

Football

continued from page 1

safety Keith Lewis, a second-team all-Pacific-10 Conference selection, is staying for his senior season.

Losing Smith and Wrihster, however, leaves gaping holes in the Oregon offense, which faltered late in the season. Much of those late-season struggles were because Smith missed three games with a knee injury, which forced him to have surgery on Nov. 18.

Despite the injury, Smith rushed for 1,141 yards and 12 touchdowns this season, becoming just the second Oregon running back to tally consecutive 1,000-yard seasons.

Mel Kiper Jr., an NFL draft expert for ESPN.com, predicts that Smith will be a "solid" second round pick. Bellotti, though, said he had "reliable confirmation" that Smith would be a first round selection. Bellotti told Smith that he should leave if he was certain he was going to be a first round pick, but the coach also made a top-10 list of reasons why he should stay at school, including getting a degree and becoming Oregon's all-time leading rusher.

"We had two very frank discussions (with Smith) about the pros and cons," Bellotti said. "And I was surprised in all honesty that it came to that — not that I had any forgone conclusions. He led most of the discussion of why he should stay, and I

was just very honest with him about what he has done and what he can do in the future."

Wrihster had six touchdowns this season and was second on the team with 41 receptions, a record for an Oregon tight end.

"George, athletically, is as good as anyone," Bellotti said. "There's some things consistency-wise he needs to work on, but he had a very good year for us. I think he would've had an even better year next year, and that would have enhanced his draft potential, but I think he feels it's time for him to move on."

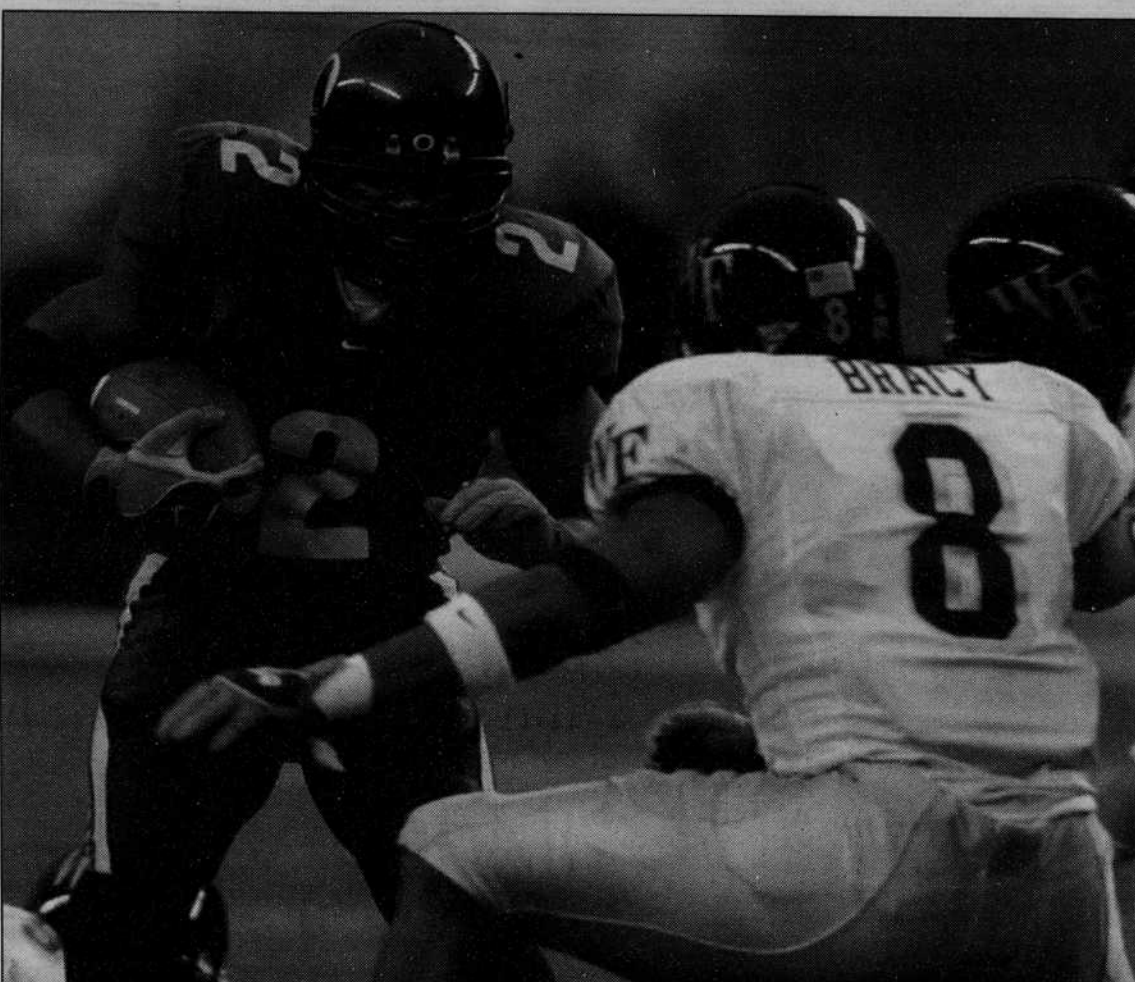
Kiper has Wrihster listed as a third-to-fifth round selection in the April draft.

"George and Onterrio feel that they're draft status is secure enough that they can go out, and I hope that that's the case," Bellotti said. "I'm going to support them whatever their decision is."

As unlikely as it is, Bellotti said he was holding out some hope that all of his juniors would return next season.

"Anything isn't over until it's over," Bellotti said. "It's just like recruiting, with whoever gets that last word or that last pitch. I would say right now that Onterrio and George are going out for sure, Keith is staying for sure, and Samie we will know by the end of the week."

Contact the senior sports reporter at adamjude@dailyemerald.com.



Adam Amato Emerald

Onterrio Smith rushed for 1,141 yards and 12 touchdowns for the Ducks in 2002 despite missing three games with a knee injury.

Sports brief

No. 5 Notre Dame holds off Seton Hall

SOUTH BEND, Ind. (KRT) — Seton Hall's players should have seen him. The Pirates could have stopped him. After all, he was shooting in plain sight, a blue No. 2 sewn onto

his white Notre Dame jersey.

But if it is possible for a 6-foot-2-inch, 178-pound player to be invisible, freshman Chris Quinn pulled off the feat Sunday afternoon in Notre Dame's 74-64 victory over Seton Hall at the Joyce Center.

Quinn scored just six points in 19 minutes for the Irish (13-2, 1-1 in the Big East). His value, however,

exceeded his numbers.

With 9:29 left in the first half, Quinn, ignored by the defense, rotated to the left wing, took a pass from point guard Chris Thomas and fired off a three-pointer, cutting the Pirates' lead to one.

Thirty seconds later Quinn mirrored the play from the right wing. His basket not only put Notre Dame ahead 26-25, it also made it that

much tougher for an already tenuous Seton Hall defense to slow Notre Dame's scoring.

"Sometimes, when we have four shooters on the court, it confuses them a little bit," Quinn said. "They don't know who they have to extend on."

Which is what happened Sunday. Though he only took (and made) two shots against the Pirates (5-7, 0-3), Quinn subsequently absorbed

plenty of defensive pressure, opening up the floor for Thomas, who finished with a game-high 22, and Matt Carroll, who added 19.

"It wasn't a really pretty game," Carroll said. "But that's how it is in the Big East, every game is a grind."

— Avani Patel
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