

Pro football awaits Duck draftees Berry, Oldham

By Ashley Conklin
Emerald Sports Reporter

Oregon's Latin Berry and Chris Oldham were selected in Sunday's National Football League draft when Berry went in the third round and Oldham in the fourth.

Berry, one of the 10 leading rushers in school history, was selected as the 78th pick over-

all when the Los Angeles Rams named him. Oldham, a defensive back, didn't have to wait much longer as the Detroit Lions named him the 105th pick overall.

"I've been wishing and hoping for this," Berry said. "It's a dream come true. It's been pretty crazy and hectic around here today, but it's starting to die down. I'm on cloud nine big time."

"I'm very, very pleased to go to the Los Angeles Rams," Berry said.

At 5-foot-10 and 207 pounds, Berry played mostly fullback during his time with the Ducks. He was the team's second-leading rusher four straight years behind Derek Loville.

After completing his Oregon career in the Ducks' 27-24 Independence Bowl victory, Berry played in the Blue-Gray all-star

football game Christmas day and was voted as his team's most valuable player in the game.

Pro scouts were said to be impressed by Berry's athletic ability, quickness, and ability to catch the ball coming out of the backfield, but Berry said the Rams are interested in him as a defensive back.

He had no complaints about the possible change of position.

"All I ever wanted was to get a shot and a respectable chance at playing professional football," Berry said. "I think I've been wanting this since I was 12 years old, and I'm 23 now so it's been a long process."

"I'm just happy I went fairly early and that it's over with," he added.

Besides his football abilities, Berry has had an outstanding track career at Oregon, winning the Pacific-10 Conference long jump title twice and the conference triple jump crown twice.

He also holds the school record in the long jump, and said that his ability to compete in two sports was probably a deciding factor in getting picked where he did.

Oldham missed his first season with Oregon because of Proposition 48 restrictions, but became one of the top defensive backs in the Pac-10, intercepting 15 passes and being named to the all-Pac-10 defensive team twice. He also set a school record for kickoff return average, averaging 28.1 yards on kick returns in his career.

Oldham was in the Los Angeles area Sunday and could not be reached for comment.

The draft will continue today with three other Ducks hoping to be picked up. Loville, wide receiver Terry Obee and offensive lineman Curt Dykes are also expected to be drafted in the 12-round draft. At press time, the first five rounds had been completed.

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