

College Football

Nall carries Oregon State to Civil War victory

By ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

CORVALLIS — Ryan Nall was 10 years old the last time the Beavers beat the Ducks in the Civil War rivalry game. So that made Saturday’s 34-24 Oregon State victory all the more sweet for the sophomore tailback, who finished with 155 yards rushing and four touchdowns. The win snapped an eight-game losing streak for the Beavers in the long-running series. “To be a part of our first win in such a long time, it’s truly an amazing feeling,” said Nall, an Oregon native. “I can’t believe it.” Marcus McMaryion threw for 101 yards and another score as the Beavers finished their second season under coach Gary Andersen at 4-8

overall and 3-6 in the Pac-12. Afterward, fans stormed the field at Reser Stadium and someone hoisted up Nall in victory. “All of the sudden I’m in the air,” he said. “I was just taking in that moment. It was amazing.” Oregon (4-8, 2-7) will end its disappointing season in the basement of the Pac-12 North, a dramatic fall for a team that just two seasons ago played in the first College Football Playoff championship game. True freshman Justin Herbert, starting in his seventh game after taking over for graduate transfer Dakota Prukop, threw for 180 yards and a touchdown for the Ducks, who won’t play in the postseason for the first time since 2004. Royce Freeman, who had seen mention as a



preseason Heisman candidate, ran for 106 yards. Afterward, Ducks coach Mark Helfrich was asked about his job security. “Nobody’s job is safe in college football,” he said. “That’s just the nature of the beast.” Oregon was boosted going into the Civil War by a 30-28 upset of then-No. 11 Utah last weekend, a win that momentarily silenced talk about Helfrich’s future. The victory was sealed by Justin Herbert’s touchdown pass to Darren Carrington with two seconds left.

The Beavers had momentum, too, coming off a 42-17 victory over Arizona at Reser Stadium last Saturday night. Oregon State opened the scoring on Nall’s 12-yard touchdown run. The Ducks answered on the next series with Tony Brooks-James’ 3-yard TD run, then pulled ahead on receiver Jalen Brown’s reverse pass to Carrington for a 33-yard touchdown. The Beavers pulled even at 14 on McMaryion’s 6-yard pass to Ricky Ortiz. McMaryion was pressed into duty as a starter for the Beavers earlier this season after both Darell Garretson and backup Conor Blount were injured. The Ducks were efficient to start the second half, taking the lead on Herbert’s 23-yard

touchdown pass to Charles Nelson. Aidan Schneider’s 46-yard field goal extended the lead for the Ducks. But then the rain started coming down hard and the Beavers turned almost exclusively to running the ball, at one point running on 21 straight plays. Nall scored on a 14-yard run to narrow it for the Beavers, then added a 6-yard touchdown with 9:40 left in the game. His fourth, a 2-yard dash, came with just under two minutes to go. Nall finished the season with 14 touchdowns despite being hampered by a foot injury. It was his fourth game this season with 100 or more yards. “Ryan is a workhorse,” Andersen said. “You keep pounding the ball, good things

are going to happen.” Herbert appeared to connect with Johnny Mundt in the end zone with 41 seconds to go, but Mundt dropped the ball, ending the Ducks’ last chance. “We knew we were going to win,” Beavers safety Devin Chappell said. “Definitely,” added cornerback Treston Decoud. It was the first sellout at Reser Stadium since the 2014 Civil War. PLAYERS WEIGH IN: Freeman said the Ducks player want to see Helfrich return, and they believe he can return the team to national prominence. “He’s done a lot of great things here,” Freeman said. “A lot of positivity coming from him, and the players feed off that.”

Beavers make more progress in Andersen’s second year

By ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

CORVALLIS — With a victory — finally — over rival Oregon in the Civil War, the Oregon State Beavers took a meaningful step in their evolution under coach Gary Andersen. The Beavers finished 4-8 overall, a two-game improvement over last season, and won three Pac-12 games after going winless in the conference last year. But perhaps the most positive indicator of where the Beavers are going came when they snapped an eight-game losing streak to the Ducks. Already out of post-season contention — it was essentially Oregon State’s bowl game — the team was both tough and persistent. “This is a big, big statement for us to be able to get ourselves back in a position to grow as a football team and football program,” Andersen said. The Beavers rallied from a 24-14 third-quarter deficit with three straight touchdown runs from sophomore tailback Ryan Nall, appropriately nicknamed “Wrecking Nall,” to win it 34-24. Nall finished the game with four touchdowns, most for a Beaver since Jacquizz Rodgers ran for three and caught another against

