

Clemens, Fife continue duel after successful dual rotation

Oregon coaches haven't determined who will take more snaps against Nevada, which is fine for now

By Jesse Thomas
Sports Reporter

So who will start this week? Sophomore Kellen Clemens or senior Jason Fife?

The real question is: Does it really matter?

Clemens was the starter and led Oregon to three first-quarter touchdowns against Mississippi State last week. Fife entered the game with five minutes to go in the first and led the Ducks to another touchdown.

Fife was a perfect 8 of 8 on the night for 111 yards and two touchdowns, one of which he ran in. Clemens finished 14 of 21 for 247 yards and three touchdowns.

Oregon proved two things: No. 1, a two-quarterback rotation does work; and No. 2, the bottom line is to get the win.

"We got a 'W,' so that works," Clemens said. "That's most important and that's the thing that Jason and I try and keep in mind."

Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti was pleased with the results as well.

"What we did last week was very successful," Bellotti said. "Jason Fife maybe had his best game of his life, he was 8 of 8. He was perfect, basically."

"Our productivity at the quarterback position was very good. I was pleased with Kellen, too. They both did very good things and their mobility certainly played a role in our success."

Clemens and Fife alternated approximately three series apiece, although Clemens took the majority of the snaps late in the game.

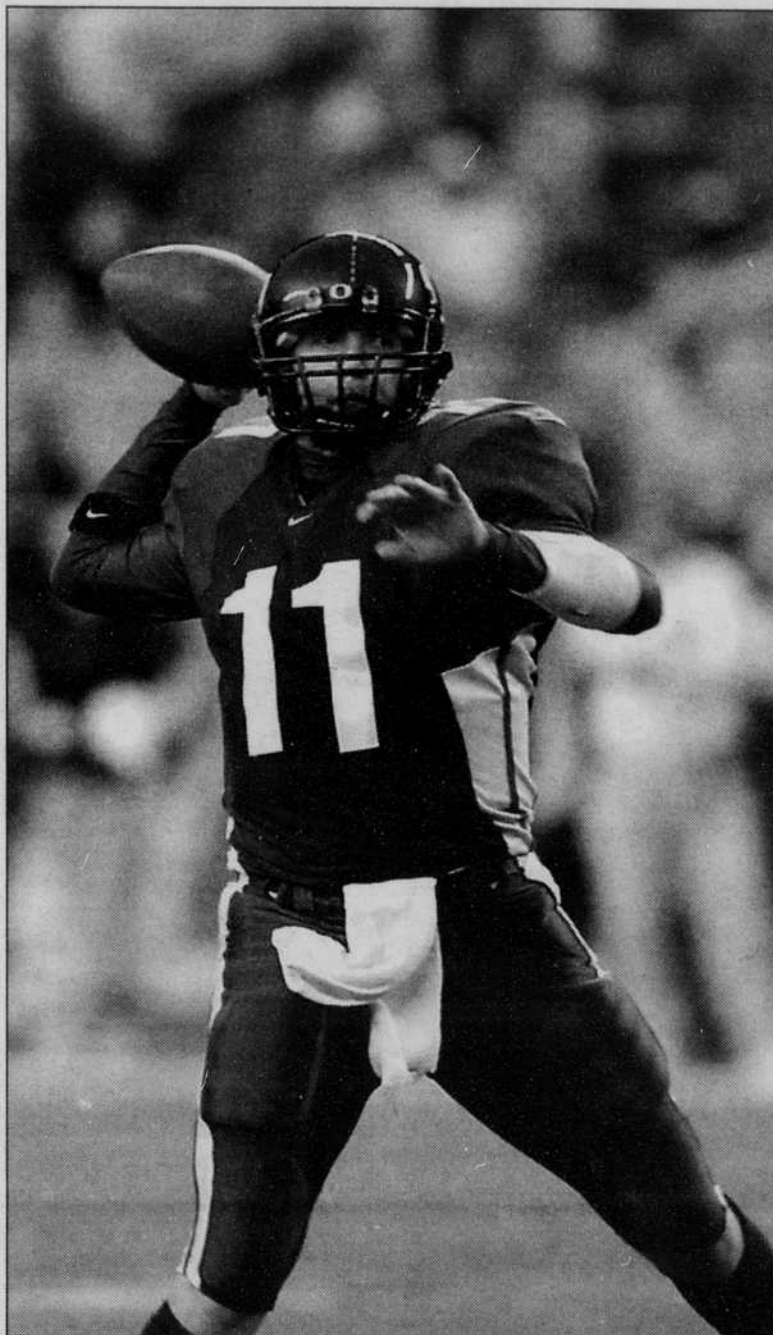
The stats show that the strategy was successful. But, individually, the two said it was difficult to establish a rhythm.

