

Howry energizes Ducks with big return

Keenan Howry's fourth quarter punt return enlivened the Ducks' stagnant offense

By Adam Jude
Oregon Daily Emerald

It was just what the doctor ordered. A packed Autzen Stadium crowd of 46,075 — the largest of the season — withstood the inclement weather to see what was supposed to be another action-packed shootout between Oregon and Oregon State on Saturday. But nothing happened, offensively anyway, until junior wide receiver Keenan Howry touched the ball early in the fourth quarter.

On the third play of the last period, Howry received a Carl Tobey

punt at the Oregon 30-yard line and raced 70 yards untouched to score the first touchdown of the game. The touchdown return was Howry's second of the season, with the other coming against Stanford. "You probably could have drove anything through that," Howry said of the hole. "You can say first hand that you made a difference in the game. It's special for me because being a punt returner, you don't get too many opportunities to get touchdowns, and this year I was able to get two."

After a dismal three quarters, which saw the Ducks garner just 143 total yards, Howry sparked a fire under the Ducks' feathers, igniting a 17-14 win that secured Oregon's second outright Pacific-10 Conference championship in

school history.

"Keenan Howry's punt return energized not just the crowd, but our team," Oregon head coach

"Keenan Howry's punt return energized not just the crowd, but our team. It got people going and gave us a spark."

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Howry had a 28-yard catch on third-and-long on the Ducks' next drive, which ended on an eight-

yard touchdown run by senior tailback Maurice Morris to give Oregon a 17-6 lead.

"Everybody was pretty juiced," Howry said. "That's one of the best drives we've had all year."

Although he may not look like a prototypical football player, Howry proved Saturday that heart is all that matters.

"This kid has no size, decent speed and will kill any corner in the nation," defensive back Rashad Bauman said. "If you told me I was going to get beat by a 5-foot-8, 165-pound, 4.5-running receiver, I'd laugh. But Keenan will kill you. He's good at every aspect of the game."

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The end of an era for Oregon State

Oregon State ends season — and careers of successful seniors — on a sour note

By Adam Jude
Oregon Daily Emerald

In a season wrought by so many disappointments, the Oregon State Beavers had a chance to make them all disappear Saturday. Instead, it turned out to be just another disappointment in a 17-14 Oregon victory.

The 2001 Oregon State senior class has been credited with the turnaround of a perennial bottom-feeder, and it helped the Beavers win a school-record 11 games last season, including a win over Notre Dame in the Fiesta Bowl.

"It was really disappointing for those seniors who worked so darn hard and played so darn hard in this game," head coach Dennis Erickson said after his second losing season in 12 years as a college coach. "Our guys played their rear ends off. I can't ask anything more of them."

Against Oregon, senior Ken Simonton failed in his attempt to become the fifth running back in NCAA history to rush for 1,000 yards in four straight seasons. He finished the game with 84 yards on 26 carries, moving him into 15th on the NCAA career rushing chart with 4,802 yards.

"Records are made to be broken, and it was really cool to be so close," Simonton said. "It's not a big deal. I'm not walking away from the game, I'm walking into the real game. I'm not going away."

With 248 yards, senior quarterback Jonathan Smith became the Beavers' all-time leader in total offense. Already OSU's all-time passing leader, Smith now has 9,209 yards of total offense.

Smith's last pass, however, was hard to swallow — as it was swallowed into the hands of Oregon defensive back Rashad Bauman, effectively ending the Beavers last-minute drive Saturday.

"This loss is frustrating," Smith said. "I thought we ran it well and

moved it well and had good rhythm going, but we didn't put the ball in the end zone."

Leading 6-3 heading into the fourth quarter, Oregon State's chances for an upset were erased when Keenan Howry returned a punt 70 yards for a touchdown, giving the Ducks a 10-6 advantage.

"I didn't hang it up and let my coverage team get down there and cover it," punter Carl Tobey said of Howry's punt return. "We thought if we could hang it up and give the coverage team time, we could contain (Howry), but it didn't happen that way."

At 5-6 overall (3-5 Pacific-10 Conference), the Beavers were denied a third consecutive trip to a bowl game.

"We had some goals a lot higher than 5-6," Erickson said. "We are going to have to sit down and evaluate where we are at and sit back for a second and go from there."

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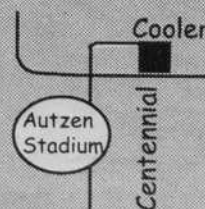
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