

One-on-One with Ken Woody

By Zach Silva
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Last Thursday, Oregon football expert Ken Woody visited the Cottage Grove Rotary Club where he talked all things Oregon football. The former Oregon football player, Division I coach, Fox Sports television analyst, current Register-Guard columnist and author of "After Further Review" sat down with the Sentinel and talked about a little of everything. Here is an excerpt of the conversation that has been edited for clarity and flow.

Ken Woody: Really, when I got out of school before I got involved in coaching I wanted to be a play-by-play radio broadcaster for ice hockey.

Cottage Grove Sentinel: That was the goal? Why hockey?

KW: It's probably the best spectator sport there is. I love football but I love hockey, too. Lot of action and it is a game where defense can be exciting.

CGS: On the Ducks though, on that side of things, how do you think Justin Herbert compares to the rest of the Pac-12 quarterbacks?

KW: Favorably. I wouldn't take any one of those other guys over him.

CGS: If you had the chance for USC's Sam Darnold on the Ducks?

KW: We know Darnold is good, but Herbert is smoother. We know Herbert is just like Mariota. We know that he is an All-American boy, he's smart, he studies, he obviously has taken to being more of a visible leader.

CGS: You mentioned your prediction at the beginning of the year was that the team would finish 6-6. How has it changed after seeing the Pac-12

not being as strong this year and the Ducks being better on defense than expected.

KW: I am absolutely marveling at how much better they are on defense and it's all coaching. You see them run to the ball. Pass plays there are guys around the ball and they are going to it. They are making plays. Defensive line is so much different. They have lower pad levels and they are staying square. They were struggling a little bit at times but you're gonna. Their pass rush was unbelievable. Last year they would blitz a linebacker and it would be ho-hum, he would never get there.

CGS: There was never much pressure.

KW: I'm seeing a totally different defense. I just see a different intensity in the players and coaches. And the players love the coaches. They will play hard for them and they will have fun. That's one thing about Taggart that I really, really like is he says guys you got to have fun. Because when you are having fun you will work hard and you will practice hard and you'll be together. Everything you are doing is with a positive look on it. Oregon needed the change that they got.

CGS: Do you have a record that you think this team can get to?

KW: You look at teams and how they have played so far and you would have them favored over Arizona State. Cal didn't look as good against Weber State as they did the week before but they've got athletes. Then they play Washington State. I would have Washington State favored in that game because they've got more experience but the Ducks keep improving, it might be a toss up.

The Ducks could very well be favored against UCLA, it could be a toss up. Washington may be the only game that I don't think they can win right



now. I think they could win all the others. A lot of people think Utah is kind of a gimme but they are really good.

CGS: Do you have an all-time favorite Oregon team?

KW: The '94 Rose Bowl team. I was doing color for Fox at that time and that team changed things around. I don't know if you remember it, how old were you then?

CGS: I was born in '95.

KW: [Laughs] Here is what you missed. Ducks win big against Portland State in their opener. Then they go to Hawaii, and I did that game live back to Portland and the Ducks lost like 37-14. Then they played Utah at home and they got beat but they played a little bit better.

So then Nick Aliotti, we were close friends and I was talking with him, and the captains came to Rich Brooks and said we need to condition more. And they all got together and they said we've got three goals, and Aliotti tells this to me, we're go-

ing to play hard, try to get better and we're going to have fun. And that's it.

The next week they play Iowa at home and Iowa is good. There are now fans that are excited about Oregon losing because they think we can now get rid of Brooks.

They ended up kicking Iowa's butt. There were fans that were there that were upset that Oregon won. The next week they go to USC and they win. They go to Washington State and they get screwed on a couple of calls but then they end up running the table.

It was just amazing. Sitting there in the Rose Bowl there was one of my former teammates in front of me and there were tears coming down his face and he turns to me and says I can't believe we're here.

That team had some great personalities. Just really good guys that they molded together and they were a fun time. They are the ones that raised the bar.

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ATTENTION: Tiebreaking Process - the designated tie-breaker game will be judged on total points ONLY. Please estimate the total points for the tie-breaker game.

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LARRY This Week Stats:11-0 Season Stats:18-6

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