



Emerald Media

A SILENT JOURNEY

THOMAS TYNER

TYNER COMMONLY DECLINES MEDIA REQUESTS.

Though he's not frequently quoted, his teammates recognize the passion that fuels him — and his play is starting to speak for itself.



DOUBLE FEATURE: Free admission, food, & giveaways Thursday nights to UO students

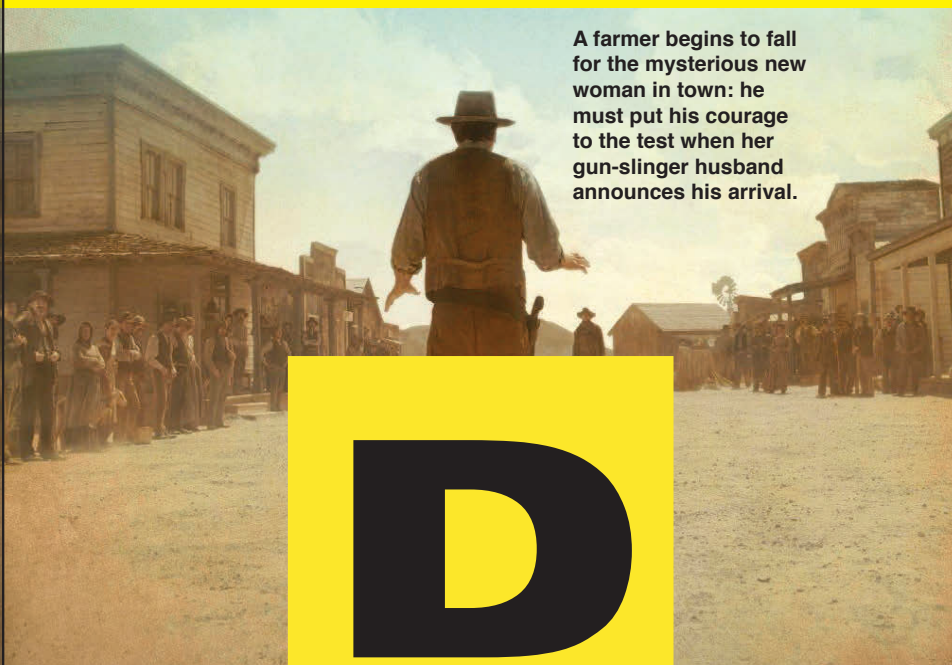
22 JUMP STREET 8:30pm

Officers Schmidt and Jenko go deep undercover at a local college.



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GAMEDAY



Pharoah Brown will not be returning this season due to injury.

HOW WILL OREGON WEATHER THIS STORM?

BY JUSTIN WISE, @JWISE25

Oregon's 51-27 win over Utah clinched the Pac-12 North division crown and jettisoned itself into prime contention for the College Football Playoff. Oregon moved to No. 2 in the poll and now appears to be on a collision course with Arizona State for a Dec. 5 matchup in the Pac-12 Championship with "winner goes to the playoff" implications.

Yet, the outlook for Oregon doesn't appear as crystal clear and the injuries that occurred last Saturday are the glaring reason why. Star defensive back Ifo Ekpre-Olomu left the game in the first half with what was said to be a toe injury, All-American center Hroniss Grasu never saw the field again after an apparent leg injury and tight end Pharoah Brown's season is confirmed to be over after injuring his knee in the fourth quarter and being carted off the field.

Injuries have occurred throughout the season and in a large quantity. Yet, the ones suffered Saturday seemed to have a different feel.

With Brown's absence, the Ducks will experience blows to both its rushing and passing attack. Brown, who had become more and more of a threat through the air as the season progressed, may have been even more vital to the running game's success and had constantly garnered as much credit as the rest of the offensive line.

Which leads to Grasu, whose injury last week only symbolizes to what extent injuries have plagued the unit's season. And if his injury proves to be something long-term like Brown's, it will be another adjustment that Oregon will have to take head on.

"I think offensively we've

had to adjust quite a bit," Mark Helfrich said to the media in his Sunday teleconference. "That's what you have to do. You can't sit around and pout about what isn't, you have to move on to what is and what's going to be."

What's going to be a lineup that, simply enough, lacks the amount of experience and talent that it most likely needs to compete at its capable level. For an offense that virtually opens up through its rushing attack, the side effects could be costly.

