

# Luton named starter for OSU

By Steve Gress  
Corvallis Gazette-Times

Oregon State's battle for the starting quarterback position carried on deep into fall camp before Jake Luton began to separate himself from Connor Blount and Jack Colletto.

Over the last week, including last Thursday's scrimmage at Summit High in Bend, Luton solidified the starting gig.

On Monday, first-year coach Jonathan Smith declared the 6-foot-7, 230-pound Luton as the Beavers' starter for Saturday's season opener at No. 5 Ohio State.

"What separated Jake really was the last three, four practices," Smith said. "He did really well in the scrimmages. It's not always the highlight plays that stand out (but) some of those plays that you just avoid the negatives."

Luton, a redshirt senior, started the first four game last season before suffering a thoracic spine fracture at Washington State that ended his season.

He completed 83 of 135 passes for 853 yards with four touchdowns and four interceptions.

"I thought those three guys handled it really well," Smith said. "They're going to work together as we continue the season but Luton will be out there to start and we feel good about that."

Smith said he wouldn't have named a starter on Monday if the staff wasn't confident in their selection.

"We didn't have anything locked in," Smith said. "If we didn't know by (Monday) we weren't going to announce it. But with the way it was trending, we felt confident to make the decision."

Luton will face a tough defense on Saturday when the Beavers face a Buckeyes team that has had to deal with the suspension of Coach Urban Meyer, who won't be coaching on Saturday.

If things don't go well, will the Beavers have a quick hook?

"We're completely behind Jake," Smith said. "And we totally understand he's not going to play perfect football. There's going to be some mistakes that are made."

However, that doesn't mean they don't trust the backups.

"I do think we've got some confidence that if we do want to make a change, we've got a couple guys who have gotten a lot of reps," Smith said.

## Injury update

The Beavers will be without some significant players and for some time due to injury.

Junior tight end Noah Togiai, who led the team with 34 catches for 461 yards last season, is out at least a month — depending on how rehab goes — after suffering a knee injury in last Thursday's scrimmage. Togiai had been recovering from a foot injury he suffered in the Civil War last year.

Junior defensive back Jay Irvine is still recovering from a shoulder injury suffered the second week of camp and is likely out until the last third or quarter of the season, Smith said.

Sophomore running back Calvin Tyler Jr. tore his ACL and is out for the season, while sophomore safety David Morris and junior Jeremy Reichner are both out between four to six weeks with foot injuries.

## Youth is served

There are 27 underclassmen on the two-deep chart for Saturday's game with 10 true freshmen listed, including two starters — tight end Isaiah Smalls and defensive end Isaac Hodgins.

"We're going to play the

best players and there's a few young guys who have earned those spots," Smith said. "We're excited about that opportunity and the youth that the depth chart has."

With Togiai out, Smalls and fellow true freshman Teagan Quitoriano are the top two tight ends.

"They were going to see some time even when Noah was healthy," Smith said. "Those guys have grown and done some really good things."

Matthew Tago and John McCartan are two true freshmen listed No. 2 at outside linebacker and Jermar Jefferson is listed behind Artavis Pierce at running back.

"He's probably not going to start with A.P. going but Jermar's going to get some carries," Smith said. "He's just earned them through camp."

## Not set in stone

Smith said the position coaches met with every player following last week's scrimmage and told them where they were on the depth chart, how they were contributing and what their role was.

Obviously, some probably didn't like what they heard. "We've got some competitive kids," Smith said.

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## TIGERS

Continued from Page 7A post. Bloodgood had an opportunity just eight minutes into the match that Sanchez got a hand on before the ball bounced off the right post.

Though the Pirates had the late outburst, La Grande goalkeeper Christian Waugaman did record seven saves. That included a flurry in the 53rd minute where he turned away two shots in about a five-second span.

"(He had) some point-blank, flat-out reaction saves," Wright said of Waugaman. "Even though we lost, by and large as the keeper he did what you want him to do. He saved a bunch of goals, saved a couple (I didn't expect him to) and kept us in the game."

Although the team has six seniors, Wright said this was the first varsity match for several of the Tigers after eight players graduated off of last year's 9-5 team.

"The more (the season) goes on, the more comfortable they'll be, the more confident they'll be and the more calm they'll be," Wright said. "We'll get that experience under our belt."

La Grande (0-1 overall) hosts Pendleton Sept. 4.

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