

Tormey returns to location of first loss with Wolf Pack

Nevada rolls into Autzen after a hard-fought 24-23 victory against Southern Utah to open its season

By Mindi Rice
Senior Sports Reporter

The last time Nevada head coach Chris Tormey faced Oregon, it was his first game at the head of the Wolf Pack.

Tormey led his young team into Autzen Stadium and left with a 36-7 loss.

But this time around, the Wolf Pack have 18 returning starters who are searching for the team's first winning season since 1998's 6-5 campaign.

Nevada's task now is to get the job done.

In their season opener Saturday against I-AA Southern Utah, the Wolf Pack narrowly pulled off a 24-23 win.

"We made enough mistakes to lose three games today," Tormey told the Reno Gazette-Journal on Saturday. "We kept an underdog in the game. It was a more exciting game than it should have been."

Regardless, it was a victory, and Nevada comes to Autzen after its first season-opening win since 1995.

In Saturday's victory, Logan Carter did it all for the Wolf Pack.

The inside linebacker recovered a fumble for a touchdown, intercepted a pass and blocked an extra-point attempt that would have tied the game with 3:06 remaining.

Carter, the 2002 Western Athletic Conference Defensive Freshman of the Year, and junior running back Chance Kretschmer were the Wolf Pack's standout players in the win.

Kretschmer rushed for 170 yards, picking up where he left off in 2001 after missing most of the 2002 season with a torn anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee.

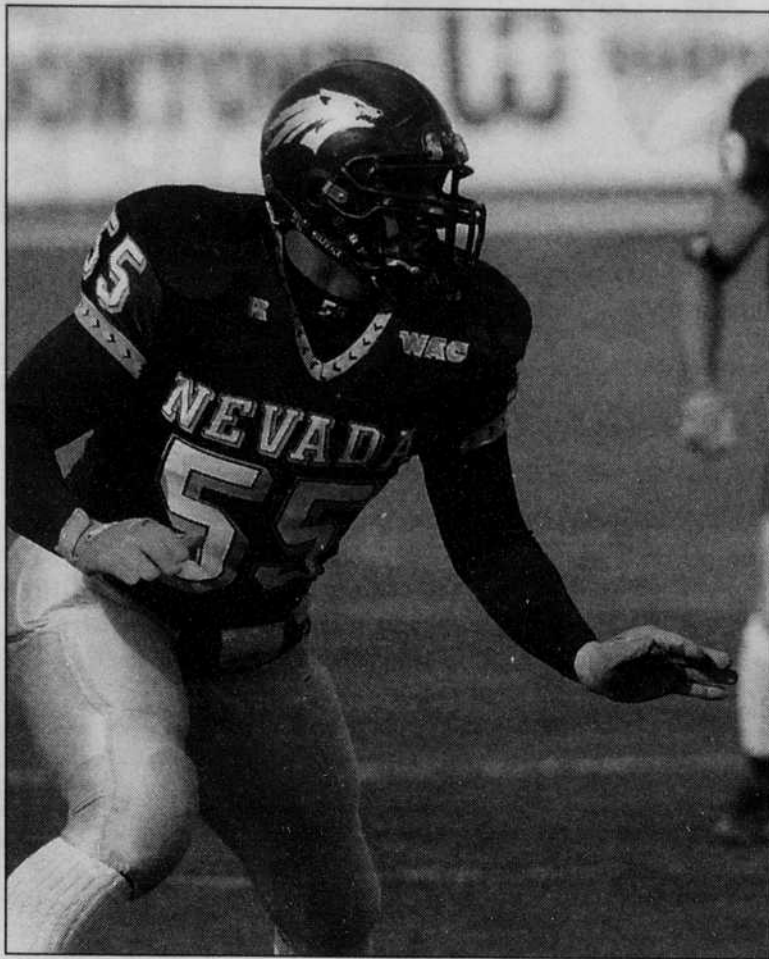
"Nevada's a scary team for me," Oregon coach Mike Bellotti said. "They had a game where they had to scramble to win and I think that wakes you up as a team."

