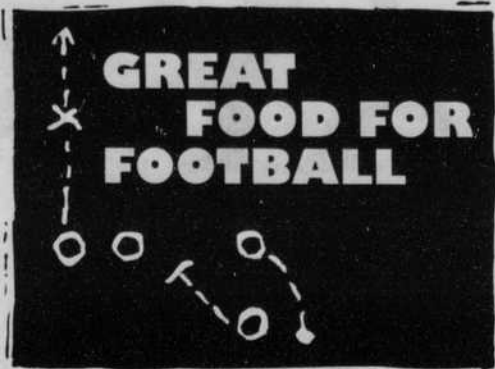


GAME DAY

Friday, September 5, 2003

Sports Editor: Hank Hager



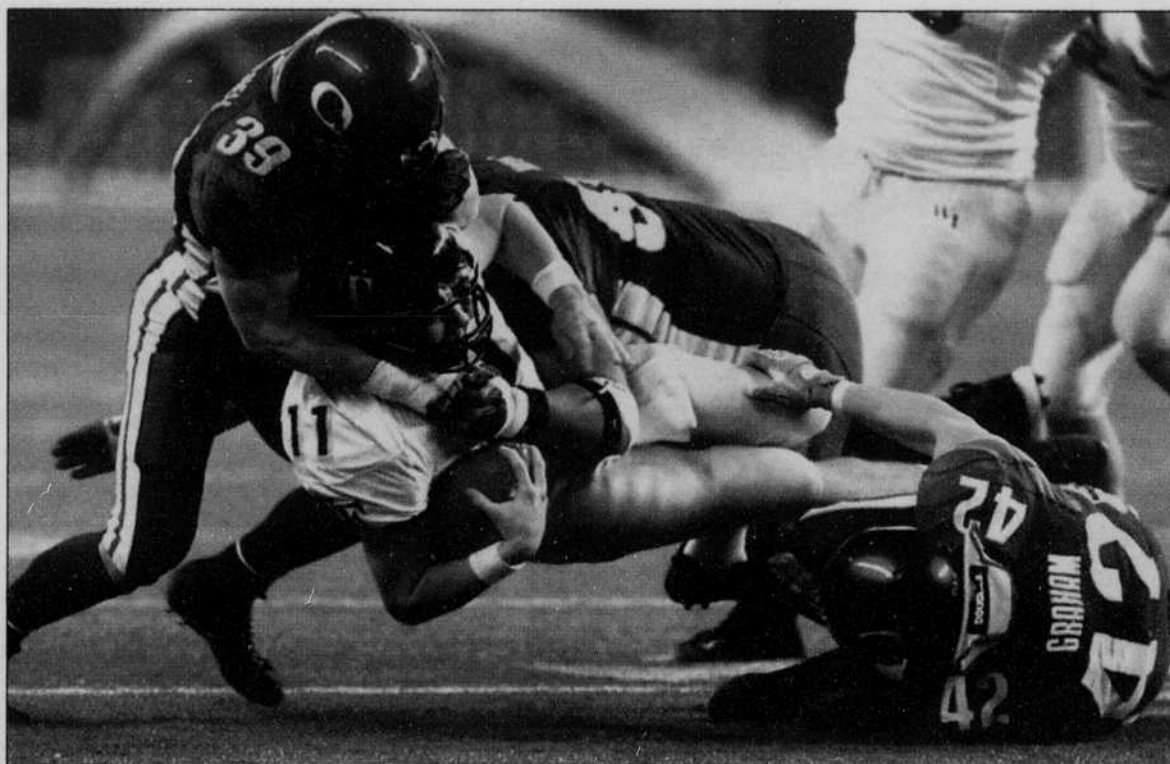
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Adam Amato Emerald

Linebacker Kevin Mitchell recorded two unassisted tackles and five assisted tackles against the Bulldogs in Oregon's opening win.

Ngata-less Ducks welcome Wolf Pack in home opener

Nevada invades Autzen Stadium for Oregon's second game of season

By Hank Hager
Sports Editor

The 42-34 win over Mississippi State last week was a case of Oregon's best and worst.

