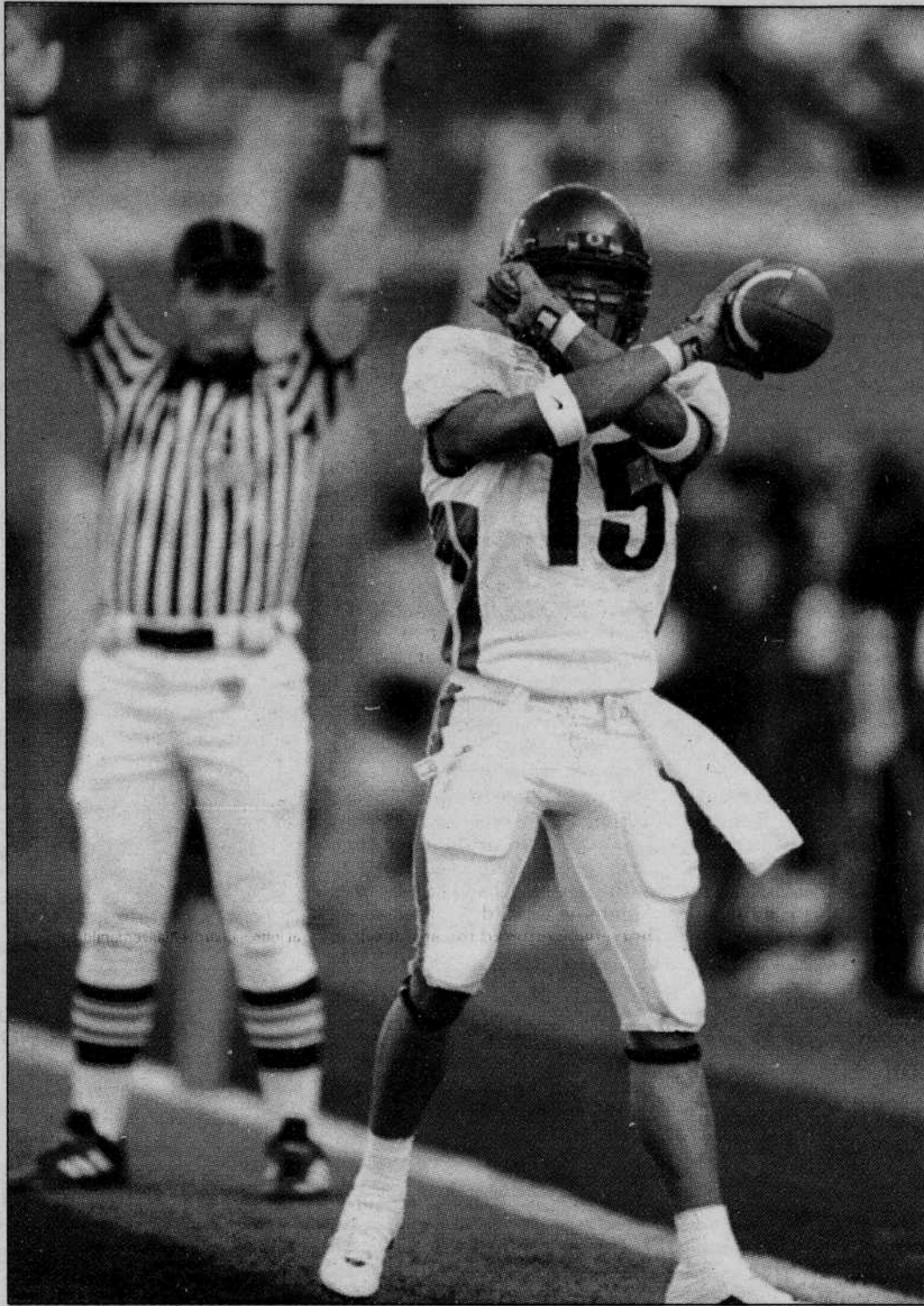


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Best Bet
NFL: Minnesota at Baltimore
6 p.m., ABC



Monday, January 7, 2002



Oregon junior wide receiver Keenan Howry celebrates a 28-yard first-quarter touchdown reception. The Ducks scored 38 unanswered points in a 38-16 victory over Colorado in the Fiesta Bowl on New Year's Day.

John Stoops for the Emerald

CHECKMATE

Ducks make final move

Oregon dominated Colorado in the Fiesta Bowl to record a school-record 11 wins

By Jeff Smith
Oregon Daily Emerald

TEMPE, Ariz. — A massive crowd of nearly 150,000 crammed the streets of downtown Tempe to party on New Year's Eve.

While they did, a poem was being read by a coach to his players in the team hotel in Scottsdale, located 10 miles away from all the craziness.

The coach talked. The players listened.

The final line of the poem packed the biggest punch:

"Make your move; time is ticking away."

With that, the members of the team retired to their rooms where they could ring in the new year before having a curfew check at 12:01 a.m.

Fifteen hours later, the players were playing in a game that left the coach saying simply, "Our kids made their move."

