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Oregon wide receiver Keith Allen is part of deep and talented receiving corps that looks to capture a win in its conference opener against Arizona State on Saturday.

LAUREN WIMER
SENIOR
PHOTOGRAPHER

Past losses have Oregon seeking revenge on ASU

Arizona State goes for a three-peat against Oregon Saturday night

BY CLAYTON JONES
SPORTS EDITOR

In 2002, No. 6 Oregon relinquished a 21-point advantage to Arizona State and watched Andrew Walter rack up a Pacific-10 Conference record 536 yards passing in a 45-42 upset at Autzen Stadium.

In 2003, Oregon didn't seem to have a chance as Kellen Clemens threw interceptions on his first two passes, including one returned for a touchdown, and the Sun Devils trounced and humiliated the Ducks 59-14.

In 2004, the Ducks wear the scars from those painful losses and hope to use it as motivation against No. 21 Arizona State Saturday at Autzen Stadium.

"They torched us last year in Phoenix," Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said. "The temperature torched us and the team torched us. We can look at that film and be very embarrassed about our effort and our performance."

Despite their 4-7 record of last season and a sixth-place ranking in the Pac-10 preseason media poll, the Sun Devils have turned it around thanks, in part, to their improved defense.

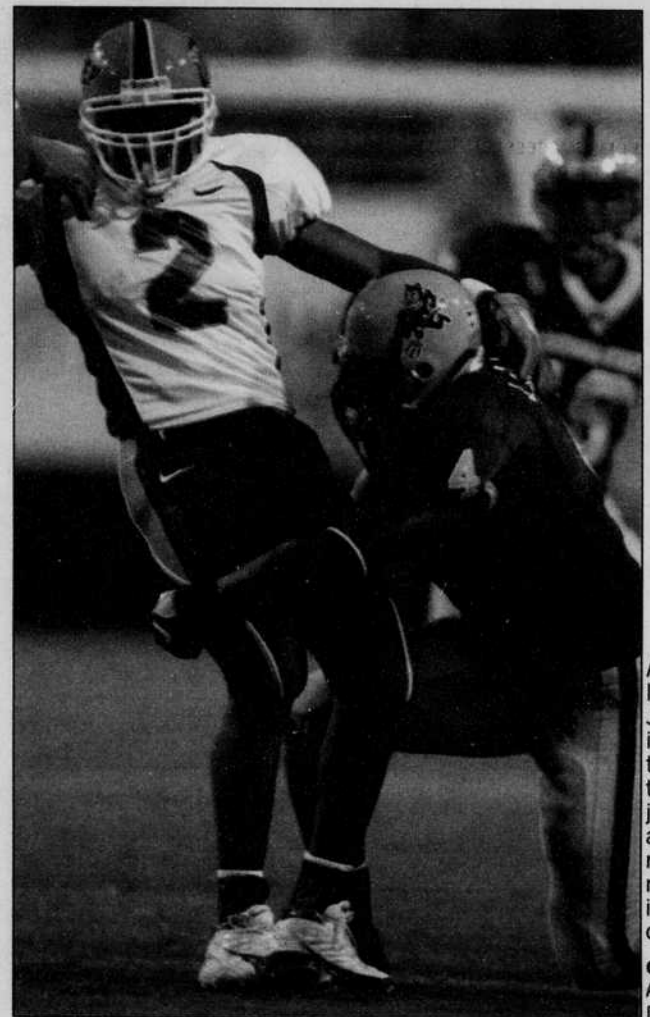
"I think the difference in this team from last year to this is the intensity with which they are playing on defense," Bellotti said. "They look to be equally adept to taking on the run or the pass."

Arizona State has held opponents to a stingy 12.8 points per game, ranking them first in the Pac-10 and 12th in the nation.

The leaders of the defense are junior linebackers Dale Robinson and Jamar Williams. Robinson is tied for first in the conference with four sacks and is fourth in tackles, averaging 9.8 tackles per game. Williams is tied for first in the conference and fifth in the nation with three interceptions.

"Dale Robinson and Jamar Williams are making a whole lot of plays at their position," Bellotti said.

To penetrate this tough Arizona State defense, Bellotti believes they will need to establish a good running attack so they can open up their passing game.



Arizona State linebacker Jamar Williams is third on the team with 21 tackles. The junior is part of a defense that ranks in the nation's top 25 in three categories.

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A key for that will be junior running back Terrence Whitehead. The Los Angeles native ran for 115 yards last week against Idaho and leads the team with 228 yards.

If the Ducks can run the ball, it will open up more one-on-one situations for the 6-foot-plus Oregon receivers against an Arizona State starting secondary that averages 5-foot-10. Senior Oregon wide receiver Marcus Maxwell thinks the height difference could benefit them.

"We do look to take advantage of them since we are taller," Maxwell said. "We need to focus and make sure we study their defense and know their DBs inside and out."

The matchup that may concern Oregon the most is Walter and his explosive aerial attack against the Duck secondary.

"We have to not allow Andrew Walter to throw for 300 yards," Bellotti said. "If he does that they are probably going to lose."

"This will be the best quarterback we've seen to date. We're talking about Jason White, a Heisman trophy winner, but he didn't throw the ball as much as I expect Andrew Walter will," Bellotti said.

And expect Walter's passes to be directed at junior wide receiver Derek Hagan. He is currently second in the conference in receptions (7.75 per game) and receiving yards per game (112.8).

A big loss for Arizona State is the

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