

Oregon aims for more touchdowns, forwar 6.1.1 fewer field goals

BY SHAWN MILLER SPORTS EDITOR

Oregon, 9-1 in home openers under head coach Mike Bellotti, is looking forward to erasing the bad taste from its mouth after the last home game, a 34-26 loss to UCLA.

The Ducks have that opportunity on Saturday, hosting the University of Montana Grizzlies, a Division I-AA school out of the Big Sky Conference.

Typically, a Pacific-10 Conference school matched up against a Division I-AA opponent should be a laugh, but nobody at Oregon is smiling at the thought of the Grizzlies.

We are not taking them lightly," Oregon cornerback Aaron Gipson said. "We are just going to come out, play hard, play fast and come out with a win.

That is probably for the best after last season's home-opener debacle, when the Ducks committed seven turnovers in a losing effort to Indiana.

'They (Montana) are a darn good football team," Oregon quarterback Kellen Clemens said. "We've got to be ready, and after last year we will be."

The loss started the season in a downward spiral, eventually leaving Oregon with its first losing season in 10 years and in Bellotti's tenure. The lessons were learned, and after beginning the season with a victory last week at Houston, the Ducks feel confident that they are headed in the right direction early.

Bellotti spent the week focusing on "special teams coverage, kickoff coverage, consistency in where we kick the ball off, no break downs in the secondary, not giving up the big play and a reduction in penalties."

Last year the Ducks were flagged for 877 yards and were the worst in the Pac-10, recording an average of 79.7 penalty yards per game. Little changed against Houston; Oregon committed 12 penalties for 105 yards. A lack of experience is what Bellotti said could lead to the miscues.

'Every year we are a young team," Bellotti said. "We have 12 or 13 seniors on this team, which is scary. That is the least I've had since the Cotton Bowl year."

Offensively, Bellotti wants productivity in the red zone, with fewer field goals and more touchdowns. Despite kicker Paul Martinez's record-tying effort of five made field goals in six attempts against Houston, touchdowns are worth double the points, and that is what Bellotti wants to see on the scoreboard.

'We moved the ball well. We did not score as many touchdowns as we would like," Bellotti said. "We had opportunities in the red zone; we didn't convert them for a variety of reasons.'

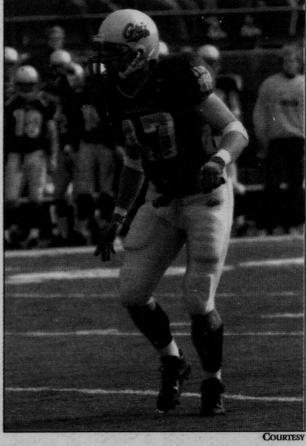
Two key statistics that show improvement are that the Ducks held Houston to 31 percent on thirddown conversions, while posting nearly a 50 percent completion rate,

PREVIEW, page 12



STEPHEN PINCHBACK | THE DAILY COU

Quarterback Kellen Clemens will showcase the new Duck offense in front of the home crowd for the first time this season Saturday against Montana. Clemens was the Pacific-10 Offensive Player of the Week after throwing for 348 yards and two touchdowns last week at Houston.



Shane MacIntyre defensive attack from the inside linebacker position. MacIntyre recorded a team-high 94 tackles last season.

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