Under the beautiful blue sky and setting sun above Sun Devil Stadium, the No. 2 Oregon Ducks completely stampeded over the then-No. 3 Colorado Buffaloes, 38-16, on Jan. 1 in the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl.

The win was so convincing that it even astonished the Ducks.

"I was pleasantly surprised by the outcome of the game," head coach Mike Bellotti said. "I thought it would be closer."

As Bellotti spoke, the Associated Press national championship trophy glistened in the next room. With the win, Oregon had hope of acquiring the

trophy and sharing the national title, but it needed Nebraska to beat Miami two days later.

It didn't happen. Miami went on to prove itself worthy of No. 1 with a dominating performance that ended all hopes of a split title for the Ducks.

"To go 12-0 in a season, that's awesome," senior defensive back Rashad Bauman said of Miami. "You can't take anything from them. They beat everybody, so they deserve the national championship."

Still, finishing No. 2 in both the media and coaches' polls with an 11-1 record gave Oregon its highest ranking and highest number of wins in school history, plus its resounding New Year's Day victory was the type of performance that can fast-forward a program from great to elite.

"It doesn't change the fact that we had a wonderful season," Harrington said moments after the Rose Bowl. "The only thing I'd be disappointed in is we didn't get a shot. You can speculate all you want, but you'll never know."

The shot Oregon did have came against a hot Colorado team that was coming off consecutive wins against Nebraska and Texas. Colorado entered the game with a rushing attack that Oregon couldn't stop gushing over in the week prior.

The Buffaloes struck first in the Fiesta Bowl behind their respected run-

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Hold off on tomorrow for now

TEMPE, Ariz. — Today, school begins once again.

Today, Ryan Schmid is in Seattle making the transition from his gig on Oregon's underrated offensive line to his pastoral internship that will mark the first step in his path to the real world.

Today, Joey Harrington will not be in class, having wrapped up his college degree, and is now preparing to impress NFL scouts, starting with Saturday's East-West Shrine game in San Francisco.

Today, the thousands of Ducks fans who cluttered the streets of Tempe and celebrated like teenagers on a snow day are now back at work, dressed not in green and yellow but in regular work attire.

And today, the sports world and the sports fans' interests turn to the NFL, NCAA hoops and maybe even the NBA, leaving college football as last week's news.

But while the natural reaction today is to start moving forward, let us not forget what happened down here in the desert on the first day of 2002.

And don't let the domination of Miami in Pasadena or any beef you have with computer ratings cloud your memory of New Year's Day.

Because what transpired in those three-and-a-half hours when Oregon thumped Colorado, 38-

16, was so much more than the Ducks having a chance at a split national title.

The new year began, and with it, a new era began for Oregon.

It takes a game like this, with people across the country watching with their families while eating burgers and drinking suds, for a program to advance upward.

Oregon was in the spotlight more than ever this year, beginning with the Harrington billboard and the Sports Illustrated cover. The Ducks kept winning, and even after they slipped, they climbed back up to give the BCS the controversy it deserves.

But it took a special kind of performance against Colorado to solidify Oregon's status as an elite program.

Lose, and you're back to being viewed as one of those solid teams in the Pacific-10 Conference.

Win, and you're now being viewed as one of those emerging powerhouse teams in the NCAA.

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Jeff Smith
Hakuna Matata

Hoopsters earn Arizona split

■ The Oregon men lose to the Sun Devils after blowing out the Wildcats in Arizona

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

In a span of three days this weekend, the Oregon men's basketball team conjured up a desert paradox.

Two nights after blowing out No. 14 Arizona for the second time this season, the Ducks lost a close game to Arizona State in Tempe.

Oregon's 95-88 loss to Arizona State on Sunday was the Ducks' fourth loss by less than 10 points, and moved them to 10-4 on the season, 3-1 in Pacific-10 Conference play. The Sun Devils improved to 9-4 and 2-2 in conference play.

Arizona State jumped on Oregon early and never jumped off. The Ducks made runs, and even led late in the first half, but never found a rhythm and never overcame the Sun

Devils' intensity.

"We were able to settle down a little bit midway through the first half," Oregon coach Ernie Kent told KUGN-radio after the game. "But the damage was already done."

Arizona State led 26-15 with 12 minutes left in the first half after a Justin Allen 3-pointer. The teams traded baskets, and then Oregon mounted its most impressive comeback of the game with seven minutes left in the first frame.

Ducks point guard Luke Ridnour, who scored a career-high 23 points against Arizona on Friday, hit four foul shots and a long 3-pointer to lead Oregon on an 11-2 run and a 37-36 lead.

Arizona State answered back, though, and led 44-41 at halftime. In the second period, the Ducks made several runs, but never led. Still, the game was close heading into the final minute, after Oregon guard Luke Jackson hit two free throws at the 1:05 mark to cut Arizona State's lead to 89-88.

Sun Devil guard Curtis Millage converted a three-point play with 25 seconds left, and the Ducks missed three

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