



STEVE TANNEN
Feature Writer
DUCKS ILLUSTRATED

Time Is On Their Side

Let me get on with my life and put this whole Sun Bowl thing behind me. The primary difference I've noticed between folks from the West Coast and my old stomping grounds in the East is the way time is viewed. I'm a bit on the anal side. In this part of the country you're more laid back and not constantly checking the Seiko. I think the Ducks completely mismanaged the clock down the stretch. It began when they were driving for the go ahead field goal. Samie Parker had a catch at the Minnesota 23-yard line with a little over 4 minutes left. Instead of running once to kill some time, Kellen Clemens threw a couple of

incompletions then got sacked. Then the Gophers took control with plenty of time remaining. I'm all for saving time for a final drive, but not 24 seconds. Cast your vote. It's 3rd & 7 with 36 seconds left and your defense has just made a play. Time is rolling along and the opponent is out of time outs. Is it more likely you'll stuff them and get a missed long field goal or you'll get the ball back and move 45 or 50 yards in 3 or 4 plays. Even the greatest coaches make mistakes. Oregon has one of the best in the business. I think that was the worst use of a time out since Chris Webber called the infamous T.O in the 1993 NCAA hoop final against North Carolina. The bottom line is the season ended with much hope for 2004. The out of conference schedule is a cakewalk and once again USC is no where to be seen.

I understand Igor Olashansky's move to enter the NFL draft. The season ending injury to Haloti Ngata certainly opened his eyes to the down side, but we're talking the difference between a mid to late round

selection as opposed to a likely choice in the first or second round in '05. He's a tremendous raw talent but 300 pound interior linemen are everywhere in the pros and I think the offensive blocking schemes at the highest level will school him big time. He was a classic case of a player who needed another year of seasoning and polish. Either way, he was a great Duck and I hope he has a lucrative, successful career.

Let's move to hoops. The Civil War defeat was certainly disappointing. I thought Oregon had to sweep the Northwest schools to have a legit shot at a third straight trip to the Big Dance. Stanford looks like a monster and beating Arizona will be a monumental task. At 6 & 2 entering conference play, logic said 12 & 6 in league would get their ticket punched. I think Brandon Lincoln will need some time to grow into the point guard role but might not have the luxury of time. The injury to Aaron Brooks is a nightmare because it was 100-percent

preventable. Part of the maturation process is accepting failure and the kid did not need to be punching immovable objects. Not gonna win that battle. Live and learn. The troubling part is he just cost himself about 1/8th of his college career. This one certainly qualifies for the Rocket Science Hall of Fame. I thought he was progressing in leaps and bounds. In the games versus the Southern California teams he showed some brass. Brooks was willing to take the outside shot to loosen up a zone or penetrate, break down a defense and dish off for easy buckets. Then an ill-timed right hook halted his development dead in it's tracks. The guess here is Coach Kent will rally the troops and they still have an excellent shot at joining the March Madness party. **O**

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