

# Steve Brown



Photo by Mark Pynes

## Playboy All-American

By Dan Buckwalter  
Of the Emerald

The wide receiver breaks from the huddle and in an almost cocky trot, nears the sideline, wide right.

He positions himself on the line of scrimmage, away from the masses hovering over the ball. Carefully, he places his hand on the turf and turns to watch the center snap.

Up creeps Steve Brown, Playboy Magazine's pre-season All-American and Oregon's marvelous talent at cornerback, to meet the receiver eye to eye. At the snap of the ball, away from the view of most of the fans, the receiver and Brown was a personal battle of their own. Elbows and forearms fly as the receiver and Brown race down field, each battling for better position to catch the ball.

Brown and his cohorts in the Duck defensive backfield represent 'No man's land' for many receivers. They are also a study of what every defense fears — the point of no return. If a receiver or running back dashes through the secondary, it's curtains for the defense.

Very little has escaped the point of no return, particularly in Brown's case, the last three seasons.

He shadows some of the Pac-10's best receivers one-on-one with ease, killing sustained drives with dramatic interceptions and pounding receivers and running backs alike with sure, crisp tackles.

He stands out as the jewel of

Oregon's highly regarded defense, rated third statistically in the Pac-10 last season and perhaps an even better unit this season if it gets more minutes on the sideline.

Brown, enters his final campaign as recipient of some high honors for his work at the corner, the most prestigious of which being named to Playboy Magazine's pre-season all-America team.

It's an honor Brown has not taken lightly as the Ducks prepared for their season opener and the rugged schedule ahead. He's setting out to prove that his past heroics, some of which are very memorable to the Oregon program, were not flukes.

"I want to prove to my coaches, my teammates, and people across the nation I'm worthy of the selection," said Brown, a fifth-year senior from Sacramento, Calif. "Some people look at it as pressure. I look at it as incentive. It gives me a lot more things to look forward to."

Brown has been looked upon this season as the leader of the Duck secondary, not so much for years in service but for

actual playing time.

Oregon lost three-fourths of last seasons starting defensive backfield to graduation — Joe Figures, Gary Beck and Ross Gibbs. Senior Dennis Clay now plays opposite of Brown at right corner with senior Devall Webster at strong safety and junior Jeff Williams at free safety.

Again, this group is not young, but, except for Brown, it hasn't seen a lot of playing time. It has given Oregon coach Rich Brooks some cause of concern.

Brown, however, is confident the secondary will not be the weak link to the defense, if indeed there is a weak link.

"Dennis Clay is an excellent athlete," says Brown. "Devall Webster and Jeff Williams are also good. The best thing is that we all get along well. We'll be alright."

Perhaps it's confidence that

has propelled Brown from a one-time tennis player and a risky gamble for the Duck coaching staff to one of the top cornerbacks in the nation.

Brown came to Oregon having played football only one season, though it was a good

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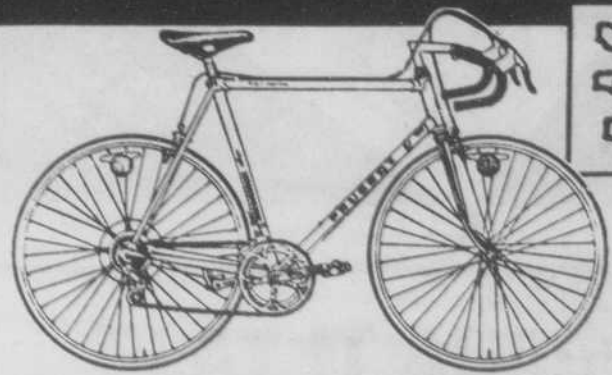
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