Look back to the games against Washington State and Arizona; when Jake Fisher was injured. They were the only two games that Oregon has played this season that have been decided by seven points or less and the rushing attack only averaged 158 yards versus its season average of 232.1 yards per game which ranks 22nd in the nation.

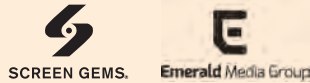
The coaches have said it time and time again: When the team can run the ball, the game seems to become easier in every phase.

The defense looks to be coming into its own as well and Ekpre-Olomu's injury does not appear to be serious. The unit limited Utah's workhorse Devontae Booker to just 65 yards on the ground and the Utes were just 5-of-15 on third-down.

But it won't matter if the clear strength of this team is missing two of its most necessary parts during its five-game win streak that got to them where they're sitting currently.

With all of the turnover that Oregon has experienced this year it's clear that a couple more injuries will not have a direct effect. Yet what's unclear is how they will weather this storm that continues to stir and whether the seriousness in them could translate into a drop in the Ducks' performance.

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A 'MAGNET' FOR ATTENTION – BUT WORKS BEHIND THE SCENES

In his sophomore season, Oregon running back Thomas Tyner has made a habit of declining interviews. Over the course of the year, he's made it known to the media that he's not interested in talking.

For this story, Tyner was unavailable for comment.

Tyner, a former five-star recruit out of Aloha High School in the Beaverton School District, has been accustomed to nontraditional hype and buzz surrounding him since he was in eighth grade.

When Chris Casey was the head football coach at Aloha, he made it a custom to keep strong ties with the local little-league football teams. Reports of the talent that would eventually pass through his program were not uncommon. The reports of Tyner's early ability were exactly that – uncommon.

The youth coaches in the Aloha area would test players in the beginning of the season, including timing the players in the 40-yard dash. The coaches reported to Casey that Tyner ran a 4.3 40-yard dash in his first attempt. The second go around, with two coaches using handheld timers, Tyner accomplished the same feat.

"He's the fastest kid I've ever coached," Casey, now the head coach at George Fox University, said. "This is my 34th year coaching and more than 20 of those have been spent at the college level."

By the time he got to Aloha High School, Casey believed that Tyner could play varsity immediately. However, he eased him through his freshman year by placing him originally on the junior varsity squad. Casey wanted Tyner to adjust to the rigors of high school from a social standpoint first.

"We are concerned about our players as students and as people," Casey said. "We didn't want him, from a social citizenship standpoint, to be put with the varsity immediately going into his freshman year. It's tough enough to acclimate to high school coming out of junior high school. To do that, we think it would've been tough for him."

In the last third of the season, Casey decided to promote Tyner to varsity. He rushed for over 100-yards in two different games over that span.

Over his time at Aloha, Casey took notice to Tyner's shyness. Publicly, he was considered a quiet individual.

"I think a big part of it is that he's just really humble," Casey said. "He's got a great family

situation and he's a really home-bodied type of guy."

Eventually, Tyner verbally committed to Oregon. The fanfare from Oregon fans went through the roof. People were enamored with the possibility of the next great Oregon running back staying home – Aloha is about an two hour drive from campus.

The over-fueled admiration turned to mass-hatred and questioning when Tyner tweeted out that he was going to open up his commitment and visit other schools. He got phone calls, letters and messages on social media from fans looking to find out why he would consider visiting other schools.

Stunned at the reaction, Tyner changed his phone number and relied on Casey and his family to filter messages directed toward him. His innate shyness had been exploited.

"It's a combination of a lot of things," Casey said. "He's quiet. He's humble, he had so much media attention early on and the incident on social media...all those things. I think it just added up."

Fellow running back Kenny Bassett noticed Tyner's quiet nature immediately upon meeting him.

"Everybody is quiet when they first get here because it's so fast and no one really knows what to expect," Bassett said over the summer. "Thomas is probably the quietest person I know. He's changed, but when he first got here, he was really quiet."

During his freshman year at Oregon, Tyner rushed for 711 yards – then a school record for a freshman – and nine touchdowns. This year hasn't been the same. Tyner battled a shoulder injury he suffered on the opening kick off against Washington for a small part of the season, and his carries have been diminished. Freshman Royce Freeman has taken over as the starter in the Ducks' backfield and has 945 yards rushing and 14 touchdowns this year.

