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We're located in the lower level of Friendly Hall. Or call
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The quarterback question

Kevin Lusk hopes he's the Ducks answer

By Dan Buckwalter
Of the Emerald

If this season were to be labeled one of redemption for the Oregon Ducks, and it easily could be, then it may be a year of redemption for Kevin Lusk as well.

Lusk, Oregon's fifth-year senior quarterback, has weathered the same peaks and valleys the Duck program has, during his career. Like the Oregon team, Lusk was near the top his game two seasons ago, before it all came crumbling down in last year's sea of losses.

Lusk's story is perhaps the best known of any of the players on the current roster. He is the same quarterback, who as a sophomore during Oregon's remarkable string of upsets in a probation year, sparkled in the shadow of Reggie Ogburn, helping the Ducks to a startling 6-3-2 mark.

After that memorable season, Lusk inherited the starting role from a graduated Ogburn with the promise from coach Rich Brooks of better things to come; perhaps a bowl bid. For Lusk, that physically and emotionally painful year was played with a bum knee (the result of surgery prior to the season), a broken nose, and a sore throwing shoulder.

He also played behind an unsettled line so

badly crippled with injuries that different players were shuffled in and out almost weekly. At the same time he was trying to guide the Ducks through the new Power I offense. All of which left the Ducks with a 2-9 record, no bowl bid, a large question mark at quarterback and no more fearless forecasts from Brooks.

Lusk, for now, has answered the quarterback question, winning the job outright in spring drills. He reported to two-a-day drills with a clean bill of health. The offensive line, which took its share of heat last fall, is also sound entering the season.

Now, with the season underway, Lusk sets out to prove his sophomore year (he completed 64 percent of his passes) was not a deception and that his junior year (49 percent) was a fluke.

"I've been here five years," Lusk said prior to two-a-days. "Experience has to show. It's up to me to bring it out. It's a matter of improving. We all had problems last year."

Brooks knows firsthand the problems that besieged Lusk and the offensive line a year ago. He has stressed all through preseason practices the need for improvement on the line and at quarterback so that Oregon's defense, statistically near the top of the Pac-10 for the first half of last season, may rest itself.

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Brown

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one. He rushed for over 1,000 yards and was named all-league at tailback.

He redshirted his first year to add some bulk to his 6-0, 160 pound frame. By the time he was to start playing a year later, Brown was up to 180 pounds and ready to make a significant contribution to the Duck program.

Tennis is far removed from the athletic agenda these days. Brown won the Sacramento city prep doubles title one year in high school and his father wanted him to advance tennis to the college level. But Brown has no regrets being on the level he's on now in football - an elite group of preseason all-Americans from around the country.

"I enjoy playing tennis very much," he says. "But I don't

have regrets playing football. I just wanted to do something athletic."

In his five years at Oregon, Brown has seen plenty of highs and lows, from scandals and subsequent probation to a trouncing of the Rose Bowl-bound Washington Huskies in Seattle.

The lows seem to stand out though.

"Being on probation, the actual losing, it's hard to take," said Brown. "But if you're ever going to do well in life, you're going to have to learn from your mistakes and capitalize on them."

Brown has certainly capitalized on any mistakes he's made. In his freshman year, Brown picked off two crucial passes late in the game as

Oregon held off Cal, 19-14. In his junior season, Brown intercepted a fourth quarter pass and raced 36 yards for a touchdown to cap the 34-10 win over Washington which put a thorn in the Huskies Rose Bowl season.

All are good memories, ones that fans will treasure. But for Brown, it was the 6-5 and 6-3-2 seasons he'll remember most and it's those seasons that he will have a hand in this year trying to duplicate.

Everybody was in good spirits when we were winning," said Brown. "I came from a high school that never won (1-10 his senior year). That's why I treasure every win."

Brown hopes to treasure more wins and even better memories this season.

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