Beavers Favored to Win Oregon "Civil War"

Contributed by Benton Vale
Thursday, 23 November 2006
Last Updated Thursday, 23 November 2006

The Oregon Ducks (7-4, 4-4 PAC 10) travel to Corvallis to battle the Oregon State Beavers (7-4, 5-3 PAC 10) Friday at Reser Stadium in what Oregonians call, "The Civil War." The game pits neighbor against neighbor and family member against family member. Though not known nationally as a rivalry on the scale of Ohio State-Michigan or Auburn-Alabama, the game has been getting plenty of attention in the Beaver State for the past 101 years.

The home team has won the game in the last nine meetings. The last time the home team didn’t win, was when Oregon defeated the Beavers 49-13 in Corvallis in 1996. Oregon is looking to snap a two-game losing streak their longest such streak since losing three in a row to end the 2004 season.
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A win by Oregon State would ensure it third place in the Pac-10 and possibly a tie for second with California, should the Bears lose next week at home to 1-10 Stanford. A win by Oregon could generate a four-team tie for third with Arizona if it wins Saturday at home against Arizona State and with UCLA if it wins Dec. 2 at the Rose Bowl against USC.

The OSU offensive attack is led by quarterback Matt Moore who has completed 100 of 157 passes with six touchdowns over the last six games. He has 1,384 yards passing during that stretch and three interceptions. Moore has gone 117 consecutive pass attempts without an interception the longest active streak in the nation. Moore is fourth in the league for passing yards per game at 196.9.
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Moore's offense wouldn't click without the talents of junior receiver and punt returner Sammie Stroughter. Stroughter is second in the Pac-10 and 12th in the NCAA for receiving yards per game (89.6) and is the team leader for overall receptions (55). Stroughter’s 223 yards receiving vs. Washington is the second-most in the Pac-10 this season and the fourth-highest in OSU history (Pac-10 Player of the Week). He is also fifth in the nation and second in the conference for punt return yards per attempt at (15.4) and has three returns for touchdowns.

Ducks quarterback Dennis Dixon leads an offense that is prolific on the ground or through the air. Dixon has connected for 2021 yards and 11 touchdowns. However he has been prone to throwing interceptions with 13 picks this season. Jonathan Stewart leads the ground game at running back carrying 159 times for 866 yards, seven touchdowns and a 5.4 yards per carry average. Jason Williams is the Ducks leading receiver with 62 catches for 929 yards and seven touchdowns.

The season looked promising early for the Ducks and disastrous for the Beavers but their fortunes have reversed in the late going. Also Oregon has struggled on the road in conference action losing at Cal, Washington State and Southern California. The Ducks have lost four of their last six games against the spread (ATS) which could explain why the Beavers are installed favorites by a -3.0-point chalk. The Beavers have also been kind to Beaver backers at the betting window covering five of the last six football games ATS.