



# TAMING THE QUACK ATTACK



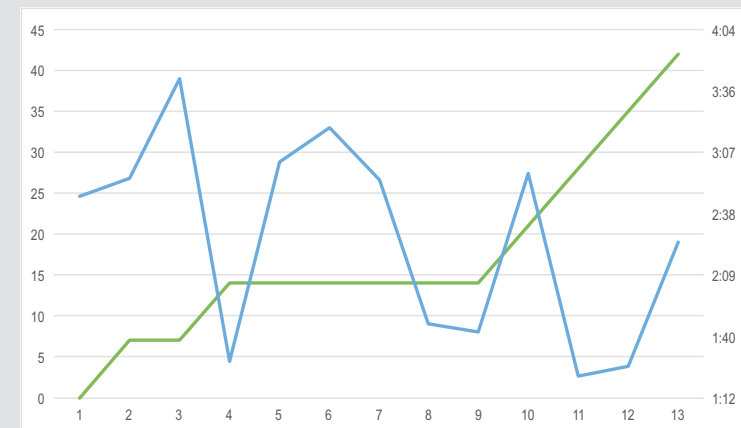
**GAME 8: 6 p.m. (PST)**  
**STANFORD STADIUM**  
**CAPACITY: 50,545**  
**STANFORD (7-1, 5-1 PAC-12) VS. OREGON (8-0, 5-0)**

## WHAT STANFORD NEEDS TO DO TO SLOW DOWN THE OREGON DUCKS

BY WINSTON SHI • GRAPHIC BY VICTOR XU

### Make the Ducks go the distance

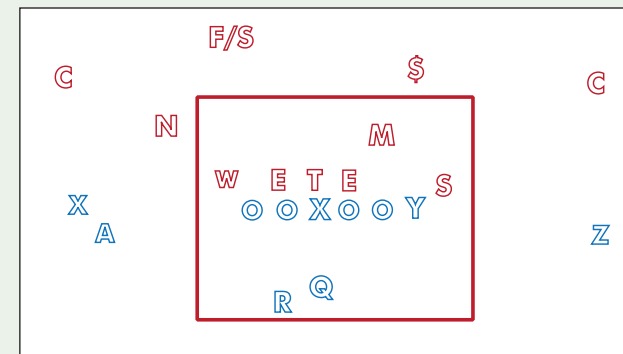
Oregon points scored vs. UCLA offense time of possession



If you give an offense enough time it will eventually make mistakes and grind to a halt — turnovers, penalties, incompletions, and failed runs. Stanford needs to force Oregon to string together ten good plays in order to score.

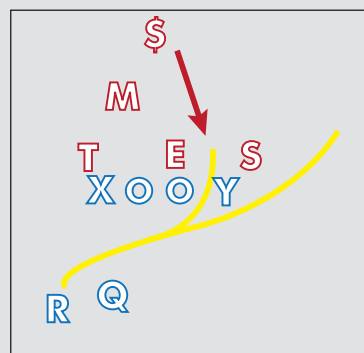
The Cardinal offense is going to have to hold the ball and give the defense time to rest. In Oregon's last game against UCLA, the Bruin defense held the line for three quarters, but UCLA's offense crashed to a halt, and, constantly on the field, the defense collapsed out of exhaustion. To sustain the defense, Stanford needs to get 1-2 first downs each drive.

### Stop the Ducks with a 6-man box



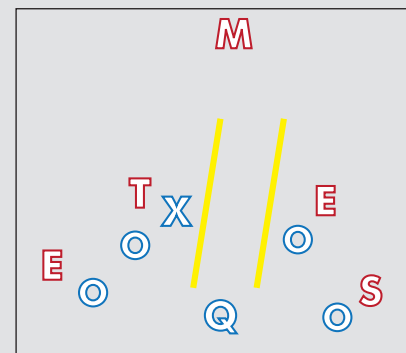
Oregon will be happy to run for 5 yards a pop all the way to the end zone. Stanford needs to stop the run — and it needs to stop the run while leaving enough players in coverage to defend the pass. The Cardinal need to play with two high safeties. Cover 4 (quarters) coverage will be a little weaker against short passes but will free Stanford's safeties to play the run.

### Corral Oregon to the inside

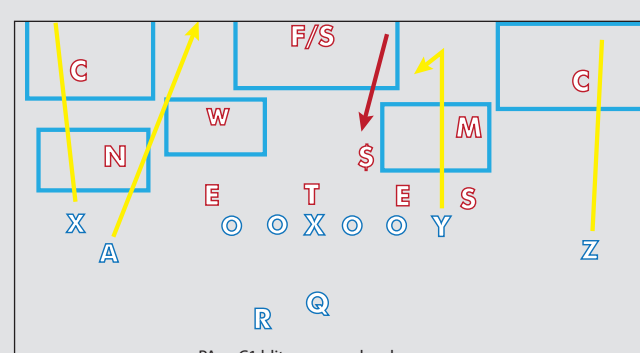


Keep contain

Stanford limits big plays by containing runs to the middle and removing Marcus Mariota's options in the passing game. Diagram 1: Stanford's defensive ends and outside linebackers need to make sure Oregon's fast running backs cannot get to the outside, where there are fewer defenders and more space — this chokes the run game. Diagram 2: By dropping back a player (M) to spy on Mariota, Stanford prevents QB scrambles. Diagram 3: Stanford also needs to stop Mariota from exploiting open spaces (seams) in zone coverage, especially when Stanford blitzes.



