

Sports

PAC-12 FOOTBALL

Last-second field goal lifts Ducks over Washington State

CJ Verdell runs for 257 yards as Oregon snaps 4-game losing streak to Cougars

By Anne M. Peterson
AP Sports Writer

EUGENE — Freshman kicker Camden Lewis flexed his muscles with a holler as teammates raised him on their shoulders.

He had just nailed a 26-yard field goal as time expired, extending No. 11 Oregon's winning streak to seven games with a 37-35 victory over Washington State on Saturday night.

He deserved that flex.

CJ Verdell ran for a career-high 257 yards and three touchdowns for the Ducks (7-1, 5-0 Pac-12), who haven't lost since the season opener against Auburn.

Anthony Gordon's 5-yard touchdown pass on fourth down to Brandon Arconado with a minute remaining gave Washington State a 35-34 lead. But then Justin Herbert completed four straight passes on the ensuing drive to get the Ducks close for Lewis' kick.

"I want that kick so bad, that's just why you do it," Lewis said about his mindset as he watched Oregon march down the field. "I don't want them to score, I want to kick it."

The loss snapped Washington State's four-game winning streak over Oregon. Gordon threw for 406 yards and three touchdowns for the Cougars (4-4, 1-4), while Arconado caught nine passes for 130 yards and two scores.

Gordon went into the game leading the nation in yards passing (425.9) and completions (35.14) per game. He has 32 touchdowns this season, including the four he threw last week in a 41-10 victory over Colorado.

"Definitely it felt good to get the ball in the end zone in crunch time like that," Gordon said about the Cougars' final drive. "Just coming up a little bit short, and in general



Chris Pietsch/Associated Press

Oregon's CJ Verdell, left, breaks a tackle by Washington State's Jahad Woods during the third quarter Saturday at Autzen Stadium in Eugene.

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— Camden Lewis, Oregon freshman kicker after making game-winning field goal Saturday

throughout the four quarters, just got to figure out how to make maybe one more play to give us an opportunity to win."

Herbert threw for 222 yards but his streak of 35 straight games with a touchdown pass — the longest active run in the nation — was snapped. He threw for 280 yards and four touchdowns last week in a comeback victory over Washington to earn Pac-12 Offensive Player of the Week honors.

"To be able to trade that

for a win, I'd do that again," Herbert said about the streak ending.

The Ducks were without senior linebacker Troy Dye, who broke his thumb last week against Washington. Dye has 351 career tackles, most among current Power 5 players, and has led the Ducks in tackles for three straight seasons. Dru Mathis started in his place.

The Cougars got to the Oregon 19 on their opening drive, but Gordon twice failed to connect with Rodrick Fisher and the team settled for Blake Mazza's 36-yard field goal.

The Ducks answered with Lewis' 40-yard field goal.

Verdell ran untouched for an 89-yard touchdown to put the Ducks up 9-3 midway through the first half. The extra point attempt by Lewis went wide right.

Gordon was intercepted in the end zone by Verone McKinley III, who snagged the ball when Arconado bobbled it. It was McKinley's third interception this season. But the Ducks failed to capitalize on the turnover.

Max Borghi's 1-yard touchdown run pulled Washington State in front 10-9.

Jevon Holland intercepted Gordon and ran it back 19 yards for a touchdown, and the 2-point conversion was good to give the Ducks a 17-10 lead. The Cougars tied it with 47 seconds left before the break when Gordon found Renard Bell with a 15-yard touchdown pass.

Verdell's 2-yard scoring run put Oregon back in front before Mazza's 23-yard field goal closed the gap to 24-20 going into the fourth quarter. Verdell added a 1-yard TD early in the period.

The Cougars trimmed the margin with Gordon's 19-yard pass to Arconado, and the conversion was good to make it 31-28.

Lewis made a 30-yard field goal with 6:29 left to give the Ducks some cushion, but a pass interference call and Gordon's 48-yard pass play to Tay Martin got the Cougars to the Oregon 12 with less than two minutes to go. On third-and-5, Gordon's pass to Arconado was incomplete, but Washington State went for it on fourth down and this time Arconado pulled down the TD.

"Football's a game of inches and it shows out there. Just one play different could change the whole game. But there are some takeaways from that: We played a good game, I thought. We played all four quarters well, probably the best of the season," Borghi said.

Verdell's yards rushing were the most by a Pac-12 player in a conference game this season.

SCOREBOARD

NFL

Table with NFL American Conference results including teams like New England, Buffalo, N.Y. Jets, Miami, Indianapolis, Houston, Jacksonville, Tennessee, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Kansas City, Oakland, L.A. Chargers, Denver.

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EASTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL

Montana Tech downs Mounties

By Ronald Bond
The (La Grande) Observer

The game was much closer this time, but the Eastern Oregon football team struggled to get its offense in gear in a 23-10 road loss to Montana Tech Saturday in Frontier Conference play in Butte, Montana.

EOU didn't get on the board until the fourth quarter, when a 32-yard Jaiden Machuca field goal made it 16-3. Eastern then drew closer thanks to its special teams, when Derrick Pontenot blocked a punt and Josh Mendoza returned the blocked kick 30 yards for a touchdown to get within 16-10 with 9:59 to play. But Tech running back Blake Counts' third touchdown of the day pushed the margin back to 13 with just over six minutes to go.

The Mountaineers managed just 171 yards of total offense, and only 43 on the ground, the fifth time this season Eastern has been held under 100 yards.

EOU, though, hung tough after a rough first quarter that saw it fall behind 13-0 after two short rushing touchdowns by Counts, who had 134 yards on the ground.

Victor Dias had 60 yards rushing and 47 yards receiving for EOU, and Kai Quinn was 12-for-35 passing for 128 yards and an interception.

Tech quarterback Jet Campbell had 159 yards on 11-for-18 passing.

EOU (2-6 overall, 2-5 Frontier) hosts No. 7 and undefeated College of Idaho Saturday.

POWDER VALLEY VOLLEYBALL

Badgers claim OOL championship

By Ronald Bond
The (La Grande) Observer

The Powder Valley Badgers may be down one of their best players as they head into the state playoffs.

But that didn't hinder them from claiming the Old Oregon League tournament title.

The Badgers, the No. 1 team in the OSAA 1A rankings, swept Wallowa in the semifinals of the OOL tournament, 25-20, 25-20, 25-19, and topped Joseph in four sets in the championship match, 25-19, 24-26, 25-18, 25-16.

"It was a big adjustment after losing one of our strong players, but the girls came and (said), 'We can readjust,'" head coach Marji Lind said of her Badgers, who are without junior middle blocker Belle Blair for the duration of the season after an ankle injury last week. "All the girls have stepped up two levels to come together."

The Badgers were able to string big runs together throughout the season, and did so again to finish the tournament, ending the final match on an 8-3 run. Kills by Keanna Bingham and Trinity Nesser helped Powder Valley push its lead to 21-13 in the fourth set against Joseph. Kills by Josi Krieger and Autumn Davis offset a trio of kills by Joseph's Sabrina Albee and helped the Badgers reach match point, and Krieger sealed the match and tournament title with another kill.

"We're a pretty versatile team," setter Brooke Allen said. "We were determined to come together and make it happen, even without Belle, because we wanted it so bad."

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