

# Oldham runs The Return, prepares for Huskies' pass

By Kurt Zimmer  
Emerald Contributor

Homecoming was shaping up as a very happy one at the University of Southern California two weeks ago. Everything was going just as planned for the 63,452 fans at the Los Angeles Coliseum — the powerful Trojans, ranked third in the nation, were pounding the upstart 17th-ranked Oregon Ducks 30-0 in the third quarter after Quin Rodriguez kicked a 32-yard field goal.

The resulting kickoff by the Trojans became The Return for Oregon's Chris Oldham.

"My wedge (of blockers) was perfect," the junior defensive back said. "We emphasize staying together. I cut left and found a big hole."

Oldham found nothing but Coliseum real estate ahead of him and sprinted 99 yards for the first touchdown kickoff return by a Duck since Steve Brown's 93-yarder at Washington State in 1981.

"I never thought I would ever do that in my whole life," Oldham said. USC went on to win the game 42-14, but Oldham was named Pacific-10 Conference player of the week for special teams. He averages 30.2 yards per return, second best in the nation.

In his second year of collegiate eligibility, Oldham has become a fixture at left cornerback in a defensive backfield marked by its consistency. The



Photo by Mark Ylen

*Playing intense and consistent football, Chris Oldham, second in the nation in average yards per return, is a dangerous threat to opposing players.*

four Ducks to log the most total defensive plays so far this season are free safety Thom Kaumeyer, right corner Brett Young, Oldham and strong safety Derek Horton.

Oldham has picked off three passes, placing him in a tie for 18th in the nation in interceptions per game, returning them for an average of 23.3 yards, his

longest being 53 yards at Washington State.

Oldham's achievements seem even more impressive in light of the fact that he didn't play football until his senior year at Highlands High School in Sacramento, Calif. Although he played basketball and baseball

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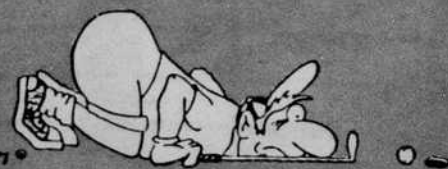
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