



Graphic by Shawn Bird

Ducks' Carson Gang

Oregon has five starters from one town

By Steve Turcotte
Of the Emerald

The Carson connection. It's not a television spy program or a new show starring Johnny.

It is the connection Oregon's football team has with Carson High School, 15 minutes outside of Los Angeles in Carson, Calif. In a day and age where it is rare to obtain even two football players from the same high school, the Ducks have no less than five players from the Southern California school — and all five are starters.

The connection began three years ago when running back Ladarja Johnson came to Oregon. After Johnson began carrying the ball for Oregon, the others began filtering in.

Cornerback Wendell Cason arrived a year later, and two years ago cornerback Don Brown and safety Doug Judge appeared in Eugene. This season the Ducks reeled in their fifth player from Carson High in junior college transfer Kevin McCall.

Saturday, UCLA is on tap for the Ducks at Autzen Stadium. And with the Bruins invading Eugene, the five see the game as a chance to show up their friends from down south.

"There is a lot of extra incentive there," says Cason. "It's fun to get a shot at these guys, friends or no friends."

WHY OREGON INSTEAD OF SUNNY SOUTHERN CAL?

The distance between Carson and Eugene is about 1,000 miles. But that didn't stop the five from coming to Oregon. Each of them were heavily recruited out of high school and could have written their own tickets to most of the country's major colleges.

However, all five had similar reasons for coming to Oregon and rejecting schools like USC and Nebraska.

"I was heavily recruited by USC," says Brown, a

sophomore. "But I said to myself, 'why not get away, and I ended up here.'"

Judge wanted to get away too, and he and Brown decided to attend the same school. When the two made their visit to Oregon, Johnson talked to them and pointed out that Oregon might be a good place to play collegiately.

"Don was all set to go to UCLA, and I wanted to go to USC," says Judge, who looked at schools like Arizona State and Nebraska. "But for some reason, Don didn't like USC and I didn't like UCLA."

"We just decided to go to a school where we'd already know somebody."

For Cason, the road north to Eugene also spelled an excuse to get away from home.

In McCall's case, it was a matter of yearning to play major college football. Four brothers were running backs at major colleges, and with four other Carson players dotting the Duck roster, what better reason to come to Oregon.

"I wanted to get out and play in the Pac-10," says McCall, who played at Santa Monica Junior College for a year. "I liked Oregon and thought I could fit in."

CARSON HIGH SCHOOL — A FOOTBALL FACTORY
Oregon's Carson stars were coached by Gene Vollnogle, a 21-year veteran coach at Carson High School.

In addition to sending five proteges to Oregon, Vollnogle has 21 players currently on major college rosters — including starting defensive backs Darrel Hopper of USC and Clemont Williams of Cal.

In 21 years at Carson, Vollnogle has amassed a record that would make any high school coach green with envy. He has captured six Los Angeles City football championships and a handful of runner-up trophies.

"The tradition at Carson has been very good over the years," says Vollnogle. "Once you start winning,

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Interviews will be held on campus, Nov. 9-11, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Career Planning & Placement Center.

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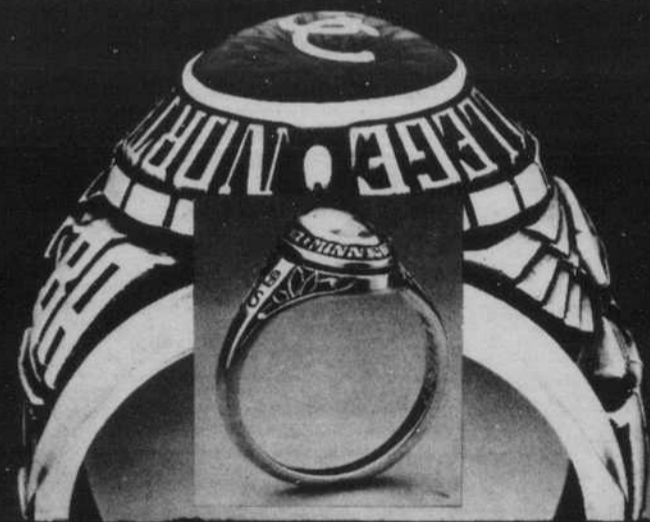


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