

OREGON FOOTBALL

Former Oregon star De'Anthony Thomas, left, and quarterback Bo Nix (No. 10) as the Ducks hold their annual spring football game at Autzen Stadium in Eugene, Oregon on Saturday, April 23, 2022.

Sean Meagher/The Oregonian, File



Bo Nix settles into quarterback competition with Oregon Ducks

BY ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

EUGENE — Bo Nix has seen this all before.

A three-year starter at Auburn, Nix transferred to Oregon in the offseason and now finds himself in a competition at quarterback with young prospects Ty Thompson and Jay Butterfield.

Nix competed with LSU transfer T.J. Finley at Auburn during fall camp last year. He won the job, but was replaced by Finley in mid-November when he broke his ankle.

Nix said it's been the same every fall camp since he was a freshman: He pours himself into securing the job.

"I wanted that really bad obviously," he said. "It's something that I've always wanted to do and so I put my life to it, and that's just what I've been doing for the past couple of years, all this these competitions. I mean, you really do have to put your life to it and everything's got to be about it."

The former five-star recruit started the first 34 games of

his career at Auburn before the season-ending ankle injury. Last season threw for 2,294 yards with 11 touchdowns and three interceptions. Known for his mobility, he also ran for four touchdowns. But the Tigers, under first-year head coach Bryan Harsin, struggled somewhat and finished 6-7 for their first season below .500 since 2012.

Nix joins a team that is going through its own transition: The Ducks are embarking on their first season under Dan Lanning, former defensive coordinator and linebackers coach at Georgia. Oregon opens fall camp on Friday.

Nix said that even in SEC country Oregon is a well-known and respected team, which is why he settled on the Ducks.

"The brand of Oregon, the 'O' itself signifies so much in college football, year in and year out, they have a chance to be in the top four in the country," he said.

"That's what I wanted to be a part of. I wanted to be able to

play and have a chance to play in the playoff. And I know that with my skills I could contribute."

The move also reunites him with new Oregon offensive coordinator Kenny Dillingham, who was Auburn's offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach when Nix was a freshman. That year Nix won SEC Freshman of the Year honors.

Nix, the son of former Auburn quarterback Patrick Nix, is more comfortable in Eugene since getting married in the offseason. At 22, he's among the oldest players on the team.

"Especially now being here, I feel like the oldest guy. Even though it's not necessarily my age. People kind of look at me because I'm already married, I've been through a lot, they kind of assume that I'm just a lot older," Nix said. "Which is a good thing, because we have a lot of younger guys that haven't had same experience."

Thompson, his main competition, played in three games last season as a true freshman while redshirting. He passed

for 87 total yards with two touchdowns and one interception.

But players say Butterfield, who appeared in one game last season, is in the mix, too.

"We're going to compete at quarterback like we do at every position," Lanning said.

"I'm really excited that we have quarterbacks that can play winning football at the University of Oregon," Lanning said. "If I felt like it gave us a competitive advantage to tell you, I would. I don't."

While Nix is the presumed front-runner in the competition because of his experience, he also serves as a mentor to Thompson and Butterfield.

"Bo is a natural born leader. He's like a coach on the field sometimes. He's obviously older, he's going into his fourth year in college and he's been there, done-that in the SEC," Thompson said. "So he knows his way around the field and he just does a really good job vocalizing stuff like that. And he's a really good athlete, we all know that."

OREGON STATE FOOTBALL

Beavers bring energy on opening day of practice

BY LES GEHRETT

Albany Democrat-Herald
CORVALLIS — Oregon State opened fall training camp under bright blue skies on Wednesday morning, Aug. 3 at Prothro Field. Contemporary football practices are always fast-paced with players broken down into small groups to take part in drills timed to the minute. But even by that standard, the players had an extra spring in their step, which coach Jonathan Smith noticed.

"There's a lot of energy, which you expect on day one," Smith said.

He thought the work players had done in the offseason showed up in their appearance and performance on opening day.

"A lot of guys look better, physically," Smith said.

During spring practice Oregon State had just three quarterbacks available: Chance Nolan, Tristan Gebbia and Ben Gulbranson. For fall camp they have been joined by true freshmen Travis Throckmorton of Westlake Village, California, and Dom Montiel of Coos Bay.

Having more quarterbacks available is helpful if only to spread the throws around during the 90-minute practice. There are two outdoor fields at Prothro and at times there were seven-on-seven or 11-on-11 drills taking place on both fields with quarterbacks rotating in and out.

"I thought the two young guys — for their first day — did some good stuff," Smith said.

As always, attention is focused on the potential starting quarterbacks. Nolan, a red-shirt junior, took over that role early in 2021. Gebbia, a red-shirt senior, missed all of last season as he recovered from injury, but is healthy now.

Smith was asked if there is

a real competition underway for that starting job. He said there is.

"It's a battle and really that's at every position," Smith said. "I think it's good for those guys to compete and get opportunities and know that each day counts."

During the first seven-on-seven drill, Nolan and Gulbranson shared the repetitions on the field nearest to the media observers. Nolan completed his first several attempts in a row, although most were for short gains.

His best pass during that drill was to tight end Luke Musgrave on an intermediate crossing pattern which required a throw into a tight window as Musgrave was defended well on the play.

Gulbranson completed the longest throw of that session, arcing a pass deep down the left sideline for a completion. Running back Trey Lowe also made an impressive one-handed catch on a pass over the middle from Gulbranson, but that play would have to be scored in favor of the defense as it took several seconds for the quarterback to locate a potential target.

Redshirt freshman Jaden Robinson had one of the better defensive plays of that drill, closing fast to break up a short pass attempt by Gulbranson.

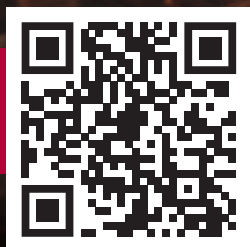
This was the first of nine practices in early August which will lead to a scrimmage on Aug. 13. That will be followed by four practices before a second scrimmage on Aug. 20.

Smith said the focus is on overall improvement during these early sessions. Later in the month, the team will begin to turn its attention to preparing for a tough early slate. The Beavers open the season at home against Boise State on Sept. 3 and travel to play Fresno State on Sept. 10.



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