

College wrestling Rodriguez continues resurgence for Beavers

East Oregonian

CORVALLIS — Hermiston graduate Abraham Rodriguez continued his February turnaround as a resurgent Oregon State wrestling team posted its biggest victory of the season by stunning No. 7 Oklahoma 22-12 on Thursday night before a vocal, season-high crowd of 1,041 at Gill Coliseum.

"They are ranked seventh in the country and we want people to know that we are right there with the best of them to," said Rodriguez, whose 5-2 decision over Shayne Tucker at 157 pounds gave the Beavers (9-6, 2-2 Pac-12) a 12-6 advantage at the midway point.

"It was important to us. We beat them, and that makes a statement."

Rodriguez lost seven matches in a row at one point this season, dropping his record to 8-13. But he went 3-0, with three bonus points and a win over the Pac-12's current top seed, in last week's road trip to California, and extended his winning streak to four straight against the Sooners (9-5).

"During that [tailspin] it was hard but you just have to keep believing, keep plugging away," he said. "Good things started happening and it started coming for me. That's what I always believed."

"(Thursday) is momentum for this dual, and for Pac-12s and nationals coming up," he said.

Beavers 149-pounder Joey Delgado of Hermiston lost his match 11-5 to Davion Jeffries. He was coming off a 2-1 road trip to California with win by major decision 12-2 win over Cal Poly's Jacob Leon and 10-2 over Stanford's Peter Russo.

The Beavers conclude their nonconference schedule at 5 p.m. Sunday against Air Force. OSU then closes the regular season with the annual Border War against Boise State, set for 11 a.m. Feb. 21 at Gill Coliseum. It will be televised by Pac-12 Networks. The Pac-12 Championships are Feb. 27, at Arizona State.

Information for this report provided by OSU Sports Information.



Rodriguez



Delgado

College Football

Hoke: Effort is key to defense

New Oregon defensive coordinator meets the press

By RYAN THORBURN
The Register-Guard

Brady Hoke has moved eight different times during his 33-year career as a college assistant and head coach.

One of the stops was a five-year stay in Corvallis, where Hoke coached Oregon State's defensive line from 1989-94.

So what does Oregon's new defensive coordinator remember about his final Civil War?

"I don't," Hoke said. "Did we get beat or win?"

The Ducks, of course, won the memorable defensive slugfest with the Beavers, 17-13 at Parker Stadium, to clinch the program's first Rose Bowl berth in 37 years.

It was one of former Oregon defensive coordinator Nick Aliotti's finest hours.

"Saw Nick yesterday," Hoke said. "He's one of the good dudes, a good man."

Two seasons removed from Aliotti's final game and a year removed from Oregon's historic Rose Bowl win over Florida State in the College Football Playoff, Hoke was hired by coach Mark Helfrich to restore some glory to the Ducks' defense.

The former Michigan coach met with the media for the first time on Thursday at the Hatfield-Dowlin Complex, where his office is still in need of decoration after its new occupant spent his first few weeks on the job recruiting and the last week getting to know his players.

"It was a great opportunity to focus



Andy Nelson/The Register-Guard via AP

New Oregon defensive coordinator Brady Hoke meets with members of the media at the Hatfield-Dowling Complex near Autzen Stadium in Eugene, Ore., Thursday, Feb. 11, 2016. Hoke is a former head coach at Michigan.

in on calling defense and coordinating a defense," said Hoke, who has never been a defensive coordinator before. "Like Mark said, it's your defense. Having that opportunity was great. We'll see how we do with it."

Hoke has known Don Pellum, his predecessor, since they were young coaches on opposite sides of the Civil War.

After Helfrich demoted Pellum, who he had selected as Aliotti's successor at defensive coordinator, the loyal Oregon linebackers helped persuade Hoke to join the staff during a lengthy phone conversation.

"It was all positive," Hoke said. "Look, (Pellum) loves this school. I was fortunate enough to coach at my alma mater (Ball State). ... He loves the kids on this team, he has great regard and respect for Mark and for the other guys on the staff."

"We had a great conversation about what the vision is and we agreed on that vision. It's been awesome. You talk about a guy

who has done everything he possibly could to make a new guy feel comfortable."

Hoke held a meeting with the defensive players last Friday and has since met with all but two of them individually. He has watched Oregon's 47-41 triple-overtime loss to TCU in the Alamo Bowl, the high-scoring Civil War and the Ducks' win over USC to get a feel for some of the returning players.

