

Antonyms in uniform

THE FOOTBALL PROGRAMS AT OREGON and USC are difficult to compare.

You could call them the antonyms of college football. Match up the opposites, and they fit: Good-bad. Win-lose. Sun-rain. Rose Bowl-Toilet Bowl.

Even last weekend, when both schools lost, they were opposites: upset loss for the Trojans, expected loss for the Ducks.

Coming from a school of perennial losing football teams then, it's hard to imagine what goes on in a college football factory like USC. Where victory is routine, the athletes are the gods-in-residence on campus, and the stars are idols to an entire nation.

O.J. Simpson was part of the USC football factory, and so too, for a brief moment, was Eugene resident Micheal Leander. Again, it's hard to compare USC'S greatest alum, with Leander, currently a student at Oregon. But Leander's first-hand glimpse of USC football reveals some interesting parallels.

TODAY, LEANDER IS A Russian major, is married, and works at the Emerald as a night production foreman.

But in 1969, Leander was an alternate choice for defensive tackle on the New York City All-Private School all-star team.

At six-feet, 160 pounds, Leander was a tiny defensive tackle by anyone's standards, but he helped lead McBurney High to a 6-1 record his senior year.

And after enrolling at USC the next fall, Leander spotted a notice in the USC newspaper, the Daily Trojan, about tryouts for the football team. On a whim, he showed up at the Physical Education building on a sunny September afternoon along with another 20 grid hopefuls, eager to become part of the Trojan football machine.

But enter the antonyms. 1970 was also the year that O.J. Simpson was recruited to Southern Cal. Both Simpson and Leander tried out for the USC football team that fall. As it later turned out, Simpson was the star, Leander cut after one day.

Now 29, Leander looks back on his short career in a Trojan uniform with a twist of humor.

"I WANTED TO SEE IF I could do it, but I had no idea what I was running up against. I was great at knocking over little guys in the private-school league, but when you get up against 250, 260-pound people, it's a little different."

His times in running sprints were compared with O.J.'s, and after some light hitting drills, he

and the other walk-ons were given the bad news.

"They told us right away that we weren't going to make it," says Leander. "I didn't realize this at the time, but I think the coaches thought it was as much of a lark as I did. The entire setup was just designed to give the illusion that it was still the college team, made up of students."

"They had to retain that illusion because that was the original basis of college sports. But everyone knows USC is just a farm club for the pro's."

"I don't think any of those walk-ons ever made it, or if any ever do down there."

TO OREGON'S CREDIT, THERE'S a difference here too. Greg Moser, the Ducks' top receiver, was a walk-on, as was punter Ryan Murphy, flanker Mark James and numerous others on the roster. When a player tries out for Rich Brooks' team, it's no farce.

Leander and Simpson ran up against each other one more time at USC. The two were both enrolled in a freshman composition class in fall term.

Simpson showed up once to class, says Leander, and got a "B".

"I showed up once to football practice and got an "F", while O.J. showed up once to English and got a "B", muses Leander.

"The teacher was very sarcastic about the pressure brought to bear on him by the athletic department," says Leander. "He was really quite bitter about it, always making jokes about it. He said that he had to do this with other athletes as well."

Leander, who once drove trucks for Hertz, the company that O.J. runs through airports for, is bothered by the emphasis on college athletics over learning. "I don't like it. School is for learning, a university is for scholarship. The university library is more important than a gymnasium."

To compare Oregon and USC on this count is much easier. Both schools were involved in the bogus credits scandal two years ago, and the wrongs still exist.

"I took a class once that had a lot of athletes in it," says Leander, himself a 3.90 student on the honor roll at Oregon. "They must have spotted it as a 'Mickey' because it met just once a week, and had no midterms. It was pretty easy to get just a 'C' out of it I imagine."

USC MAY BEAT THE DUCKS on any given Saturday, and O.J. may have bested Micheal Leander on the USC football field in 1970. But Leander was the victor in Freshman Comp 101.

"I got an 'A'," he says proudly.



Micheal Leander

Photo by Mark Pynes

Winfield powers Yankees, 13-3; Expos even series on shutout

(AP) — The New York Yankees broke loose for seven runs in the fourth inning Wednesday, highlighted by Dave Winfield's two-run double and Lou Piniella's three-run homer, and battered the Oakland A's 13-3 for a 2-0 lead in the American League Championship Series.

Willie Randolph and Jerry Mumphrey triggered the big inning with run-scoring singles to erase a 3-1 Oakland lead as the Yankees overcame the loss of slugger Reggie Jackson, who suffered a slight calf strain an inning earlier.

In Los Angeles, Ray Burris tossed a five-hitter and broke a three-year-old Dodger Stadium jinx Wednesday night by beating rookie sensation Fernando Valenzuela and the Los Angeles Dodgers 3-0, tying the National League Championship Series at one victory apiece.

Burris worked out of several precarious situations, and as the Dodger bats were quieted, the Expos' came alive.

Piniella, Jackson's replacement, put the game out of reach.

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Oregon netters go north, expect 'refreshing' wins

The song, "On the Road Again" may not have been written for the Oregon volleyball team, but it certainly would be appropriate.

The Ducks are travelling again, going north to take on Montana State, the University of Montana and Washington State Oct. 15-17. After two disappointing trips to California, where they met the top teams in the nation, the Ducks should find easier teams this time around, as they try to improve their 7-19-2 record.

"We think that if we compete as well as we expect to, we should be able to have a sweep," said Oregon coach Chris Voelz. "Before, we never had to say this, but this time we really need to win. We are really determined and want these (wins) bad."

"We've been in a bit of a drought lately in the win department, and a few wins would really be refreshing. It should get us started on the right track for the rest of the season."

Voelz has reason to be confident, with the return of region all-star Karen Beamer to the lineup. Beamer has been out with a knee injury, but is finally ready for action.

"Beamer will make a whole lot of difference and should help us a lot," said Voelz. "She gives us opportunities that we didn't have before. She'll give both our offense and defense a big boost."

The Ducks are having trouble staying healthy. Kelly Dischinger took Beamer's place on the casualty list when she caught a virus. Beamer is sidelined along with Ronda Dalthrop, who is already out for three weeks with a stress fracture in her foot.

"It would be nice to have more than seven players ready to compete," said Voelz. "But then I might not know what to do with them."

Voelz probably could find somewhere to put those extra players, but that might put Oregon at an advantage. With Oregon playing the underdog much of the season, however, the Ducks may not be able to adjust to such a luxury.

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