



by Jim Nakadate

2003 Duck Opponents

NEVADA WOLF PACK

Saturday, September 6, 12:30 p.m. (PDT)
Autzen Stadium, Eugene

Series Record: Oregon leads, 4-1
Head Coach: Chris Tormey (4th year), 10-25
2002 Record: 5-7, 4-4 (fourth in WAC)



RUNNING BACK
CHANCE KRETSCHMER

In Chris Tormey's first year as head coach in Reno the Wolf Pack won only two games. In 2001 Nevada eked out three victories, followed by five last year, including a first-time win over BYU. In fact each of three other games in 2002 were lost by less than a touchdown, giving Wolf Pack fans hope for even better things this year.

All this optimism is bolstered by the return of 10 starters on defense and six on offense, not including junior running back **Chance Kretschmer**, who led the nation with 1,732 yards rushing (5.7 yards per carry, 15 touchdowns) in 2001. His 2002 season was cut short by a concussion suffered in the first game and a torn ACL in the second game, the latter putting him on the sidelines for the rest of the year. At 6-2 and 220 pounds Kretschmer is much bigger than the other running back candidates, sophomore B. J. Mitchell (5-8, 207,

232 yards last year) and JC transfer Talib Wise (5-8, 182), who have been getting most of the carries in fall scrimmages.

Due to numerous injuries and resultant position switches last year, there are eight returning offensive linemen with some starting experience. They are led by right tackle Harvey Dahl (6-5, 309), right guard Isaiah Ross (6-3, 322), left tackle Alan Parker (6-5, 314) and left guard Chris Hines (6-2, 299), all of them upperclassmen. It will be strength against strength when this group meets the Duck defensive line in the Autzen mosh pit.

Sophomore quarterback Jeff Rowe (6-5, 209) completed only 17 passes for 138 yards last year as a backup, but has the edge this season over junior Andy Heiser (6-1, 186) and freshman Travis Moore (6-2, 209). They will be putting the ball up for wide receivers Tim Fleming (6-1, 183, Sr.), Nichiren Flowers (6-2, 203, So.) and JC transfer Willie Johnson (6-4, 195, Jr.). As in the past the Oregon secondary will have its hands full covering taller receivers with shorter cornerbacks. Disguised coverages and closing speed will be critical for Duck success here.

The good news for the Wolf Pack defense is that virtually all the starters return. The bad news is that all the starters return. Nevada's defensive player of the year, sophomore DE **Jorge Cordova** (6-2, 250), leads an experienced crew of mostly juniors and seniors. However, last year's defense gave up 4.7 yards per carry on the ground and 13.6 yards per reception through the air. An interesting addition to the mix is cornerback Randy Ladingham, a 6-0, 200-pound transfer from Nebraska.

The one position where Nevada would seem to have a distinct edge over the Ducks is at punter. Senior Derek Jones (6-2, 234) is rated to be all-conference at this position, while Oregon will be breaking in a rookie.

Take notice of how the Wolf Pack does hosting Southern Utah the week before they play the Ducks. Although Nevada should beat the Thunderbirds easily, success against a Division I-AA school may not carry over to a Pac-10 opponent. At Autzen Stadium the Ducks should muzzle the Wolf Pack, if they can sustain a good effort on both sides of the ball. A conservative, lackluster performance would give Nevada a chance for an upset.

ARIZONA WILCATS

Saturday, September 13, 7 p.m. (PDT) - TBS
Arizona Stadium, Tucson, Arizona

Series Record: Oregon leads, 16-12
Head Coach: John Mackovic (3rd year), 9-14
2002 Record: 4-8, 1-7 (tied for ninth in Pac-10)



CORNERBACK
MICHAEL JOLIVETTE

The natives are restless in Tucson. In head coach John Mackovic's first year (2001) his team won just five games overall and two in conference play. Last year they beat three bad non-conference teams and only one from the PAC 10. The latter win came the week of an acrimonious player revolt, their highly charged meeting with the university president (complaints about Mackovic's heavy-handed treatment of players), and an emotional mea culpa news conference by Mackovic. The coach didn't resign, the university didn't fire him and the team beat Cal, 52-41. But the causes of the situation probably did not go away either. The Wildcats lost to Arizona State, 34-20, to finish the season tied with Stanford for the worst record in the Pac-10.

Coach Mackovic replaced four of his assistant coaches and has promised to change the way he relates to his players, but whether they buy it may be another thing entirely. Senior **Clarence Farmer** (6-0, 224), their best returning running back, was suspended from spring football and recently stated that he is not a happy camper and doesn't talk to the coach "unless he has to." On August 19 senior Andrae Thurman, Arizona's best wide receiver, was declared academically ineligible for the season, as was junior David Sharp, a junior college transfer listed on the pre-season two-deep roster at defensive tackle. And wide receiver Justin

Levasseur (ironically, one of Mackovic's most vocal critics) was arrested in the off season and will not be back.

