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Best bet
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UO's comeback bounces Bears

The Ducks score with less than a minute left to cap a 21-17 win over the Golden Bears on Saturday

By Hank Hager
Sports Editor

There was something epic about quarterback Kellen Clemens' effort on Saturday against California.

It was something Oregon hadn't seen in almost two years, a phenomenon made popular by former miracle worker Joey Harrington.

DUCK FOOTBALL

It was an ability to reach into the depths of the Ducks' offense, gather up some confidence and lead Oregon to a 21-17 come-from-behind victory over the Golden Bears in front of 57,511 at Autzen Stadium.

"To this team, this means a lot, to overcome that adversity," Clemens said.

The sophomore led two fourth-quarter scoring drives that vaulted Oregon (6-4 overall, 3-3 Pacific-10 Conference) to the team's first fourth-quarter comeback this season and also the first since a 31-30 win over UCLA last season. He did it after sitting out two quarters due to starting off the game 1 for 6 passing in the first quarter.

"My confidence didn't drop as much as people think it did when I went 1 for 6 in the first quarter," Clemens said.

The Ducks went into two-minute mode after a punt by California's Tyler Fredrickson that found the Ducks at the Golden Bears' 43-yard line. Clemens immediately threw to Samie Parker for an 8-yard gain but then threw two straight incompletions.

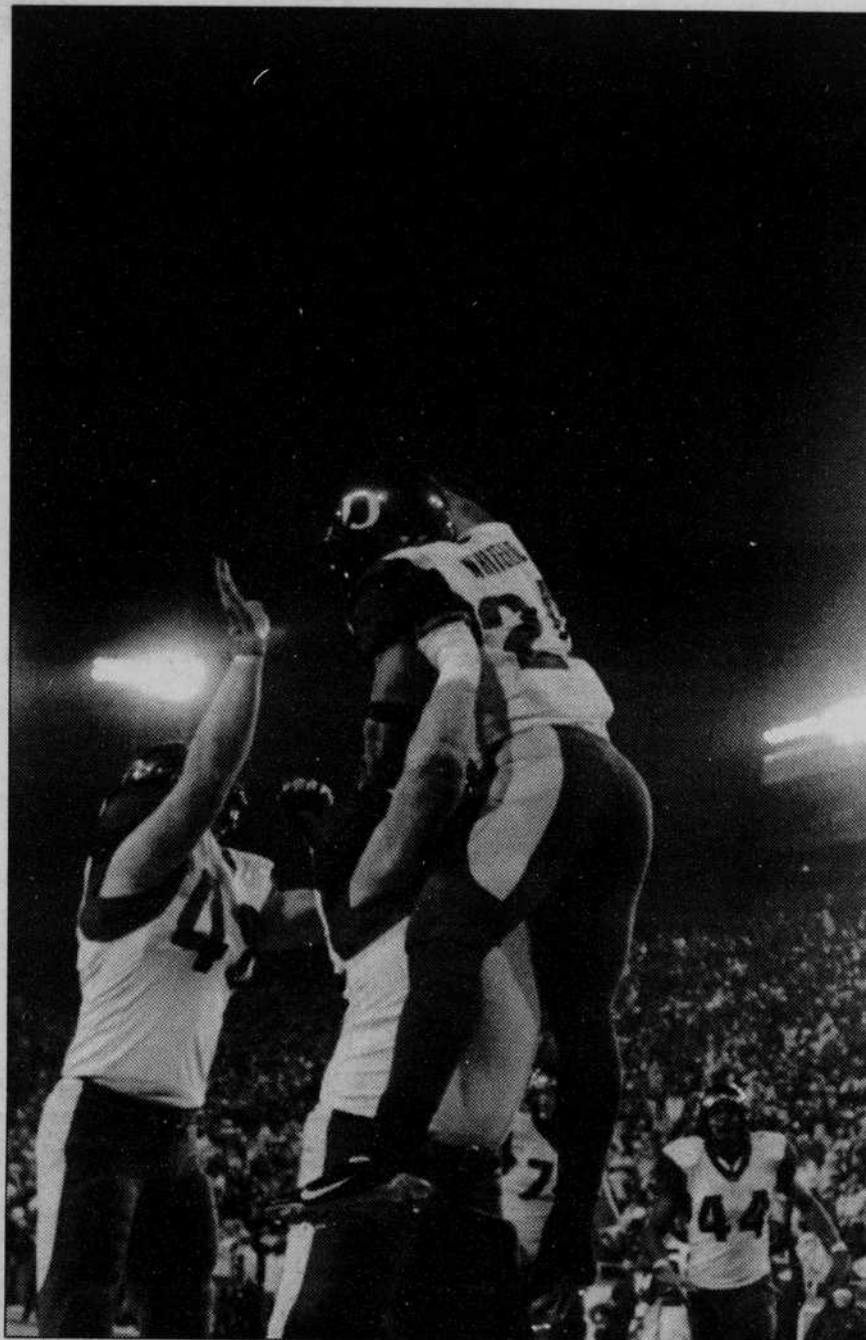
On 4th-and-2 from California's 35, Demetrius Williams snared in a Clemens pass along the right sideline and streaked for a 19-yard gain before being pushed out of bounds.

