

OREGON STATE FOOTBALL

Beavers seek rare win in the desert

BY JOHN MARSHALL

Associated Press

TEMPE, Ariz. — No. 25 Oregon State is back in the rankings and bowl eligible in consecutive seasons for the first time in nine years.

The Beavers face a daunting task Saturday against Arizona State, trying to win in Tempe for just the second time in 50 years.

The Sun Devils have gone 19-1 at home against Oregon State since 1972 and, despite playing under an interim coach, have Oregon State coach Jonathan Smith's attention.

"It's always tough going down there to Arizona, especially late in the year," Smith said. "It's always tough to play down there, so we've got to prepare well to do that."

Oregon State (7-3, 4-3 Pac-12) also is trying to do something that's proven to be nearly as difficult as winning in the desert: win as a ranked team.

The Beavers broke a nine-year drought in the AP Top 25 two weeks ago and promptly lost to Washington. Oregon State bounced back with a win over California to move back into the poll and is hoping to win while ranked for the first time since 2012.

The Beavers arrive in the desert on a defensive roll. Oregon State dominated Cal in a 38-10 win last week, holding the Bears to 132 total yards, including nine rushing — fewest allowed since 2007. The Beavers are allowing 21.6 points per game, on pace to be their lowest-scoring defensive season since 2000.

"They do a great job not getting hit with big plays," said Sun Devils interim coach Shaun Aguano. "They do bring exotic pressures, very similar to Washington State, but they play disciplined football."

BANGED-UP BOURGUET

Arizona State's Trenton Bour-



Naji Saker-TNS

Oregon State's Jaydon Grant (3) tackles Jalen McMillan (11) as the No. 23 Beavers face the Washington Huskies in a Pac-12 football game at Husky Stadium in Seattle on Friday, Nov. 4, 2022. Washington won 24-21.

OSU at ASU

- Saturday, Nov. 19, 11:15 a.m.
- Sun Devil Stadium, Tempe, Arizona
- TV on ESPN2

gnet has been solid since replacing Emory Jones at quarterback, throwing for 992 yards and eight touchdowns with four interceptions. Bourguet left last week's loss to Washington State in the second quarter with a lower-leg injury, but said this week he's feeling better and expects to play.

GO, GO GULBRANSON

Oregon State has played the last five games without quarterback Chance Nolan due to a neck injury. His status for the rest of the regular season is uncertain, but Ben Gulbranson has played well while Nolan has been out.

Gulbranson has thrown for 817 yards and seven TDs with an interception in his five starts, adding a rushing TD last week against Cal.

"With every snap you take you grow from those opportunities and I'm just grateful to be in this opportunity and playing these games and I look forward to finishing strong here," he said.

BEAVERS INJURIES

Oregon State saw nine players go down with injuries last week and may be in a similar situation this week.

Safety Jaydon Grant, cornerback Alex Austin and running back Jack Colletto were among the players injured and the availability of all the injured is still up in the air.

"We're not the only program dealing with that," Smith said. "Shoot, we're playing Arizona State, and they've had a bunch. I look across the league. It's an unfortunate part of the game. No one is playing with their full roster at the end of the year."

AGUANO'S AUDITION

Aguano was promoted from running backs coach when Herm Edwards was fired on Sept. 20. The Sun Devils (3-7, 2-5) haven't exactly turned it around, but they did knock off a ranked Washington team while Aguano has gotten growing support from the fan base and those within the program to be named the full-time coach.

"You got a local guy that knows the people in the Valley and knows all high school coaches in the Valley and that wants the job," Arizona State defensive coordinator Donnie Henderson said.

OREGON FOOTBALL

Playoff hopes dashed, Ducks look to rebound

BY TIM BOOTH

Associated Press

Dan Lanning had regrets. That should be expected after the coach watched Oregon's chances of making the College Football Playoff slip away because of decisions he'd like to have back and mistakes on the field a week ago.

"I think we all had a taste in our mouth that we're ready to get out of our mouth," Lanning said. "Ready to go back and attack things. This (last) weekend certainly didn't go the way we anticipated. Like I said after the game, that really falls solely on me."

