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Mindi Rice

The girl and the game

## Ducks impress at end of season

If the Ducks were to grace a Sports Illustrated cover now, the photo would have to be Kellen Clemens diving over two Beavers for a touchdown, with a look saying, "You didn't believe in us? Believe this!" on his face.

Or Kenny Washington straight-arming the Oregon State kicker on a 48-yard kickoff return.

Or Igor Olshansky celebrating one of his three-and-a-half sacks.

Or Dante Rosario sliding into the corner of the endzone for Oregon's final touchdown.

Or Jason Fife and Jared Siegel with their high-five routine after four successful point-after kicks and two made field goals.

Whoever it would be or however it was chosen, one thing is for sure: The Ducks had a successful finish to the end of their season.

The season that started strong suddenly took on traits of 2002. Until Oregon found the key to its game — finish strong — against California with the fourth-quarter comeback.

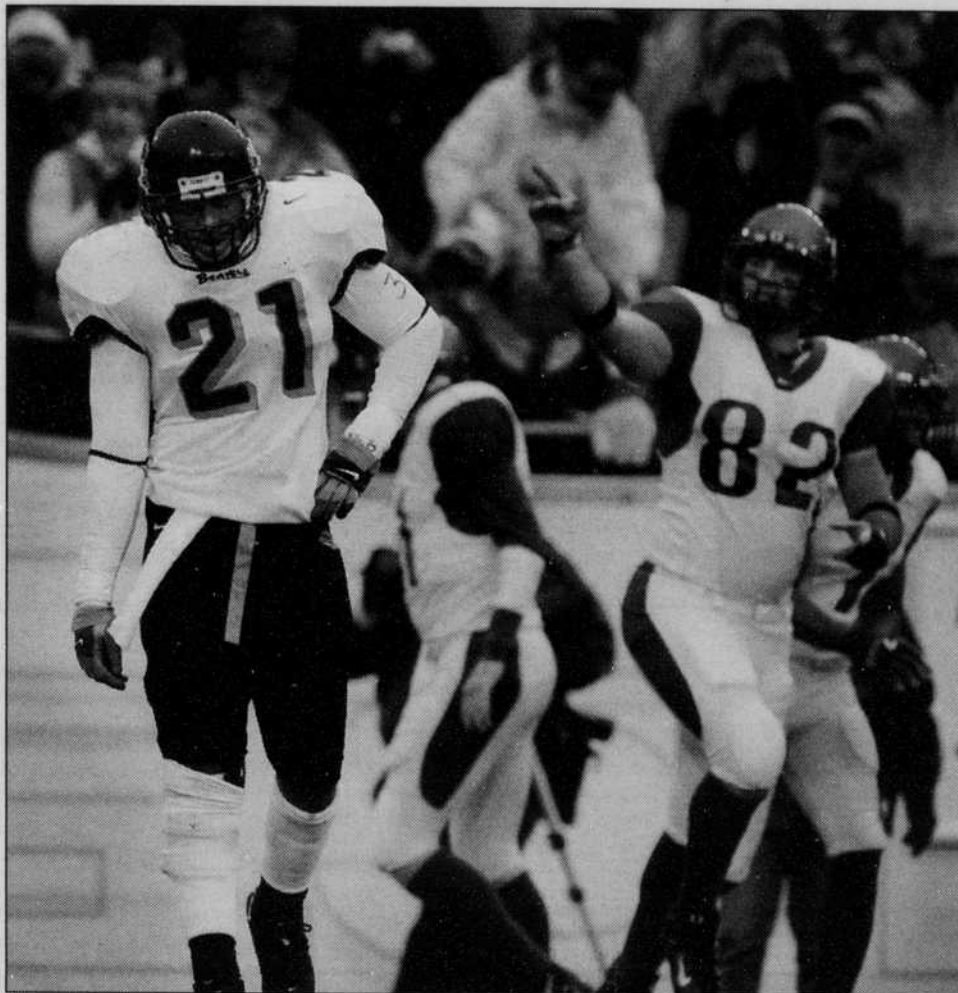
And the Ducks made that key work for their season.

Three weeks ago, following the blowout loss in Seattle, few thought Oregon could, or, in their wildest dreams, would win out the season.

Oregon, which went from 2-3 in the Pacific-10 Conference to 5-3 after the

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## Ducks win the War



Adam Amato Photo Editor

Oregon State's Chaz Scott can't look as Dan Kause (82) celebrates during Oregon's 14-point win.

Oregon holds Derek Anderson and Steven Jackson in check for its eighth win of the season

By Hank Hager  
Sports Editor

The evolution of the Oregon program came full circle on Saturday.

It came the moment the Ducks held Steven Jackson to 68 yards rushing. It came after giving Derek Anderson little breathing room, forcing him to the turf for six-and-a-half sacks.

It came as the Ducks celebrated on the Autzen Stadium turf after defeating arch rival Oregon State, 34-20, in front of a packed house in Eugene.

And now, the Ducks probably know where they'll be headed come December.

After an all-out, dominating win over the Beavers, Oregon watched Washington upset Washington State, 27-19, late Saturday. That means the Ducks will probably be going to El Paso, Texas, for the Sun Bowl.

"It doesn't matter," Oregon linebacker Kevin Mitchell said of where the Ducks could have gone. "Our season could've gone the other way."