After five more plays and one California illegal substitution penalty, Terrence Whitehead went around left on a pitch and put the Ducks ahead, 21-17, with a 1-yard run.

"I was sitting there next to (linebackers coach Don Pellum) and he looks at me and goes, 'Hey Kev, this kind of feels like a couple years ago, huh?'" Oregon linebacker Kevin Mitchell said. "I sat and there and said, 'It really does.' It came out that way. We got the offense back the ball and they put it in the end zone. What more can you ask for?"

It took a defensive stand and interception by Keith Lewis with four seconds left to seal the deal. It was a win for the Ducks that means the world.

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Mark McCambridge Photographer

Terrence Whitehead (24) scored the winning touchdown Saturday in Oregon's 21-17 victory.



Mindi Rice
The girl and the game

Oregon grooves way to win

The Comeback Kids may have just seen their rebirth at Autzen Stadium.

With apologies to the cliché king and every Oregon beat writer who was going to use this for Sunday's story — and every California beat writer who eventually did — the Ducks had the plug pulled on their season on Saturday.

Well, until quarterback Kellen Clemens returned to the game with 6:35 remaining in the fourth quarter.

After the 23-minute power problem, technically called a "control failure," the Ducks found a groove just in time to get the win and make a few thousand Duck fans smile.

There's hope yet, Oregon faithful. Now that the Ducks are 6-4, they are officially eligible for a bowl game — be it the Silicon Valley Bowl or the Las Vegas Bowl. At least there are no return trips to Seattle possible.

From the sound of things in the California interview room after Saturday's dazzlingly ducky 21-17 victory against the Golden Bears, the fans laid the groundwork for a possible Oregon comeback.

Even with California's coaching staff having eight former Oregon coaches or players — all with direct experience with

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Bowl opportunities shrinking for California after loss

The Golden Bears' defense held a low-scoring game in Cal's favor until halfway through the fourth quarter

By Mindi Rice
Senior Sports Reporter

California's magic number is 31. In the Golden Bears' five wins this season, they have scored 31 points

or more.

Twenty-eight didn't cut it against Kansas State, and 17 eventually didn't hold as the Ducks took Saturday's game, 21-17, at Autzen Stadium.

The lowest point total that California has scored this season held until the final two minutes of the game.

"It was tough watching them drive to the other end of the field and get two good gains on the same play and finally just put it in," tight end

Garrett Cross said. "The penalties hurt us, but that's just the way the game goes I guess."

After a 10-7 halftime lead for California that held into the fourth quarter, the game that could have been a high-point shootout looked dull and lifeless.

