

Ducks welcome in Mike Riley and the Cornhuskers

By ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

EUGENE — Mike Riley is coming home to Oregon but this is just a business trip.

The former Oregon State Beavers coach is bringing his current team to Autzen Stadium for a high-profile early-season game between Nebraska and the Oregon Ducks.



• Saturday, 1:30 p.m.
• at Autzen Stadium
• TV: FOX

Riley grew up in Corvallis, some 50 miles north of Eugene, and played quarterback for Corvallis High School. His dad, Bud, was an assistant at Oregon State. Riley himself had two stints as head coach of the Beavers between 1997 and 2014.

He still has a home in the central Oregon town, which he joked that his wife won't let him sell.

"I do like revisiting that history



AP Photo/Nati Harnik, file

Former Oregon State Beavers' coach Mike Riley is bringing his new team to Autzen Stadium for a high-profile early season game against Oregon on Saturday.

because I appreciated it so much. All of those times were special. I watched games in that stadium when I was a kid," he said.

During his time with the Beavers, Riley was 1-6 at Autzen Stadium in Civil War rivalry games. The only win was in 2007 when the Beavers beat the Ducks 38-31 in double overtime.

Nebraska (1-0) is coming off a 43-36 victory over Arkansas State last Saturday. The Huskers went

9-4 last season, their second under Riley.

Oregon (1-0) is playing its first season under coach Willie Taggart, who took over after the Ducks finished 4-8 last season.

The team won the opener in decisive fashion, routing lower-division Southern Utah 77-21. It was Oregon's most points in a single game since 1916. The Ducks also racked up 703 yards in total offense and set a new Autzen record with

nine rushing touchdowns.

Other things to watch when Oregon hosts Nebraska on Saturday:

ANOTHER CONNECTION: Taggart is a former quarterback who started all four years at Western Kentucky. Before that, he played at Manatee High School in Bradenton, Florida, where he followed quarterback Tommie Frazier — who went on to lead the Huskers to consecutive national championships and undefeated seasons in 1994 and 1995.

As a sophomore, Taggart was Frazier's backup.

"If there's anything that helped me it was learning how competitive he was and then how he didn't want anyone to beat him, he didn't want anyone to take his job, he didn't want any of that," Taggart said. "That's the way you have to be. I think that's why he was a great player, he took pride in it every single day."

Taggart made his debut as a head coach with Western Kentucky against Nebraska in 2010, losing 49-10 to the Huskers in Lincoln.

HISTORY: The Huskers won last year's meeting in Lincoln, 35-32. It was the fifth straight Nebraska victory in the series between the two teams. The game Saturday will be the first time in the past six meetings that neither team is nationally ranked.

Saturday will also mark Nebras-

ka's first appearance at Autzen and first visit to Oregon since a 28-13 victory over the Ducks in 1952 at what is now Providence Park in Portland.

SMOKY SKIES: There are so many large wildfires burning in Oregon that there was some concern about the air quality for Saturday's game. The smoky skies made conditions hazardous in Eugene for most of the week, forcing the Ducks to travel to the coast for practice on Tuesday.

But showers that moved over the region late Thursday did the trick, and the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency said air quality was categorized as "good" by Friday morning.

ABOUT THE UNIFORMS: The Ducks will be wearing special new uniforms when they host Nebraska. Nike teamed up with OHSU Doernbecher Children's Hospital for the clean white "Stomp Out Cancer" uniforms. Three young cancer survivors, Joe MacDonald, Sophia Malinoski and Ethan Frank, served as the design team.

Because Oregon is wearing white, Nebraska will wear its home uniforms in Eugene. The last time the Huskers wore their red jerseys in a true road game was the 1976 opener. They were in their home uniforms for the 6-6 tie at LSU because the Tigers wear white jerseys at home.

No. 7 Washington returns home to host FCS power Montana

By TIM BOOTH
Associated Press

SEATTLE — Bob Stitt is regarded as one of the more innovative offensive minds in college football, honing his craft for years at the small-college level before making the jump to Montana and the FCS level before the 2015 season.

He's got an admirer in Washington coach Chris Petersen.

"Their coach is a legendary coach for a long time coaching small-college football and a lot of guys have been through his shop to pick his brain and see how he does things," Petersen said. "So he's a really good coach."

Petersen will get to see Stitt's innovative offense up close on Saturday when No. 7 Washington faces Montana in the Huskies' home opener.

It will be the first home game for the Huskies (1-0) since the middle of last November, before they were Pac-12 North champions, before they beat Colorado in the Pac-12 championship game, and before they faced Alabama in the national semifinals. So the opener is expected to be a celebration — even without a premier opponent — and a tuneup after Washington's sluggish 30-14 season-opening win over Rutgers.