"It was different, I'll give you that," Fife said. "We didn't know how it was going to work, we both just prepared ourselves the best we could."

For the rest of Oregon's offense it hasn't been a struggle; the team has practiced using a dual rotation from the beginning.

"We've been working with them all fall so I'm kind of adjusted to both of them," wide receiver Demetrius Williams said. "They both get the job done the same way and that's all we're trying to get accomplished."

In past years, Oregon has had a one-quarterback offense where the



Adam Amato Emerald

Quarterback Kellen Clemens led Oregon to 21 first quarter points and 247 yards Saturday.

starter plays most of the game. But Bellotti is seeing improvement from both Fife and Clemens because the two compete on a daily basis for the starting position.

"I think the competition will always continue to make them better," Bellotti said. "That's the basis for most everything we do. Having to compete everyday, you don't lose your edge, you never become complacent, you're always working harder to get better."

Yes. But who will start this week?

"I have no idea if I'm still the starter,

if we're going to start over from square one or what. I don't know yet," Clemens said Monday at practice.

Bellotti does remain confident that he will stick with a two-quarterback rotation for the time being. And until one quarterback stands out, Bellotti will stay with what works.

"The biggest thing is if someone separates themselves through their performance, then we'll consider doing something else," Bellotti said.

Contact the sports reporter at jessethomas@dailymerald.com

With scoring streak on the line, BYU must defend 28-year record

The Trojans, fresh off shutting out Auburn, look to end BYU's 351-game scoring streak Saturday

By Jesse Thomas
Sports Reporter

Here's an interesting situation to remember:

USC walks into a stadium packed with more than 86,000 fans on national television and shuts out previously ranked No. 5 Auburn, 23-0, on Saturday.

**GAME
of the
week**

"We didn't do a lot of fancy things," USC coach Pete Carroll told the Daily Trojan. "We just played ball."

It was USC's first opening shutout in 30 years and first shutout of a top-

10 team since 1962. Now, USC returns to Los Angeles Coliseum on Saturday to face unranked BYU in its home opener.

BYU does not have a single player on its roster who was alive the last time the Cougars were shut out.

The Cougars have an NCAA record streak of 351 games without being shut out, dating back to 1975 when they were shut out by Arizona State, 20-0.

So could BYU's 28-year record be broken Saturday at 5 p.m. by the Trojans, whose top-notch defense held Auburn to 43 yards rushing? Maybe.

The two teams have never met. USC and Stanford are the only two Pacific-10 Conference teams that BYU hasn't yet faced. The Cougars have a .357 winning percentage against Pac-

10 teams and USC has an .801 percentage in home openers.

The quarterback matchup should be one to watch as sophomore Matt Berry connected on 31 of 46 attempts for 276 yards, the third-best performance of his career.

And for USC, sophomore Matt Leinart didn't appear to miss a beat in trying to replace former quarterback Carson Palmer. Leinart went 17 of 30 for 192 yards and one touchdown in his first career start for USC. He threw his first career passes against Auburn after taking just three snaps last season.

"Jason played hard," Auburn coach Tommy Tuberville told the Daily Trojan. "He was running around for his life."

Contact the sports reporter at jessethomas@dailymerald.com

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