With 10:07 left in the fourth quarter, Cross grabbed an 18-yard pass from quarterback Aaron Rodgers for a touchdown, increasing the Golden

Bears' lead to 17-7.

"I thought, 'Wow, we have this,'" Cross said. "All we have to do is play solid defense like we've been playing and just run the clock out."

And just like that, a season that opened 1-3 — then caught up with a .500 record — started to close its doors.

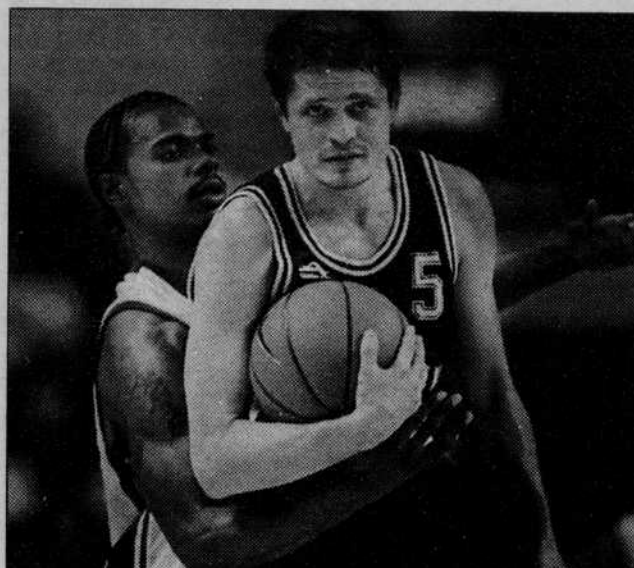
On the final play against Oregon, Adimchinobe Echemandu — who came into the game as the Pacific-10 Conference's second-leading rusher

— was injured.

"He got a bad ankle sprain (on the play)," Golden Bears head coach Jeff Tedford said. "It could be more serious than that but it's too early to tell."

Cornerback Mike McGrath was also injured during Saturday's game. Tedford said McGrath's injury looked like a broken leg after a first evaluation.

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Mark McCambridge Photographer

Andre Joseph led the Ducks with 20 points on 6 of 10 shooting.

Brooks impresses in first game with Ducks

Oregon easily defeats its Ukrainian counterpart by 20 in the Ducks' first exhibition game of the 2003-04 season

By Hank Hager
Sports Editor

It took only four minutes for the McArthur Court faithful to get the hang of the "Aaron" chant.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

OK, so maybe Aaron-2-Luke doesn't sound as good as Luke-2-Luke, but it could

very well be just as effective this season as the past three years. Brooks posted 14 points and four assists in 24 minutes as the Ducks defeated MBC Nikolaev, 96-76.

"He's going to be good," Oregon's Ian Crosswhite said of the freshman point guard. "He'll push the ball as fast as any guard in the Pac-10. Like any freshman, he's going to get better as time goes on."

If Brooks wasn't shooting three-pointers — he made 2 of 3 — or making no look passes, he was going coast-to-coast on layups.

Or maybe he was making Nikolaev — a team from the Ukraine — defenders lunge at the ball, only to slip away untouched. It was Brooks' first game in an Oregon uniform, and even though it didn't count, he showed that Luke Ridnour's departure to the NBA may not be as much of a worry as previously had been thought.

"I've told people this all along; he is a gifted player," Oregon head coach Ernie Kent said. "People are going to have a chance to really see him grow and become a great player. He has all the tools to be a great one: speed, shooting ability, an ability to finish in the hole and the thing he probably does the best is run the team."

Overall, Brooks finished the night on 5 of 10 shooting, committing one turnover and three fouls.

Brooks' speed was evident against the mismatched Ukrainian squad. Nikolaev had just eight players available for the game, and three of them — Evgen Podorvanny, Olexiy Onufriyev and Ivan Gilevich — fouled out.

Brooks said he was out to have fun in his first game at McArthur Court.

"When I first got in, I was nervous, but I Turn to **BASKETBALL**, page 12