Washington in 2010. Steven Jackson had the last game with four rushing TDs in 2003. Nall, a native Oregonian who played at Portland’s Central Catholic High School, was named the Pac-12 offensive player of the week for the effort. He finished the season with 951 yards rushing and 13 touchdowns on the ground, and also caught a pair of TD passes. He had four 100-yard rushing games. It was the second straight victory for Oregon State, which also beat Arizona 42-17 at home a week before the season finale. It was the first time since 2013 that the Beavers had won consecutive conference games. For senior left tackle Sean Harlow, it was the perfect way to end his college career. “That one has a little extra something special to it,” Harlow said after the Civil War win. “To be able to get one last one, a home game in our place against them of all people, and to run the ball physically and force our will on them all game — there’s nothing better.” And they did it despite numerous key injuries. The Beavers lost starting quarterback Darell Garretson midway through the season to a broken ankle. Backup Conor Blount injured his knee in the same game — essentially thrusting soph-

omore Marcus McMaryion into the starting role for the Beavers’ final six games. McMaryion threw for 1,286 yards and 10 touchdowns, but also threw five interceptions. Five of those touchdown passes came in the victory over Arizona. Sophomore receiver Seth Collins, arguably the most dynamic player on the Beavers’ offense, missed the final two games with a serious illness that put him in the hospital for nearly two weeks. The nature of the illness was not disclosed because of privacy rules. Collins, the Beavers’ former quarterback, had 36 catches for 418 yards and a touchdown this season before falling ill. He was named an honorary captain for the Civil War. Beavers’ H-back Noah Togiai was lost early this season with a knee injury, while outside linebacker Bright Ugwoegbu, the team’s top pass rusher, was lost late in the season to an ankle injury. In all, the Beavers lost 15 players to season-ending injuries this year. “They got knocked down a lot but the battled and got back up and all of a sudden you have some good things happen to you, it’s absolutely got to help your growth and your program and it should help recruiting, too,” Andersen said.

Disappointing season provides few bright spots for Ducks

By ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

EUGENE — Oregon’s run as one of the nation’s elite teams came crashing to a halt this season. Now the question is, was the year just an anomaly? The Ducks, who just two seasons ago were playing in the first College Football Playoff championship game, wrapped up a season to forget with a 34-24 loss to the Oregon State Beavers in the 120th Civil War. The loss snapped an eight-game winning streak in the series. It was one of many streaks that would fall this season. Oregon finished 4-8 overall and at the bottom of the Pac-12 North standings at 2-7 — snapping a run of nine straight winning seasons in conference play. The final loss meant that Oregon wouldn’t be making a postseason appearance for the first time since 2004. The Ducks had finished every season ranked in the AP Top 25 since 2007. It also threw coach Mark Helfrich’s future with the team in doubt, as well as the direction of the program. Just moments after the Ducks left the field at Oregon State, Helfrich was asked about his job security. “Nobody’s job is safe in college football,” he said. “That’s just the nature of the beast.” Oregon hasn’t fired a head coach since 1976 when Don Read was let go after three seasons. At the final media availability of the season, the morning after the Civil War loss, Helfrich said he had called athletic director Rob Mullens to inquire about his status. The two were going to meet this week. Helfrich tried to be positive, but conceded it was out of his control. “We needed to win more games this year and I get that,” he said. “There are a lot of factors involved there but all that stuff is up for debate and determination by people that aren’t me. I think we’ve got a great team coming back, a very talented team coming back, and that’s exciting.” The Ducks started the season with promise, ranked No. 24 in the preseason AP poll. For the second straight season, Oregon brought in an experienced graduate transfer at quarterback — this time Dakota Prukop from Montana State. The Ducks also hired a new defensive coordinator, former Michigan coach Brady Hoke, who installed a 4-3 scheme. Matt Lubick was promoted from within to replace departed offensive coordinator Scott Frost, and David Yost was named quar-

terbacks coach. The defense appeared shaky but the Ducks nonetheless won their first two games, against UC Davis and Virginia. A 35-32 loss at Nebraska started a five-game slide — the longest for the Ducks in 20 years — which finally ended at home with a 54-35 victory over Arizona State on Oct. 29. While mired in the losing streak, the Ducks benched Prukop in favor of freshman Justin Herbert, who in the end was one of the few bright spots in an otherwise dismal season. Herbert’s first start was a daunting one, against No. 5 Washington. The Huskies routed the Ducks 70-21 to snap a 12-game losing streak in the series. But Herbert would go on to finish the season ranked fourth on Oregon’s all-time list for completion percentage at 63.5 percent. He threw for 1,936 yards and 19 touchdowns with four interceptions in nine appearances. Junior Royce Freeman, mentioned as a Heisman Trophy hopeful at the start of the season, rushed for 945 yards and nine touchdowns but was slowed by injury. A possible NFL draft prospect, Freeman said after the Civil War that he had not made a decision on whether to return for another college season. Oregon didn’t lead the Pac-12 in rushing for the first time in 10 seasons.

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