

■ In my opinion



JON ROETMAN
ROUGHING THE PASSER

Ducks' lack of hunger in defeat inexplicable

Oregon had plenty of reasons to be fired up for Saturday's contest against UCLA.

It was a chance for the Ducks to secure their 11th consecutive winning season.

It was an opportunity to assure the team an eighth-straight bowl appearance.

And for Oregon seniors, it was the last chance to suit up for a game at Autzen Stadium.

With all the motivation Oregon had to shine on a cloudy Saturday in Eugene, UCLA came out as the hungrier team and downed the Ducks 34-26.

UCLA ran the ball early and often, and dominated an Oregon defense that sat back on its heels from the opening kickoff.

The Bruins were without the services of starting tailback Maurice Drew, who sat out with an ankle injury. It didn't matter. Third-string running back Chris Markey rushed 23 times for 131 yards, and second-stringer Manuel White added 82 yards and two touchdowns on 21 carries.

The Bruin offensive line blocked with attitude. The Ducks couldn't tackle. UCLA made plays. Oregon played hesitant.

"This game was all about who was the hungriest," Oregon safety Justin Phinisee said. "It seemed like UCLA came out hungrier than we did. We got hungry toward the end, but it was too late."

With Drew out of the game, Oregon defenders said they expected a heavy dose of the Bruin passing game. What they got was a steady diet of blue-and-gold ball carriers running between the tackles.

"They just kept running the ball and kept with it," defensive tackle Robby Valenzuela said. "We were preparing for more pass. They just came out running it all the time, and it surprised us."

Adjustments can be made, and the element of surprise can be neutralized. After UCLA rushed for 141 yards in the first half, Oregon should have figured the Bruins were going to stay with the run. While UCLA didn't match its halftime total in the second half, the Bruins still managed to grind out 86 more yards and control the clock.

Throughout the game, Bruin running backs could be seen running full speed five yards downfield before being touched. And when Oregon defenders managed to track down a ball carrier, it appeared UCLA backs were covered in a thick coating of Vaseline. Sloppy tackling led to an abundance of extra yardage for the Bruins, who took advantage of every given opportunity.

"We had chances and a lot of missed tackles," defensive end Chris Solomon said. "That probably gave them more confidence in their running game. They just kept pounding it and pounding it and pounding it."

With only one regular season game remaining, it would be hard to attribute missed tackles to a lack of practice and fundamental ability. Phinisee credited them to a lack of desire.

"When it comes down to it, it's that hunger factor," he said. "If you want it bad enough, (a ball carrier) isn't going to slip out

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■ Duck football

Not - so - Civil War a-Bruin



ERIK R. BISHOFF | PHOTOGRAPHER

UCLA's third-string running back Chris Markey ran for 131 yards in the Bruins' victory over the Ducks at Autzen Stadium. The freshman also led his team in receiving with five receptions for 84 yards.

Saturday's 34-26 loss to UCLA leaves the Ducks in a must-win situation heading into Corvallis for the 108th Civil War game

BY CLAYTON JONES
SPORTS EDITOR

Oregon's hopes of a winning season and a bowl game will now be determined at the Civil War. The Ducks couldn't slow down UCLA's rushing attack and lost to the Bruins 34-26 Saturday at Autzen Stadium.

The Bruins (6-4 overall, 4-3 Pacific-10 Conference) pounded the ball on the ground against the Ducks (5-5, 4-3), accumulating 227 rushing yards on 56 carries without starting tailback Maurice Drew.

UCLA's rushing attack was led by third-string tailback Chris Markey. The freshman from Luling, La., ran the ball for 131 yards and led the Bruins in receiving with five catches for 84 yards.

"We knew they would run the ball and that they have a good offensive line, which is healthy for the first time in a couple weeks," Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said. "We knew Maurice Drew is a great running back, but also knew they had two great running backs behind him."

The Ducks had a final shot at the end of the game after UCLA's Justin Medlock kicked his second field goal from at least 50 yards away to give the Bruins a 34-26 lead.

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■ Men's basketball

Brooks helps Ducks slip by Western Oregon 66-58

Despite being outrebounded, Oregon held on with the help of the sophomore guard's 21 points

BY JON ROETMAN
SENIOR SPORTS REPORTER

The youthful Oregon men's basketball team received a lesson in staying focused Sunday.

The Ducks squeaked past a feisty Western Oregon team 66-58 during their final exhibition game at McArthur Court.