"The one thing I asked the guys on the staff is, I didn't want to know about anybody. I didn't want any preconceived (perceptions)," Hoke said. "I want to see it myself. I want to make those evaluations myself."

Hoke couldn't help but notice that he just missed out on coaching a special player in defensive end DeForest Buckner, who is projected to be a top-10 NFL draft pick.

The coaches video Hoke has digested so far shows some intriguing talent running to the ball, but also players making mistakes and not always giving great effort.

That last part is something the new defensive sheriff won't tolerate.

"I believe there's a way you play defense. There's a physicalness," Hoke said of his philosophy. "You have to do that about every day, it just doesn't happen on Saturdays."

"The effort, if we are playing with great effort, all 11, if we are playing like our hair is on fire, we are going to be OK."

During spring practice, Hoke will float between the defensive line, linebackers and secondary to helping each member of the staff implement a 4-3 base defense.

When the season kicks off on Sept. 3 against UC Davis at Autzen Stadium, Hoke plans to be calling the defense and also coaching a position group.

"I can't tell you which one," Hoke said. "It's where I think I can be the most valuable."

After getting fired by Michigan with a 31-20 record over four seasons, Hoke visited the Oregon and Oregon State staffs last spring. He also worked on the other side of the microphone as part of a college football show on SiriusXM, which gave him access to programs such as Clemson, Georgia, Florida and Florida State in the fall.

Now the well-traveled coach hopes to use his experience and knowledge to make some more lasting memories with the Ducks.

There will be plenty of work to do when spring practice begins March 29. Oregon's defense finished the 2015 season ranked 116th in scoring defense (37.5 ppg) and 117th in total defense (485.3 ypg).

"There are no excuses," Hoke said. "We're going to be pretty adamant about who we are and how we play. If we don't play as well as we feel we should, then shame on us, we've got to get better."

NBA

It's Kobe's world, at least for 1 more All-Star weekend

By TIM REYNOLDS
Associated Press

TORONTO — Kobe Bryant answered questions in Spanish and Italian, raved about Canadian hospitality, showed off knowledge of both Greek basketball and English soccer. He announced plans to go to the Philippines and Taiwan, thanked fans from Japan and even asked a reporter how to say a phrase in Mandarin.

It all made perfect sense. The basketball world belongs to Bryant, at least for one more weekend.

About 750 million people around the globe are expected to follow Sunday's NBA All-Star Game in one form or another, and it's a safe guess most will do so to keep a keen eye on Bryant's final appearance in the league's midseason showcase. His farewell season now officially

starting to wind down, the Los Angeles Lakers' star was the center of attraction at media day Friday — and seemed most appreciative.

"I just feel very blessed to be able to play so many years, man," Bryant said. "Twenty years is a long time, so I feel very good about it."

Bryant was the leading vote-getter in the fan balloting that chose the starting lineup for Sunday's game, a lifetime achievement award more than anything related to his play this season. At 37 years old, he's obviously not the same player he was when he was helping the Lakers win five championships, though during the season he's shown flashes of what made him one of the game's all-time elite.

Bryant said he'd be fine playing 10 minutes Sunday. Oklahoma City's Kevin Durant isn't buying that one. "We definitely want to send him

off on a good note," Durant said. "We know he's going to be super competitive."

It is a festive sendoff, for certain. Dozens of media members staked out space around Bryant's podium long before he started speaking Friday, though some just wanted to take selfies with him in the background. Bryant was a featured panelist at the NBA's technology summit earlier in the morning to share ideas with league executives and others, and has his wife and their two daughters in Toronto so the whole family can bask in the celebrations.

"This is pretty cool," Bryant said. "I'm looking around the room and I'm seeing guys that I'm playing with that are tearing the league up that were like 4 for my first All-Star Game. ... How many players can say they played 20 years and actually have seen the game go

through three, four generations? It's not sad at all. I'm really happy and honored to be here and see this."

So were his All-Star peers. Cleveland's LeBron James still might be the best player in the world, Miami's Dwyane Wade has more championship rings than any other All-Star this year besides Bryant, Toronto's Kyle Lowry and DeMar DeRozan are getting the hometown support and Golden State's Stephen Curry is the reigning MVP for a team that won last year's title.

But they all know the spotlight is going to be on No. 24.

"I think it's going to be special," said James, who got Bryant's sneakers autographed after the Lakers visited Cleveland earlier this week for his own trophy case. "Not only for myself, but for the fans here and for all of Kobe's fans."

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