Casey keeps in regular contact with many of his former players, including Tyner. He noted that the adjustment to anything new is filled with difficulties. He told Tyner the same thing he has told every player that talks to him about the troubles of adjusting. "Finish what you've started. You fight through and you don't give in, you dig in. When something's a new challenge and there are doubts and questions, you face it and you fight through it."

"It's kind of the Michael Jordan thing: I

succeed because I fail, ya know? Failure is the road to success."

After recovering from his shoulder injury, Tyner made an emphatic return in a 45-16 victory over rival Stanford. He scored two touchdowns, one of which concluded with a highlight reel spin move. Against Utah last week, teammate Byron Marshall noticed the difference in his running mentality. He saw Tyner's feet continue to churn despite the contact from a hard-hitting Utes' defense.

"He knew he wasn't playing to his capabilities," Marshall said. "Plain and simple: He fixed it. He's coming out, working a lot more in practice and it's paying off. Hats off to him."

Oregon quarterback Marcus Mariota added, "I think he's always had it, he's a hard-runner to bring down like any one of those guys in the backfield. Thomas played well and we're going to expect that out of him for the rest of the year."

Despite his quiet nature, Casey believes that Tyner is showcasing his competitive nature through the way he has been running the ball the past two weeks.

"Because he is quiet, I'm don't think many people realize that he's got a fire burning. He's got a bounce in his step and a spark in his eye. He's that kind of a competitor," Casey said. "He ran angry and he ran harder."

Over the course of his two years with the Ducks, Casey says Tyner has made a consistent effort to bridge the 111 miles between college and his home at Aloha. He has attended three of Aloha's football games this year.

Casey terms Tyner as a magnet – an icon that attracts all kinds of attention from people. At every event back home, Casey has seen kids approaching Tyner to sign autographs, write notes or even visit people who are sick in the hospital. Evidently, Tyner prefers to work behind-the-scenes. When he's offered the opportunity to talk to people in the media, he commonly declines.

Casey says that's the only request he knows Tyner has turned down.

"It's amazing the amount of stuff he's done for people, especially people in need," Casey said. "I don't know one request that guy has ever turned down to help somebody. He's just a great person, and he's so well-received."

BY JOSEPH HOYT, @JOEJHOYT



RUNNING BACK THOMAS TYNER is known for his quiet and humble nature. He's a much needed and solid presence on the grid iron.

→ **ROUNDTABLE**

Will Oregon and ASU collide?



Pharaoh Brown is out for the season, while Hroniss Grasu's status remains unknown.

Oregon may have a bye this week, however, there is still plenty to talk about. Who will emerge out of the Pac-12 South? How will injuries effect the Ducks' outlook for the rest of the season? Senior Sports Editor Justin Wise and Associate Sports Editor Joseph Hoyt answer this and more as the season heads into its later stages.

Are Arizona State and Oregon on a collision course? Or will someone else emerge out of the Pac-12 south?

Wise – Arizona State made a statement last Saturday. The Sun Devils would defeat the Fighting Irish 55-31, which put them in prime position to make a stab at the College Football Playoff. With just one game left against a team with a winning record in Arizona, the Sun Devils are the clear favorite to emerge out of the Pac-12 South currently.

Hoyt – The Sun Devils are on fire. The Arizona State defense mauled Everett Golson and the Notre Dame offense last weekend in a 55-31

victory. I think the key date for the Pac-12 South is Friday, Nov. 28. On that day, the Sun Devils face off against Arizona in an interstate battle. Also, UCLA – if they beat cross-town rival USC the weekend before – will play Stanford. UCLA beat Arizona State earlier this season 62-27, so the Bruins own the tiebreaker over the Sun Devils. If the Bruins can get past the Trojans, the day after Thanksgiving will be the key date for deciding the Pac-12 South champion.

How much will injuries play a factor in how Oregon finishes the season, postseason included?

Wise – Pharaoh Brown is done for the season. This fact is known. The injuries to both Hroniss Grasu and Ifo Ekpre-Olomu however, have gone undisclosed, and their health will be a huge factor in what type of lineup the Ducks have on both sides of the ball forthcoming. Without Brown, the passing and rushing attack will suffer. If Grasu's injury becomes long-term, the Ducks' offense could really become a disheveled unit.

