

## Is Smith OSU's feel-good story?

By Anne M. Peterson  
The Associated Press

Jonathan Smith is a feel-good story for an Oregon State football team that really needs one.

The former Beavers quarterback filled the head-coaching vacancy left by Gary Andersen, who abruptly parted ways with the program last October after a 1-5 start. Cornerbacks coach Cory Hall served as interim head coach for the rest of the season, and the Beavers finished 1-11. Oregon State won just seven games during Andersen's 2-1/2-season stint.

It was a markedly different Oregon State team from the last one Smith played for.

Originally a walk-on, Smith was a four-year starter and helped lead the Beavers to a Fiesta Bowl victory following the 2000 season under coach Dennis Erickson. Smith was MVP of the bowl.

He returns to Corvallis after a stint at Washington, where he was an assistant to head coach Chris Petersen. He followed Petersen to the Huskies from Boise State.

"I kind of came in with eyes wide open," Smith said about his first head-coaching gig. "Not doing it before, I knew I was going to learn a ton and experience it. So (I was) expecting the unexpected."

One of the first things he has been tasked with is helping the team forget the disappointment and upheaval of last season. Oregon State's last game was a 69-10 loss to rival Oregon in the Civil War.

He said he has not dwelt too much on the bad parts.

"I wanted to come in with a message of, 'I've experienced it here. I've sat in those seats. I've gone through a coaching change when I was a player,'" he said. "It's been done before. We can do it again. So trying to be authentic that I've lived it, and I want to



Oregon State coach Jonathan Smith addresses his team during preseason training camp in Corvallis.

help them do the same."

Other things to know as Oregon State prepares to begin the 2018 season:

### Looking to Luton

Oregon State had high hopes last season for quarterback Jake Luton, a junior college transfer, but his time as starter lasted just four games after he sustained a thoracic spine fracture in a 52-23 loss at Washington State. He finished the season with 853 passing yards with four TDs and four interceptions. Darell Garretson stepped in and took over, passing for 1,465 yards with six TDs and eight interceptions. He has since graduated. Luton is back this year and ready to pick up the reins again. He is being challenged in preseason camp by Conor Blount, while Jack Colletto and Nick Moore push for playing time, but the job is Luton's to lose.

### Gotta run

Oregon State's running game

is in rough shape with the departures of Thomas Tyner, Trevorris Johnson and Ryan Nall, who left school early and is now with the Chicago Bears. The top returning running back is Artavis Pierce, who ranked second on the team behind Nall with 323 yards rushing and one touchdown. Calvin Tyler is the only other rusher with experience, and he is out indefinitely with an injury, Smith announced Thursday. Freshman Jermar Jefferson impressed during a preseason camp scrimmage.

### Retro Benny

Much like Smith, the old Benny Beaver is making his return, too. Oregon State will revive the mascot with special homecoming uniforms on Oct. 20 against Cal. Benny, who wore a jaunty orange OSU hat, was on the team's helmets back in 1973 and was part of the school's identity from 1951 to 1998.

### Life of Riley

Longtime Oregon State coach

Mike Riley was set to come back to Corvallis as Smith's assistant, but another job came calling this summer: a head coach post with San Antonio of the new Alliance of American Football league, set to start play next February. Riley has vowed to stay connected with the Beavers, however, and will serve as a consultant to Smith.

### Outlook

It is not good. Oregon State was picked to finish at the bottom of the Pac-12 North. The Beavers' schedule features five teams expected to be ranked in the Top 25. It all starts with the opener: Oregon State is on the road to face Ohio State on Sept. 1. The Buckeyes are experiencing turbulence at the moment, but do not expect it to have much of an impact on the outcome of this game — the Beavers are 35-point underdogs. The team's other nonconference games are against Southern Utah and Nevada.

## Ducks need healthy Herbert for success

By Anne M. Peterson  
The Associated Press

Just 12 months ago it was the start of the Willie Taggart era in Eugene. Now it is Mario Cristobal's turn.

Oregon's former co-offensive coordinator is embarking on his first season at the helm of the Ducks. Taggart, meanwhile, is doing the same at Florida State after a one-year tenure at Oregon.

It is not quite Cristobal's debut. He led the Ducks in last season's Las Vegas Bowl, a 38-28 loss to Boise State. With a full season in front of him, Cristobal is clearly ready to move on from 2017's 7-6 finish.

"This season has nothing but opportunity in front of it, and we've got to do it," he said. "There is no way to sugarcoat it or try to dance around it, there is not. We've just got to get it done."

Cristobal, who was an assistant at Alabama under Nick Saban for four years, has one of the league's top quarterbacks in junior Justin Herbert, who passed for 1,983 yards and 15 touchdowns last season — despite missing five games with a fractured collarbone. He also rushed for 183 yards and five scores.

He was replaced as starter by

freshman Braxton Burmeister and the Ducks went 1-4 during Herbert's absence. Burmeister passed for 324 yards with two touchdowns and six interceptions during the span, while also rushing for 106 yards and three scores.

The key will be keeping Herbert healthy, while also making sure he has a backup who is ready to step in. And in this case, Burmeister took his lumps last season.

Herbert has done his part by bulking up over the offseason and now weighs in at some 240 pounds.

"It's not just how he looks. It's the mindset that comes with it, the confidence that comes with it," Cristobal said. "The ability to create a galvanizing effect for the guys in the locker room, because you know you're preparing and holding each other accountable."

The Ducks averaged 52 points with Herbert on the field last season, so the longer he stays there, the better for Oregon.