The other way, as in down the drain, or to the cellar of the Pacific-10 Conference. After starting off the season 4-0, the Ducks sunk to 4-3 after consecutive losses to Washington State, Utah and Arizona State.

At one point, the Ducks stood 5-4 overall.

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## Special teams play special role in victory

Kenny Washington defied OSU's game plan to become a key cog for the Ducks in the Civil War

By Hank Hager  
Sports Editor

On the first kickoff of Oregon's game Saturday, Oregon State kicker Kirk Yliniemi aimed hard for the ground, hoping to drive the ball onto the Autzen Stadium turf.

The ball bounced, bounced again and bounced some more. It bounced so much that it eluded the hands of Oregon returner Kenny Washington and

into the end zone for a touchback.

Such was the day of Washington and the rest of Oregon's return corps. The group returned four kicks for 104 yards, highlighted by Washington's 67 yards. His long was a 48-yarder that put the Ducks on Oregon State's 35-yard line with seven minutes left in the third quarter.

Oregon ended that drive with a 15-yard touchdown by fullback Dante Rosario.

"Kenny Washington is so confident right now and so aggressive," Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said. "It's really fun to watch him return kicks."

It looked to be a long day with Oregon's kick returners. The Beavers hoped to take the Ducks'

special teams out of the game by driving the ball short or away from Washington and Ryan Shaw.

They succeeded, to an extent. Shaw and Washington combined for 33 yards of returns in the first half, but in the second, the Ducks exploded.

It started with Washington's run and was accentuated by an unlikely returner. Linebacker David Martin, who normally blocks for the returning duo, caught the ball at the Oregon 20 and returned it 23 yards.

"We did a great job of creating field position," Bellotti said.

For Washington, his performance was a con-

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## Oregon streaks to season-opening victory

The Ducks use their up-tempo offense to full advantage in a 13-point season-opening win over Fresno State

By Hank Hager  
Sports Editor

Whoever said the basketball season was a marathon and not a sprint obviously never watched Oregon play.

The Ducks came out with all pistons firing against Fresno State on Friday in the season-opener for both teams. Those pistons cooled down at times, but the Ducks pulled out an 80-

67 win over the Bulldogs to start the season on the right foot.

"That was a very good game for an opener," Oregon head coach Ernie Kent said.

The Ducks said that after the game they would go to the tapes and look for things to "clean up." They would find the mistakes, work on them and get ready for a Dec. 2 game against Portland State at McArthur Court.

They won't have much to work on if the statistics have anything to say. Try 20 assists in 26 Oregon baskets. How about 14 of 27 three-pointers, marked by Luke Jackson's five?

Try out-rebounding Fresno State, a team built on banging hard at the boards.

The Ducks did, taking 31 to the Bulldogs' 29.

"Every win is a good win," Oregon forward Ian Crosswhite said. "It was a good win against a tall, athletic team like Fresno State."

The win was Oregon's 12th season-opening victory and sixth in a row for a home opener. It came in front of a sellout crowd of 9,087, the 10th in a row at McArthur Court and first in a season-opener since 1978.

Of course, there were the obligatory warnings toward the fans from the referees. One for throwing things on the court, another for stomping so hard before a Renaldo Major free throw attempt that the vibrations shook the rim.

"It really feels good to play in that kind of atmosphere," Jackson said, comparing it to a Pacific-10 Conference game.

Fresno State, the 2003 Western Athletic Conference Champions, played well at times but

couldn't sustain against an Oregon team that Kent said has "great chemistry."

The statistics don't lie. The Bulldogs shot 44 percent from the field, committed 15 turnovers and of the team's 26 baskets, assisted on just four.

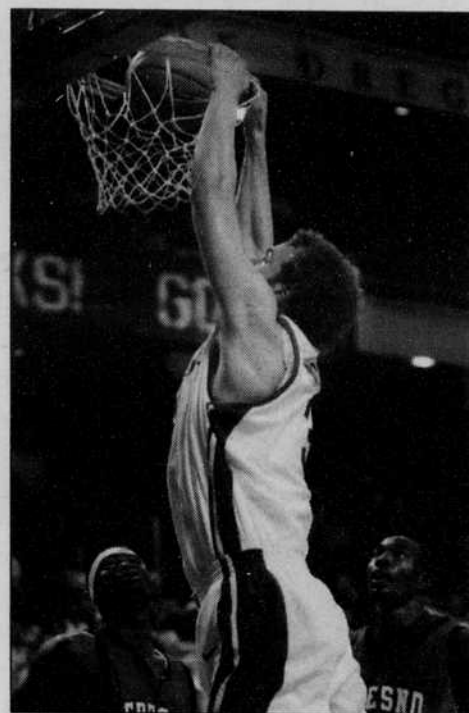
"That tells us we did a good job of locking up their system," Kent said. "We took the options away from their sets."

Shantay Legans led Fresno State with 20 points in his return to McArthur, his first game there since transferring from California two seasons ago. The crowd let him hear it, but he kept steady, shooting 8 of 19 in 39 minutes of play.

"I knew Shantay was going to play well," Fresno State head coach Ray Lopes said. "They made it hard for him, like everybody else will. He's one of those guys that's very dependable."

Jackson led the Ducks with 20 points, while guard Andre Joseph scored 15. Jackson played a key role on the boards, grabbing eight, and he also dished out a team-high six assists.

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Adam Amato Photo Editor

Mitch Platt scored 12 points in his first game as a Duck. Oregon defeated Fresno State on Friday.