



Mindi Rice

The girl and the game

UO future will be decided Saturday

November is Oregon's month.

In Mike Bellotti's eight-plus seasons leading the Ducks, quacker backers have seen a 19-7 record produced.

The luck of November may help Oregon's bowl berth — when Oregon travels to UCLA this weekend, the Ducks face a team they haven't lost to in November since 1992. And that's only because the two teams have faced each other once in November since then — in the 2001 season.

Oregon also hosts the Beavers in the classic season-ending rivalry match.

Considering that Oregon State is just a half-game ahead of Oregon in the standings — and a half-game behind the Bruins — this weekend may be a good indicator for Oregon of just how the season will play out.

Then again, we are talking about the Pacific-10 Conference here. This is the conference that every week takes between four and eight teams, puts them in a big jar and shakes them up until the teams figure out a way to escape and not be left sitting at the bottom.

Sorry Arizona schools. You just got the "luck" of the draw this season.

Back on the topic of luck: if Oregon is lucky enough to win out the season — and Washington State and USC play their cards just right — the Ducks feasibly could end up in San Diego, Calif., at the Pacific Life Holiday Bowl.

Oh boy! The Ducks haven't made that trip since ... 2000. Hey seniors and redshirt juniors, want to go back to San Diego?

The next spot down the Pac-10 bowl chart would put Oregon at the Wells Fargo Sun Bowl. Even better — only the redshirt seniors will remember that trip to El Paso, Texas, in 1999.

If the Ducks were to earn the fourth conference bowl spot — let's leave out the complications of a Bowl Championship Series arrangement for fellow conference teams — they would make a brand new trip. Phoenix, Ariz., for the Dec. 26 Insight Bowl anyone?

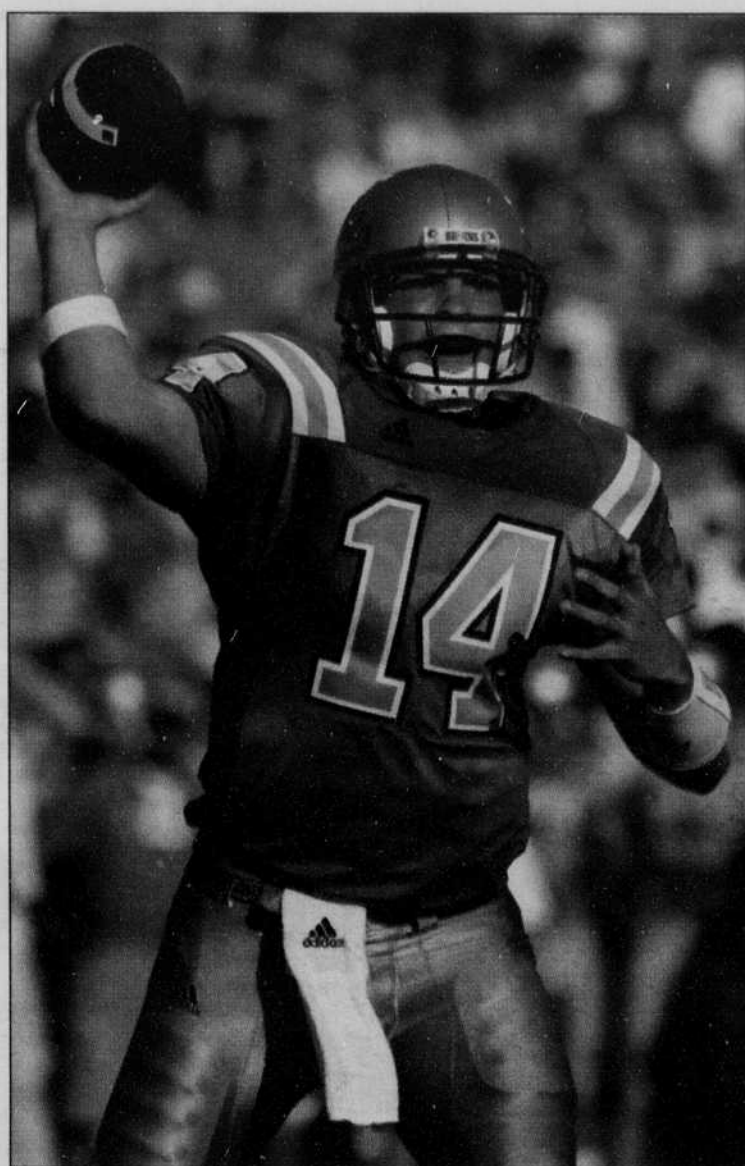
Who wants to spend Christmas Day in Phoenix when they could be enjoying the beach in San Diego or the ... well, anyway, who wants to spend Christmas Day in Phoenix?

