

IN BRIEF

Walker out of backfield at Oregon State

Oregon State tailback Jimtavis Walker has left the team because of personal reasons, the school announced Wednesday.

Walker, a 5-foot-10, 225-pound native of Statesboro, Ga., had appeared in three of the team's five games this season, rushing for 44 yards on 15 carries. He did not play in 2004 because he had to sit out a season due to NCAA eligibility rules for transfers. He played at the University of Florida in 2003.

Off the field, Walker and a teammate were arrested in February and accused by Corvallis police of assaulting a taxi driver and offering to pay a \$20 fare with marijuana. The charges were later dropped.

With Walker's departure, junior college transfer Nate Wright and freshman Patrick Fuller have been elevated on the depth chart behind starter Yvenson Bernard, Oregon State head coach Mike Riley said in a statement.

UPenn running back commits suicide

Two days after one of the best games of his career, Penn running back Kyle Ambrogi committed suicide, the university and police said.

The 21-year-old senior, who died at his suburban Havertown home Monday, had been battling depression, the Daily News reported, quoting the player's family.

Ambrogi, a backup, carried five times for 18 yards and two third-quarter touchdowns. His brother, Greg, is a defensive back on the team.

— The Associated Press

Quarterbacks: Oregon has history of dual-QB system

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Dixon said. "I know we're halfway through the season, and I have a lot more to show."

Leaf, a native of Great Falls, Mont., has been a big supporter for both Dixon and Clemens since coming to Oregon. For his wedding last June, Clemens asked Leaf to be one of his groomsmen.

"It was a big day for me obviously, and it meant a lot that he was there," Clemens said. "He and I are really close and I'm proud of the progress he has made this year."

Clemens has enjoyed having Dixon and Leaf on the sideline to talk to and discuss the opponents' defense.

"The greatest thing is that they are both sophomores and have been around and know what to look for," Clemens said. "I don't see everything out there on the field, but I can come off and say, 'Hey, what was that coverage?' and they'll be able to tell me everything. Last year it was different, now they see things better. It really is a team effort at quarterback."

On the weekends Dixon and Leaf can be found together enjoying the spoils of being college athletes.

"We're very tight," Dixon said. "I love Kellen and Brady. We do things on the weekend that most people don't do, and it's cool."

One of the more talked-about stories surrounding Oregon football this past offseason was the departure of Johnny DuRocher, who was a promising freshman quarterback. During the 2004 season, DuRocher transferred to Washington, where he now backs up Isaiah Stanback. It was a shocking move, but it came as no surprise to Leaf, who knew of DuRocher's dissatisfaction

with Oregon.

"He didn't feel like he enjoyed himself here anymore. He just wanted to find a new home," Leaf said. "He did what he felt would make him happy and I respect him for it." Attempts to reach DuRocher for comment were denied by Washington media services.

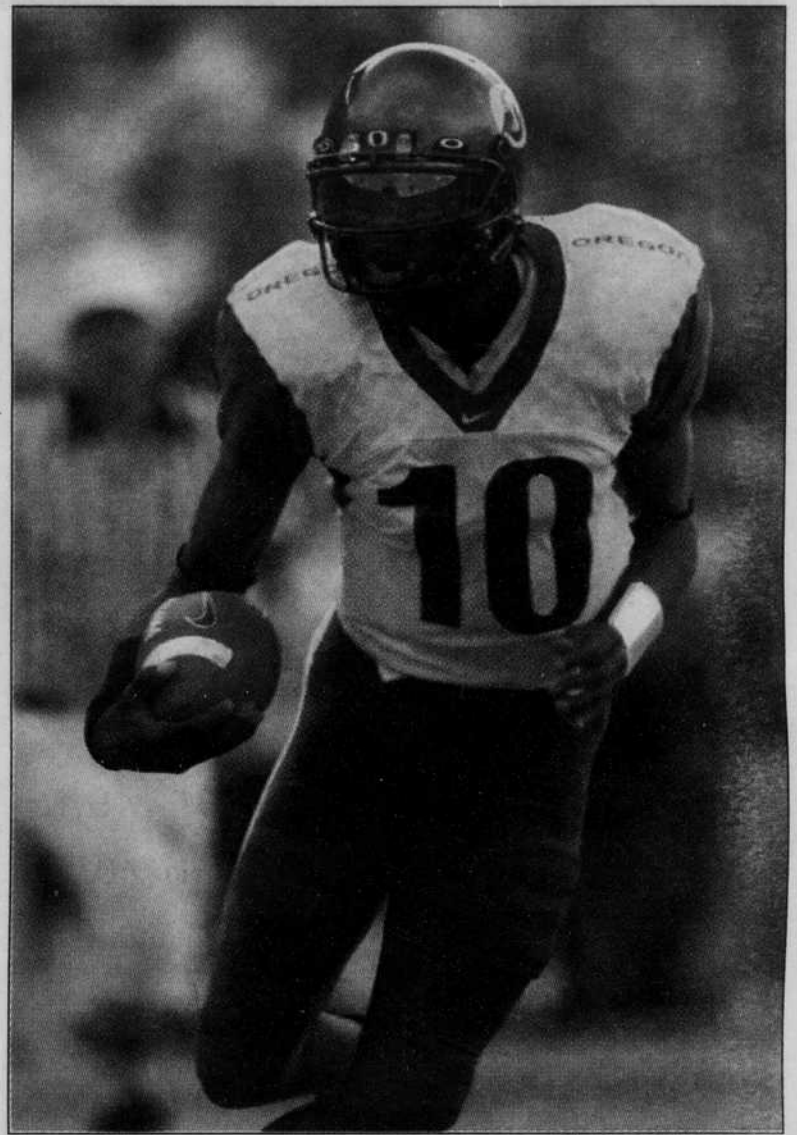
Oregon's football program is no stranger to having a dual-quarterback system, and next year will most likely mark another season in which Bellotti has juggled quarterbacks. With both Dixon and Leaf showing great potential, the race for the starting job might remind fans of Oregon's 1997 season, which saw Smith sharing snaps with Jason Maas behind center. The program had success then, but Bellotti still preferred having the starting quarterback job reserved for one.

"I'm not sure I was comfortable with it last year," Bellotti told reporters prior to Oregon's 1998 opener against Michigan State. "Our team is very accustomed to it. If the results weren't positive, or if it was a divisive thing for the team, and if the players themselves couldn't handle it, we wouldn't do it."

As for Clemens, whose days of suiting up for the Ducks are coming to a close, he feels the program's future is in good hands regardless of who starts in his place next season.

"They each have a different style, but they're both great football players, and I expect a lot out of them next year," Clemens said.

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TIM BOBOSKY | PHOTO EDITOR

Dennis Dixon shows off his speed in the open field. As a reserve, Dixon continues to impress in limited playing time at quarterback.

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