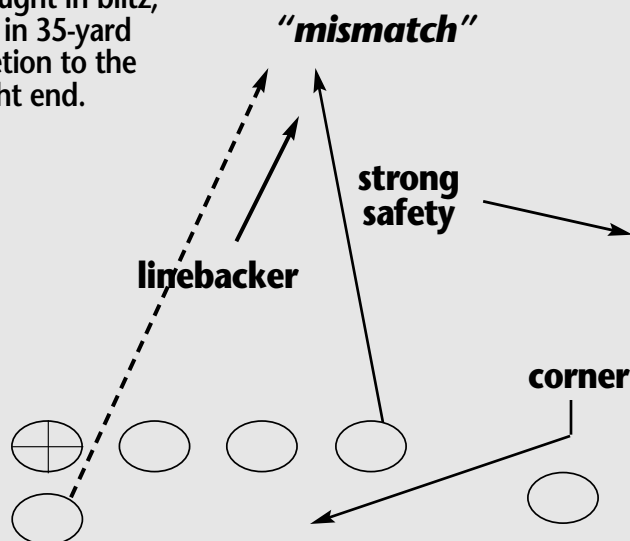


DIAGRAM C

Two Plays that Dogged the Ducks

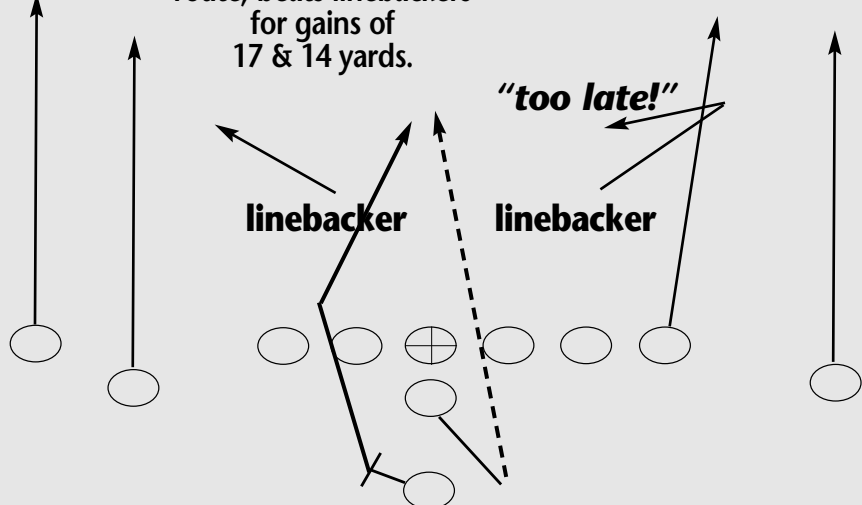
A smart offensive coach will learn from his opponents' tendencies and anticipate further blitzes down the road. In the fourth quarter, nursing a 31-14 lead, the Ducks blitz their corner on first & ten from their own 36-yard line, and this time Nevada is ready: Andy Heiser hitting his tight end (who is covered by a linebacker in a mismatch) for 35 yards down to the Oregon one-yard line. For all those who cry out "Blitz 'em, blitz 'em," remember that you can have it go against you once in a while, or more, if you aren't careful.

Ducks caught in blitz, results in 35-yard completion to the tight end.



Oregon's linebackers are working hard to help out in coverage deeper in the secondary in this situation. Chance Kretschmer, Nevada's outstanding running back, can catch the ball too. He sets up to block, which tells the linebackers they can drop deeper. Once they do, the back circles over the middle in the vacated area for a big gain (17 yards on a third & fifteen and 14 yards on a first & ten; both completions set up scoring drives of a touchdown and field goal). The defensive answer is that the linebackers can either rush, when they see the back blocking, which keeps him from releasing, or dropping at a more guarded pace so they can react quicker to the pass route once the back releases.

Running back delays route, beats linebackers for gains of 17 & 14 yards.



get away from the ball," said Ross.