Prevent QB scrambling



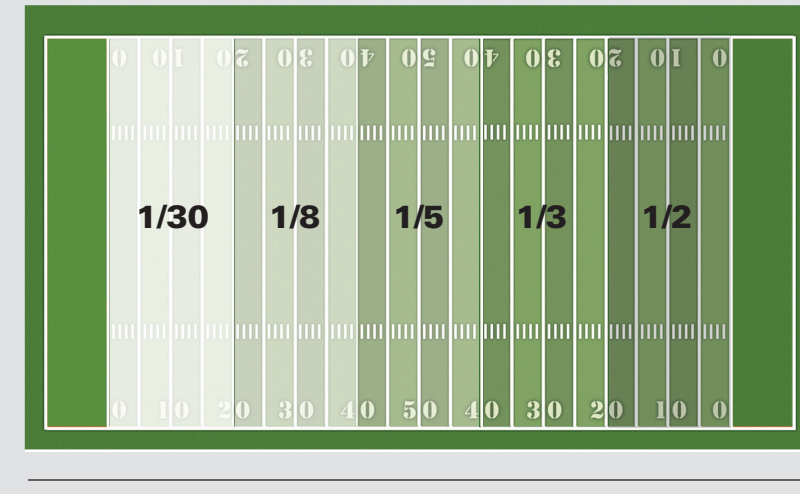
Defend the seam routes

### Scouting report

One key to the game is that, in the red zone, Oregon will almost always run to the boundary (toward the nearest sideline) — against UCLA, 11 out of 11 times

### Win the field position game

Scoring odds vs. starting field position



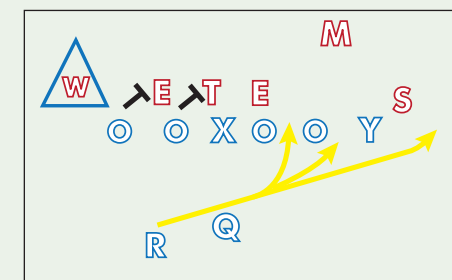
Stanford needs to win the field position game. This means limiting Oregon's dangerous return game: getting touchbacks on kickoffs and forcing fair catches on punts. Pinning Oregon within its own 20 makes it incredibly difficult for Oregon to score. Turnovers do the exact opposite — Stanford nearly killed itself against Oregon last year with ill-timed fumbles.

The odds of scoring rise exponentially with success in the return game, as this chart by Virginia Tech head coach Frank Beamer shows. If Stanford can force Oregon to go 80 yards every drive, even the Ducks will have trouble getting to the end zone. But once Oregon crosses the 50-yard line, Stanford needs to make big plays because the Ducks can use all four of their downs instead of three.

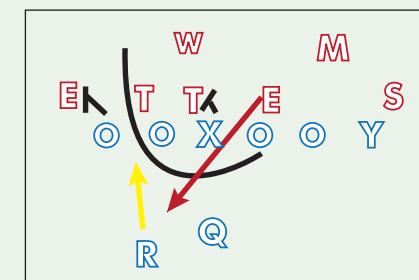
## Key: Don't give Oregon chances to score

### Blow up the Ducks' offensive line

Oregon's base runs against Stanford's G-C-G Bear front



Outside Zone

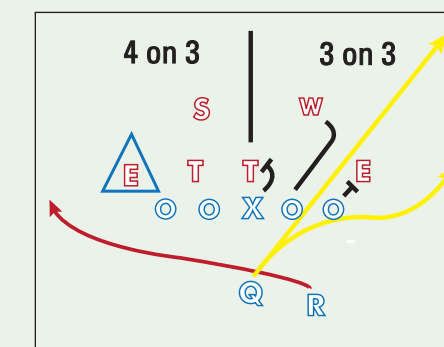


Power

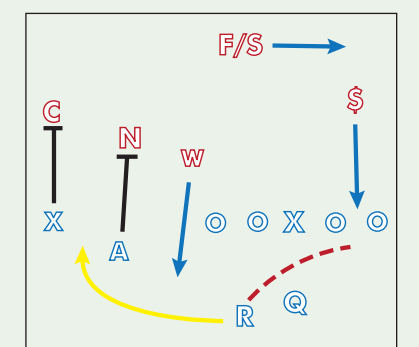
By placing players opposite Oregon's guards and center (the Bear front), Stanford forces one-on-one matchups instead of Oregon's favored double-teams. This immediate interior pressure makes it very difficult for Oregon to use its core running plays: outside zone and power. Both plays against the Bear give Stanford players easy paths into the Oregon backfield. A key point to remember is that, in the red zone, Oregon runs to the near side of the field (the boundary) instead of the open side nearly 100 percent of the time.

### Don't overcommit to any one strategy

Oregon's favorite misdirection plays



Bash Read Option



RB Screen

If Oregon's running back lines up to the left, the play will typically go to the right. But in Oregon's last game, UCLA overcommitted to the playside, and Oregon punished them by running backside plays — the reversed Bash zone read and the RB flare screen.

### Make Marcus Mariota beat you with his arm

Marcus Mariota thrives on overaggressive run defense and soft pass defense. He is an accurate quarterback, but he is only mortal. When Oregon is in third and long and Mariota needs to make plays in the dropback passing game, his efficiency sharply declines. Forcing Mariota to face the full brunt of the Stanford pass rush is the best way to victory.

Marcus Mariota with the game on the line

Success rates against Top 25 teams

54%

33%

Overall success rate

Success rate on obvious passing downs