon capped off its best-ever football season Saturday with a 17-14 win over Oregon State in the 105th Civil War to claim the throne as the outright Pacific-10 Conference champion.

Everything else is a little complicated.

First, there's the BCS hoopla. If this team does that, and that team does this... I know what you're thinking: "Just give me the results when they're finalized Dec. 9."

But that's no fun. The Bowl Championships Series is here to tease your hopes, when really, there's not much to cling to. Yes, the Ducks are one of the best teams in the country and will be in one of the best bowls in

the country, but save yourself some grief and some money and buy your plane tickets to Tempe, Ariz., for New Year's Day.

The Ducks, now third in both the Associated Press and ESPN/USA Today polls, are guaranteed a trip to the Fiesta Bowl, but need help to get

to the national title game at the Rose Bowl. Even with Texas and Florida losing this weekend, Oregon will probably be no higher than fourth in the BCS when it's released today.

That leaves Tennessee, now No. 2 with a game against Louisiana State on Saturday, and Nebraska as possible opponents to play undefeated Miami in the national championship.

Odds are that the Ducks will play a dangerous Colorado team in the Fiesta Bowl.

"We're happy with the Fiesta Bowl, but the rest is not in our hands," Oregon linebacker Kevin Mitchell said. "Whatever happens, happens. If it does happen, we're ready."

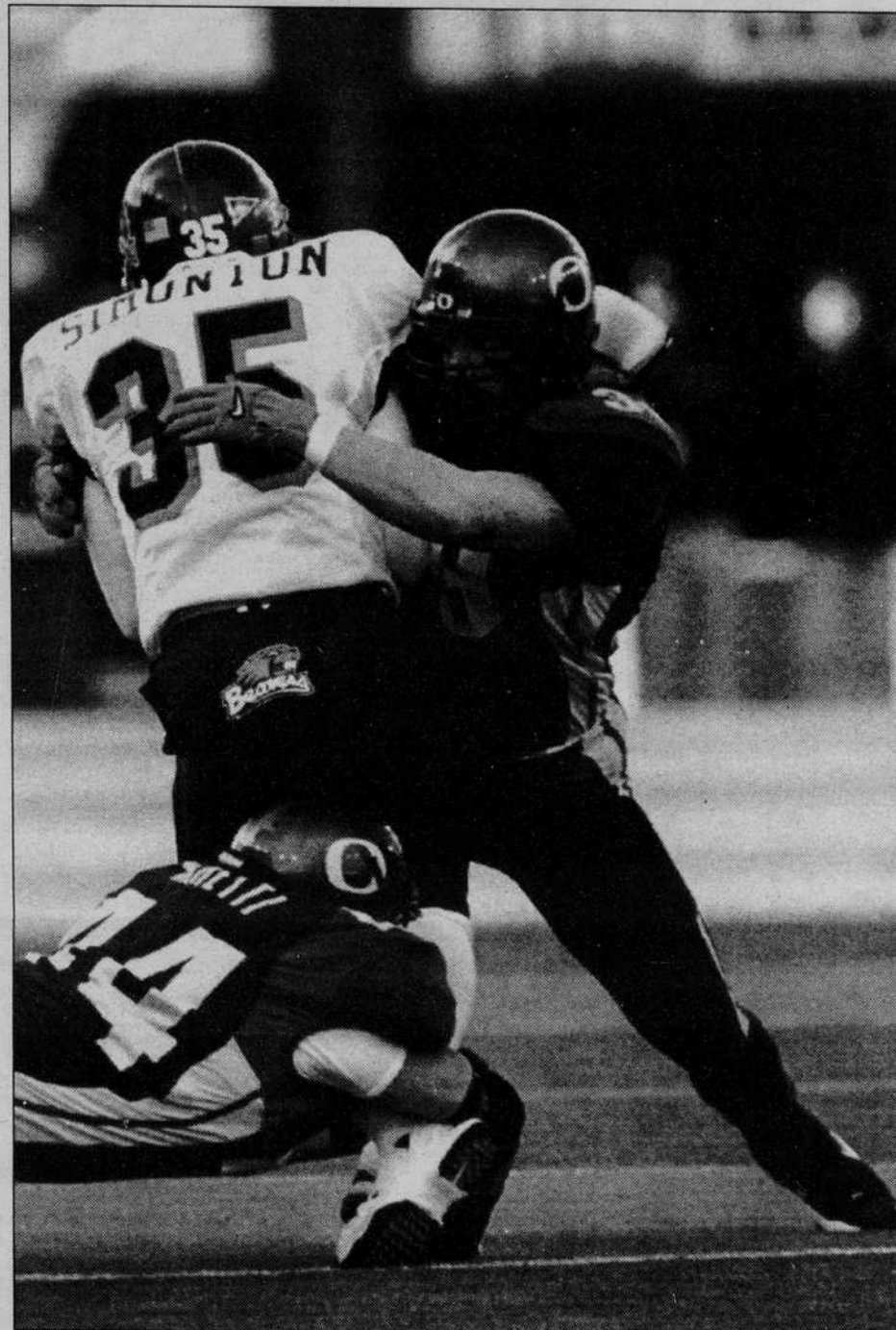
Then there's that other race involving the golden boy, quarterback Joey Harrington. A national audience tuned in to see if Harrington could take control of the Heisman Trophy debacle, but you can be sure the East Coast voters took notice of the dismal 11-for-22, 104-yard, no-touchdown performance against Oregon State. Most notably, Heisman winners don't fumble the ball with less than two minutes to play and the game on the line.

