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Backed up in the backfield

With Onterio Smith sidelined, Terrence Whitehead and Ryan Shaw create a one-two punch in Oregon's backfield

Adam Jude
Senior Sports Reporter

What a show it could've been. The Pacific-10 Conference's top two running backs — Oregon's Onterio Smith and Oregon State's Steven Jackson — battling it out for the rushing title, busting big runs in the biggest game of the year, the Civil War.

Instead, with Smith sidelined after knee surgery, Jackson will be the lone star in the backfield Saturday at Reser Stadium. Which leaves Oregon's struggling offense to rely on two virtually unknown tailbacks in Terrence Whitehead and Ryan Shaw, California natives playing in their first Civil War.

But Oregon's offense won't change without Smith. And running backs coach Gary Campbell said he's still anticipating a good show from his backup backs.

"I'm expecting good things out of them," Campbell said of Whitehead and Shaw, Oregon's new one-two tandem in the backfield. "I'm not expecting a fallout. I expect those guys to step up and carry the load."

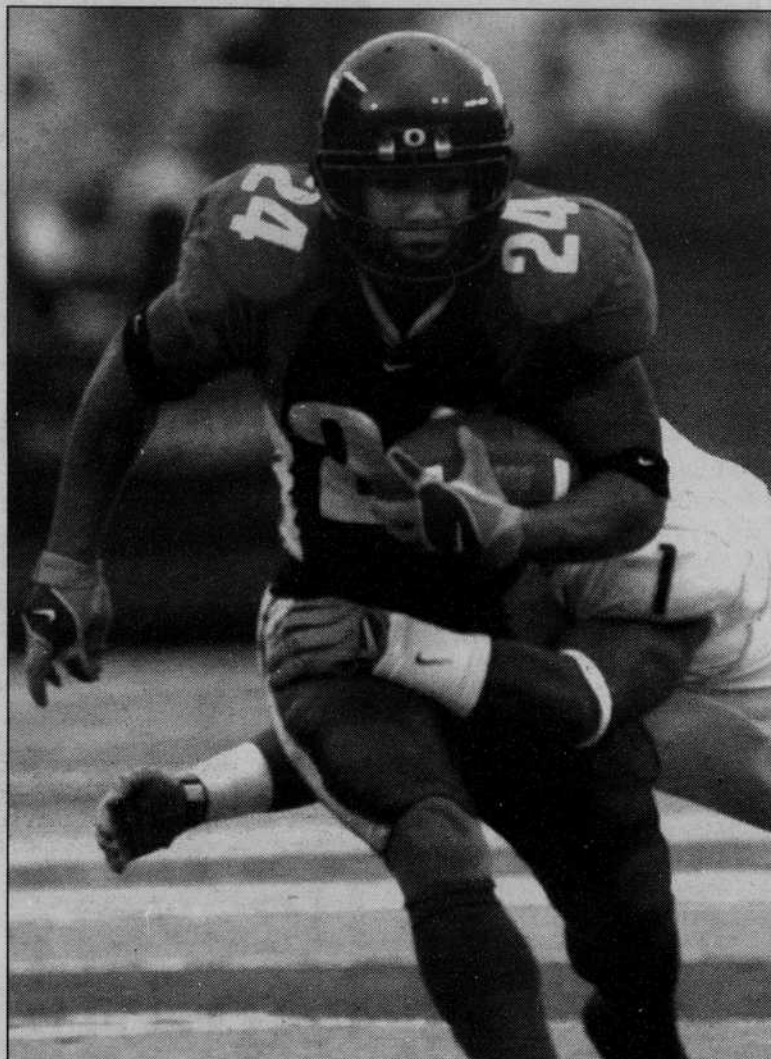
They have yet to show that they can be as effective as Maurice Morris and Smith last season, but Whitehead, a true freshman, and Shaw, a redshirt sophomore, are just getting started.

"They're both capable of starting and playing the whole game, but I just feel that they have some strengths that we need to take advantage of," Campbell said.

Taking advantage of everyone is no easy task in a stacked backfield, even without Smith. Besides Whitehead and Shaw, senior Allan Amundson and redshirt sophomore Kenny Washington are also vying for carries.

"When you have such a talented backfield, it's hard to keep everybody happy," Campbell said. "We know, that in this league, you're always going to need guys. And that's what it's come to now. We need them."

Listed as an "athlete" in the Ore-



Adam Amato Emerald

Terrence Whitehead, a true freshman, has taken over as Oregon's main tailback duties in the absence of Onterio Smith, who had knee surgery Monday.

gon media guide, Whitehead says he has equal desire to play on both sides of the ball.

"I love playing defense, but I love to score touchdowns," said Whitehead, a standout at safety and running back at Crenshaw High School in Los Angeles. "If the coaches don't want to give me a try on the defensive side — I have been trying to put a little bug in their ears — I think I'll be committed to get ready for the backfield."

Already this season, the 5-foot-10, 202-pound Whitehead has shown his commitment as a tailback — and

talent. In place of Smith, Whitehead rushed for 132 yards on 29 carries in a win over Stanford, though he has been slowed of late by ankle injuries.

"He is a student of the game," said Amundson, who shared a dorm room with Whitehead during fall camp. "Every night he was studying his playbook, asking me questions. He really wanted it, you could tell."

Campbell compared Whitehead to former Oregon star Saladin McCullough.

"The thing about Terrence is that Turn to **Backs**, page 10B

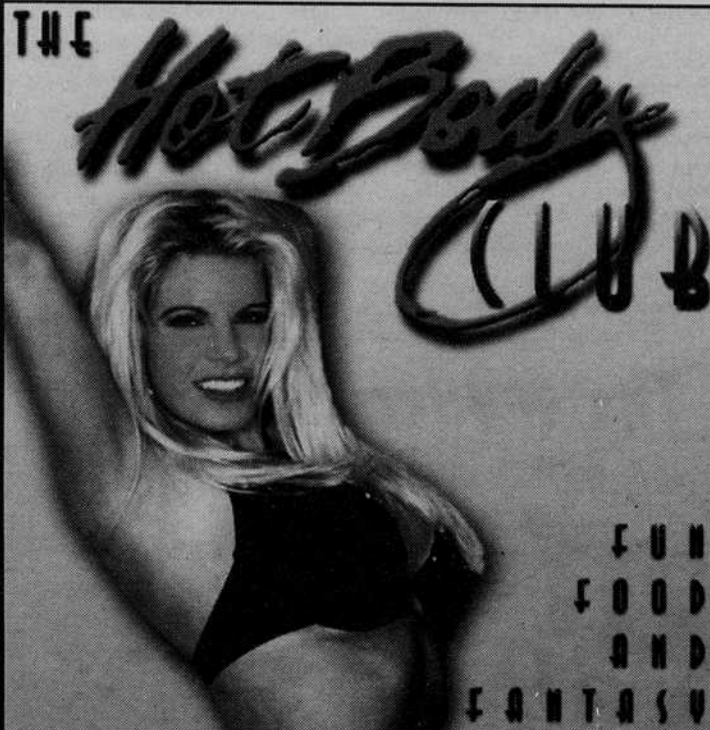
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