

Jackson leaps past Pac into national rankings

Oregon State's running back has emerged as the conference's top rusher late in the season

Peter Hockaday
Sports Editor

Steven Jackson is like a puppy. Just give him the ball, and watch him run with it.

At least that was the analysis of Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti, only without the puppy part.

"They're very comfortable giving him the ball 30 times a game and letting him win the game for them," Bellotti said of Jackson, who the coach also called "the best runner in the conference."

With Onterio Smith sitting out the past weeks with injury, Jackson has officially taken over the crown of the Pacific-10 Conference's best rusher. He averages 136.6 yards per game, almost 30 more yards per game more than Smith and 50 yards more than the next-nearest challenger, UCLA's Tyler Ebell. That number puts Jackson fifth in the nation.

He will win the conference rushing crown, barring 500-yard performances from Ebell in the Bruins' final two games or a shocking appearance by Smith in the Civil War.

"What can I say?" Oregon State head coach Dennis Erickson said. "He's had a great year, and we'll see what happens this week."

If Erickson had trouble coming up with words, Oregon's Kevin Mitchell had no problem coming up with some.

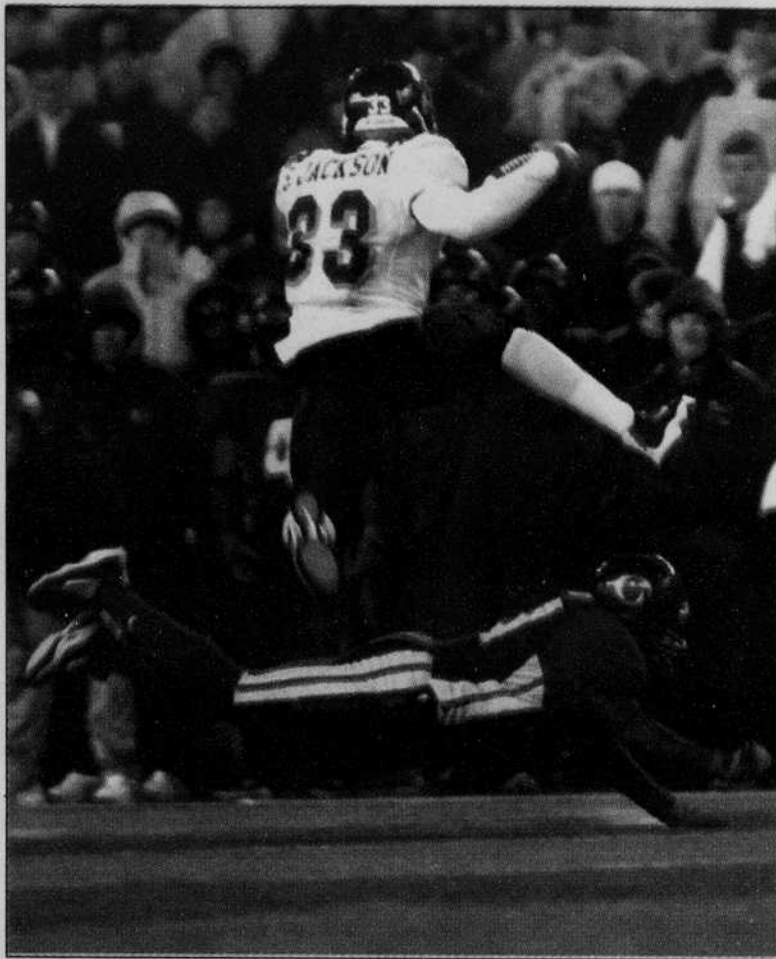
"He's the real deal," Mitchell said. "He'll run you over or put a move on you. He's unbelievable."

Jackson has scored 14 touchdowns this season, the most by a Pac-10 running back, and rushed up the Oregon State career lists in total yardage (he now ranks 17th), career points (11th) and career rushing yards (eighth).

Yes, Jackson is eighth on the Beaver career rushing-yards list. And yes, he's only a sophomore.

His emergence has Oregon State fans asking "Ken Simon-who?"

Ken Simonton, who had a well-publicized Heisman Trophy campaign fall well short last season, gave way to Jackson, who now finds himself right up there with the Heisman hopefuls, at least in



Adam Amato Emerald

Steven Jackson (33) ranks fifth in the nation with 136.6 rushing yards per game.

some statistical categories.

On the national rushing-yard list, Jackson trails only Colorado's Chris Brown, Penn State's Larry Johnson, Northern Illinois' Michael Turner and West Virginia's Avon Cobourne. Brown and Johnson are legitimate Heisman candidates late in the season.

