

Oregon State quarterback Tristan Gebbia loose, mobile and philosophical as he bounces back from serious hamstring injury

Eighth months removed from injury, Gebbia looks to make comeback

By NICK DASCHEL

The Oregonian

CORVALLIS — Eight months after hamstring surgery, there was reason to wonder how loose and mobile Tristan Gebbia might be during Oregon State's preseason football camp.

The fifth-year junior showed his mobility Friday, Aug. 6, smoothly running through scramble and roll-out drills during the Beavers' opening practice.

There's no one looser in camp. While the media was interviewing linebacker Jack Colletto on Saturday, Gebbia stood within eyesight trying to distract his teammate with a variety of unartful dance moves.

"Tristan, could you stop?" Colletto said to his playful teammate.

Gebbia has worked his way back from the gruesome hamstring injury, sustained

during the final minutes of a 41-38 win over Oregon on Nov. 27, to arguably the quarterback to beat for Oregon State's starting job. It's been a painstaking process for Gebbia, who said it wasn't until mid-July that he was able to throw and run normally during workouts.

"I don't feel like I missed a step out here. It might as well be Nov. 30 and I didn't get injured, in my book," Gebbia said.

The proof comes this week, as the Beavers put on pads for practice and competition intensifies. But at a minimum, Gebbia — who started OSU's first four games last season — is in the hunt to start the season opener Sept. 4 at Purdue.

Offensive coordinator Brian Lindgren believes Gebbia is close to his old form, saying "you can tell he's put in the work as far as the rehab goes. I anticipate by (Purdue) that he'll be ready to go."

In late November, Gebbia had a firm grasp on Oregon State's quarterback job. He



Leon Neuschwander/The Oregonian, File

Oregon State quarterback Tristan Gebbia (3) has worked his way back from a gruesome hamstring injury to become arguably the quarterback to beat for Oregon State's starting job.

was improving with each start during the 2020 season. The apex came against Oregon, when Gebbia threw for 263 yards and a touchdown. But in trying to give OSU the lead on a quarterback sneak during the final minute, Gebbia sustained a hamstring injury.

Gebbia recalls a few things going through his head at the time. Did Gebbia

need to rush off the field to save time (no, as he soon found out when coach Jonathan Smith told him to go down because of the injury)?

Also, "It hurts," Gebbia said of his suddenly throbbing hamstring. "I was just praying that Chance (Nolan) got in, and he did."

The pain didn't subside for a while, and not just physically.

"It's a painful thing to hear that your season's done," Gebbia said. "But it's part of life. Sometimes you've gotta roll with the punches and try to come back stronger than ever."

Gebbia rehabbed through the remainder of the school year, and began throwing in June. All the while, Gebbia watched video as though he was completely healthy, as well as helping OSU quarterbacks during spring practice.

Smith said they would be "smart" in handling Gebbia's duties during the early days of practice.

Lindgren said he'll carefully watch Gebbia during 11-on-11 team drills and scrimmages, when the "suddenness" of moves out of the pocket or escaping a pass rusher will test his hamstring.

Gebbia finds himself in a competition for the starting quarterback job with Colorado transfer Sam Noyer, third-year sophomore Chance Nolan and true freshman Sam Vidlak. Noyer was a late entry to the party,

as he transferred to OSU in June after an injury to Ben Gulbranson ignited interest from the Beavers.

Gebbia wasn't surprised the Beavers were interested in Noyer, the Pac-12's second-team all-conference quarterback in 2020.

"At that point in time, I was pretty confident I was coming back, but there's some question marks," Gebbia said. "It's only going to make us better. All that matters is winning games on Saturdays and whoever can do that best."

Gebbia sounds very much like a veteran who heads into his fifth college training camp, and third at Oregon State.

"Football is a privilege that can get taken away at any time, for a lot of reasons," Gebbia said. "Most important thing is to be a good teammate. ... really support the guys that we have around here and being the best guy that I can be in the facility. That's really all there is to it. Football can end someday. Sometimes you don't get to choose when, right?"

Pac-12 says COVID-19 issues can result in forfeits in 2021

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Pac-12 teams that cannot play because of COVID-19 issues will likely be forced to forfeit games this season.

The conference announced Thursday, Aug. 12, it is reinstating its forfeiture policy after it modified its rules last season because of the pandemic.

Last season, a game that could not be played because of COVID-19 problems with either team was canceled and deemed

no contest. This season, COVID-19 will not be automatically considered an excused absence.

"If an institution is unable to play a contest through its own fault, it shall forfeit such contest to its opponent," the conference said.

A forfeit will count as a conference victory for a forfeiting team's opponent.

"The Pac-12 rule provides the Commissioner with discretion to determine whether an institution is at fault or primarily

at fault for an inability to play a contest based on the facts of the situation," the conference said.

The Pac-12 announced earlier this month that regular COVID-19 testing will no longer be required for vaccinated individuals. Vaccinated individuals will also no longer be immediately subjected to quarantine after exposure to an infected individual.

Regular testing will still be required for unvaccinated players, coaches and staff.

Doncic signs \$207 million dollar as Mavs turn focus to titles

By SCHUYLER DIXON

Associated Press

DALLAS — Luka Doncic welcomed all his bosses with the Dallas Mavericks to his home country of Slovenia to watch the young superstar sign the richest contract in club history.

Now that the record rookie supermax extension of \$207 million is in the books, it's back to the business of trying to win for a franchise that hasn't ad-

vanced in the playoffs since winning its only championship 10 years ago.

"I'm proud of Luka," owner Mark Cuban said Tuesday, Aug. 10, as he sat next to his point guard during a news conference in Doncic's hometown, the Slovenian capital of Ljubljana.

"I've seen when he first came in, the pressure that was on him and the way he dealt with it, how hard he worked," Cuban said.

"How he recognized that it was always about the team winning and that was what was most important to him. That was always most important to me, whatever we could do to win."

The Mavericks have the most important piece of their next title pursuit under contract through 2026-27, although that final season in a five-year deal that starts in 2022-23 is a player option.

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