"I am excited to be here at home and I am really excited to see what our crowd is all about. I really, really am," Petersen said. "When a program is doing the things they want to do, it doesn't matter — we only get seven home games, and everybody is going to show up to see their team play. When you look at really the elite programs throughout the country, the (fans) are there — rain, wind, early, late, before school, it doesn't matter. I am really hopeful we get a really good crowd."

Montana (1-0) has not traditionally been an FCS team to step up in competition and take on FBS programs. The trip to Seattle will be the Grizzlies' first FBS game since playing at Wyoming in 2014 and just the second since 2011 when they lost 42-16 at Tennessee.

"We've got to use this game to get better and you can't miss an opportunity for your football team to get better schematically and mentally," Stitt said. "To go against the best, that can't do anything but help us."

Here are other things to watch as the Huskies host the Grizzlies:

MONTLAKE JAKE: Washington QB Jake Browning was solid but not



• Saturday, 5 p.m.
• at Husky Stadium
• TV: PAC12 Network

spectacular in the opener. He threw for 284 yards and two touchdowns. He also took one of the biggest hits of his career early on. Browning would like a little better performance than his last start at Husky Stadium. In the home finale last season, Browning threw for 338 yards and two touchdowns against Arizona State but also threw two interceptions.

REESE'S PIECES: If there is one Montana player not likely to be in awe of the atmosphere at Husky Stadium, it would be starting quarterback Reese Phillips. Phillips started his career at Kentucky before transferring to Montana. One of the three games Phillips appeared in before leaving Kentucky happened to be at Tennessee in front of more than 102,000 fans. Phillips was excellent in Montana's opener, throwing for 381 yards and four touchdowns in a victory over Valparaiso.

GROUND OUT: Washington's run game was expected to be a strength with the return of Myles Gaskin and Lavon Coleman, and the addition of freshman Salvon Ahmed. But the ground attack never got going in the opener. Gaskin had just seven carries, Coleman was limited to 40 yards on 14 attempts and Ahmed touched the ball once. "I think everybody's always trying to figure those things out. And it's probably playing 'live' for the first time," Petersen said. Expect the run game to be a focus for the next couple of weeks as Washington tries to get that part of its offense established heading into Pac-12 play.

AZEEM RETURNS: Washington will get preseason AP All-American linebacker Azeem Victor back on the field for the first time since Nov. 12. Victor suffered a broken leg on that day in Washington's only regular-season loss last season. He was healthy throughout spring and fall camp, but was suspended for the season opener for violation of team rules. Victor is expected to team with fellow linebacker Keishawn Bierria to form one of the best linebacker duos in the country.

More AP college football: Collegefootball.ap.org and on Twitter @APTop25

Beavers ready to take on Golden Gophers

By ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

Oregon State coach Gary Andersen pretty much knows what to expect from Minnesota, even though the Golden Gophers have a new coach.

As coach at Wisconsin from 2013-14, Andersen faced Minnesota in the battle for Paul Bunyan's Axe twice, winning both times. Then last year he took the Beavers on the road for the first game of the series against the Gophers.

So while there are differences with the Gophers under P.J. Fleck, Andersen said he's confident about what Oregon State will face.

"Sure there are differences in the offense and defense, but it's not a drastic departure," Andersen said.

Fleck's debut was a 17-7 grind-it-out victory over Buffalo. The first-year Gophers coach said he kept the running game fairly basic for his players — Rodney Smith ran for 76 yards while Shannon Brooks had 69 yards and a touchdown — but the offensive line will show more as time goes on.

"As we continue to go, we'll expand. Whatever the team can handle, we'll give them but that would be foolish for me to say here's



• Saturday, 7 p.m.
• at Reser Stadium
• TV: FS1

everything, we haven't really had you practice much, you know, especially at the key positions, and you've been here three and a half weeks of true practice and here you go, here's the whole thing," he said.

The Beavers are 1-1 after a loss at Colorado State and a nail-biting 35-32 victory at home over lower-division Portland State. Like Fleck, Andersen said one focus will be making sure the Beavers' talented running backs are freed to work: "Sustaining blocks this week will be key."

Top rusher Ryan Nall ran for 115 yards in the opener, but had only 59 against the Vikings last week. He had TDs in both games. Thomas Tyner, who came to the Beavers from Oregon, is still catching on to the system.

Andersen said that overall the Beavers continue to search for that edge.

"As you go through (the season), you get to see who you are as a team. They have

two games underneath their belts right now. We have some young guys stepping up, there are opportunities for others that see how they're playing. You should always gain a little bit of an edge, because it's one day closer to the season being over, also."

Things to watch when the Beavers host Minnesota:

HISTORY: Minnesota is 3-1 all-time over Oregon State, including last year's 30-23 victory at home.

