

# Kelemeni faces tough task of replacing Loville

By Ashley Conklin  
Emerald Sports Reporter

It's a tall order for Ngalu Kelemeni. After spending last season as a redshirt freshman backing up tailback Derek Loville, Kelemeni has the unenviable task of trying to replace the school's all-time leading rusher and scorer for the 1990 season.

That's not to say that Kelemeni isn't a talented back. The 6-1, 208-pound native of Pueblo, Colo., was the Colorado 3A player of the year his senior year in high school. He was also the Ducks fourth-leading rusher last season and averaged 5.1 yards per rushing attempt.

But it's not everyday that a Derek Loville comes along and can be counted on to be in the line-up game after game and give Oregon the consistent ground game it needs to take the pressure of quarterback Bill Musgrave.

"I think there's no question that we need a productive ground game," Duck head coach Rich Brooks said. "Loville was a steadying influence there for 3-4 years.

"The things that Loville did was that he didn't fumble the ball," Brooks said. "If you have somebody that runs for 1,000 yards and coughs the ball up 15 times that doesn't help. Loville was virtually there every day and was very durable. Ngalu has already had some problems being hurt and missing practice and playing time."

Both Kelemeni and Brooks know that Kelemeni can step in and be a productive tailback for the Ducks, but the hardest thing for Kelemeni might be dealing with being part of a new backfield that has to replace not only Loville but fullback Latin Berry as well.

"There's a lot of hype going on about that," Kelemeni said. "I need to set all of that aside and just concentrate on what I have to do."

Possibly the biggest thing that could help Kelemeni during spring drills and next season was watching and learning from Loville and Berry last season.

"Derek helped me out a lot," Kelemeni said. "If I had a question he would answer it. He was good in teaching me as well as being a friend."



Photo by Martin Thiel

Ngalu Kelemeni, who will be a sophomore, hopes to start at tailback for the Ducks next season.

"Last year I saw some of the leadership role that him and Latin had to carry and I knew that would be part of my role on next year's team," he added.

Despite being relatively inexperienced, Kelemeni had some big moments last season, including a 45-yard run against Arizona that helped the Ducks control the ball in the game's final minutes.

It was those kind of brief outbursts that have Brooks believing Kelemeni will come through for him next season.

"I don't have any concerns about his talent," Brooks said. "He has shown some flashes of brilliance as a redshirt freshman and as a true freshman when we












were redshirting him. He's a big back that's strong and quick and needs to stay healthy."

For Oregon, now in its second week of spring drills, one of the biggest concerns is getting Kelemeni healthy. He had to sit out of drills last week and missed last Saturday's scrimmage because of a hip pointer.

In the interim, Sean Burwell, who redshirted last season as a true freshman, carried most of the load and looked impressive with 43 yards in 13 carries. Kelemeni went through drills on Monday and could be

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