

GAME DAY

Vol. 104 Oregon Daily Emerald Issue 20

Portland State vs. No. 9 Oregon

Somewhat civil

North meets south in a battle between Oregon powers that doesn't quite rival the famed Civil War matchup

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Sports Editor

It's an intrastate rivalry that is older than most (first graders).

It's a bitter series that divides (maybe a few people in) the state. The last time the two teams met, it was a nailbiting (blowout) contest in Eugene. The rivalry is widely written about in (Eugene) newspapers and talked about on (Portland) sports broadcasts.

Well, maybe Oregon-Portland State isn't exactly the Civil War, but it's still a Beaver State rivalry that is sure to create more than a few water-cooler discussions as it approaches. Portland State is a top-10 team in Division I-AA. Oregon is a top-10 team in Division I, as the Ducks cracked that plateau after beating Idaho 58-21 last Saturday.

"Idaho gave us great field possession," Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said. "I don't expect Portland State to do so."

In many other ways, the Vikings may prove more of a test for the Ducks than the Vandals were.

"By their own coach's admission, they have the best returning quarterback in the state and they have the nation's best rusher for their division," Bellotti said.

The quarterback in question is PSU's Justin Wood, one of the best passers in Division I-AA. The tailback in question is Ryan Fuqua, Division I-AA's leading rusher at 174.5 yards per game.

"They have very skilled position players," Bellotti said. "I've always said the great equalizer is the pass."

The statistical similarities between the Ducks and the Vikings are somewhat eerie. It's almost like Portland State is the alternate-reality version of Oregon. Wood is 40th nationally in passing, while Oregon's Jason Fife is 57th. Fife is 34th nationally in total offense, while Fuqua is 45th. Ducks receiver Samie Parker is 46th in receptions in Division I, while Vikings receiver Jesse Levin is also 46th, in Division I-AA.

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KICKOFF AT 12:30 P.M. ■ AUTZEN STADIUM ■ SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2002 ■ TV: NONE

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Kick, kick, boom

The Oregon kicking game has improved along with the maturity of placekicker Jared Seigel and punter Jose Arroyo.

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Football, mister?

It took a tragic event with a loved one to make linebacker Kevin Mitchell realize there's more to life than football.

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