### Who will catch passes?

With the departure of versatile wide receiver Charles Nelson, a lot of attention has gone to Herbert's targets. The Ducks return their top receiver from last season, Dillon Mitchell, who

caught 42 passes for 517 yards. Then there are fellow wideout Brenden Schooler, who switched from safety, and tight end Jacob Breeland, who caught five TD passes last season.

### Two-way player?

Bryan Addison could also be a welcome addition to Oregon's receiver corps. He somewhat surprisingly joined the Ducks in July. Originally committed to UCLA, he was granted his release after his admission was delayed Addison, who is a 6-foot-5 prospect out of Gardena, California, could see time at both wide receiver and defensive back — both positions where the Ducks could use some help. Cristobal did not hide his enthusiasm for Addison at the Pac-12 media day: "He's played both ways. He has special-teams value. He is intelligent, he's tough, he's athletic. Great balance and body control. Explosive. Incredible ball skills."

### Replacing Royce

The Ducks' two top running backs from last season, Royce Freeman and Kani Benoit, have graduated. The top returnee is Tony Brooks-James, who ran for 520 yards and two touchdowns. He could get help from redshirt freshman C.J. Verdell. Herbert

was the team's fourth-leading rusher last season.

### Don't forget the defense

There was lots of speculation that Taggart's defensive coordinator, Jim Leavitt, might follow him to Florida State at the end of last season. But Oregon was able to keep the veteran coordinator on staff, and that is a good thing: In Leavitt's first season, the Ducks went to a 3-4 defense and improved to 75th in the nation in points allowed, up from 126th. They also improved to 42nd nationally for yards allowed. He has clearly inspired his players, including linebacker Troy Dye, who has led the team in tackles for the past two seasons.

### Outlook

Oregon was picked to finish third in the Pac-12 North. Washington should rule its half of the conference and is the favorite to claim the league's overall title. But the Ducks are helped by a schedule that has just two teams that are expected to be ranked: Washington and Stanford. Oregon gets both of those teams at Autzen Stadium. Another highlight will be the return of Chip Kelly to Eugene when the Ducks host the former Oregon coach and his new team, the UCLA Bruins, on Nov. 3.

### COLLEGE VOLLEYBALL

## Mounties open 2018 slate with three wins



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Sarah Carpenter, shown at Thursday's practice, led EOU with 78 assists over the weekend.

### Weekend includes win over No. 12 Montana Tech

Observer staff

The No. 15 Eastern Oregon volleyball team went a spotless 3-0 at the Spokane Valley Tournament to open the 2018 season, earning victories against a trio of Frontier Conference foes and highlighting the weekend with a come-from-behind five-set win over No. 12 Montana Tech.

### Friday

#### EASTERN OREGON 3, CARROLL COLLEGE 0

Megan Bunn had 11 kills and 12 digs — her first of three double-doubles on the weekend — and the Mountaineers opened the season with a 25-18, 25-18, 25-21 sweep of Carroll College.

Freshman Breanna Shaffer added eight kills in her first collegiate match, while Hailee Ackerman had seven and Cambree Scott — another freshman — had six. Holli Mullins led the defense with 18 digs, and Sarah Carpenter had 18 assists. Madison Pilon added 10 assists.

#### EASTERN OREGON 3, MONTANA TECH 2

The Mountaineers faced their first major challenge and came back from two sets down to eke out a thriller over the Orediggers, 23-25, 23-25, 25-19, 25-16, 15-12.

EOU was unable to hold a late lead in the first set, and was within striking distance late in the second set, but couldn't put either away.

Eastern finally got on the board in the third set with a 6-1 run midway through to take control, and runs of 8-0 and 6-0 in the fourth set gave EOU control to set up the deciding fifth set.

EOU never trailed in the final set, taking the lead for good with a 5-1 run. Scott had three kills and a block in the final set. Ackerman and Kaci Cox, who had the decisive kill, both had two kills in the final set.

Ackerman finished with a career-high 19 kills in the thriller. Cox and Bunn both added 12 kills, and Scott and Cox posted seven and six block assists, respectively. Carpenter had a career-best 41 assists and added 17 digs. Mullins led with 23 digs.

### Saturday

#### EASTERN OREGON 3, LEWIS-CLARK STATE COLLEGE 1

EOU shook off blowing a sizeable first-set lead to come back and take the final three sets for a win over the Warriors, 23-25, 25-19, 25-7, 25-22.

Eastern led as much as 15-7 in the opening set before letting LCSC rally, but righted the ship to finish off its undefeated weekend.

Bunn and Ackerman led the attack with 12 and 10 kills, respectively. Scott added eight kills and eight block assists. Mullins chipped in with a career-high 26 digs, and Carpenter doled out 19 assists to lead the team for the third straight match.

Eastern opens its home slate against Whitman College at 5 p.m. Tuesday.

## BRIEFLY

### Football officials to meet Tuesday

The Northeast Oregon Football Officials will meet at 6 p.m. Tuesday in the banquet room of the Flying J truck stop. Those people interested in officiating football this fall are encouraged to attend.

For more information, contact NEOFOA

President Joel Hasse at 541-786-1333.

### Flag football registration open

Registration for the La Grande Youth Flag Football League is open. Early registration is \$20 for the Pee Wee division, and \$35 for both the 1st through 3rd grade and 4th through

6th grade divisions. Regular registration is \$25 and \$40. Early registration ends Sept. 5, and the last day to register is Sept. 9.

For more information or to register, visit [www.teamsideline.com/sites/cityoflagrande/program/16980/Youth-Flag-Football-2018-Fall-2018](http://www.teamsideline.com/sites/cityoflagrande/program/16980/Youth-Flag-Football-2018-Fall-2018)

