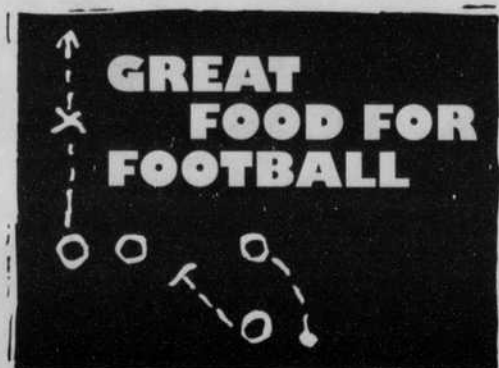




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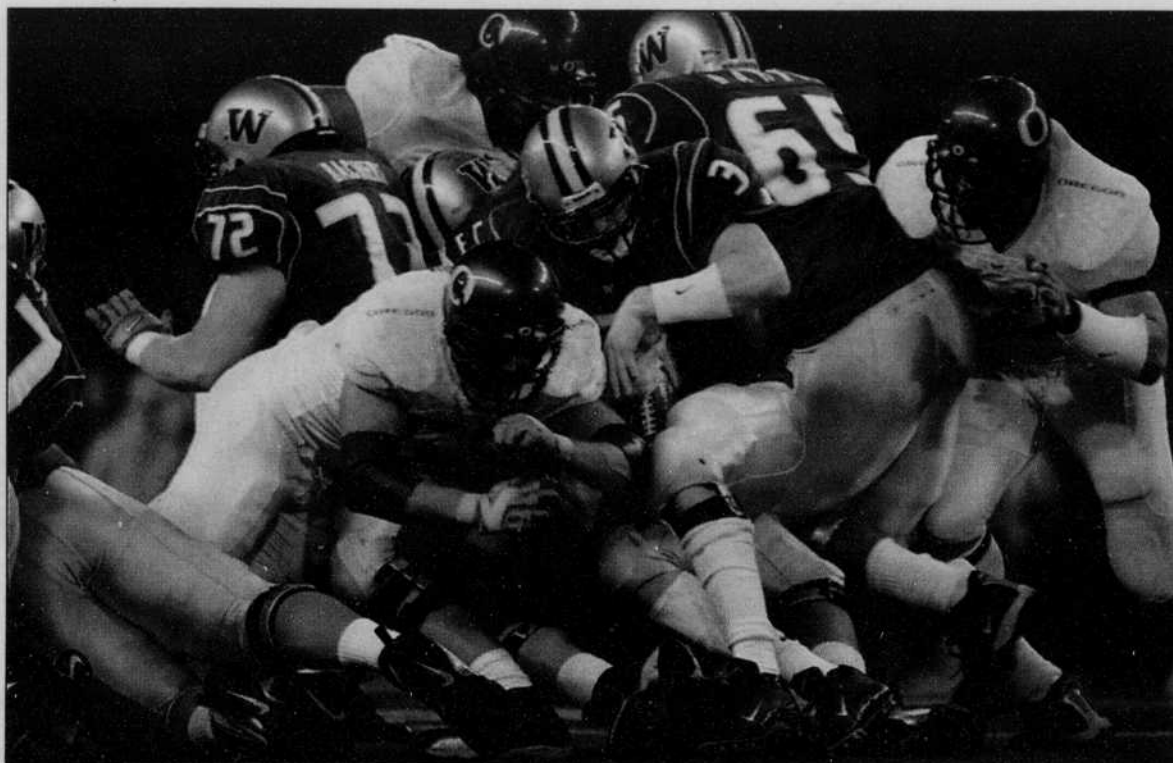
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Oregon Daily Emerald

GAME DAY

Friday, November 7, 2003

Sports Editor: Hank Hager



Adam Amato Photo Editor

Oregon's defense will look for similar success against Cal's Aaron Rodgers as they did in the first half against Washington.

Ducks, Bears ready for fight under night's lights at Autzen

Oregon's regular season woes have the Ducks hoping for success against the visiting Golden Bears

By **Mindi Rice**
Senior Sports Reporter

The Ducks are trying to get back on track.

They're moving along with an almost "business as usual" feel, according to their head coach, while coming off a conference loss is something Oregon is a little more accustomed to this season.

"(This week is) hard focus, contend to the end and finish things," Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said Tuesday. "We'll work very hard in practice with a positive attitude about what we can do this week."

Heading into Saturday's 7 p.m. game against California, the Ducks

are coming off more than just a conference loss, though. They're coming off the second game of the first back-to-back losses to Washington since the early '90s.

"Every single one of our losses this year has been opportunities to make plays that we haven't made," quarterback Kellen Clemens said. "(This week is) making the plays, doing it one play at a time, one series at a time, one quarter at a time and one game at a time."

On Saturday in Seattle, Oregon had a promising first half. After a field goal and an 85-yard Clemens' pass to Demetrius Williams, the Ducks went into the locker room at halftime with a 10-7 lead.

Unfortunately for the Ducks, their days as the comeback kids have reversed. This season, Oregon has lost to Utah and Washington after holding a 3-point lead at halftime. Against Utah, the Ducks gave up one touch-

down in the second half. At Washington, they gave up 42 unanswered points, leading to a 42-10 loss.

"We've got to be consistent in what we do and the intensity level and just taking care of business and making plays," senior linebacker Kevin Mitchell said. "We've got to work on some gap controls, defensive wise. It's just a matter of us executing and getting ready throughout the week."

Oregon's best preparation has been the cold weather. After practicing in 39-degree weather on Tuesday, which was warmer than Monday's practice, the Ducks will be ready come Saturday's late kickoff.

"We're going to be practicing in (the cold) all week," Clemens said. "We're going to be used to it — it won't be as much of a shock to our system."

The shock would come if the Ducks get a fifth loss on Saturday. Oregon is

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UO quarterbacks keep Ducks afloat on team's sinking ship

Kellen Clemens is still learning. Football is just a game to some, but to most players, it's one of those life experiences where you learn along the way.

Clemens will be a good quarterback. He's already a good quarterback.

While the Ducks sit alone at seventh in the Pacific-10 Conference, Clemens is still the second-rated quarterback in that conference.

And that's while he and senior Jason Fife trade significant amounts of playing time. Although Clemens has completed seven more passes than Fife has attempted, Fife is the team's second-leading rusher with 195 yards and five touchdowns.

All in all, Bellotti's quarterback-by-committee system is essentially alive and well.

While some have called for Fife to



Mindi Rice
The girl and the game

start after spending last season as the Ducks' lone quarterback, Clemens needs the starting experience for upcoming Oregon seasons.

Clemens doesn't have next year's job locked up quite yet, though. He'll have competition from Johnny DuRocher, the Graham, Wash., freshman who has spent this season as No. 3 behind Clemens and Fife with the intent to redshirt.

DuRocher graduated early to join the Ducks in last spring's drills, giving him an advantage over fellow freshmen Dennis Dixon and Brady Leaf, also fresh-from-high school quarterbacks.

With a spring battle brewing at quarterback and the current season sinking in a "Pirates of the Caribbean" fashion, some Ducks may be having a difficult time focusing on the tasks ahead: California, UCLA and Oregon State.

Those games are potential blowouts if the recent Oregon squad is the one that shows up for all three games. The Ducks have some things to work on to turn this season around.

But not much time. If things are going to happen, they've got to hap-

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