With the departure of school record holder Jason Johnson at quarterback (3,327 yards last season), new offensive coordinator Mike Deal will be working with a real short or real tall replacement. Last year's backup, sophomore **Nic Costa** (5-10, 200, a graduate of Aloha High School in Beaverton), and redshirt freshman Ryan O'Hara (6-6, 195) are the most likely candidates. Fifth-year senior right tackle Brandon Phillips (6-8, 330) will anchor the offensive line with help from senior left guard Reggie Sampay (6-3, 285), junior center Keoki Fraser (6-3, 300) and sophomore left tackle Tanner Bell (6-8, 324), all of them returning starters.

So, going into battle this year with a rushing offense that averaged a paltry 43.8 yards per game and a passing attack with one returning receiver of note (senior Lance Relford caught 20 balls last year), Arizona may be hard pressed to put points on the board.

First-year defensive coordinator Mike Hankwitz has installed a 3-4 alignment, forsaking Arizona's trademark double-eagle flex. Senior **Joe Siofele** (6-2, 255), who led the team with 66 tackles and 5.5 sacks last year, will shift from defensive end to inside linebacker. Sorely missed will be last year's LB starters Spencer Larsen who opted for a church mission and Lance Briggs (All Pac-10 for three straight years) who is on a mission with the Chicago Bears.

The effectiveness of the Wildcat secondary hinges mainly on the healthful return of senior cornerback Michael Jolivet (5-10, 180) who broke up 20 passes and made five interceptions in 2001, but missed 10 games last season due to a torn ACL.

Senior kicker Bobby Gill hit on seven of 11 field goal attempts last year and made all 17-for-17 on PAT's. Senior James Molina, a walk-on who just won a scholarship, may beat out sophomore Danny Baugher for the punter's job.

With so many holes to fill and the aforementioned management-personnel issues, it may be difficult for Arizona to escape the Pac-10 cellar this year, and for Coach Mackovic to stay in command. The folks in Tucson have reason to be restless. The Ducks should win this one.

MICHIGAN WOLVERINES

Saturday, September 20, 12:30 p.m. (PDT) - ABC
Autzen Stadium, Eugene

Series Record: Michigan leads, 3-0
Head Coach: Lloyd Carr (9th year), 76-23
2002 Record: 10-3, 6-2 (third in Big-10)



CORNERBACK
MARLIN JACKSON

In the pre-season Michigan is ranked #7 in the ESPN/USA Today coaches poll and #4 in the Associated Press (sportswriters) poll. Virtually every other reputable source has the Wolverines ranked as one of the Top 10 teams in the nation. So hopes are extremely high in Ann Arbor for a Big 10 championship and a BCS bowl invitation. Most of all, the Michigan faithful want to supplant arch rival Ohio State as the best team in the land, not just the conference. And the possibility of gaining that coveted invitation to the Sugar Bowl national-title game is very good.

Head coach Lloyd Carr has stockpiled enough football talent to extend Michigan's streak of 28 straight bowl games and to rack up his fifth 10-win season. Factor in an always-sold out Michigan stadium (seating capacity of

107,501), a new \$3 million locker room and a favorable schedule, and one can see why the Wolverines are thinking beyond roses.

At the quarterback position is fifth-year senior **John Navarre** (6-6, 228), who last year threw for 2,905 yards with 21 touchdowns and only 7 picks. He holds school season records for attempts, completions, yards and 200-yard games, and against Florida in the Outback Bowl he connected on 21 of 37 pass attempts for 319 yards. Junior wide receiver Braylon Edwards (6-3, 205) made 67 catches for 1,035 yards and 10 touchdowns; his exploits earned him the right to change his jersey number from 80 to the much-revered number 1, formerly worn by NFL great Anthony Carter and David Terrell, the #1 draft pick of the Chicago Bears in 2001.

Tailback Chis Perry (6-1, 228, Sr.) started 11 games last year and rang up 1,110 yards and 14 touchdowns. He'll be running behind a veteran offensive line led by senior guard David Baas (6-5, 314) and senior tackle Tony Pape (6-6, 304), both of them selected First Team All Big-10 last year.

All four projected starters on the defensive line are fourth- or fifth-year seniors. Larry Stevens (6-3, 260) and Alain Kashama (6-5, 256) will man the end positions, while Norman Heuer (6-5, 282) and Grant Bowman (6-1, 289) are the tackles. The linebacking corps is experienced, with seniors Carl Diggs (6-1, 246) and Zach Kaufman (6-1, 234) and sophomores Scott McClintock (6-2, 236) and Lawrence Reid (6-1, 222) all vying for starting spots.

However, the jewel of the Wolverine defense is junior cornerback **Marlin Jackson** (6-1, 199), who grabbed three interceptions last year, made four tackles for loss and set a school record with 18 pass breakups. He is the frontrunner for the Jim Thorpe Award, given to the nation's best defensive back. The returning starter on the other side is senior corner Jeremy LeSueur (6-1, 202).

Of course the real strength of this team lies in the fact that nearly all the other starters and backups were very highly touted coming out of high school, giving coach Carr