But those regrets can't linger if the 12th-ranked Ducks still want to make this a special season, not with a visit from No. 10 Utah coming up on Saturday night, Nov. 19.

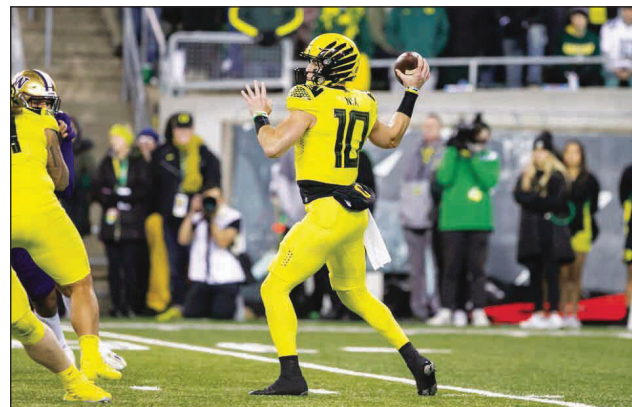
While the Ducks' playoff chances were shot down by Washington last week, they still control their path to the Pac-12 championship game and a chance at the Rose Bowl in Lanning's first season.

Beat Utah, beat Oregon State next week and the Ducks (8-2, 6-1 Pac-12, No. 12 CFP) will be bound for Las Vegas no matter what else happens around the conference.

"Good teams can find a way to bounce back from a loss. I think (coach) Lanning has really emphasized don't let (Washington) beat us twice," Oregon defensive lineman Casey Rogers said.

The same scenario holds true for the Utes and their hopes of getting back to the conference title game. Thanks to its win over Southern California that started a four-game win streak, Utah (8-2, 6-1, No. 10 CFP) will find a spot in Las Vegas if it beats the Ducks and then Colorado next week.

In that sense, Saturday's matchup could be viewed as a de facto semifinal, although there still remains a scenario



Sean Meagher/The Oregonian

Oregon quarterback Bo Nix (No. 10) drops back to pass as the No. 6 Ducks host the No. 25 Washington Huskies in a Pac-12 college football game at Autzen stadium in Eugene, Oregon on Saturday, Nov. 12, 2022.

Utah at Oregon

- Saturday, Nov. 19, 7:30 p.m.
- Autzen Stadium, Eugene
- TV on ESPN

where five teams could all finish 7-2 in conference play and create tiebreaker chaos.

"Obviously, the game this week has implications, conference implications as does every game. You say this is a big game, they're all big. If you lose one prior to this then this game doesn't matter. So every game is important," Utah coach Kyle Whittingham said. "It's gonna be a tough environment. ... We've got to handle the crucible that is Autzen Stadium."

INJURY WATCH

Oregon came out of the loss to Washington banged up, with the biggest concerns surrounding quarterback Bo Nix, who appeared to suffer a lower leg injury in the fourth quarter. Nix returned for Oregon's final drive but was on the sideline when Lanning chose to go for it on fourth-and-1 from the Ducks' 34 with less than two minutes remaining. The Ducks were stopped when

running back Noah Whittington slipped in the backfield.

"In retrospect, I wish I would have called a timeout based on the look we got not so much just to get Bo in," Lanning said. "But it's really easy to go back and replay the game in your head. There's probably 10 plays that I would have played a lot different."

Oregon also has concerns on the offensive line after Ryan Walk and Alex Forsyth suffered injuries against Washington. Lanning declined to give updates on the status of either.

GETTING EVEN

Utah beat the Ducks twice last year by a combined score of 76-17, including a 38-10 thumping in the conference championship game. One of the deciding factors in the two wins was Utah running back Tavion Thomas. He rushed for 94 yards and three touchdowns in the 38-7 regular season victory, and followed up with two more touchdown runs in the championship game.

Thomas had been quiet most of this season while dealing with personal issues but finally had a breakout game last week in a win over Stanford, rushing for a career-high 180 yards and two touchdowns.

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