CONCLUSION: Mental mistakes are preventing the Ducks' "killer instinct" from taking control over lesser opponents. My feeling, which is probably shared by Coach Mike Bellotti, is that these mistakes are correctable. It will be interesting to look for this in the Arizona game this weekend.

Arizona Up Next:

This may be a great time to play Arizona. They looked pathetic against

LSU, out manned and discouraged — certainly Nevada looked to be more competitive against Oregon. But occasionally, a team will be embarrassed and "sell the ranch" the next game and for this, the Ducks need to be focused. Coach Bellotti and his assistants have enough mistakes to correct to keep all phases of Oregon's team focused. They will need to get past the mental breakdowns that keep them from putting an opponent away for good, i.e., get that "killer instinct." Arizona could be very well the opponent Oregon needs to face to prove to themselves — and their somewhat worried fans — that last year's nightmares can be put to rest. **O**



Mallard Musings

STEVE TANNEN
Feature Writer
DUCKS ILLUSTRATED

Informal Poll

If the Oregon coaches were so torn on who to start at quarterback and decided to let the fans at Autzen Stadium cast the final ballot, Kellen Clemens would win in a landslide. The sell-out crowd roared their approval each time he led the offense onto the field against Nevada. The throw of the game, however, was Jason Fife's. The 43-yarder to Samie Parker was a masterpiece. When you have a guy with Parker's wheels, just hang it out there for him to run under. Samie has a shot at Bob Newland's single season mark for catches of 67 set in 1970.

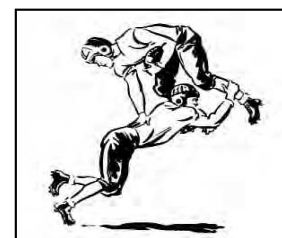
When Dan Weaver went down I was dialing up Kevorkian on my cell but disconnected when he left the field under his own power.

Am I the only one concerned about this early season habit of blowing large leads? Here's a heads up for authorities. I'm planning on breaking into the football offices, stealing the playbooks, and tearing out the page with the quarterback option. Does that thing ever work? Not to mention it's gonna get one of our QB's killed! For pure grit, guts and the ability to bounce back from a big hit, I must doff my cap to Andy Heiser of the Wolfpack. He took some serious shots including a monster blast from Robby Valenzuela and kept getting off the deck to make plays.

The amount of Oregon penalties really has to stop. This stuff will be fatal when Michigan comes marching in and during the Pac-10 season. Did anyone else find it humorous when our stadium announcer, Don Essig stated the Nevada touchdown went to a "wide open" Nichiren Flowers. Those types of comments usually come from broadcasters. Gotta love it! Based on what I saw Saturday night, the Ducks next

opponent, Arizona might be the ultimate conference antidote! They stunk it up huge in losing to L.S.U by 46. A closer look at the numbers gives off an even worse stench. The Cats picked up half of their 10 total first downs and more than a third of that whopping 182 yards on a couple of late, meaningless drives the final 5:40 of the game. Like Mr. Blumski had no grade point average, the U of A has nothing going on at quarterback. Granted, those Bayou Bengals are loaded and should be a player in the S.E.C. Wildcat coach John Mackovic might want to update that resume. 2nd home game of the season, highly ranked opponent, 10,000 empty seats. I bet the countdown to hoops has already started in Tucson.

Let's wrap with a few thoughts from around the Pac. The Cougs almost won the first ever program visit to South Bend against my 2nd most hated team (Huskies are 1st). Lost in overtime, heck of an effort, but they will lose sleep about one that got away. Oregon State quarterback Derek Anderson has not grown like those in Beaver Nation had hoped. He was awful in the Fresno State loss and made some unforgivable mental errors. This team has a strong defense and Steven Jackson is the best back this side of Florida State's Greg Jones but D.A. is going to lead OSU into the tank if he doesn't mature and fast. **O**



Steve hosts **SportsTalk** on KPNW Radio AM1120, Eugene, Monday-Friday, 5-7 p.m.

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