

■ Pac-10 game of the week

Oregon State takes on No. 8 UCLA Bruins at Rose Bowl

The Beavers seem to be gathering momentum coming off a win against No. 25 California

BY JEFFREY DRANSFELDT
SPORTS REPORTER

Two weeks ago this game might have been an afterthought.

Oregon State against UCLA might have been little more than a reunion for Oregon State quarterback Matt Moore. However, Oregon State's 23-20 upset of No. 25 California last week changed that.

Now, Oregon State's match-up with No. 8 UCLA set for the 4 p.m. at the Rose Bowl looms large for both teams. The Beavers' win against Cal keeps them within distance of second place behind No. 1 USC. UCLA overcame a one-time 21-point deficit against Washington State to earn a 44-41 overtime win.

Moore faces quarterback Drew Olson, who has solidified his hold on the starting position two years after competing with the Oregon State starter. The once embattled Olson has led three consecutive fourth-quarter comebacks against Washington, Cal and Washington State.

Months ago he competed with incoming recruit Ben Olson and questions remained. He entered the season coming off leg injuries to his anterior cruciate and medial collateral ligaments in last season's Las Vegas Bowl.

Consider the questions answered; his veteran poise and return to health has helped him in close games and allowed him to accumulate 1,612 yards passing and 15 touchdown passes. The combination of Drew Olson and powerful tailback Maurice Drew has UCLA confirming head coach Karl Dorrell's coaching philosophy and putting themselves in the running for a major bowl appearance.

Two years ago feels like 20 consid-

ering the changes between Olson and Moore's careers. Moore played in six games as a true freshman after injuries to Olson and Cory Paus. Likewise in 2003, it was another inconsistent season as Moore started four games out of eight appearances and missed another three games due to a leg injury. Overall, Moore threw for 555 yards in 2003 and 412 in 2002.

After 2003, he chose to transfer, attending College of the Canyons and not playing football. He came to Oregon State this fall and was immediately eligible to compete. The 6-foot-4, 191 pound quarterback has been solid, forming a potent combo with Mike Hass, as the California native has thrown for 1,766 yards and seven touchdowns with a 199.69 efficiency rating.

Hass has caught 51 passes — double the next closest receiver — for 848 yards.

Prior to Cal, Oregon State's bowl chances were questionable, having been blown out by Louisville and Arizona State in recent weeks. They also forged a comeback against Washington State at home.

"Our team is pretty tough-minded; we've been through a lot," Oregon State head coach Mike Riley said. "We fought back in two of the best comebacks that I've been involved in. Our team never thought we couldn't stop (Cal), and that we couldn't move the ball."

More surprising was that Oregon State did it despite a struggling running game led by Yvenson Bernard.

His backup, Jimtavis Walker, left the team earlier in the week. Bernard responded with a career-high 185 yards and scored the go-ahead touchdown with 6:41 remaining in the fourth quarter.

The usual combo of Moore to Hass was a non-factor. Hass only caught four passes for 17 yards. The running game helped Oregon State overcome numerous mistakes, including three interceptions by Moore.

Cal had relied on Marshawn Lynch and Justin Forsett in a 5-1 start. Lynch had 58 yards, before being benched in the second quarter after fumbling twice. Forsett, Lynch's able replacement in his two game's missed earlier this season, had 17 yards on nine carries.

Quarterback Joe Ayoob did little better, completing 13 of 39 passes with 219 yards and two interceptions.

This against an Oregon State defense statistically among the bot-

tom of the Pacific-10 Conference rankings. Cal had 315 total yards — as a team they average 450 per game. Including Cal, Oregon State is allowing 443.8 yards of total offense per game.

"It's been five years since we beat a ranked team," said linebacker Andy Darkins of a streak stretching eight games. "This was without a doubt the biggest win of the season so far. We are going to roll with this."

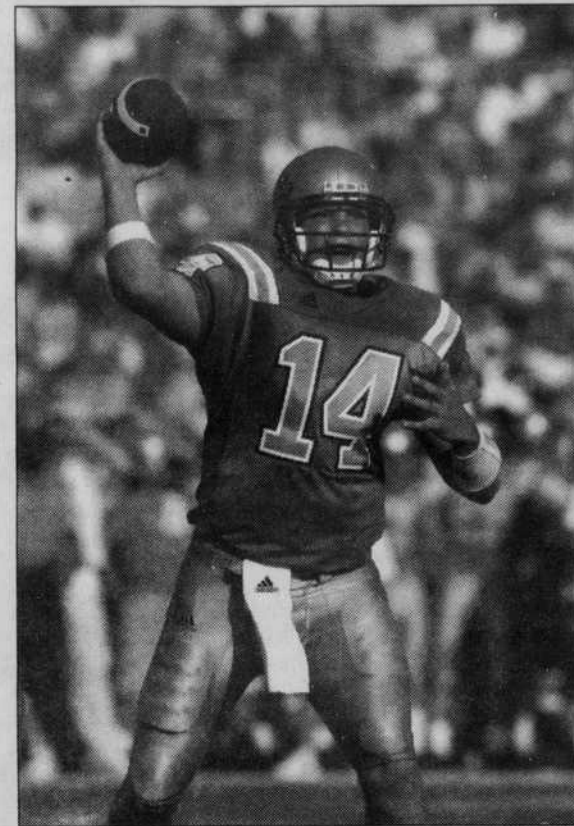
The confidence builder has Oregon State thinking big against UCLA.

"Just to win against a top 25 team is huge," Moore said of the Cal game. "Coming into the UCLA game next week is big, especially with it being another road game."

"Our team never thought we couldn't stop (Cal)."

MIKE RILEY | Oregon State head coach

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UCLA's Drew Olson has led the Bruins to a 6-0 record and a No. 9 ranking in the first Bowl Championship Series poll. UCLA will take on Oregon State on Saturday at the Rose Bowl.

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