QUARTERBACK SHUFFLE: The Gophers have started the season playing two quarterbacks — Conor Rhoda and Demry Croft. Fleck is waiting for one of the two to take control and earn the job. That didn't happen in Week 1 against lowly Buffalo. Rhoda was 12 of 20 for 176 yards with a touchdown and an interception and Croft was 7 of 12 for 63 yards. "I want somebody to make that big, giant leap, and if they don't make the big, giant leap, that's OK," Fleck said. "But sooner or later, I would like to be able to focus in on one."

DOUBLE DUTY: Punter Ryan Santoso handled the kickoff duties as well in the opener for Minnesota after kicker Emmitt Carpenter had those responsibilities last season. Santoso said that might

change as the season wears on, but he did not find out he would be kicking off against Buffalo until two days before the game. "It is a different skill. It's a different leg swing," Santoso said. "I'm glad to be back out there. It's fun to see the boys getting all juiced up at the beginning of the games."

SMOKE GETS IN YOUR EYES: There were concerns about the smoke-filled skies in Oregon this past week caused by more than two dozen large wildfires burning in the Pacific Northwest. The Beavers were monitoring the situation, but showers moved across the region on Thursday night and cleared much of the haze.

GETTING HYPER?: Fleck is known for his buzzwords and catch phrases. So let's look at one: HYPRR culture. The word is an acronym for how, yours, process, result, response. He explains the meaning for it here:

"It starts with the people, the people matter. Holistically, academically, athletically, socially, spiritually. I might get fired one day, I might stay here a long time but it's all about people, right? So it's my job to make them better students, better people off the field, better husbands, better fathers one day," Fleck said.

Rypien leads Broncos up against No. 20 Cougars

By NICHOLAS K. GERANIOS
Associated Press

Boise State quarterback Brett Rypien is no stranger to Washington State's Martin Stadium.

He attended many games in Pullman when he was growing up in nearby Spokane and knows what the atmosphere is like.

He'll get to experience it from a different perspective Saturday when he leads Boise State against No. 20 Washington State.

"It's wild, especially when the Cougars start winning," Rypien said.

The Cougars (1-0) have been winning quite a bit the past two years, going to bowl games after each of the last two seasons.

Boise State (1-0) has been winning consistently for some two decades. Rypien, the nephew of great Washington State quarterback Mark Rypien, picked the Broncos over the Cougars because he wanted to try something new.

"It's going to be different for sure, being back home," the junior said. "But I'm looking forward to it."

Rypien led Boise State to a 31-28 win over Washington State last season in Boise, the Broncos' first



• Saturday, 7:30 p.m.
• at Pullman, Wash.
• TV: ESPN

win over the Cougars after four losses.

While Rypien is expected to start Saturday, the Boise State quarterback situation got a little murky in the season opener against Troy last weekend when backup Montell Cozart played some decisive minutes in leading the Broncos to a 24-13 win.

Cozart, a former starter at Kansas, may play again if the Cougars defense is roughing up Rypien like the Troy defense did.

"It really wasn't that hard for me," Rypien said of watching Cozart play. "I want to win championships, first and foremost, and after not getting it done the first two years here, it's something I'm really looking forward to."

Washington State coach Mike Leach said Rypien played well against the Cougars last year. He is not a fan of rotating quarterbacks.

"I always worry it makes the team disjointed," Leach

said. "I've never done it that way."

Leach said the Cougars will prepare to face both quarterbacks. He noted that Boise State often presents coaching challenges.

"They've always had some gadgets and shifts and motions that have worked out good for them," Leach said.

Other things to watch when Washington State hosts Boise State:

WELCOME TO THE PAC-12: Boise State is regularly one of the Mountain West's top teams but the Broncos are pretty good playing out of conference as well. The Broncos are 4-0 against Pac-12 teams dating to 2014, including wins over Washington State and Oregon State last year. "They are able to zero in" when they play teams from the Power Five conferences, Leach said. "Pac-12 teams play a lot of good teams." These two programs, located about 300 air miles apart, have played only five times in their history.

FALK'S MILESTONES: Washington State QB Luke Falk continues to pile up passing records. He needs just 101 passing yards to break Connor Halliday's team record of 11,304 career

yards, and is stalking a whole bunch of other team and Pac-12 records. Most important, he has led the Cougars to 19 victories, second-best in program history behind Jason Gesser's 24 wins. "He's good at featuring the talents of the players around him," Leach said.

RUN AND CATCH: Washington State's James Williams set team running back records last weekend with 13 receptions for 163 yards and a pair of touchdowns. He also rushed for 45 yards. "James is really explosive with the ball in his hands," Leach said.

GOOD COMPANY: Boise State's football winning percentage of .725 since becoming a four-year college ranks third in history, after Michigan (.731) and Notre Dame (.729). The Broncos also have made 15 consecutive bowl appearances and have appeared in the AP Top 25 at least once a season for the past 15 years.

GRAY AIR: The air in eastern Washington has been smoky all week because of wildfires, with air quality often dropping into the "hazardous" category. But the weather forecast calls for much of the smoke to clear out by game time Saturday night.