Hoyt – Three key players for the Ducks left last Saturday's 51-27 victory over Utah. Pharaoh Brown is done for the year, Hroniss Grasu's condition is unknown – he was seen limping gingerly on the sideline wearing street clothes in the fourth quarter of the game against the Utes – and Ifo Ekpre-Olomu was laughing off his toe injury after the game. The Ducks have two very capable replacements for Brown in Evan Baylis and Johnny Mundt, and Ekpre-Olomu shouldn't be out for any extended period of time. The key

is Grasu. He's the leader of an already makeshift offensive line. Doug Brenner replaced him and played well, but taking away Grasu's leadership and experience from the Ducks' O-Line could present some issues.

As of now, do you see Oregon making the College Football Playoff by the end of the season?

Wise – As of now, yes. But the injuries continue to mount for this team, and if Grasu's injury proves to be something serious, I don't see them getting past a team like Arizona State or Arizona in the Pac-12 Championship. For this team's offense, everything still starts at the line of scrimmage and the loss of Brown and possibly Grasu could prove to be too much for it to wither.

Hoyt – Yes, I do. Aside from a seven-point loss to Arizona – a team that's proved to own the matchup the past two years – Oregon has overcome every challenge it has faced this season. They have the best player in college football in Marcus Mariota, and the running game has really hit its stride in the past month. Oregon has to overcome a weary Colorado Buffaloes team, in-state rival Oregon State and the Pac-12 South representative to make it to the playoff, but I think that's a feat the Ducks can accomplish.

BY JUSTIN WISE AND JOEY HOYT



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HAPPY HOUR IS EVERY HOUR AT THE O BAR & GRILL



BY RYAN KOSTECKA, @RYAN_KOSTECKA

With four weeks to go until the final four teams are selected by the College Football Playoff Committee, the pressure to make an impression on the committee is hotter than a Thanksgiving turkey in the oven.

With that being said, there is still a lot of football to be played, including plenty of dust that needs to be settled in the Pac-12 South, SEC West and Big-10.

Here are the top-five games to watch this weekend (**predicted winner in bold**):

1) **No. 4 Alabama** vs. No. 1 Mississippi State (CBS, 12:30 p.m.): College GameDay is in Tuscaloosa, Alabama for the huge SEC West showdown between the Crimson Tide and the Bulldogs. Much more is at stake than the SEC West crown as a win by either of these teams will only further validate its resume.

2) **No. 25 Wisconsin** vs. No. 13 Nebraska (ABC, 12:30 p.m.): It's a clash between the two best running backs in the nation when Wisconsin's Melvin Gordon faces off with Nebraska's Ameer Abdullah. The winner of this game will have the inside track to play Ohio State in the Big Ten Championship game.

3) No. 20 Georgia vs. **No. 3 Auburn** (ESPN, 4:15 p.m.): After getting upset last week by Texas A&M, Auburn needs a win to stay alive in the ultra-competitive SEC West. Georgia will basically give Missouri the SEC East crown.

4) No. 24 Georgia Tech vs **No. 21 Clemson** (ESPN, 9 a.m.): A loss by the Yellow Jackets will make the ACC Coastal division a battle between Duke and Miami, while Clemson is strictly trying to gain some momentum for the season-finale against bitter-rival South Carolina.

5) Miami vs. **No. 2 Florida State** (ABC, 5 p.m.): This matchup could be a preview of the ACC Championship game if Miami pulls off the upset. A win by Florida State sets up an ACC championship game between the Seminoles and Duke.

Every week, the Emerald will feature a different sports bar from the Eugene/Springfield area where students can watch the games. This week, it is The O Bar and Grill in Eugene.

Not very well-known to people not associated with the University of Oregon, The O Bar and Grill is quite possibly the greatest place to watch a game for the truest Duck fans.

HERE ARE THE TOP-FIVE REASONS TO CHECK OUT THE O THIS WEEK:

1) The location is pristine, being a quarter-mile walk from Autzen stadium through apartments rented out by Oregon college students.

2) The bar and grill has a wall dedicated to just Joey Harrington and Dennis Dixon, a place to check out all of the coolest memorabilia offered. It's only a matter of time till Mariota is on a similar wall.

3) The amount of specials are ridiculous: happy hour everyday, karaoke twice a week plus thirsty Thursday and finally Friday weekly deals.

4) A late night bar that serves pizza? You can't go wrong with a greasy slice of pie after the late night games.

5) The breakfast buffet on Saturdays and Sundays (9-11:30 a.m.) is easily one of the best breakfast joints around and when combined with a mimosa or bloody Mary, absolutely unbeatable.

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