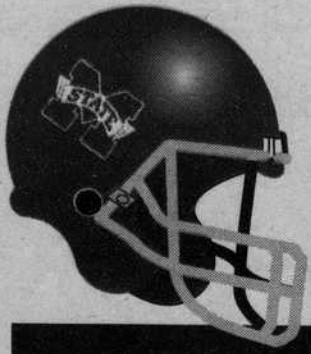


GAME



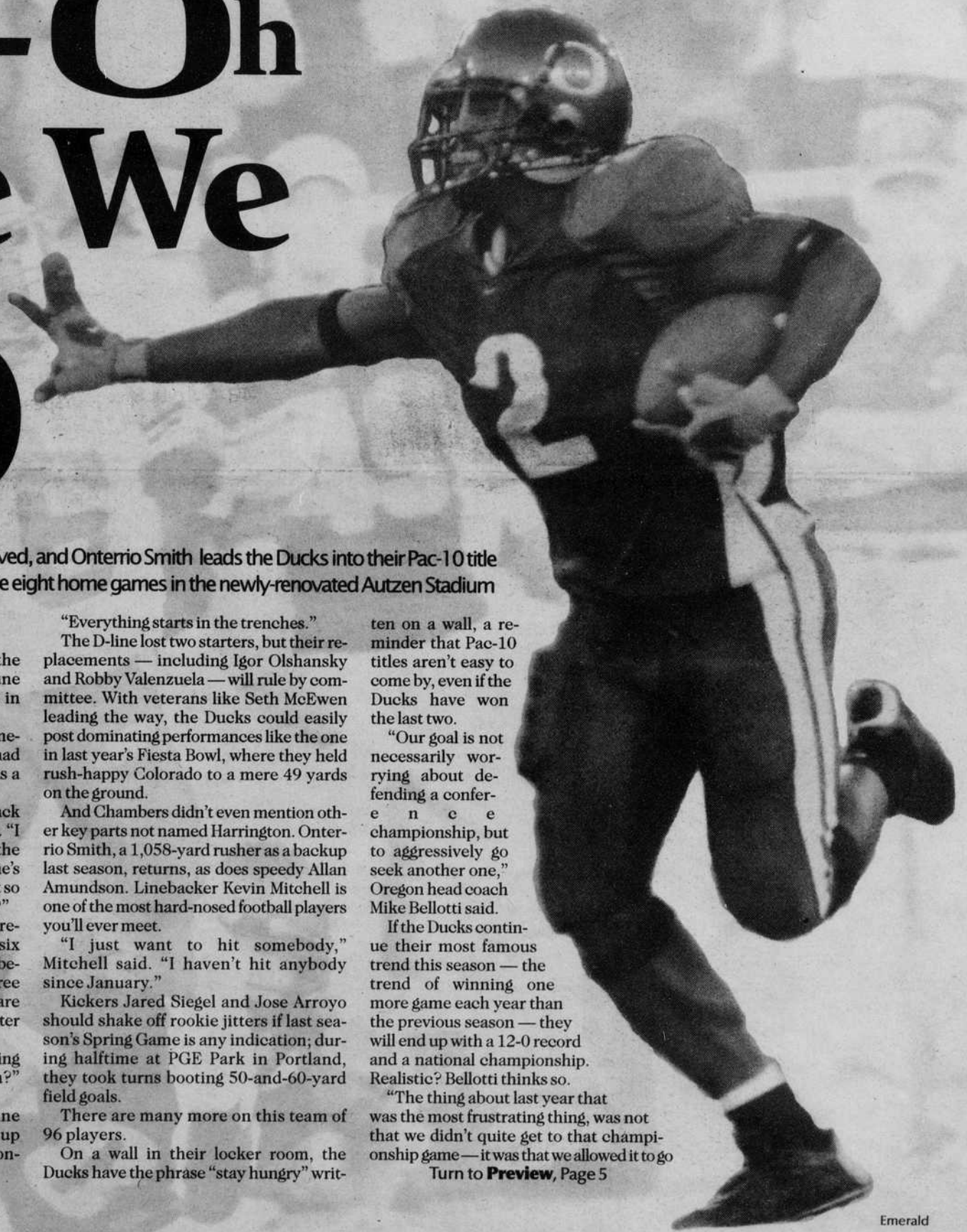
ODAY



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Mississippi State vs. Oregon

Oh-Oh Here We GO



Emerald

The 2002 football season has arrived, and Onterio Smith leads the Ducks into their Pac-10 title defense, a defense that will include eight home games in the newly-renovated Autzen Stadium

Peter Hockaday
Sports Editor

Call Corey Chambers the muse of the 2002 Oregon football team. The fortune teller with the crystal ball. The genie in the bottle.

Leaning back in his chair at Oregon media day earlier this month, Chambers had this to say about those who see 2002 as a rebuilding year for Duck football:

"I think it's funny how people sit back and judge us like that," Chambers said. "I don't want to diss Joey (Harrington, the third pick of last year's NFL draft), but he's just a quarterback. How's he going to get so many receptions without his receivers?"

Oregon returns All-American wide receiver Keenan Howry, who needs six touchdowns, 30 catches and 831 yards before he holds school records in all three categories. Joining Howry at wideout are veteran Jason Willis and exciting speedster Samie Parker.

"How's he going to get so many rushing yards without the line blocking for him?" Chambers continued.

Chambers anchors an offensive line that returns three starters and gave up only 11 sacks to lead the Pacific-10 Conference last season.

"Everything starts in the trenches."

The D-line lost two starters, but their replacements — including Igor Olshansky and Robby Valenzuela — will rule by committee. With veterans like Seth McEwen leading the way, the Ducks could easily post dominating performances like the one in last year's Fiesta Bowl, where they held rush-happy Colorado to a mere 49 yards on the ground.

And Chambers didn't even mention other key parts not named Harrington. Onterio Smith, a 1,058-yard rusher as a backup last season, returns, as does speedy Allan Amundson. Linebacker Kevin Mitchell is one of the most hard-nosed football players you'll ever meet.

"I just want to hit somebody," Mitchell said. "I haven't hit anybody since January."

Kickers Jared Siegel and Jose Arroyo should shake off rookie jitters if last season's Spring Game is any indication; during halftime at PGE Park in Portland, they took turns booting 50-and-60-yard field goals.

There are many more on this team of 96 players.

On a wall in their locker room, the Ducks have the phrase "stay hungry" writ-

ten on a wall, a reminder that Pac-10 titles aren't easy to come by, even if the Ducks have won the last two.

"Our goal is not necessarily worrying about defending a conference championship, but to aggressively go seek another one," Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said.

If the Ducks continue their most famous trend this season — the trend of winning one more game each year than the previous season — they will end up with a 12-0 record and a national championship. Realistic? Bellotti thinks so.

"The thing about last year that was the most frustrating thing, was not that we didn't quite get to that championship game — it was that we allowed it to go

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Autzen grows up
The new Autzen Stadium has much to offer the 12,000 additional patrons who make the trek to Eugene.
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Rating the Pac
Pac-10 power may have shifted northwest, but the southern teams will still put up a fight in 2002.
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