

Oregon: Ducks, Cougars have split 76 meetings

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around the conference, that's because it is. Oregon third-string quarterback Brady Leaf, the younger brother of former Washington State quarterback Ryan Leaf, will travel into his brother's old haunts on Saturday. Also, Oregon defensive end Devan Long is the brother of 2002 Outland Trophy winner Rien Long.

And the rivalry continues

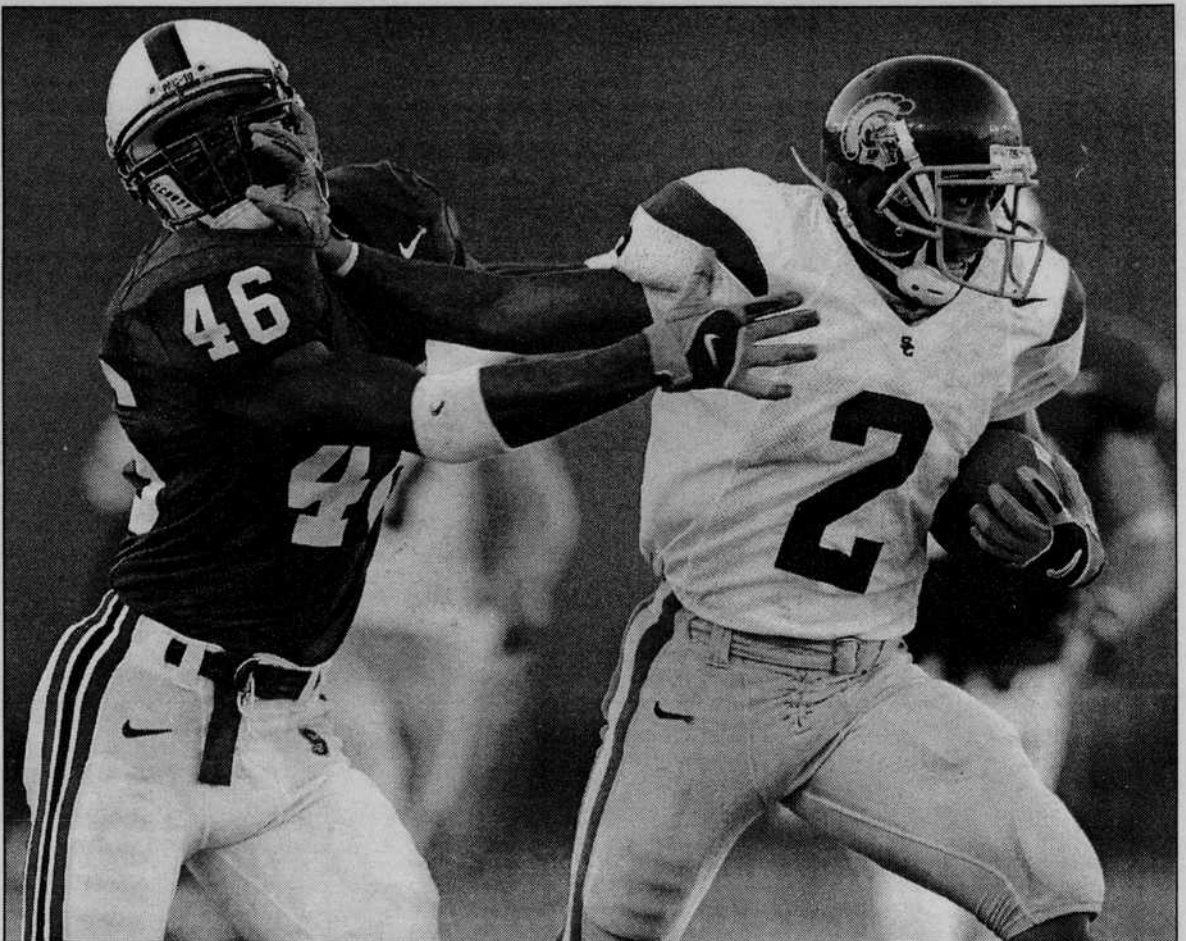
Oregon continues one of its longest rivalries in school history Saturday against Washington State.

"(The Cougars) are an interesting team," Bellotti said. "They have a

great receiver and a big, physical back. The quarterback question revolves around his health. Defensively, Will Derting continues to amaze me. He makes plays. He makes them all over the field, and they are difference-making plays."

The Cougars have won the last two meetings between the two schools to forge a 37-37-7 tie in the all-time series that dates back to 1901. Oregon last won in Pullman in 2001 and is 20-18-2 in the Palouse, with the game marking the fourth meeting played on the Washington State campus in the last five years.

briansmith@dailyemerald.com



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USC sophomore receiver Steve Smith stiff arms Stanford's Brandon Harrison earlier this season. The Trojans defeated the Cardinal 31-28, and they are the favorite to win the Pacific-10 Conference championship.

GOTW: USC looks to avenge last year's 3 OT loss

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yards and has thrown for six touchdowns and just two interceptions.

"We need to protect the passer — in any game you need to protect the passer," Tedford said. "They do have a very wide variety of blitzes to bring people out of the secondary to come after you. Preparation is going to be key so that we don't let any free hitters come loose."

California faces a tight and stingy Trojan defense that has surrendered just 12.7 points per game, which ranks No. 10 in the nation. USC opponents have also gained only an average of 277 yards per game, which ranks 20th nationally.

