

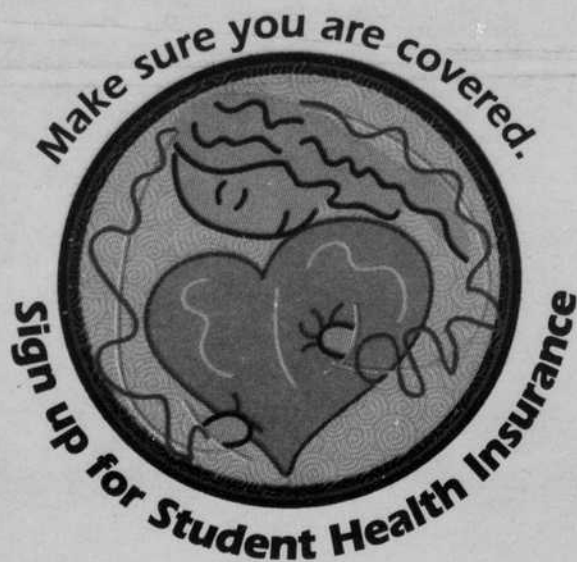
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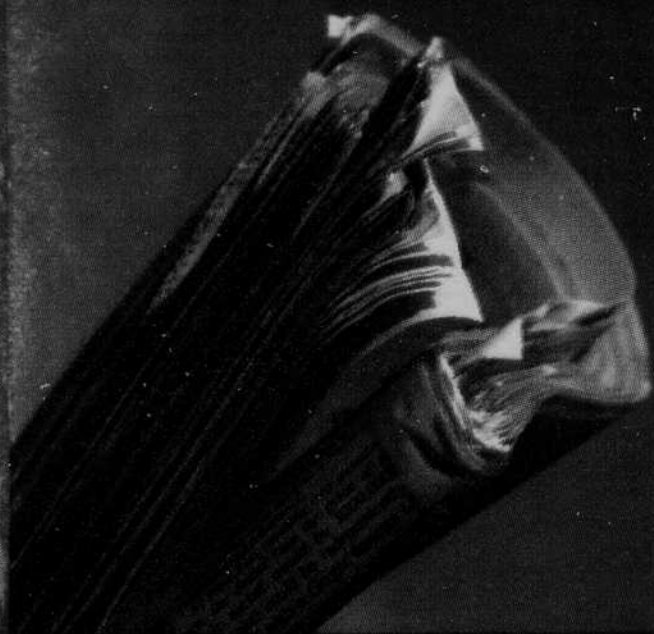
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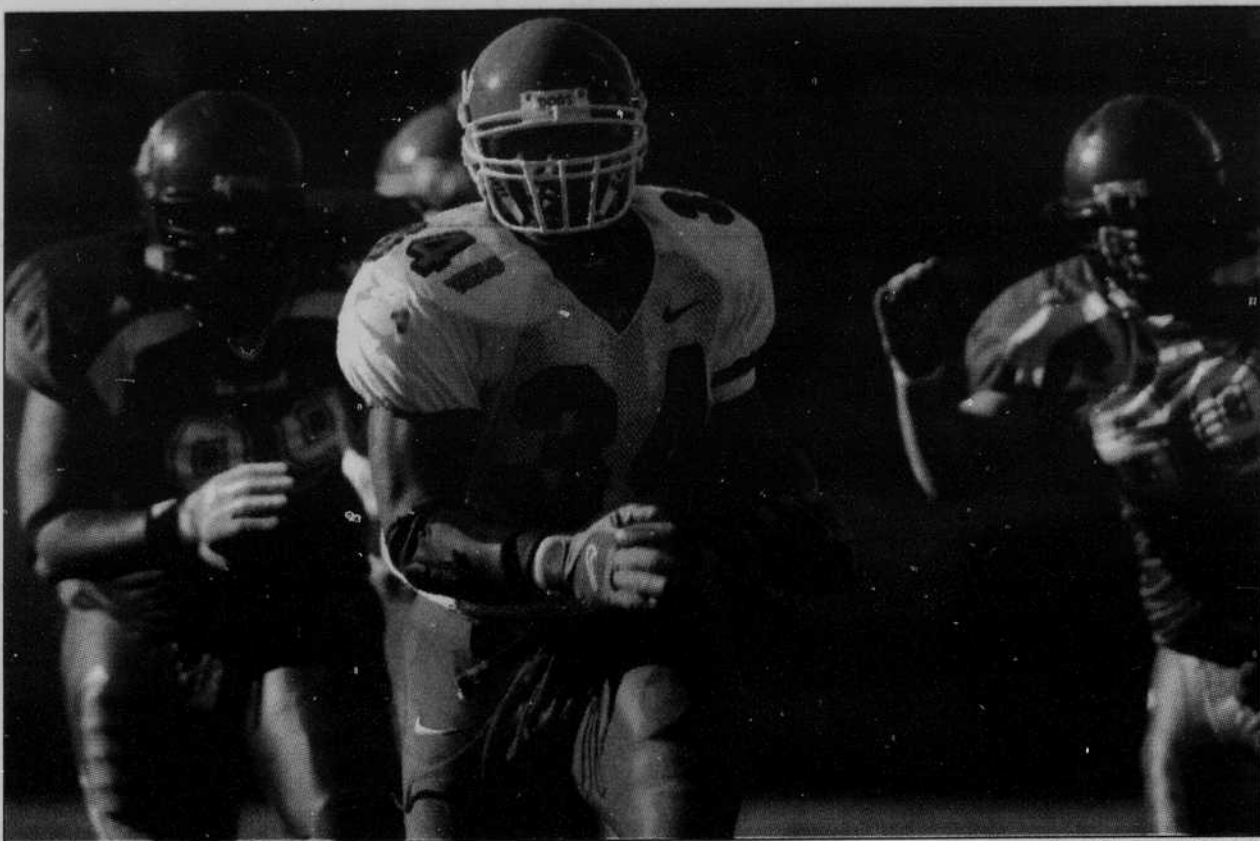
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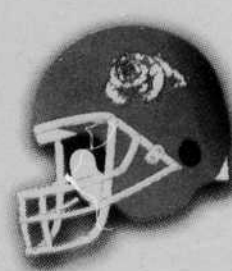


