

■ Oklahoma notes

OU's Jason White leads a strong Sooners' offense

Quarterback Jason White returns for his senior year after being last year's Heisman Trophy winner

ALEX TAM
SPORTS EDITOR

There is no doubt about the potential that No. 2 Oklahoma has on both the offensive and defensive sides of the ball.

The Sooners are perennial contenders for the national

championship. Under sixth-year head coach Bob Stoops, Oklahoma has produced a 57-11 overall record, including a national championship in 2000.

Behind that success has been the terrific play at the quarterback position under Stoops' tenure. From 1999 to 2002, quarterbacks Josh Heupel

and Nate Hybl combined for 12,403 yards passing, including passing for 91 touchdowns and 52 interceptions.

This season, Jason White is the offense's leader after winning last year's Heisman Trophy, given to college football's best player. He was also a consensus college player of the year among various media outlets.

White, a native of Tuttle, Okla. — just 30 miles outside Norman, Okla. — passed for 3,846 yards, threw 40

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Oregon: Phinisee says heat will help injury

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During the last four games of the season, Day caught 12 passes for 170 yards (the Ducks were 3-1) compared to 11 receptions for 148 yards during his first nine games (the Ducks were 5-4).

Phinisee looking to return

Junior cornerback Justin Phinisee re-injured a hamstring in the first quarter of the Indiana game, but says he will be ready for Oklahoma.

"There is no diagnosis, I diagnose myself, and I say I'm good and I'll be ready to go Saturday," Phinisee said.

The injury initially occurred during fall camp and Phinisee said he may have tried to come back a little early from it.

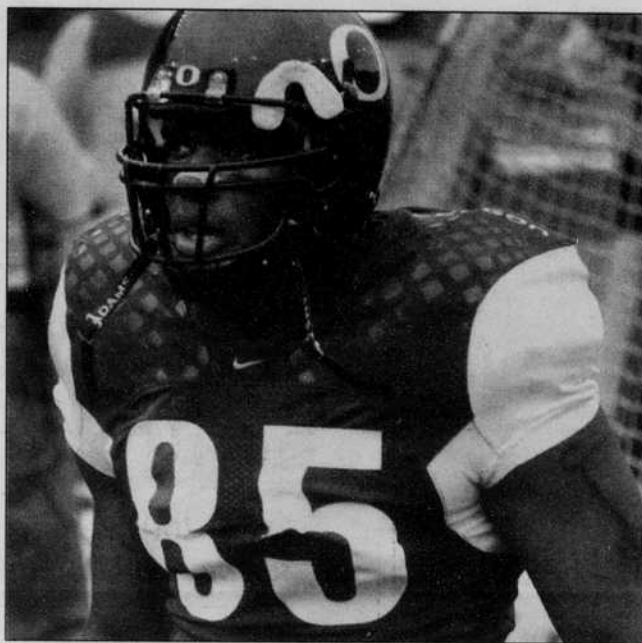
"I felt pretty confident and it felt good at first," Phinisee said, "I think my preparation had something to do with it. I didn't get myself ready enough. So now I need to take an extra step to make sure I make it through the game."

There is no doubt in Phinisee's mind that he will be out there against Oklahoma.

"I'll definitely be out there," Phinisee said. "It was a slight twinge, but it wasn't as bad as it was before. I gave it a day or two of rest and I should be ready to go."

"Our trainers feel strongly that there was not a strain," head coach Mike Bellotti said. "It was probably a tear of some scar tissue which is typically painful at the time and tends to allow the leg to loosen up. So that is a good sign."

Because the Ducks are traveling to



Junior tight end Tim Day's stress fracture is healed and he will make his first start of the season when the Ducks travel to Oklahoma and face the Sooners Saturday.

ERIK R. BISHOP
ONLINE & PHOTO
EDITOR

Oklahoma where the weather will be warmer and more humid, Phinisee said he believes it will benefit him by loosening up the injury.

"As a youngster I grew up in the heat," Phinisee said. "I love the heat. It's good on the muscles and better on your tendons, so I'm happy we will be in an atmosphere where it is hot and humid."

Ngata's return is a sore one

Defensive tackle Haloti Ngata's return caught up with him the next day as his injured knee that kept him out of the 2003 season felt the effects.

"It was really sore, but I felt really good during the game," Ngata said.

"It was my first game back so it doesn't surprise me."

The stats showed that Ngata's knee is feeling better as he led the team with six solo tackles against Indiana, including one for a loss.

But as the week of practice goes by, the 6-foot-5, 345-pound sophomore from Salt Lake City said he won't take it easy because of the importance of this game.

"I'm still going hard. I can't think about my knee being hurt, because it's Oklahoma," Ngata said. "I really don't care how my knee feels. I just got to play with it."

claytonjones@dailyemerald.com.

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