

CIVIL WAR

On Dec. 1, the Oregon State Beavers and University of Oregon Ducks will compete in the Civil War game at Autzen Stadium

Injuries will plague Oregon against Beavers

Andrea Simpson
Sports Editor

After the Ducks lost quarterback Dennis Dixon to a torn ligament injury, Duck fans everywhere sobbed into tissues as they watched the team's season go down the drain.

The Ducks lost the chance at the National Championship, Dixon lost Heisman consideration, and when — I mean, if — they lose to the Oregon State Beavers, they won't be playing in a decent bowl game, either.

I have to reach for a scrap of humanity and feel bad for the Ducks because the loss of Dixon was a massive shortfall. Dixon was not just a phenomenal quarterback, but he always gave the threat of running it if he saw an opening.

The combination of Dixon as quarterback and Jonathan Stewart as running back was a vital component of the Ducks' offense. Brady Leaf is simply not the same kind of player.

I would have said that the Ducks were merely in shock over Dixon's departure when they lost to Arizona, but last Saturday they also lost to non-ranked UCLA. This was their last game before the Civil War, and

unless something changes in practice, the Beavers should feel secure in their win.

The main thing that the Beavers have going for them is their strong defense. They went into the game against Washington State with the best run defense in the nation. According to the Oregon State athletics Web site, the defense averages 62.1 yards per game.

The only hesitation that I would have about the Beavers performing is the fact that running back Yvenson Bernard sat out the second half of the game against Wazzou with a minor knee injury. He had been struggling with injuries but still carried the ball 17 times for a total of 74 yards in the first half.

If Bernard can overcome the minor setback, he will be a key player in the Beavers' offense.

The Beavers haven't had an exceptional season by anyone's standards, but with the Ducks drowning in their tears, I think they should be able to pull off a victory. I don't want to make any predictions on the final score of the game, but I would think the Beavers should beat the Ducks by at least 10 points.

Ducks will overcome adversity and triumph

Zak Laster

The Clackamas Print

The Oregon Ducks started this season with one goal in mind: to get to the Rose Bowl, if not the National Championship game.

Without the devastating injury to Dennis Dixon Nov. 15, that may have been an achievable goal. Now with the loss to UCLA, not only is the National Championship out of reach, but so is the Rose Bowl.

On Dec. 1, when the Oregon State Beavers come to Eugene, a trip to the Holiday Bowl in San Diego will be on the line. While the Holiday Bowl would be a great accomplishment for the Ducks, it is far less than what they had in mind after defeating USC and Arizona State in consecutive weeks.

In the game against the Beavers, the Ducks will be without at least seven players at key positions. Unavailable to play are three quarterbacks, a running back, two wide receivers and a linebacker. The status of two other offensive starters will be determined later this week.

Quarterback Dennis Dixon was having a very impressive year for the Ducks this season. He was on the top of many of the predictions for the Heisman Trophy, which goes to the nation's most outstanding player. He stepped up for his team when it counted

and was a team leader for the Ducks.

Dixon and running back Jonathan Stewart led the two-headed monster who put up very impressive numbers. The Ducks scored more than 50 points in four games, against quality opponents. Replacing Dixon will be a difficult task.

As great as Dixon has been this year, he was less than spectacular last year, throwing two touchdowns and nine interceptions in his final six starts last year. Fans were pulling for him to be benched in favor of a quarterback by the name of Brady Leaf, brother of former NFL quarterback Ryan Leaf.

Brady Leaf was named the starter in the last Civil War and played well, even giving his team a late lead, although the Ducks lost 30-28. It was planned that Leaf would start the remaining games for the Ducks, until he was injured against UCLA. That leaves the Ducks to have to split time with two freshman quarterbacks who have seen no playing time this year.

If the Ducks are to beat the Beavers, it will come down to two factors: the Ducks' ability to shut down an injury-filled Oregon State offense and the play of the two freshman quarterbacks.

