

SPECIAL

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continuation of his efforts against UCLA the previous week. He returned a kick 97 yards against the Bruins and was most likely the impetus for the Beavers to focus on taking out the Ducks' special teams.

"I was juiced," he said. "I've been preparing for this game the entire season. Basically, I just want the ball to be in my hands."

Bruised shoulder

Linebacker Jerry Matson was key to Oregon's win Saturday, but he came close to not enjoying it as much as he should have.

Oregon State's Harvey Whiten caught the kickoff at his own 11-yard

line. Sixteen yards later, Matson found him and leveled the kick returner.

Whiten appeared to catch Matson's shoulder, knocking his head back on the way down to the ground. He laid there for about 15 minutes before being carted off the field.

Whiten later returned and joined his teammates in the waning moments of the game with what was categorized as a concussion.

"I just want to play hard and hit," Matson said. "That just ruins the whole game for you when that kind of stuff happens. You just go from an emotional high. It takes the wind out of your sail."

"I was just so happy when he got up," Matson said he didn't really know how he hit Whiten.

"I was just running as fast I could," Matson said. "I knew how the return

was set up. I could see the same thing he was seeing. I'm not a return guy, but I was thinking the same thing he was thinking. He didn't see me and his eyes were just like, 'Oh, you're here.'"

"I just kind of smelled it out. I don't know where I hit him at, it was just more of an impact. You don't remember that kind of stuff. But I've got a big black mark on my right shoulder so that might have been it."

The end

"That this team had more heart, more character and more desire than anybody gave us credit," Kellen Clemens said when asked what he knew before the game. "That's what we relied on all season and that's what we came and showed up with today."

Contact the sports editor at hankhager@dailyemerald.com.



Mark McCambridge Photographer

Oregon's Kenny Washington played a key role Saturday.

RICE

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Civil War victory, believed it, though.

"We kept faith in ourselves; the coaches had kept faith," Clemens told reporters after Saturday's win. "The highs and lows haven't been as great as people have made them seem. Even though the scores may say something different."

Some will say that Clemens was the key to Oregon's strong finish. He captained the ship that was the Ducks' comeback win against California,

and, for the first time this season, seemingly solved the somewhat flawed quarterback-by-committee system by running the show against UCLA and Oregon State.

Others will attribute the comeback to Oregon's re-energized defense, the mostly brilliant play of special teams or the quieting of Keith Lewis.

Any way you break it down, it wasn't a one-man effort. It took a team to exorcise the demons of 2002 and some fans to stay on the bandwagon and make sure it kept moving.

Through the elements — wind, rain,

power problems and just plain cold-as-hell-in-a-snowstorm temperatures — enough Duck fans stuck to their team to make sure Oregon would be well-received when it did the unthinkable: Win the Civil War against an Oregon State squad that was better than the Ducks all season, except where it counted — Autzen Stadium.

The fans began to jump the walls and rush the field Saturday as the final seconds ticked off the clock.

Ducks — those who played in the game and those who watched it — mobbed each other at the midfield

"O" logo, celebrating Oregon's third-straight Civil War victory at Autzen.

Oregon students; autograph-seekers hounding Demetrius Williams and his teammates; and Lewis, clad in an Oregon State T-shirt that he got off the "clearance rack," were just a few enjoying the moment.

"We took pride in turning the season around, even when people began to jump off the bandwagon," Clemens said.

One Duck, the bald heart and soul of Oregon's defense, was in a rush to get off the field. Kevin Mitchell hur-

ried toward the end zone, shielding a crying woman and the young child she clutched tightly to her chest, as he helped her escape the melee.

It was indicative of the season: Oregon, the Pac-10 team full of (mostly) nice guys, still had time to help those in need.

With these Ducks, you've got to have faith.

See you in El Paso, Texas.

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VOLLEYBALL

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record at 33-85 — including 3-69 in the Pac-10 — during Ferreira's four-year tenure.

Final statistical count

Russell finished as Oregon's kill leader with 278 in 91 games this sea-

son. Freshman outside hitter Sarah Mason entered Friday's match as the Ducks' kill leader, but posted only three against the Golden Bears, bringing her season total to 275 in 90 games. Mason ended with a slight edge in kills per game, finishing with 3.06 compared to Russell's 3.05.

Mason led the Ducks in hitting percentage, posting a .257 clip. Russell

(.230) and sophomore setter Jodi Bell (.210) were the only other Oregon players with an attack percentage above .200.

As a team, Oregon was out-hit percentage-wise by its opponents, .303 to .189.

Russell finished as the team's point leader with 330. Mason also finished above the 300-point mark with 304.5.

One point is earned for a kill, service ace or a solo block, while a half-point is earned with a block assist.

Middle blocker Kristen Bitter proved to be quite the force at the net for Oregon this season. The 6-foot-4-inch freshman led the team with 98 total blocks while averaging 1.1 a game.

Bell dished out a team-high 732 as-

sists in 77 games before going down with a ligament injury to her right knee Nov. 8 against Washington. Madison finished with 247 assists.

O'Neil led the way defensively by hammering out 266 digs. Westendorf finished with 158, while Bell added 127.

Contact the sports reporter at jonroetman@dailyemerald.com.

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