The Wolves — a Division II team — grabbed a 58-57 lead on a rebound basket by Ryan Fiegi with 3 minutes and 45 seconds remaining. Oregon answered with a 9-0 run to close the game, including seven consecutive points from point guard Aaron Brooks.

Oregon head coach Ernie Kent attributed the closeness of the game to the Ducks' inability to remain focused from possession to possession. He added, however, that Oregon will benefit from having played in a close game.

"It was a great game for us to play," Kent said. "It was a tight ball game. We had not drilled a lot on late-game situations. Obviously, we better do quite a bit of that because that's what this team (will look like) through the course of a year, as opposed to blowing people out by 20 or 30 points."

"This team is really going to have to grind out wins."

Western Oregon slowed the tempo of the game to a grinding pace with a ball-control style of offense. The Wolves let the shot clock tick under 10 seconds during the majority of their possessions in order to hinder Oregon's up-tempo style of play.

Western Oregon took the lead for the first time at the 3:46 mark of the first half when a three-pointer from Fiegi put the Wolves up 25-22. Brooks answered seconds later with a three-pointer from the left wing to tie it.

Forward Evan Kieling put Western Oregon back on top 27-25 during its following possession with a jump shot from the left corner, but Brooks answered once again by sprinting back to the left wing and drilling another three-pointer to give Oregon a 28-27 lead.

The teams ended the first half in a 32-32 tie. "We came out kind of flat on offense," said Brooks, who finished with a game-high 21 points in 35 minutes. "They took the air out of the ball, ran a lot of half-court sets and we didn't get a lot of transition buckets. (The game) was definitely more challenging than we would have liked."

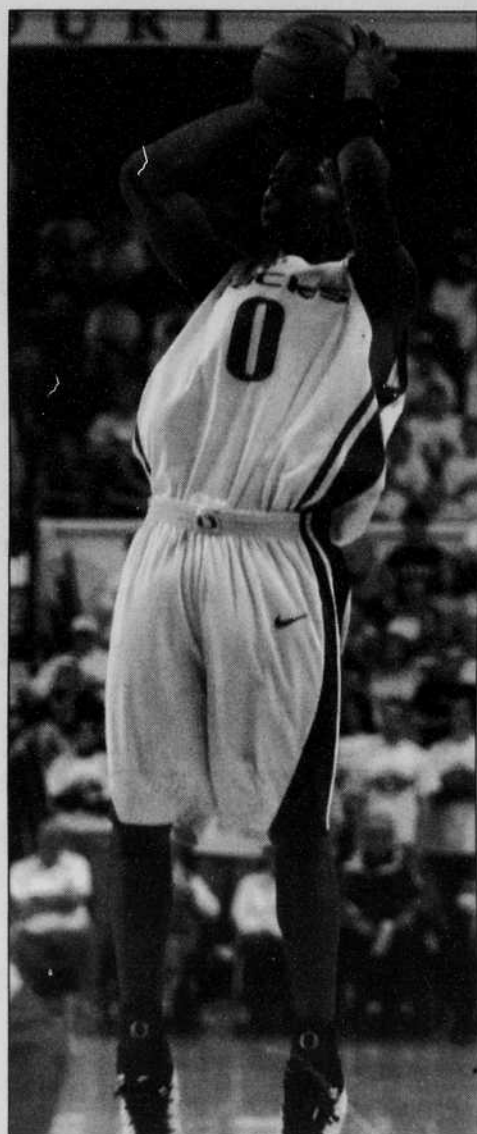
Despite not having a player listed taller than 6-foot-7, Western Oregon battled inside and outrebounded the Ducks 29-26. The Ducks were limited to 18 points in the paint and were hounded by a pack of scrappy Wolves every time they touched the ball.

Freshman guard Malik Hairston finished with 15 points and five rebounds, while junior forward Ian Crosswhite added 11 points and grabbed six boards.

Junior point guard Kevin Tyner led the Wolves with 18 points, connecting on 5 of 10 field goals.

"Our coaches always talk about playing with poise," Tyner said. "We just wanted to compete. We had fun."

jonroetman@dailyemerald.com



TIM BOBOSKY | PHOTOGRAPHER

Oregon's Aaron Brooks led the team with 21 points and five assists in the Ducks' close 66-58 victory over Division II Western Oregon on Sunday at Mac Court.