

*"It's no different than my first time in Tokyo: You're driving on the wrong side of the road and it's hell."*

Green Bay Packers quarterback Brett Favre on adjusting to a new offense

## ■ In my opinion



SHAWN MILLER  
FULL-COURT PRESS

## Ducks seek redemption against Cal on Saturday

There was a numbing feeling pulsating throughout my body almost a year ago after watching Oregon nearly knock off the fourth-ranked Golden Bears in Berkeley, Calif.

It hurt so bad. I wanted to blame former Oregon wide receiver Keith Allen for dropping the wide-open pass on fourth and long in Cal territory during the final possession. But how could I after he laid out for a 36-yard reception on fourth and three late in the fourth quarter to set up Oregon's winning touchdown two weeks earlier at Stanford?

Then it was kicker Jared Siegel, who missed an extra point in the first quarter which proved to be the margin of victory for Cal. Siegel also committed a personal foul during a kickoff which moved Cal to midfield on one possession during the game. But then again, how many games did Siegel seal with a field goal?

While I was walking to my car, being taunted by Cal fans, I came to two conclusions. One: Oregon should have won that game and the fact that they didn't could not be blamed on one single player. Two: The tables had turned, and getting over a loss like that might prove to be too much.

It was. The Ducks were embarrassed in their final two games of the season, which turned out to be Oregon's first losing season since 1993. If they had won that game against a top-five opponent on the road, it would have made them bowl eligible, and chances are they would have taken care of business in those final two games. Instead of a 5-6 season, it could have been 8-3 and a trip to a nice bowl venue.

So I have this message: I have been waiting for you Cal. And I'm sure the Ducks have been as well. You should have lost last season, and with even more on the line this time around, I don't think you will come out victorious.

Should it matter that one of the best quarterbacks in school history won't be able to play? Yeah, but there are plenty of other Ducks that are ready for redemption.

The Ducks currently rank third in the Pacific-10 Conference, allowing only 121.4 rushing yards per game. Oregon has also given up only seven rushing touchdowns, second best in the conference.

Everything is on the line Saturday at Autzen Stadium. Both teams have to win in order to stay alive for a large bowl game. Without Kellen Clemens under center, the Ducks will need to rely on the motivation from last season's loss and the critics who say that Oregon can't win with Dennis Dixon as its starting quarterback.

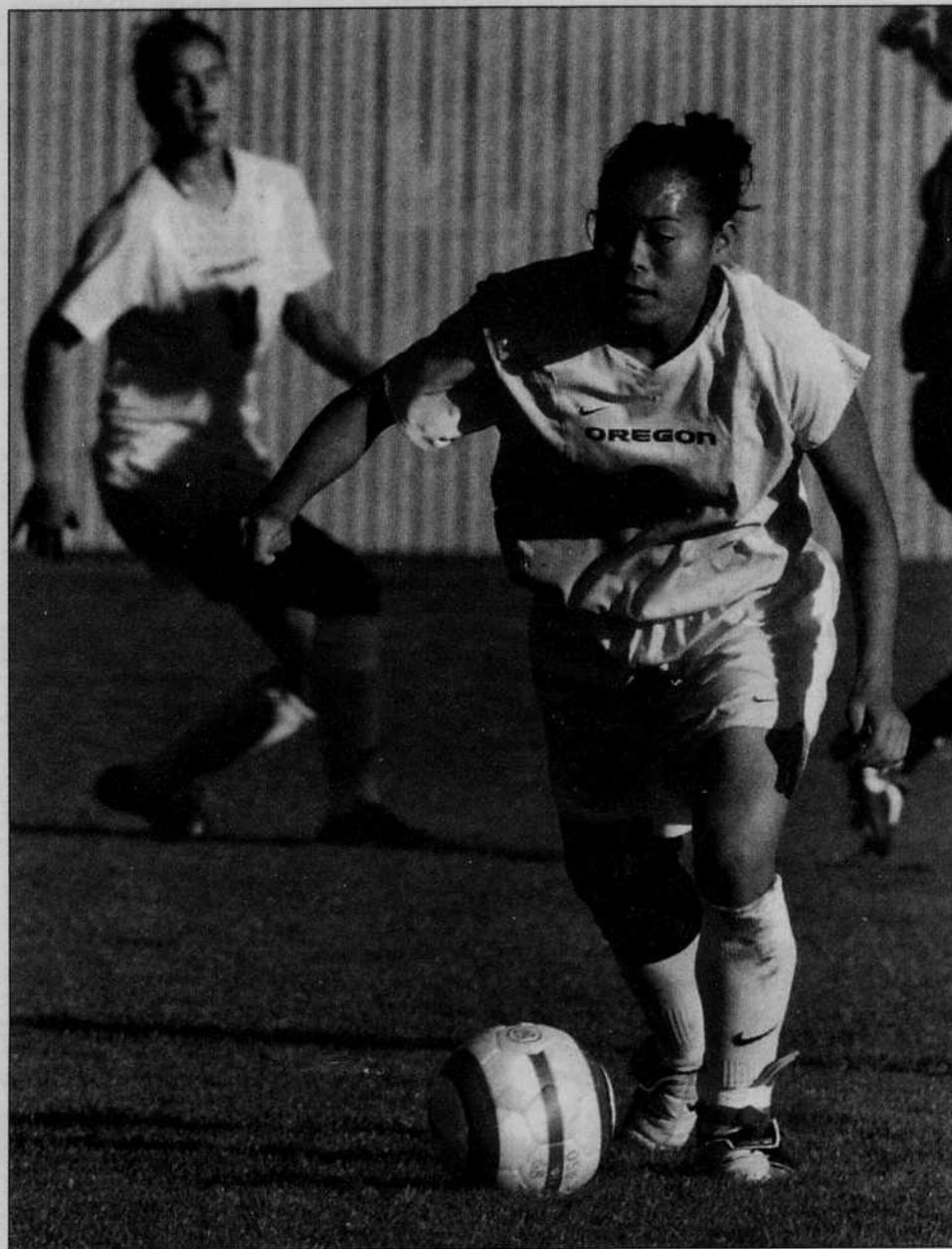
Allen and Siegel graduated from the program after last season, so the taste will remain bitter in their mouths. However, there are plenty of lettermen — 40 to be exact — who remember the feeling and are out to erase it.

