

College Football

Oregon's defensive shuffle doesn't help in loss to UCLA

By STEVEN MIMS
The Register-Guard

PASADENA, Calif. — Oregon asked some of its defenders to do things they'd never done before.

After playing the first 32 games of his career at cornerback, Ugochukwu Amadi returned to the starting lineup at safety during Oregon's 31-14 Pac-12 football loss to UCLA on Saturday at the Rose Bowl.

"Never played safety before in my life," the junior said. "Just started this week." Sophomore La'Mar Winston made his fourth start of the season at linebacker but went wire-to-wire for the first time.

"By far, the most plays I've had in a game," he said.

Oregon took just three inside linebackers on the road trip, with AJ Hotchkins,

Kaulana Apelu, and Blake Rugraff — who all started at least one game this year — out with injuries. Linebacker Jonah Moi and defensive lineman Scott Pagano were also left home due to injuries.

"We're beat up pretty bad," Oregon coach Willie Taggart said. "We are playing a lot of young guys, but we knew that coming in. That's not an excuse. We don't have a lot of depth."

Amadi said he was moved to safety to help defend wide receiver Darren Andrews, who came into the game leading the Bruins with 44 catches and seven touchdowns, caught five balls and scored a TD against the Ducks.

"We needed guys who could cover (Andrews) up the seam, and I felt like I was the best choice to be able to line up against him," Amadi said.



AP Photo/Mark J. Terrill
UCLA quarterback Josh Rosen, left, escapes a sack by Oregon defensive lineman Henry Mondeaux during the first half of Saturday's game in Pasadena, Calif.

"Watching film on UCLA and their scheme, I felt they should put me over at safety."

Amadi had a career-high nine tackles and forced a fumble while rarely leaving the field.

"It wasn't that bad because I know football and have a high IQ," he said of the position switch. "I was coming unblocked and able to play freely."

Winston led the Ducks

with 11 tackles, including a sack, as he teamed with Troy Dye, Justin Hollins, and Jimmie Swain to go most of the way at linebacker.

"I was tired, but I understand that I need to be more conditioned to stay and play as long as I want to play," he said.

UCLA had 268 of its 408 yards in the second half, including 112 on the ground, after running for 30 in the first half. Quarterback Josh Rosen threw for 156 of his 266 yards in the final two quarters.

"In the first half we played better defense than the second half," Taggart said. "In the second half, there were too many explosion plays that changed the momentum of the game, and you can't do that."

UCLA outscored Oregon 17-0 in the second half.

"I felt like a couple of our players were worn out, but at the end of the day it comes back to us and how well we condition ourselves," Winston said. "We need to condition ourselves better to play with more intensity and effort late in the game. If that has been a close game or overtime, we can't make any excuses so we need to be more conditioned."

Taggart said one of Oregon's three main objectives was to get some takeaways, but the Ducks had none. Oregon has one INT in five conference games.

"We get takeaways in practice, and I feel like we need to transition that to the game," Winston said. "There are no excuses to say why we didn't get any takeaways because there were opportunities, we just didn't take them."

BRIEFLY

Pendleton-Hermiston rivalry gains national recognition

PENDLETON — Since 1922, the Pendleton and Hermiston football rivalry has built itself into one of the longest-lasting rivalries in high school football in the state of Oregon.

Now, the rivalry is gaining national recognition.

The Great American Rivalry Series announced on Monday that Friday's meeting between the Buckaroos and Bulldogs will be featured in the Series' 11th weekend of the 2017 season. As a part of the series, the winning team on Friday will take home the Great American Rivalry Series Champions trophy, presented by the Marines and a Most Valuable Player will also be recognized.

An alumnus from both Hermiston and Pendleton will also be inducted into the Series' 14th Hall of Fame Class.

In its 14 years of existence, the Great American Rivalry Series has featured some of the best high school football rivalry games across the country, spanning 40 states. Recent selections in Oregon include North Medford-South Medford (2015), Oregon City-West Linn (2015), and Glencoe-Hillsboro (2014).

More information is available at GreatAmericanRivalry.com, on Twitter (@AmericanRivalry), as well as Facebook, YouTube and Instagram.

Pendleton athletics holding football tailgate party

PENDLETON — Prior to Pendleton's rivalry football game with Hermiston on Friday night, Buckaroo fans will have a chance to drum up their pride.

Pendleton is holding a pre-game tailgate party in the parking lot south of the Round-Up arena with food and activities for all ages. From 5:30-6:30 p.m., fans can listen to live music from DJ Clark while chowing down on free hotdogs. The National Guard will be on hand with a rockwall for fans to climb and a HUMV, and other activities include tug-of-war, football passing challenge, and inflatable jousting.

Kickoff for the Pendleton-Hermiston game is at 7 p.m. at the Round-Up Arena.

Eastern Oregon Gymnastics competes in The Dalles

THE DALLES — The Eastern Oregon Gymnastics team was on the road again on Saturday for competition and came home with solid results.

In the Level 4 Compulsory, Pendleton's Grace Shay had the best individual finish with second place in the vault, while North Powder's Felicia Murphy was third in bars and third in all-around.

In Level 5 Compulsory, Pendleton's Natalie White finished second in floor exercise, third in vault and third in beam, and then finished fourth in all-around. Shaelynn Silva, also of Pendleton, turned in a fourth place finish in beam.

The team will next compete at Westside Gymnastics in Tigard on Nov. 4.

NFL

Seahawks defense back on top after win streak

By TIM BOOTH
Associated Press

RENTON, Wash. — It may not have looked that way earlier in the season, but the Seattle Seahawks are back to being an elite defense.

