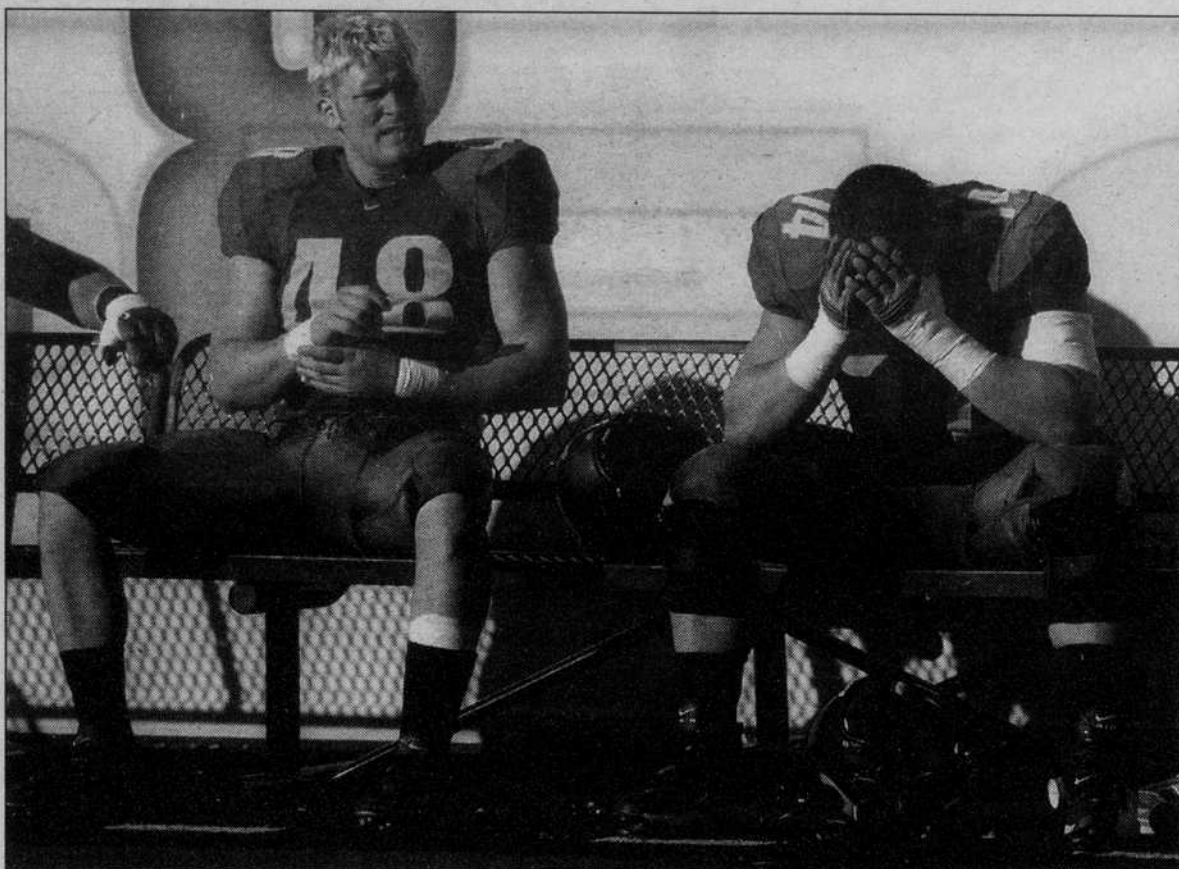




Jeremy Forrest Emerald

Nick Steitz (74) and Ryan Loftin felt the Ducks' defensive pains last week when Arizona State's Andrew Walter threw for a Pac-10 record 536 yards. Oregon looks to improve to 7-1 with a victory over USC.

Flying

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"It's very easy for people to want to place blame," Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said. "But in a team game, it falls on the team."

Fife had nothing but kind words for the defense that was victimized last week, especially with Arizona State's Andrew Walter having a career day against it.

"Wow, he's being pretty efficient right now," Fife said when asked about Walter's play. "Because there were a couple of times where he had some guys open, but there were

some times when he was making a play. He was just making a play. Steven Moore had some good coverages, Keith Lewis was on guys, and it was just a matter of we were a step behind them, or it was just the fact they made a play. It's tough."

After throwing for 209 yards passing and 10 points in the first half, Arizona State exploded for 350 yards passing and 35 points in the second stanza, including a streak where the Sun Devils scored 25 straight.

Shaun McDonald ended the day with 204 yards, while Derek Hagan had 95 and Justin Taplin 80.

Arizona State's longest pass play, a 67 yarder to McDonald near the

end of the third quarter, pulled the Sun Devils to within three and paved the way for the upset.

After the game, there wasn't much to say. The Oregon offense had done its job, but the defense was hurting.

"There's not really much you can say," senior wide receiver Keenan Howry said. "The defense wasn't feeling too great at the time, but just tell them to keep their head up and there's going to be better days ahead."

The Ducks hope those better days are soon to come.

Contact the sports reporter at hankhager@dailyemerald.com.

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