JUSTIN KASE CONDER | COURTESY

Fresno State's Bryson Sumlin is coming off a season-ending knee injury he sustained one year ago. Sumlin, who rushed for more than 1,000 yards in 2003, gained 68 yards on 12 carries against Weber State last week.



## Ducks focused on containing Bulldog backs



*Fresno State is seeking its  
11th victory in five years  
over a BCS-caliber school*

BY SHAWN MILLER  
SPORTS EDITOR

Their resume is long and distinguished. They command more respect than any other non-BCS school. And they have 29 wins since 2001, sixth-best in the nation. But don't tell them that.

The Fresno State Bulldogs, the odds on favorite to win the Western Athletic Conference, have a chip on their collective shoulder and if Oregon isn't prepared, the Ducks will become the next in a long list of Bulldog victories over major conference opponents.

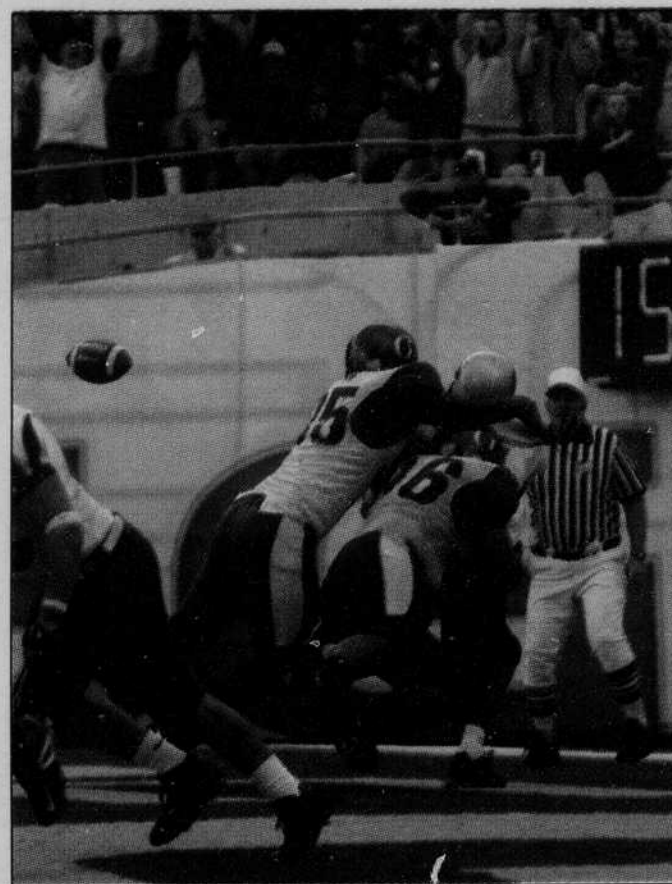
Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti, who has guided the Ducks to three consecutive wins over the Bulldogs, knows the challenge that a Fresno State team brings.

"The type of young men they bring in there are tough, physical and feel as if they have something to prove," Bellotti said.

That attitude has enabled the Bulldogs to 10 wins over BCS schools since 2001, the most of any non-BCS school.

"This is a physical football team that plays well, that knows how to win, that prides itself on going into other people's houses and winning games," Bellotti said. "We have to make sure that we are not a very good host."

The Ducks, who are in the middle of a three-game home stand, are focused on shutting down the run. While Fresno State works through a "traditional" offense, the Bulldogs aren't afraid to run the ball. Running backs Bryson Sumlin and Dwayne Wright have each rushed for more than 1,000 yards in a season each, while Wendell Mathis was only five



JONAH SCHROGIN | DESIGNER

Oregon's Haloti Ngata (96) and Darius Sanders force Montana quarterback Jason Washington to throw the ball away in the end zone. Ngata was credited with the sack and the Ducks scored two points after intentional grounding was called in the endzone.

yards short of 1,000 on the ground.

"They are content to run the ball eight or 10 or 11 times in a row," Bellotti said. "It has been very efficient, very effective and they are putting up a lot of points."

Sumlin rushed for 1,104 yards and 13 touchdowns last season, while Wright racked up 1,038 in 2003 before a season-ending knee injury sidelined him last year. Mathis, a transfer from UCLA, scored 12 touchdowns and led the WAC with a 6.9 yards per rush average last season.

"I think we have one of the best groups of running backs in Fresno

State history," head coach Pat Hill said. "As a group, we have a lot of speed and power and I think we have some toughness. Running the football will be important for our success and we have some guys who can really carry the load."

Thrown into the backfield at times is Clifton Smith, who returned two punts for touchdowns during a 55-17 victory over Weber State last week.

Mathis rushed for three touchdowns, while quarterback Paul Pinegar was 14 of 18 for 189 yards and two touchdowns.

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