

■ Game of the week

OSU hopes history repeats itself against USC

Oregon State hopes to blemish USC's record once again in a repeat of the teams' memorable 1967 meeting

BY ALEX TAM
FREELANCE REPORTER

Longtime USC football fans remember what happened in 1967.

Behind the rushing attack of O.J. Simpson nearly 37 years ago, the Trojans won their sixth national

championship, despite losing one game that season.

That one game was to Oregon State in a mud-and-rain-filled 3-0 loss in Corvallis. And now, the Beavers look to repeat one of the program's most memorable moments when No. 1 USC

(8-0 overall, 5-0 Pacific-10 Conference) travels to play Oregon State (4-4, 3-2) in Corvallis at 7 p.m. Saturday.

Oregon State head coach Mike Riley was asked whether he would break out that video of the game as inspiration for his squad.

"I don't know where that is, I don't have a copy of it," Riley said. "But we'll make reference to that. That was a great moment in Oregon State history, for sure."

Riley, who grew up in Corvallis, was a ball boy at that game and his father, Bud, was an assistant coach for the Beavers. Riley was 14 years old and vividly remembers that Oregon State team, which had a 7-2-1 record and finished No. 7 in the country.

"That was a very good Oregon State team and they ended up having a very good year," Riley said. "It was fun as a kid being around the team and it makes it fun for me now because I can relay those memories to the team."

The Beavers get another shot at taking down a co-defending national champion after losing to the other co-national champions, Louisiana State, 22-21 in the opening game this season.

Riley said the chance to play the Trojans at home this weekend is one they need to take advantage of after having won three straight games.

"It's a big challenge and also a great opportunity for our football team," said Riley. "We are at a point now that we have probably played our best, most consistent football throughout the year in the last three ballgames."

USC head coach Pete Carroll, however, enters the contest after having never lost a game in November during his four-years in Los Angeles. He is 10-0 in the month dating back to 2001.

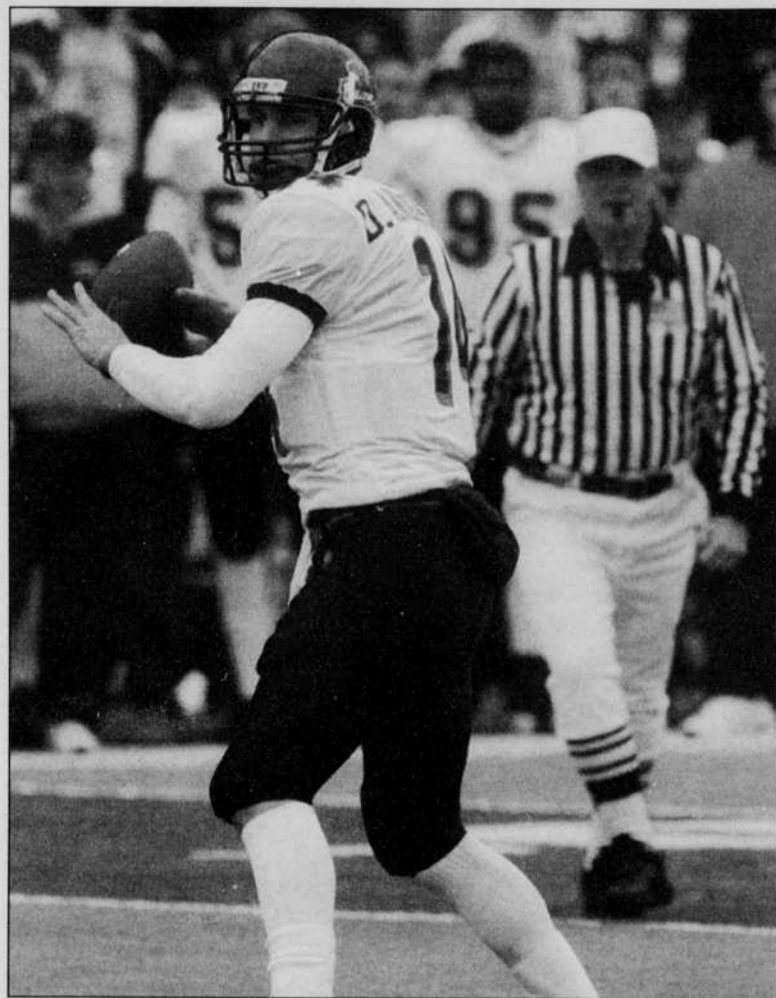
Carroll will also make his first-ever trip to Corvallis, but said it should not be a problem since they faced similar circumstances last weekend. The Trojans defeated Washington State in Pullman, Wash., for the first time under Carroll in a 42-12 victory last Saturday.