Tedford said the only way to combat the USC defense is by having a consistent rushing attack and not solely depending on the passing game. In last season's victory over the Trojans, California running back Adimchinobe Echemandu was able to run for a career-high 147 yards in 34 carries.

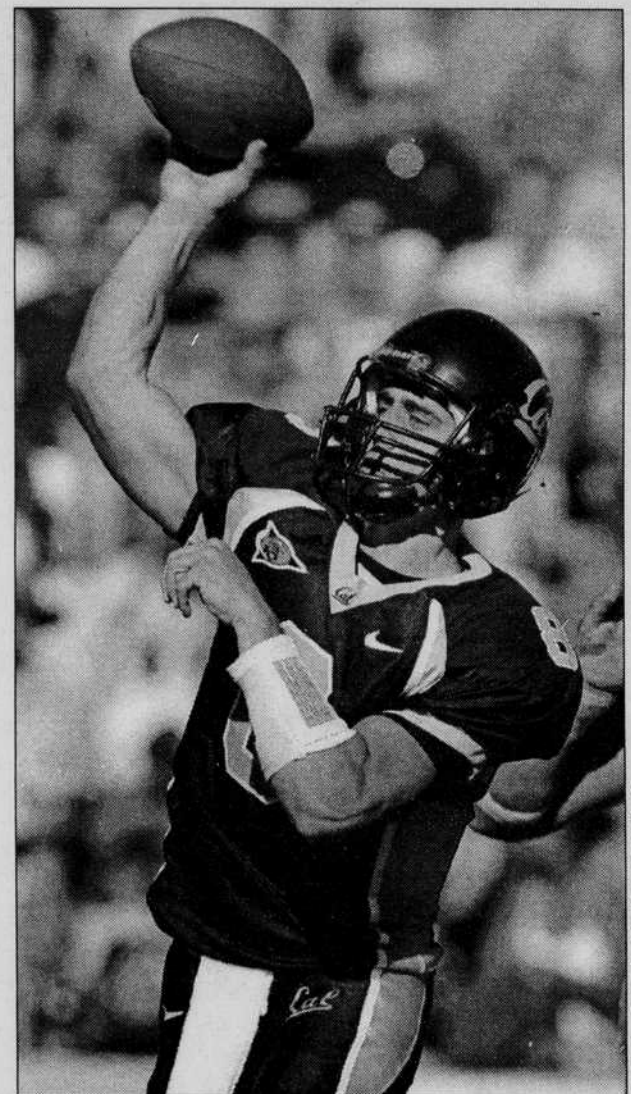
"We need to be able to run the football in some way, shape or form," Tedford said. "I think that helped us last year a little bit when Joe (Echemandu) broke a couple runs. It gave us some field position and we didn't have to rely on throwing the ball every down."

This season, California's rushing game is on the shoulders of senior tailback J.J. Arrington, who is the fifth leading rusher in the nation. The 5-foot-11, 210-pound Arrington has run for a total of 466 yards and seven touchdowns through three games this season. His 155.3 rushing yards per game and 8.6 yards per carry ranks him second in the Pac-10 behind UCLA's Maurice Drew.

In California's 49-7 rout over Oregon State last weekend, Arrington ran for 108 yards in 22 carries. In addition, Golden Bears receiver Chase Lyman caught five passes for a career-high 176 yards and three touchdowns. Lyman, a senior, was named the Pac-10 Offensive Player of the Week.

USC head coach Pete Carroll said he sees a lot of similarities between his team's offense and California's. USC is ranked 15th in the nation in scoring offense, averaging 36.5 points per game. Meanwhile, California is ranked first in the nation averaging 48.7 points per game.

"(Cal is) a team that does all of the things right. They play smart and don't get themselves in bad situations," said



California quarterback Aaron Rodgers has thrived under head coach Jeff Tedford and is considered one of the best players in the nation.

COURTESY CALIFORNIA ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

Carroll, who is in his fourth season at USC. "They have a lot of balance on the offensive side, and it helps them on both sides of the ball. I think we are similar in that fashion."

In USC's 31-28 comeback victory over Stanford two weeks ago, the Trojans scored 14 unanswered points in the second half. Trojans quarterback Matt Leinart led the way after completing 24 of 30 passes for 308 yards and one touchdown.

An improving USC receiving corps broke out against Stanford when sophomore receiver Steve Smith hauled in eight catches for 153 yards and scored one touchdown. Smith, along with Dwayne Jarrett and star tailback Reggie Bush, provide the Trojans with plenty of offensive weapons.

"I'm feeling good about (our

receivers). Steve Smith has really emerged and is rock solid in his spot," Carroll said. "That gives us the assurance that we can count on him to make the plays."

Carroll said this weekend's game will be a true test for his squad in front of the first sell-out crowd at the Coliseum in Los Angeles since 1930. More than 92,000 fans are expected to attend the game.

"It's a terrific time to be here. It's a perfect time for the Pac-10 Conference to showcase a couple of teams that are playing well," Carroll said. "We are looking forward to the match-up and hope that we can play well and get what we want to get done."

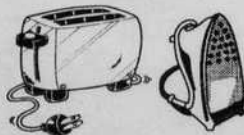
Alex Tam is a freelance reporter for the Daily Emerald

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