Seattle is tied for the league lead in scoring defense after Sunday's 24-7 romp over the New York Giants. The Seahawks are allowing just 15.7 points per game, tied with Jacksonville for the league lead. They've given up a combined 244 yards rushing in the past three games, including just 46 yards on the ground in rolling past New York.

It's no surprise the Seahawks have won three straight because their defense is back playing at the level that has become their standard.

The Giants finished with just 177 total yards, the 18th time in Seattle coach Pete Carroll's

tenure that the Seahawks have held an opponent under 200 total yards in a regular-season game. It was the 21st time they held an opponent under 50 yards on the ground. Carroll was extremely pleased with the play of second-year defensive tackle Jarran Reed and veteran Sheldon Richardson against the Giants.

"They were really consistent, really disciplined from inside out. ... It takes great discipline to do that play after play after play. We've been doing this for years and this is how you play base defense and if you don't play with great discipline, which shows up in those couple of plays that get away from you once in a while, you can't play at this level and you can't play a base scheme like we do," Carroll said. "We don't do a lot of fancy stuff. We do stuff really well and we count on our guys to execute the heck out of it."

The performance in New York capped a three-game turnaround for the Seahawks after an ugly performance in Tennessee where Seattle allowed 195 yards rushing and 33 points to the Titans. Seattle gave up touchdowns of 55 and 75 yards in the loss.

In the past three games, the Seahawks held Indianapolis to 237 total yards in a 46-18 rout, forced five turnovers in their 16-10 win over the Rams and capped the win streak with the performance against the Giants.

"We just made mistakes in the Tennessee game. I got worn down a little bit and in a segment of that game we gave up a couple of plays we never give up and it didn't look like anything we've ever seen on film for six, seven years," Carroll said. "It hasn't looked like that since. If you take the rest of the plays we're doing a really good job. It's unfor-

tunate. I don't know why that happened as it did, but it did and it's behind us."

But Seattle is about to get possibly its toughest defensive test yet this season with Houston visiting Sunday. The Texans are coming off their bye but before the break had scored at least 33 points in four straight games, sparked by the play of rookie quarterback Deshaun Watson. The Texans scored 33 against New England and Cleveland, 34 against Kansas City and 57 points in their rout of Tennessee.

Not surprisingly, Carroll was already breaking down Texans film on Monday.

"I've already jumped all over that. He's really good," Carroll said of Watson. "He's got terrific numbers. ... I've already checked him out. He looks good and they do a lot of stuff with him."

Broncos have plenty to fix after first shutout in 25 years

By DAN GREENSPAN
Associated Press

CARSON, Calif. — In a locker room still processing the franchise's first shutout since Nov. 22, 1992, the Denver Broncos knew there was plenty of blame to go around after a 21-0 loss at the Los Angeles Chargers on Sunday.

The defense took the blame for not creating turnovers. The special teams took the blame for allowing a punt return touchdown that allowed the Chargers to play with the lead. And the offense, well, where to begin?

"Everybody had faults this game," linebacker Shaquil Barrett said.

The Broncos rushed for 69 yards and allowed five sacks. Quarterback Trevor Siemian couldn't move the ball down the field. When he did, tight end A.J. Derby fumbled after making a catch. Demaryius Thomas had an 81-yard play negated because of an offensive pass interference penalty.

"The past two weeks is not us," Thomas said.

For the offense, this was the culmination of issues that had been brewing for weeks. Denver had scored one touchdown in each of its previous



AP Photo/Jae C. Hong
Denver RB C.J. Anderson, middle, is tackled by Los Angeles Chargers' defense during Sunday's game.

three games before finally getting held scoreless for the first time since facing the then-Los Angeles Raiders 25 years ago.

Injuries have been a factor, notably on the offensive line and at wide receiver. Rookie left tackle Garrett Bolles looked overmatched against the devastating edge-rushing tandem of Joey Bosa and Melvin Ingram. Guard Andre Barbre started at right tackle. There were dropped passes, missed assignments and missed plays in the running game.

"We're not blocking well. We're not protecting well. We had some good plays called again today, we had some guys wide open. We're just not hitting the passes," Broncos

head coach Vance Joseph said.

Joseph said he never considered benching Siemian, who was 25 of 35 for 207 yards, no touchdowns and one interception.

"He's our quarterback," Joseph said. "It's a two-score game for most of the game, so why make a change when we're still in the game? It wasn't simply on Trevor. I felt up until five minutes to go it was a game we could have won."

Thomas was even more forceful in his defense of Siemian.

"I got Trevor's back, I don't care what nobody say," said Thomas, who had two receptions for nine yards. "It's about what we got to do as a group, as an offense to make us better."

Once we do that, then you'll see people start pointing fingers at something else."

Taking pressure off the offense was a common refrain, either by giving them fewer third-and-longs or getting better field position. The Broncos were 3 of 14 on third down, 1 for 7 when needing at least seven yards. Four drives started inside their own 10-yard line.

The defense wants to rectify the latter problem by generating takeaways, something they did not do against the Chargers. The Broncos have one interception and no fumble recoveries in their last four games.

"There are so many different ways to get turnovers, and we're not getting any of them. We got to create a short field for our offense," linebacker Von Miller said.

In spite of the myriad problems, resulting in a performance as that several players described as "embarrassing," Miller was confident the Broncos can still recover.

"You can't lose two games straight and not have any issues, so we obviously got issues that we need to address from the top down," Miller said. "I strongly feel we'll get this corrected."

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