The good: A 28-0 lead after one quarter and more than 500 yards of offense. The team's two quarterbacks — sophomore Kellen Clemens and senior Jason Fife — combined to pass for more than 300 yards. And to top it off, the Oregon running game barely missed 200 yards rushing.

The bad: The Bulldogs came within eight points of tying the game in the waning moments of the contest, and Mississippi State had more than 400 yards of total offense.

"We made some plays and the offense put some points on the board," senior linebacker Kevin Mitchell said. "On defense we had a lot of three-and-outs, but there were times where we had them third-and-10, third-and-

15. We ended up blowing a 28-point lead. If you want to be successful, you can't do that."

Lessons have been learned: The Ducks now square off Saturday at 12:30 p.m. against Nevada (1-0) in the first game of the season at Autzen Stadium.

While the Ducks are sitting at 1-0 this season, a symbolic 1-1 sits in their minds. Sophomore Haloti Ngata will miss at least the first month of the season after suffering damage to his anterior cruciate and medial collateral ligaments in last week's game.

And the 345-pound defensive lineman will be sorely missed.

"We've talked about it all along where somebody gets hurt, we'd like to look at it as an opportunity instead of a loss," head coach Mike Bellotti said. "For us, Haloti obviously is a big part of our plan and I feel very badly for him."

Senior Junior Siavii and junior Robby Valenzuela are now expected to step into Ngata's shoes.

"They're all solid defensive linemen," junior Igor Olshansky said. "Losing

Haloti kills our depth at defensive line, but Robby and Junior are more than capable of picking up the slack."

Olshansky, who played defensive tackle last season, opened the Mississippi State game at defensive end. However, by the second half, he had moved back to tackle.

Olshansky said he expects Nevada to have the same type of game plan that the Bulldogs brought to the table. With the Wolf Pack throwing into the fire an inexperienced sophomore quarterback, Jeff Rowe, the Nevada running game is expected to take full opportunity of Oregon's depleted line.

That means Chance Kretschmer, who ran for 170 yards in the Wolf Pack's 24-23 victory over Southern Utah to start the season, will get a large portion of the team's carries. He had 26 last week.

"Basically, we've got to do our own jobs within the defense and as long as everyone does their own job, we should be okay," Mitchell said.

Turn to **PREVIEW**, page 9

Duck corners could learn well from Bauman's Oregon days

Let's take a look back into the Oregon time capsule.

Rashad Bauman, Oregon cornerback, steps in front of a Jonathan Smith pass, cementing the Ducks' victory in the Civil War in December 2001. It ends Oregon's regular season at 10-1, giving the Ducks a shot at Colorado in the Fiesta Bowl.

Why, you ask, would that play stick out any more than a Joey Harrington touchdown pass or a Maurice Morris run that season?

The answer, of course, being Bauman himself. The 5-foot-9 cornerback, who now plays for Washington in the NFL, was everything Oregon needed and wanted in his five years in Eugene.

He left last season, and for the first time in a long time the Ducks had



Hank Hager
Behind the dish

question marks in their defensive backfield. Those question marks swelled as the season wore on and Steven Moore, Aaron Gipson and company, couldn't cut the mustard.

Knowing that, head coach Mike Bellotti recruited junior college and high school players — Rodney Woods and Ryan Gilliam, respectively —

who bring to the table credentials and more question marks alike.

Woods, of course, came close to never stepping foot on the Oregon campus until a felony charge was reduced to a misdemeanor.

Gilliam is a true freshman — question mark No. 1. Secondly, he stands only 5-foot-9, very short for a West Coast cornerback. Bauman was able to overcome that, but it has yet to be seen how Gilliam will do against the Pacific-10 Conference's bigger receivers.

The Ducks will need one of these two — or someone else — to be the next Bauman. They need the brash, aggressive attitude that Bauman brought to the field.

Turn to **HAGER**, page 5

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