A more likely, and possibly more enjoyable, bowl scenario would be a party in the Las Vegas Bowl. Maybe a few reporters could find Duck defender Keith Lewis somewhere on the strip a couple days before the game. That would be a fun opportunity for some good quotes.

The only people who would remember the last Las Vegas Bowl are coaches and the like who were around in 1997.

The final bowl option is another new-to-Oregon scenario. A Dec. 30 Silicon Valley Football Classic in San Jose, Calif., would be a new trip for the Ducks. It also wouldn't interfere with any of the holidays that happen during bowl season.

I suppose I'm getting ahead of myself here. The Ducks still have two games left in their season, and although a bowl is likely, it's certainly not guaranteed. The Ducks will have to rely on playing the game they were

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Courtesy UCLA Media Services

UCLA's Drew Olson has thrown for 1,456 yards and six touchdowns this season.

Olson, not Moore, set to lead Bruins when Ducks visit

UCLA makes a change at quarterback in an attempt to gain consistency on the offensive side of the ball

By Jon Roetman
Sports Reporter

One point.

No other margin of victory can cause such joy or heartache.

UCLA has experienced the negative side of a one-point outcome in each of its last two meetings with Oregon. The Ducks survived a last-second field goal attempt in each game, defeating the Bruins 31-30 last season and 21-20 in 2001.

While UCLA can certainly use these narrow losses to Oregon as motivation, it needs not look that far into the past for a driving force. The Bruins have fallen out of first

place in the Pacific-10 Conference during the past two weeks with road losses to Stanford and No. 12 Washington State. With a conference record of 4-2, the Bruins desperately need a win to stay in the Pac-10 title hunt.

UCLA head coach Karl Dorrell said the Bruins need to overcome consecutive losses the way Oregon overcame its loss to Washington by defeating California.

"We need to get ourselves in position to be where Oregon is right now," Dorrell said. "To do things positively (through) production and execution and taking care of the football. Those are the issues that have plagued us the last couple of

weeks."

In an attempt to gain offensive consistency, Dorrell made a change at quarterback. After naming sophomore Matt Moore the starter on Saturday, Dorrell announced Monday that sophomore Drew Olson would get the start against Oregon.

"Offensively we are still trying to generate the continuity on that side of the ball and that has been a struggle," Dorrell said. "After all the evaluation that I did (Sunday) in watching our game, Matt has done some good things for us offensively, but he hasn't been as consistent as we would hope that position to be."

"Drew has, when the times he has been the starter, done some good things for us, and we were winning quite a bit at that time too."

Olson has passed for 1,456 yards and six touchdowns compared to Moore's 555 yards and two scores.

Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said the Ducks respect Olson's skills and expect to see the Bruins throw the ball deep.

"He is a guy that we liked out of (Piedmont) high school," Bellotti

said. "We think he is a quality quarterback and a quality leader."

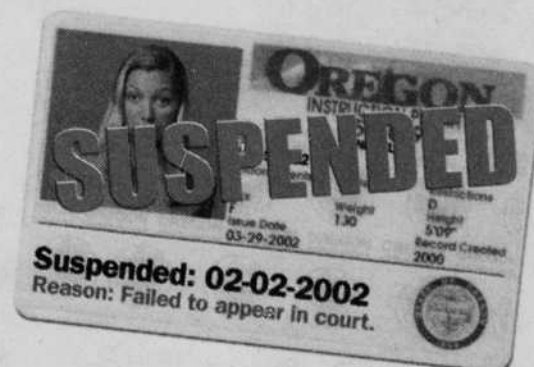
UCLA also has a pair of explosive running backs in sophomore Tyler Ebell and freshman Maurice Drew. Both are strong runners who were highly touted during their prep careers. Drew was ranked as the sixth-best running back prospect in the nation by TheInsiders.com and received

"We have some very good, young backs. We're just trying to do what it takes to utilize both of our backs in the best way possible."

Karl Dorrell
UCLA head coach

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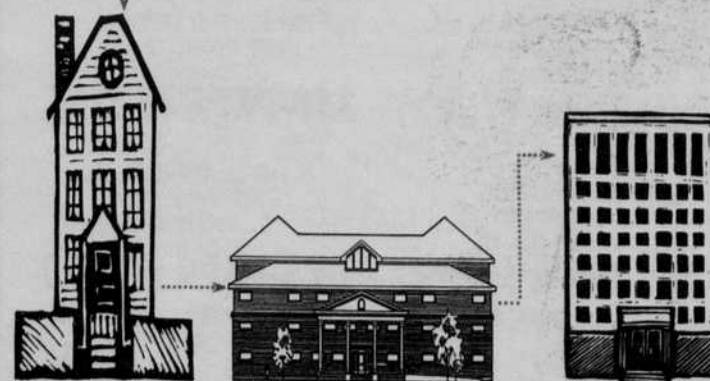
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