To Harrington's credit, the conditions Saturday weren't exactly suitable for a quarterback... wait a tick, was that Jonathan Smith throwing for 252 yards on 20-for-38 passing and one touchdown in those horrible conditions?

Harrington deserves a seat in New York, but don't expect to see the trophy in Eugene any time soon.

Turn to **Jude**, page 19

Defense fuels Civil War victory



Adam Amato Emerald

Kevin Mitchell (39) and David Moretti (44) take down Oregon State's Ken Simonton in Oregon's 17-14 Civil War win at Autzen Stadium on Saturday. The two Oregon linebackers combined for 28 tackles.

■ The Oregon defense made up for the offense's lack of production and sealed the win with a key interception

By Jeff Smith
Oregon Daily Emerald

Take away the 46,000-plus fans. Take away Keith Jackson and the mostly-national ABC telecast.

Take away all the Civil War hype that had even longer to build up during the three-week layoff. And add severe cases of rain, wind and hail.

"I loved it. I was in my element out there," Oregon offensive lineman Ryan Schmid said. "You just needed to add a mud pit, and it'd be like high school."

The result was hard-nosed, defensive-oriented football that only produced nine combined points through 36 minutes of action.

The Oregon defense made the biggest play in the end, clinching the Ducks' 17-14 victory over the Beavers on Saturday at Autzen Stadium.

"That's smash-mouth football to the fullest," safety Keith Lewis said. "A bunch of bangers just going at it."

Quarterback Joey Harrington may get credit for his 10th career fourth quarter comeback, given that the Ducks trailed 6-3 at the end of the third, but it was the defense that saved the game.

Harrington had the ball in his hands with the Ducks leading by three and with the clock showing less than two minutes to play. But Harrington fumbled it back to Oregon State, forcing the Oregon defense to end the game on a bright note, much like it did in wins at Washington State and UCLA.

"I felt terrible for putting them in that position," Harrington said. "But they stepped up. I was confident they'd stop them."

With sole possession of the Pacific-10 Conference championship on the line and all the pressure of keeping Oregon State off the scoreboard, the defense was... nervous? Scared? Frustrated? Try relaxed.

"I'd never seen a looser group out there than I did tonight after that fumble," Lewis said. "Everybody was smiling and having fun. Our backs have been against the wall so many times."

"The defense was up for the challenge." Oregon State's first play of the drive that started with 1:33 to play was a three-yard pass. The second was a Jonathan Smith fumble that he recovered for a loss of four. And then came the third.

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Men's hoops throws away another possible win

■ The Ducks fall by one point to Portland in the Rose City for their second straight loss

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

Oregon men's basketball head coach Ernie Kent will have nightmares, and every night it will be the same dream.

The Ducks are in a close game, and there are seconds left. An Oregon guard dribbles upcourt, looks for Anthony Lever, throws it to an opposing player, that player is fouled and then hits the game-winning free throw.

The Ducks throw away the game.

Oregon (4-2 overall) suffered its second straight close loss Saturday afternoon, this one a 79-78 heart-breaking defeat at the hands of the Portland Pilots (3-2) in the Rose City. The Ducks led for most of the final minute, but the Pilots hit key shots down the stretch to win the contest.

Portland's Casey Frandsen and Adam Quick hit back-to-back three pointers with less than 30 seconds in the contest to tie the score at 78. On the Ducks' next possession, with 9.8 seconds left,

Oregon point guard Luke Ridnour dribbled up the court, tried to find Lever but threw the ball to Portland's Coky Rochin instead. Rochin was then

fouled by Lever. The play was similar to one that caused Oregon's downfall at Massachusetts on Tuesday.

Rochin missed his first free throw, but made the back end to put the Pilots up for good. Oregon had one more chance, but a James Davis three-point attempt at the buzzer bounced off the backboard and the rim before falling off the side of the basket.

"They just battled their tails off and fought us the whole game."

Kent told KUGN radio, referring to the play of the Pilots. "We talked about this all week, how this was a big game on their schedule."

The game was close throughout. Portland went on a run to end the first half and entered the break with a 40-33 lead. But the Ducks came out hot in the second half, and went on a 13-3 run to take the lead at 46-43 with 15 minutes left. The teams battled from that point, often trading baskets and the lead as they wound down to the exciting finish.

"They got it in the first half, and they gained a tremendous amount of confidence," Kent said. "We recaptured the momentum in the second half and then gave it right back to them with some key turnovers and they came at us again."

Oregon got a spectacular offensive effort from sophomore guard Luke Jackson, who scored a career-high 28 points in the contest. He added seven rebounds to his point total. Ridnour scored 17 points, one short of his career

high, and also had seven assists.

The spectacular play of the Ducks' sophomores was countered by the poor play of their seniors. Guard Freddie Jones scored only six points in 21 minutes of floor time, as he was in foul trouble the entire game. He fouled out with a minute left. Center Chris Christofersen also scored six points, after a double-double at UMass last week.

"There are some guys that I felt, in the last couple games, could have given better production and performance than they did," Kent said.

The win was the first for the Pilots in the series since 1964. The streak spanned 20 straight Oregon victories.

The Ducks have a week to recover before they hit the road again to play Minnesota on Monday. That game will be broadcast on ESPN2 at 4 p.m. PST.

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