Cal's win last year snapped a seven-game losing streak to the Ducks. I can't wait for Oregon to start a new winning streak over the Bears, beginning Saturday.

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## ■ Duck soccer

# Ducks can score first winning year



NICOLE BARKER | PHOTOGRAPHER

Midfielder Cristan Higa, one of the team's seven seniors, will play in her final two games this weekend against the Bay Area schools. Higa is tied for 10th in school history with five career assists.

*Oregon's season comes to a close this weekend at home when the Ducks face Cal and Stanford*

BY SCOTT J. ADAMS  
SPORTS REPORTER

The Bay Area schools of the Pacific-10 Conference come to Eugene this weekend to wrap up the women's soccer regular season. Oregon (9-7-1 overall, 1-6 conference) has already clinched at least a .500 finish but, with a win or tie, can bid farewell to its six seniors with the program's first winning season in school history.

Tonight at 5 p.m., No. 9 California (12-3-2 overall, 5-1-1 conference) takes the field against the Ducks hoping to gain ground on conference-leader UCLA. The No. 4 Bruins are slightly ahead of five teams all vying for at least a share of a Pacific-10 Conference title. Cal lost to UCLA last weekend and is in dire need of a win today to stay in the hunt.

First-year head coach Tara Erickson has guided Oregon to its second .500 finish in school history. Last Sunday, Oregon came close to netting their second conference win of the season against Washington State losing 1-0 in overtime. Although she is pleased with the progress her team has made this year, she would love to add a major upset of Cal to the Ducks' resume.

"Our seniors are excited to be finishing .500, and although our loss at Pullman was difficult to take, we have moved on and can make up for it against Cal. We're still taking things one game at a time," Erickson said. "We have done even better than I anticipated. We haven't won a lot of games lately, but we are moving forward and keeping a great attitude, and overall I'm really happy and proud with the way we've played."

Leading the Ducks this weekend for the last time are co-captains Katie Abrahamson and Cristan Higa alongside fellow seniors Caitlin Gamble, Dominique Lainez, Valerie Mayer and Andrea Valadez. The captains have enjoyed their final season at Oregon but aren't letting career-ending emotion set in early, both are focused for today's game.

"I'm pumped for this game," Abrahamson said. "It's my last start, I want to get another win

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## ■ Club women's rugby

# This year, Dirty Ducks look to clean up

*Oregon's women's rugby hopes to start a second consecutive undefeated season on November 19*

BY JACOB MAY  
FREELANCE REPORTER

This year the women's rugby team, also known as the Dirty Ducks, is looking to build off of its success from last year when it finished with a perfect 9-0 regular season, including 4-0 in league play.

Despite its perfect regular season, UC Berkeley and eventual national champion Stanford handed the team two losses in the Regional Women's Collegiate Division I Tournament in Palo Alto, Calif.

This season, the team is looking to once again go undefeated and make it to the Sweet 16 in the National Tournament.

In order to do so the team must once again go through league opponents Oregon State, Western Washington and Reed.

The Pacific Northwest League is adopting a new scheduling format this year in which each league member will play an opponent twice, once at home, once away. Each team will have its own home game against every league member, which is expected to make the

games more competitive.

Coach Justin Bergen is hoping that returning seniors Ramey Marshall and All-American Krista Gust, who is also on the under-23 Women's National Team, provide the leadership that the team needs in order to reach its goals.

Currently the team has 26 members, and is always open to new players, regardless of whether they have any experience.

Bergen describes rugby as "a combination of soccer and football but without pads." The team, which carries only three seniors, is trying to prepare the crop of young talent to play at a competitive level.

Despite the prevalence of youth on the team, optimism is high.

"We can come together as a team and win," sophomore Kata Bahnsen-Reinhardt said.

Bergen believes that his team will be able to defeat its opponents because of a few intangibles.

"We're better conditioned than they are. We need to exploit their weaknesses and to keep running through them," Bergen said. "We



ZANE RITT | PHOTOGRAPHER

Alexis Eudy, left, Stephanie Hyde, center, and Kelly Simmons practice tackling drills at Southbank field. The women's rugby team completed last season.

need to run them into the ground."

The team's first game will be a friendly scrimmage against Western Oregon on Nov. 5 in Monmouth. The team's first league game will be a home game against Oregon State on Nov. 19, which, according to Bergen, was the team's toughest match last year when his team won 36-10.

After that, the club will not have another league game until

February. Bergen believes his team will be up for the challenge.

"We have plenty of new faces learning the game, but we'll be ready," Bergen said.

There is still an opportunity to join the team. Practices are held Tuesday and Thursday starting at 4 p.m. at Southbank Field. The team's Web site can be accessed through the Oregon Club Sports home page.