

"One player was lost because he broke his nose.
How do you go about getting a nose
in condition for football?"
Former Texas football coach Darrell Royal on injuries
resulting from poor physical conditioning

■ Football recap

Ducks defeat Washington, 45-21



MARCUS LARSON | FOR THE EMERALD

Running back Terrence Whitehead (24) rushed for 44 yards; and hauled in 59 receiving yards, and scored a touchdown in Saturday's game against Washington. Whitehead became the third Oregon player to reach 1,000 career rushing and receiving yards.

Haloti Ngata and Devan Long provide power in front of QB Kellen Clemens in a Ducks win

BY LIKE ANDREWS
SPORTS REPORTER

It took time for the No. 20 Ducks (6-1 overall, 3-1 conference) to get warmed up, but when they did, any hopes of the upset-minded Washington Huskies (1-5, 0-3) were quickly dashed as the Ducks won 45-21 in front of 58,269 — the fourth largest crowd at Autzen Stadium ever.

Oregon fumbled on the first two plays of its first two possessions, one of which resulted in a Washington score when quarterback Isaiah Stanback hit Anthony Russo for a 26-yard touchdown pass to put the Huskies ahead 7-0.

Oregon quarterback Kellen Clemens quickly rallied the Ducks, however, assembling an eight-play 86-yard drive, capped by one of two Clemens' touchdown passes to wideout Demetrius Williams.

The touchdown began a streak of 38 points in the game for the Ducks, who beat the Huskies for the second straight year at home.

"It's a great win. The way we started off made it an even better win," Oregon head coach Mike

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■ In my opinion



SHAWN MILLER
FULL-COURT PRESS

Crown the Pac-10 as king of all conferences

The Pacific-10 Conference produces the most exciting and unpredictable games in the nation. Therefore, it is the best conference.

I know that a lot of people would love to debate that, and there are good arguments for other conferences, such as the Big Ten, Southeastern and Atlantic Coast Conferences. But let's look at all of the major conferences and eliminate them one by one.

First, the ACC. Sure, there are four ranked teams, including two in the top 10. But the bottom line is that they aren't producing shocking games. If you exclude Virginia's home victory over then-No. 4 Florida State Saturday, how many other upsets have there been?

The only legit team the ACC boasts is third-ranked Virginia Tech. If you put No. 13 Boston College, No. 11 Florida State or No. 6 Miami against any one of the top four teams in the Pac-10, I could almost guarantee you that the West Coast would be the victor.

Then there is the Big Ten. Penn State represents the league with a No. 12 ranking, followed by Ohio State at 14, No. 19 Wisconsin and No. 22 Michigan State. Once again, four ranked teams, but not one stands above the rest. There is great parity in the Big Ten, which has led to several exciting games and it shows with Northwestern sitting in the top half of the conference standings. So I can't honestly dog too much on the Big Ten; just believe me ... they are second best to the Pac-10.

The SEC is overrated. Flat out, No. 4 Georgia and No. 5 Alabama are over/under killers on the betting line. They couldn't spread peanut butter and jelly on bread, much less the point spread on a football game. Seventh-ranked LSU should have lost to Arizona State earlier this year. They have three other teams, Auburn, Tennessee and Florida, ranking 16 through 18, respectively. I think everyone has seen Tennessee's and Florida's collapses this season. Both are way overrated and basically, that is all you can say about this conference.

So that leaves the Pac-10 on top. USC has held the No. 1 ranking for more than two years. UCLA has escaped near misses all season and ranks eighth. Oregon has climbed to No. 15 with California dropping to No. 25. Four teams are ranked, just like two other conferences.

My guess is that a majority of pollsters look at nothing more than game scores when determining where West Coast teams sit on the chart. In the end, the only things you can judge a conference on are its non-league schedule and record and its parity from top to bottom.

The Pac-10 has been the conference that beats itself up every week. The non-league record shows this year so give the Pac-10 the respect it deserves — as the top conference in the country.

smiller@dailyemerald.com

■ Football notes

Offensive line superior in thrashing of Huskies

Kellen Clemens' Autzen-record 36 completed passes helps lead Oregon to its sixth win overall

BY SHAWN MILLER
SPORTS EDITOR

It was Oregon's defensive line that dominated for the second consecutive game.

The Ducks allowed less than 3.5 yards per rush on 35 attempts. In fact, the Huskies rushed 11 times for 50 yards in the fourth quarter — mostly against the reserves.