According to Bellotti's logic, the Wolf Pack should be wide awake for their trip to Eugene.

"There's still a lot of optimism," Tormey told the Gazette-Journal. "We've just got to stop making mistakes. We will get them corrected before we play Oregon."

One of Nevada's mistakes may have been overconfidence from all the hype of a winning season.

"I don't know how you can be overconfident in your first game," Tormey told the Gazette-Journal. "We certainly won't be overconfident in Eugene. Hopefully Oregon will be overconfident. Once they see the



Courtesy

Defensive end Jorge Cordova led the team with nine tackles in Nevada's season opener.

tape, they'll have every reason to be."

Tormey learned from one of the best Pacific-10 Conference coaches about giving other teams the burden of overconfidence.

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Mike Bellotti
Oregon head football coach

Tormey's pre-Nevada experience against Oregon is from his days as a position coach for Washington. His 13 seasons included a stint as defensive coordinator for Don James in 1993 and 1994.

That Pac-10 knowledge may give Tormey a hand in Saturday's game, as well as down the road this season.

Saturday marks Nevada's second game against a Pac-10 school since

Tormey's opening loss to the Ducks three years ago (the Wolf Pack played Washington State last season). Nevada also managed to draw Tormey's former employers, Washington, at Husky Stadium later this season.

"We're one of the better teams on their schedule," Bellotti said. "There's nothing they would like better than to come in here and get a victory."

Nevada has one victory against Oregon — the first ever game between the two schools, a 13-6 result, on Oct. 4, 1947. The teams have played each other four times in the past seven years.

Oregon's 2002 season showed them the same fault of overconfidence Nevada may have hit, and the Ducks are trying to take it one game at a time.

"You can't take anybody lightly," Oregon center Dan Weaver said. "They played a really close game and they've got that experience under their belt."

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Sometimes he was beaten. And sometimes he was outmuscled by players who stood inches taller than him.

But Bauman was the rock-solid force the Ducks also looked to. He was the biggest benefactor to the Oregon defense that sometimes bent but broke very few times.

He was never afraid to say what was on his mind, even baiting opponents to say something in response. And invariably, those opponents would be eating their words come Saturday.

In Bauman's five seasons — 1999 was spent as a redshirt due to injury — the Ducks went 45-15. Skip the year he didn't play, and Bauman's teams went 36-12 when he was on

the field.

That included wins in the Las Vegas Bowl, Sun Bowl, Holiday Bowl and Fiesta Bowl.

Those are some credentials.

It's too much to ask Moore and Gipson to be of Bauman's caliber. Neither will get to his stature this season, but it is imperative the Ducks develop a cornerback this season who can take the same attitude into games that No. 17 once did.

They need someone, whether that's Woods, Gilliam, or anyone else, to step up and take the role of the aggressor. The Ducks need a player that won't be afraid to take responsibility for the overall health of the secondary and make sure the defense plays up to its capability.

Keith Lewis has the capability of being a difference-maker, but he isn't

a primary pass defender.

Lewis will be there to help should a cornerback become too aggressive, which might not be a bad thing. After last season's collapse, the thought that safeties should help out more instead of leaving the corners on an island became an idea that was tossed around more often.

But Lewis alone won't be enough to help a group that has gone largely unchanged in its key players. The corners cannot rely on him to be there every time.

Bauman didn't, and instead stepped up his play week-by-week.

Now, if the current Oregon corners can do that, the sky could be the limit.

Contact the sports editor at hankhager@dailyemerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

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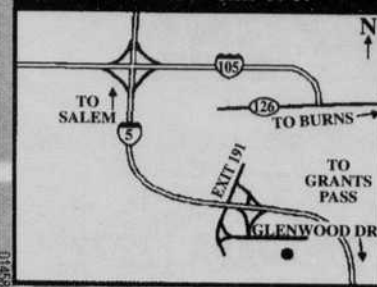
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