Because of the quarterbacks' inexperience, and having to match up with a very difficult defense, don't look for the offense to put up many points, but having the game played at home should help.

The Ducks will win, but it won't be pretty, 17-14. Book your tickets to San Diego.

Nelson inspires team to excellence, creativity on the field

Alexandria Vallelunga

The Clackamas Print

She is a teacher, coach and victory-leader by day and a wife and mother by night.

Tracy Nelson, a health and athletics instructor at Clackamas and the head women's soccer coach, was named 2004-2005 Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges championships (NWAACC) Coach of the Year.

Nelson started the soccer program here on campus six years ago and became a full-time teacher in 2005.

As stated on the Cougar athletics Web site, she "has achieved a phenomenal .809 winning percentage and harvested the last two NWAACC league crowns" in her time at the college.

Nelson has numerous coaching accomplishments, including Oregon Olympic Development Program (ODP) State Team Coach from 2000 to 2004. Since 2002, she has coached the Lake Oswego Soccer Club.

In addition, she has served both as an amateur and professional soccer player.

Nelson played the sport professionally in England and Sweden from 1996 to 1997, participating in the US Women's Amateur Soccer National Championships in 1999. She was deemed Woman of the Year in Sports at Washington State in 1994.

She has an interesting recipe for success.

"I feel it is very important as a coach to make your players feel that you care about them as people and not just as another player on your team," she said.

"I try to have a good rapport with my players and try to instill confidence in the team."

Nelson was inspired by her former soccer coaches to become one herself.

"I feel that I have learned so much from the coaches I had that it only made sense to pass on some of their wisdom and give back to others what I was so fortunate to gain through soccer," she said.

She devotes a great amount of time to coaching, and soccer is a significant part of her life and her family members' lives.

"From watching games on TV, to going to the local college games, to watching games for recruiting purposes, to coaching other teams, to playing myself, we seem to have some involvement with the sport on a daily basis," she said.

"I work with the college team every term with our indoor class in the winter to our six-week spring season in the spring."

Nelson's husband, who works as a computer programmer at Integrated Services Inc., coaches the boys junior varsity team at Tualatin High School.

Nelson attended the University of Portland from 1991 to 1995. From there, she graduated with a bachelor's

degree in social services and a minor in psychology.

In 1994, she was voted the most inspirational player at UP. She participated in the first UP final four team that same year.

Nelson continued her education at Portland State University, where she completed her master's degree in education in 2003.

"I played soccer in college (University of Portland) under Clive Charles, who I consider my mentor," she said. "We reached the final four of the Division I playoffs my senior year. I primarily played center midfield and some defense."

"I used to do substitute teaching for special education when I graduated from college in 1995 and 1996," she added.

Nelson balances much of her time between family and athletics.

"My life outside of Clackamas consists of club coaching, ODP coaching, taking care of my 15-month-old son and playing a little soccer myself," she said.

But while soccer is her favorite sport, Nelson used to be a competitive

horseback rider.

"I rode hunter/jumpers back in high school in Snohomish, Wash., stopped during college and got back into riding in early 2000 at a jumper barn up the road from where I live," she said. "I stopped when I went back to school to get my master's in 2004."

Nelson loves the art and the twist and turns soccer encompasses.

"I love the creativity that is displayed with good soccer players and teams," she said. "There are so many different elements to the game; you never know what is going to happen or what a player is going to do on the ball."

She says that the most valuable thing she has learned from the sport is "mental toughness" — "how to get through the toughest and most challenging situations even when you don't think you can."

"There were many training sessions that I didn't think I could do one more sprint or get one more goal," she said. "I look back at those situations and realize I can get through anything."

Nelson tries to shape her athletes into quality players and team members, as well as encourages them to thrive academically.

"My players work very hard to improve individually and as a team," she states on the Cougar athletics Web site. "We have very high expectations for our players and our program ... we constantly are challenging our players in training and pushing them to their fullest potential."

Nelson feels that coaches must be great motivators because motivation "is a big part of having a successful program in any sport."



NELSON