"Throughout the whole week we've been studying their weaknesses," Haloti Ngata said of Washington's offensive line. "They play light on their feet. We decided that if we basically push them back we can get to their quarterback. ... My game plan was to push them back and open up holes for our defensive ends and linebackers to get the sacks."

Ngata and fellow defensive lineman Devan Long keyed the attack. Long recorded seven tackles, two of which were sacks and four total tackles for a loss of 13 yards.

However, Long said Ngata is the difference-maker for Oregon.

"I love having him on my side," Long said. "He's just a plug. Our two tackles are doing all the work and they are letting me and Vic (Filipe) just run around and be the little quick guys and make plays."

The two veterans on the defensive front have led an Oregon defense that has allowed a minuscule 108.4 rushing yards per game average this season, ranking third in the Pacific-10 Conference. The Ducks have also given up only six rushing touchdowns, tied for second best in the conference.

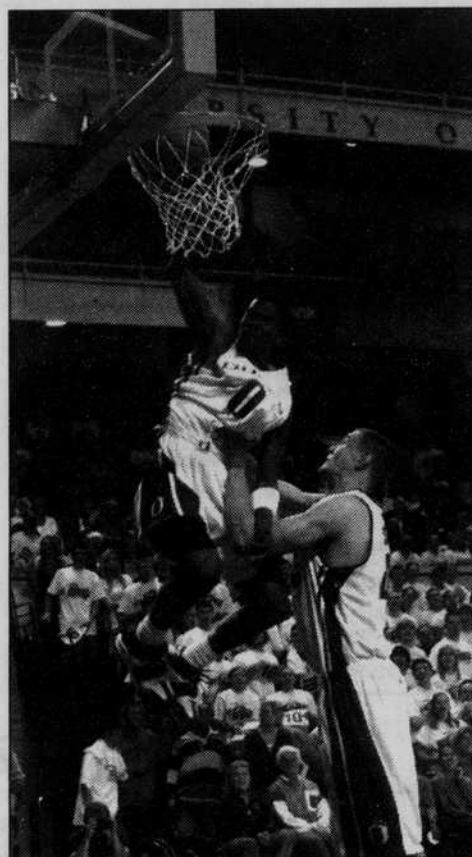
"Haloti Ngata compressed that pocket all day today," Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said. "I really thought our defense played very, very well today in containing (Stanback) and the rest of their offense."

Washington finished with 238 yards of total offense, 148 yards below its average. The Ducks held the Huskies to 131 yards of total offense through three quarters.

"I was very disappointed with our team today," Washington head coach Tyrone Willingham said. "I thought we had some opportunities today that we didn't cash in on."

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THE PIT'S BACK IN BUSINESS



ZANE RITT | PHOTOGRAPHER

Six-foot point guard Aaron Brooks (0) is assisted by 7-foot Ray Schafer last Friday during a slam dunk contest at Midnight Madness. Oregon was one of five schools to have its opening practice broadcast live on ESPNU.

Notre Dame shows its mettle in defeat

BY TOM COYNE
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Even in defeat, Notre Dame played like a champion against top-ranked Southern California.

More so than the Fighting Irish did during an 8-0 start under Tyrone Willingham three years ago. More so than when they lost in overtime to No. 1 Nebraska in 2000 on their way to the Fiesta Bowl. More like a champion than at any time since beating No. 1 Florida State in 1993.

Charlie Weis couldn't pull out the victory against the Trojans on Saturday, losing 34-31, but he pulled out all the stops in waging the echoes. He managed the clock, he managed

the crowd and, even in losing, he managed to restore the glory that's been missing from Notre Dame for 12 years.

"They're going to be a real problem for everybody," USC coach Pete Carroll said. "I don't see any way that they're not going to be a really good program."

The Irish (4-2) shined as brightly on a sunny autumn afternoon as the school's Golden Dome, freshly gilded with 23.9-karat gold leaf this summer for the first time since 1988 — the school's last national championship season.

The tarnish of recent years suddenly disappeared. Two straight non-winning seasons seemed as far away as Willingham in Washington. The days of Lou Holtz, Dan Devine

and Ara Parseghian suddenly seem more fresh in the memory.

How impressive were the Irish? Despite the loss, they stayed at No. 9 in the poll. Sure, the Irish were ranked higher three years ago after beating No. 11 Florida State, moving up to No. 4 after improving to 8-0. But that squad seemed to win with smoke and mirrors. In two of those wins the offense failed to score a touchdown, and the Irish finished the season with the nation's 10th-worst offense.

This year's team is 12th in the nation in total offense, and that's against the toughest part of its schedule.

More importantly, Weis is making believers

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