"It does present new challenges just because we have not been there before," Carroll said. "We had not won at Washington State so it was important for us to go there last week and succeed in that environment."

"I know it will be a good crowd and a different kind of turf this week."

In last week's victory, quarterback Matt Leinart completed 23 of 28 passes for 235 yards and passed for two touchdowns. Leinart, a redshirt junior, was replaced by backup Matt Cassell in the third quarter as his team built a 42-0 lead.

"He looked so comfortable in the game," Carroll said. "The touch that he put on all of the throwing opportunities that we gave him was right on."



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Oregon State quarterback Derek Anderson needs three touchdown passes to move into sixth place all-time in the Pac-10. The Scappoose native has 66 career scoring tosses.

For the season, Leinart has passed for 1,863 yards and 18 touchdowns and ranks 12th in the nation and second in the Pac-10 in passing efficiency. When Leinart starts at quarterback, the Trojans have a record of 20-1.

Leinart's counterpart, Derek Anderson, is also considered one of the top quarterbacks in the Pac-10. Anderson, a senior, is Oregon State's all-time passing yardage leader (9,876) and needs just 124 more yards to become the fifth quarterback in Pac-10 history to throw for at least 10,000 yards.

Carroll said he has taken notice of Anderson's success throughout his "fantastic college career."

"He's a big-time quarterback, there's no question," Carroll said. "Seems like he has been doing it forever."

Riley said his quarterback's confidence is "at an all-time high for the season" through the current three-game winning streak. During the streak, Anderson has passed for 705 yards and six touchdowns and also has run for one touchdown.

"He has just played efficient and he has played well," Riley said. "As far as

where we are offensively, we are doing better and he is a big part of that."

And what would it mean for Anderson if he were to pull off an upset over the No. 1 team in the nation?

"He'll have a tremendous legacy as one of the most productive and one of the winningest quarterbacks in a long time at this school," Riley said. "He'll have a positive image no matter what happens."

Riley said his team will be ready to play the Trojans and if not for three missed extra points by kicker Alexis Serna against LSU earlier this season, the Beavers could have had two victories over both of last year's co-national champions.

"Our team has risen to the occasion previously in what was perceived as an overmatched football game and we came up short," Riley said. "I think this team is better than that team, but the game will be played, and we have our opportunity and we will have to play very well."

Alex Tam is a freelance reporter for the Daily Emerald

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Roetman: Final countdown to a Duck win

Continued from page 9B

Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said Oregon is thrilled to get another chance to play a top-tier team, especially with many Duck players having grown up in the Golden State.

"I'm excited, our players are excited," Bellotti said. "We have a lot of players from California going home and I hope I get the same response from those players as I did from our kids with Washington ties this past week against (the Huskies)."

3. Terrence Whitehead — Oregon's featured tailback continues to be one of the most productive offensive weapons in the Pacific-10 Conference. The junior is one of only three backs in the Pac-10 to average more than 100 yards per game (102.4) and is also a legitimate pass-catching threat out of the backfield. Whitehead leads all conference running backs with 34 receptions for 310 yards.

If the Ducks are to have any chance against Cal, Whitehead must have a big day running and receiving against one of the best defenses in the country.

2. Kellen Clemens — Oregon's quarterback is the total yardage leader in the Pac-10, producing more than 271 yards per game. After starting the season with a three-interception performance against Indiana, Clemens has played outstanding football. He's made smart throws and has been picked off only twice during the last seven games, both of which came on passes tipped by an Oregon receiver.

For some reason, however, the Oregon offense seems to hit a bump in the road each game, where execution starts to falter. If Clemens and the Oregon offense can put together four solid quarters of football, the Ducks have a chance.

1. Defense — The Oregon defense has carried the team during the last

three weeks, allowing only 33 points during three wins. The Ducks' success starts up front. Tackles Haloti Ngata and Robby Valenzuela have been stuffing the run and getting backfield penetration, while ends Devan Long and Chris Solomona have pressured quarterbacks and created turnovers.

The dominance of the front four have opened things up for linebackers Jerry Matson, Anthony Trucks and Ramone Reed to roam free and make tackles cleanly without having to sift through blockers.

Defensive backs Justin Phinisee, J.D. Nelson, Jackie Bates and Gipson have been successful in eliminating the big play and making teams try to grind out long drives.

While Cal's offense is loaded, the Oregon defense has a shut-down mentality and is capable of doing the job.

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