

Preview: Ball security and creating turnovers key for Oregon against ASU

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absence of running back Loren Wade. He is suspended indefinitely from the team for violating team rules.

The team also lost backup running back Randy Hill due to injury, so they are to No. 3 running back Hakim Hill.

"Losing your one and two tailbacks is difficult and certainly puts a higher premium on their passing game," Bellotti said, "which is basically what has beaten us the past couple years so I think it makes it that much more of

an emphasis to stop Andrew Walter and Derek Hagan."

The Ducks hope the return of Justin Phinisee to the secondary, plus a healthy Haloti Ngata to add pressure, will slow down Arizona State's passing attack.

Oregon freshman Jackie Bates believes if the team plays as a whole the rest will take care of itself.

"Everyone just needs to play their part," Bates said. "If everyone executes and trusts in their teammates we

should be fine."

The difference in this game, according to Bellotti, will be ball security and which team can create the most turnovers.

"We have been on the negative side of the turnover/takeaway ratio," Bellotti said. "Arizona State has been on the positive side. So we have to make sure we protect the football and figure out a way to get some take-aways."

The biggest challenge for the Sun Devils may be dealing with a

rambunctious Autzen Stadium crowd.

"Autzen Stadium is the toughest place there is," said Arizona State head coach Dirk Koetter, a former Oregon offensive coordinator. "The crowd is right on top of you and the fans are very knowledgeable. They know when to be loud. They are good at disrupting the game."

Walter agrees: "Autzen Stadium is the loudest place that I have ever played. The only place that might come close is Nebraska. Autzen is definitely the

loudest and they are making noise from the moment we step out onto the field."

The crowd might be extra loud this game after watching the Sun Devils score late in the game last season when the victory was already in hand.

But Bellotti said he doesn't hold a grudge against Koetter.


"I respect Dirk. I like him a lot and I think that's a mutual feeling," Bellotti said.

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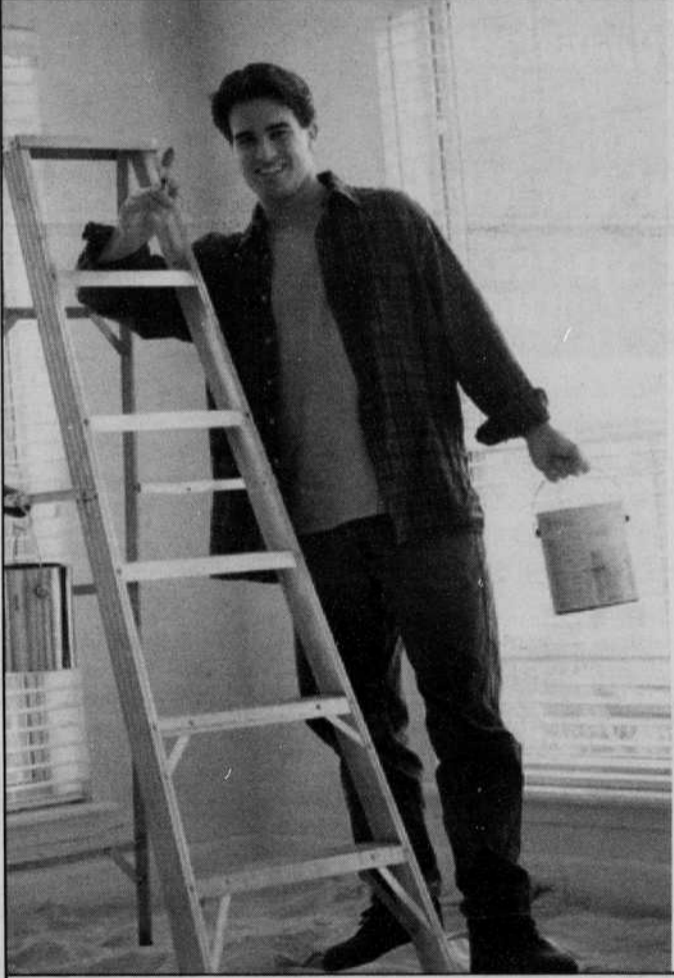
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