

OREGON STATE

Beavers hope for respectability

CORVALLIS — After seasons of 0-11 and 1-10, what do you tell your veteran players coming into fall camp?

They've heard it all before and with little results.

This year? "There's no question in my mind we can be a better football team," says Oregon State coach Joe Avezzano.

"We have a situation that's on the right track and I firmly believe that. It's taken two years to get to where we feel we have a solid program. It didn't come easy."

No, it certainly hasn't come easy. After a winless 1980 campaign — Avezzano's first with the Beavers — OSU won the 1981 opener against Fresno State, then lost 10 straight, the last four by a total margin of 159 points.

If OSU is to improve this year, Avezzano agrees, its offense must put out more points. Last year, it averaged barely 13 points per game.

"We're going to have more speed and more depth at the running back and wide receiver positions," says Avezzano.

At running back, OSU has junior Randy Holmes (5-9, 183), who rushed for 637 yards last year, tops on the club. James Terrell and Lucius High will battle for the other running back spot, according to Avezzano.

The depth in receivers mentioned by the Beaver coach refers to newcomers Andy Mott, Rex Brown, Larry Clemons and Lenny Davis.

Avezzano also feels good about the quarterback position, where the Beavers have senior Ed Singler and sophomore Jeff Seay.

"Jeff has a stronger arm, but Eddie compensates that with experience and a more-than-adequate arm," says the third-year coach.

Seay was impressive in the spring game and on the bottom line, Avezzano says, he can move the team on the field.

If that sounds like Avezzano is leaning toward Seay, guess again.

"Singler is the No. 1 quarterback going into pre-season," he says.

The question mark in the Beaver offense is in the line. Here OSU is big but also inexperienced. Avezzano is optimistic, however.

"It can be the best we've



For OSU to improve, defense must stay closer to opposing ball-carriers.

had here," he says.

The Beavers are hoping for strong performances in the line from freshmen Frank Jones, Joe Parry and Darrick Brilz and sophomores Herb Wilson, Rick Meggers and Dwane Jackola.

It all adds up to a better offense, predicts Avezzano, but it's still far from an overpowering force.

"We'll use finesse more

than sheer power — meaning we'll run around them and throw over them," he says. "We're going to play people more physical and capable than we are. We've got to mix it up."

Though offense was lacking last year, the defense was the real sob story. What else can be said of a team that was dead last in defense in the Pac-10 and allowed an average of 42 points every

Saturday? The defense was even worse than the 1980 team. It allowed just 34 points per game.

What the Beavers hope will be their strength this year is in the linebacking corps. There OSU has experienced seniors Jerome Boyd (6-2, 220) and Derek Warren (6-1, 223) as well as monster man Craig Sowash (6-2, 200).

Please turn to Page 22.

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