"He's been our workhorse," Erickson said of Jackson. "Let's face it, when we've made the decision that he's going to carry it 25 or 30 times a game, we've been more productive offensively because we've gotten the ball to a big time player's — in our scheme of things — hands."

Erickson knows his team. When Jackson rushes for more than 100 yards in a game this season, which has happened eight times, the Beavers average 37.5 points and

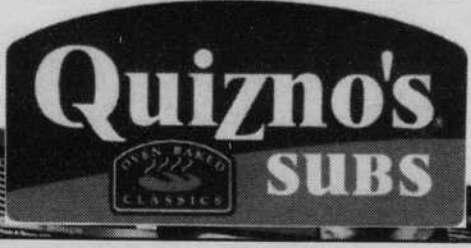
have a 6-2 record. When he rushed for less than 100 yards, the Beavers scored only nine points total in two losses and scored 47 points in a win over UNLV.

"He's got very good speed, and he seems to have hit his stride," Bellotti said.

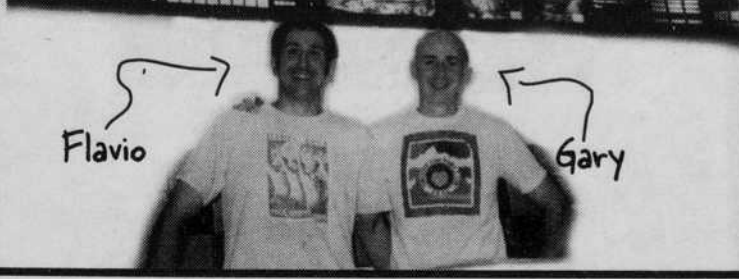
The question for Oregon's defense will be; which run defense shows up against the conference's top rusher? Will it be the defense that was ranked first in the Pac-10 after a 6-0 start? Or the defense that has slipped to third by giving up 160 yards to USC, 190 to Washington State and 163 to Washington?

Surely, the Oregon defense should be able to stop a puppy.

Contact the sports editor at peterhockaday@dailymerald.com.



OVEN TOASTED BY TWO LOCAL GUYS!



TOASTED SUBS • SOUPS • SALADS

UO Campus at 13th & Alder (Inside Starbucks)
5th Street Public Market • Gateway Blvd. & Beltline Rd.

REVERSE COVER


FRIDAYS

We pay you to party!
We give you three bucks to party with (8:30-10:00).



707 Willamette St. 683-5160
(free parking in Rock-n-Rodeo Lot)

We make our own ice cream.



PRINCE PÜCKLER'S

Ice Cream and Coffee Parlour

WEEKLY SPECIALS:
Tuesday- Hot Fudge Sundaes
Friday- Euphoria Ultra
Chocolate Sundaes

19th & Agate St.
Open Daily
12-11P.M.

Motel 6 Eugene South
Affordable Rates and Friendly Service
Come stay with us after the game!

Is there ANYTHING better than college football?



Only 1 mile from U of O
Take I-5 to exit 191
Tel: (541) 687-2395

Premium Pour Bartending
www.premium-pour.com More than just a school!
1010 Oak Street • Eugene, OR 97401 • (541) 485-4695

What we have to offer...

December Special

<p>Want to get (give) the best gift this holiday?</p> <p>Gift certificates are available for all services.</p>	<p>12/14 to 12/22</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With a tuition discount of more than 20%, this rate is a one time offer. • Less than 6 seats left. • Sign up before 11/24 and join our 11/24 flair class for FREE. <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">Payment options available!</p>
---	--

Why are you waiting? Just call—information is free!

The Lane County Farmers' Market presents

HOLIDAY FARMERS' MARKET

in the Lane County Fairgrounds Auditorium
at 13th & Jefferson in Eugene, Oregon

OPENING WEEKEND:
Saturday & Sunday, November 23-24

ALSO OPEN EVERY WEEKEND:
November 29 - December 1; December 8 - 9;
December 15 - 16, December 21 - 24

NEW THIS YEAR, look for the farmers in the Auditorium with 35 VENDORS & 60 Farms offering the county's best...

- Seasonal Veggies, Fruits, Preserves, Honeys, & Fine Foods!
- Live & Dried Wreaths, Arrangements & Decorations!
- Many Varieties of Live, Potted Trees, Plants & Nursery Stock!
- Herbal & Natural, Bath, Body & Skin Lotions & Salves!
- Chef Demos, Educational Presentations & Live Performances!
- FREE ADMISSION! FREE PARKING!
- For More Information, Call (541) 431-4923

COME SEE HOW WE'VE GROWN!