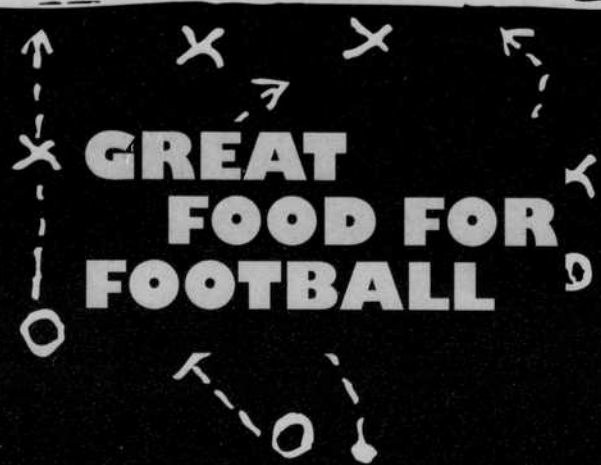




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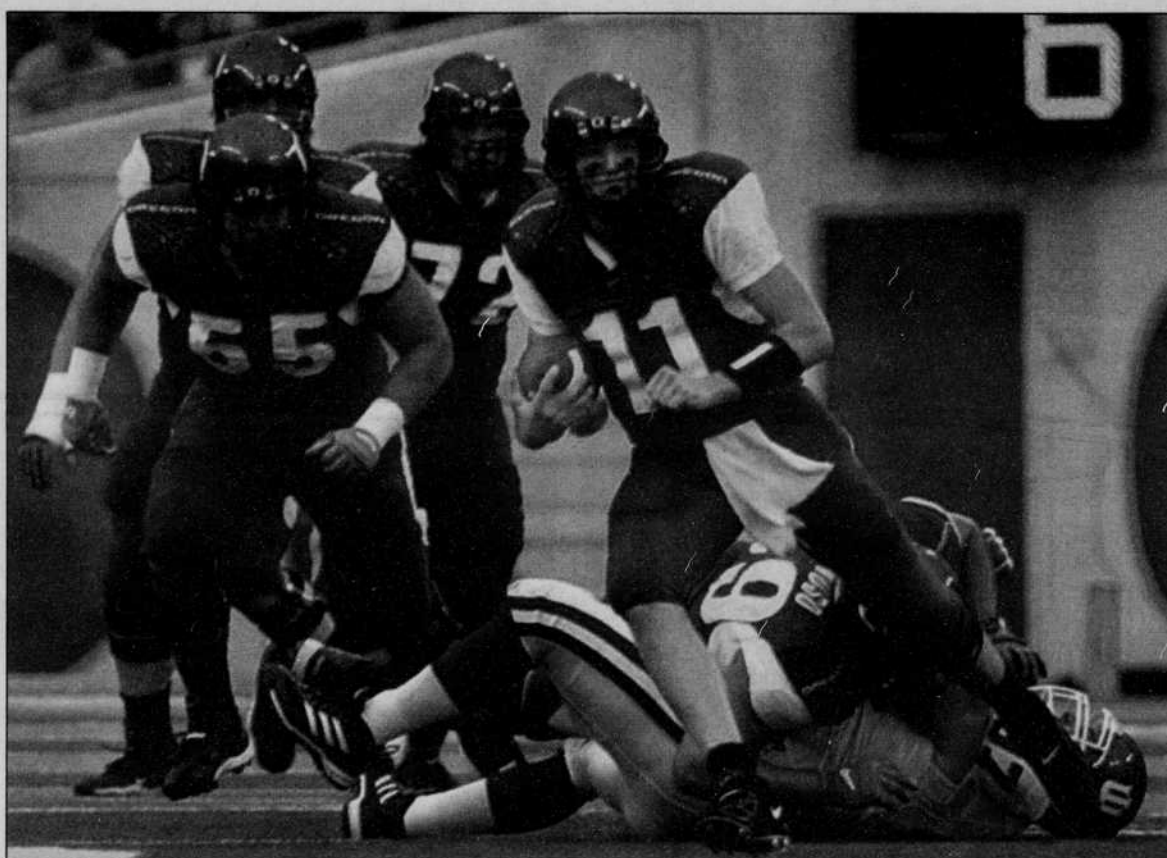
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ERIK R. BISHOFF | ONLINE & PHOTO EDITOR

Oregon quarterback Kellen Clemens (11) looks to bounce back after throwing three interceptions in last week's 30-24 loss to Indiana, the season and home opener. Last week, Clemens also threw for 317 yards and three touchdowns.

Ducks now look to upset Oklahoma on the road

*Oregon plays one
of the biggest games
in the program's history*

ALEX TAM
SPORTS EDITOR

One of the most anticipated games in Oregon football history is now upon us.

After a disappointing 30-24 loss to Indiana in their season and home opener, the Ducks (0-1 overall) return to the field to take on national championship contender and No. 2 Oklahoma (2-0) in Norman, Okla., Saturday at 12:30 p.m.

Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said his team's attitude is still upbeat after its 21-game win streak at home against non-conference opponents was broken. The team's last loss to a non-conference team at home occurred in a 34-16 loss to Utah on Sept. 17, 1994.

"We seem to be in good spirits, (although) not very happy with our game against Indiana," Bellotti said. "But we're looking forward to the opportunity presented with Oklahoma."

A big question entering the game is the play of Oregon's special teams, which struggled in all facets last week.

Punter Paul Martinez averaged only 20.5 yards on his two punts against Indiana. The competition at punter was re-opened this week, Bellotti said.

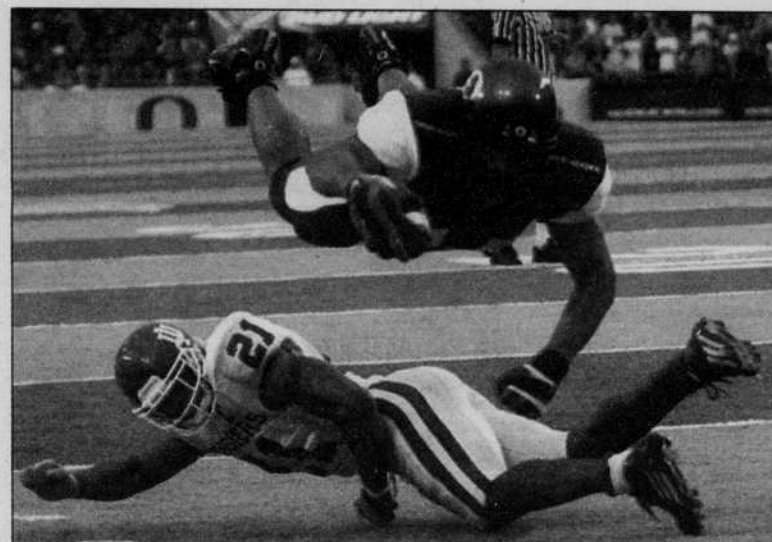
Also, Oregon's punt returners fumbled twice in the first quarter last week, which led to two Indiana touchdowns.

"Guys that dropped punts have not dropped any in practice, and they were our first- and second-string returners," Bellotti said. "We don't have a lot of choices there, but I think we can get better."

Bellotti said his team's running game will be one of the keys to an Oregon victory. Last week, running backs Kenny Washington and Terrence Whitehead totaled 125 yards rushing against Indiana.

"[Oklahoma is] very active, very physical," Bellotti said. "I think having a successful, efficient running game will keep them off-balance slightly."

In the Sooners' first two victories, their defense has allowed only 56 yards rushing. Behind that defensive success is an experienced, talented and fast defensive line led by Dan Cody and



DANIELLE HICKEY | FREELANCE PHOTOGRAPHER

Oregon fullback Dante Rosario leaps for one of his two touchdowns in last week's loss. Rosario also had five receptions for 60 yards in the game.

Jonathan Jackson, who have played a combined 70 games at Oklahoma.

Their speed on defense is an element that scares opposing quarterbacks, Bellotti said.

"I think you have to find ways to protect your quarterback and be creative with protection because there's not a lot of big plays against them," Bellotti said. "They run very well as a team on defense."

Bellotti said more of his younger players on offense and defense, who possess a lot of speed, will be counted upon to contribute mightily this weekend.

"You have to take correct angles, you have to use their speed against them in a sense and you have to match speed with speed," Bellotti said. "Some of our speed is young speed that isn't doing us a lot of good on the sidelines."

Oregon's defense will be tested against a high-octane Oklahoma offense that has produced 539.5 yards per game and 51.5 points per game.

Sooners quarterback Jason White, last season's Heisman Trophy winner, given to college football's most outstanding player, is the leader of the offense. In two games, White has thrown for 495 yards (247.5 per game) and five touchdowns.

Bellotti said White's ability to avoid getting sacked has been a huge factor in his success this season. White, a 6-foot-3 senior, has not been sacked yet through two games.

"Their quarterback is very mobile and I think it's very important that we can keep Jason White in the pocket," Bellotti said. "His improved mobility has added an aspect to the offense that they didn't have last year."

White said his job has been made easier with great playmakers around him.

"We have a lot of the same guys back from last year, so it's nice to have them on my team," White said.

However, White said he knows that Oregon will be up to task after nearly coming back to win against Indiana.

"We know that they'll improve on their mistakes, and they will be better," White said. "It will be a big challenge for us."

The bigger challenge, though, will be how Oregon defends the Sooners' offensive attack.

The running back combination of freshman Adrian Peterson and junior Kejuan Jones have totaled 401 yards and six touchdowns this season.

In a deep receiver corps, senior Mark Clayton leads the unit after having caught 12 passes for 196 yards and scoring two touchdowns.

Oklahoma head coach Bob Stoops said his receivers are relied upon to produce big numbers week in and week out.

"All our receivers are very capable of big plays," Stoops said. "They