

McClellan gets his chance to star for Oregon

By Ashley Conklin
Emerald Sports Editor

For the first three years of his career, Michael McClellan's name was hardly one that jumped out when football fans talked about Oregon.

Back in 1986, McClellan's first year in the program, he couldn't even practice with the team because of Proposition 48 regulations. The following year he redshirted and in the next two years his one highlight was a 45-yard kickoff return against Long Beach State last year.

But after watching some of his close friends like Derek Loville and Chris Oldham make big plays for the Ducks, McClellan is finally getting his chance and is now the one making the big plays.

"It was frustrating at first," McClellan said. "Chris Oldham, my former roommate, and I were both Prop 48 and we talked about it a lot, whether we would be at the same level after losing a year."

"But it worked out and I got things turned around and started doing quite well in school."

McClellan has made big strides in both school and football, taking over as Oregon's starting flanker after Tony Hargain went down with a season-ending injury in the Idaho game, and picking up a degree in communications last year and preparing to complete one in education at the end of this term.

"Michael has tremendous determination and a purpose in life," wide receivers coach John Ramsdell said. "He wants to make something for himself. Some guys can't see past tomorrow but Michael is working for the future."

Just as in school, McClellan has always had the ability to be successful playing football at

the Pacific-10 Conference level; it was just a matter of time before everything came together.

With the likes of J.J. Birden, Sam Archer, Rod Green, Terry Obee and Hargain ahead of him, there was little room for McClellan when he first came to Oregon.

"We had a lot of great receivers ahead of him and Michael had a lot to learn," Ramsdell said. "It wasn't that he didn't have the ability."

Perhaps the most telling thing about McClellan is that he stayed with football at Oregon — and in school — when a lot of other people would have given up football or both.

That he stuck with both football and school "says a lot about Michael," Ramsdell said. "It wasn't easy and it was tough for him."

"That he dealt with it, and became more determined and worked harder," Ramsdell added, "showed that he was prepared when his time came. He could have moped around and then wouldn't have been ready when he was thrown into a game."

McClellan finally got his chance last spring when he went from being the Ducks' fifth wide receiver during the 1989 season to third after a great spring.

With the Oregon offense frequently using three and four wide receiver sets, McClellan knew he had a chance to finally contribute and made the most of that chance.

"I knew they would need another receiver and need somebody in case somebody went down with an injury just like what you've seen happen to Tony Hargain," McClellan said. "I was confident I could help the team and worked out hard all summer with my best

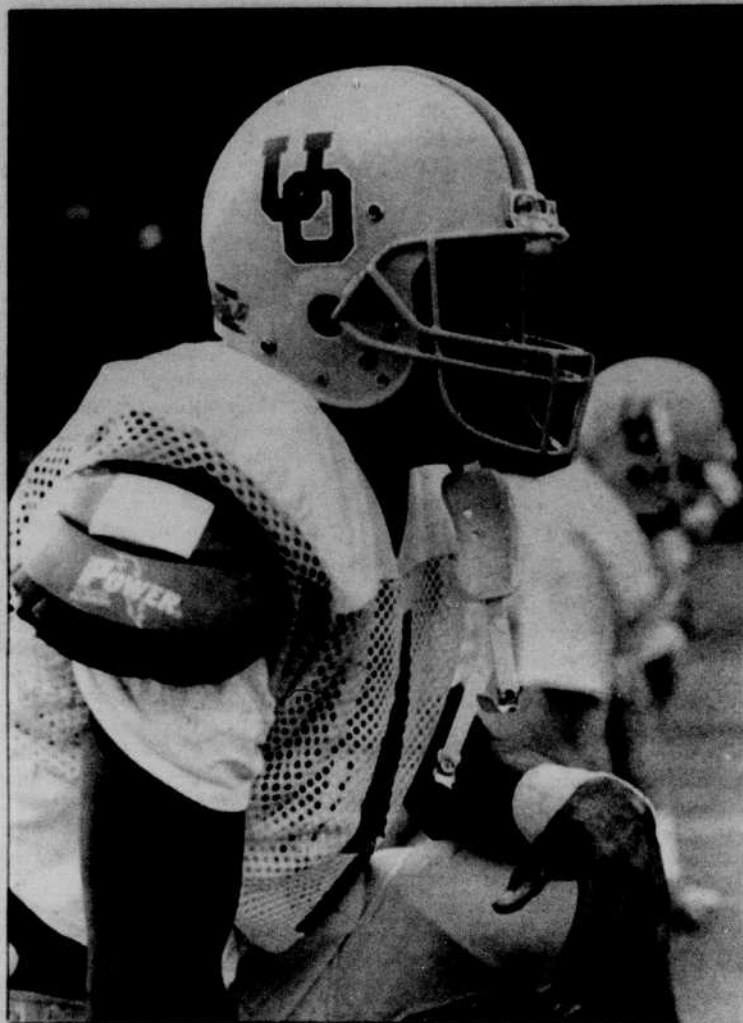


Photo by Sean Poston

Wide receiver Michael McClellan has surprised Duck fans by going from the bench to a starring role with the offense and special teams.

friend, number 84, Scott Bryan."

McClellan and Bryan, a reserve redshirt freshman split end, both are from California, but stayed in Eugene over the summer to prepare for this season.

"We worked out faithfully and played catch as much as we could," McClellan said. "We watched as much football

as we could so we could learn as much as possible."

The hard work was evident in Oregon's opener with San Diego State when McClellan finally got to show off his good moves, elusiveness and speed in the open field.

Spelling Hargain and starting split end Joe Reitzug, as well as playing with them in multiple wide receiver sets, McClellan

caught five passes for 58 yards and showed some promise on special teams, almost breaking one kickoff return for a touchdown.

The following week — against Idaho — he returned a kickoff 89 yards for a touchdown and also had a 29-yard punt return to set up another score. For his efforts he was named Pac-10 special teams player of the week, and the memory of his first Duck touchdown always brings a smile to his face.

"It felt like someone just lifted a ton of bricks from my shoulders," he said. "It felt good to score but I think a lot of the credit should go to the guys who didn't get a lot of credit and those are the guys on the wedge, mainly the front five, that made it happen."

McClellan followed that up with another outstanding game at Arizona last week where he caught seven passes for 112 yards, and Coach Rich Brooks likes the explosiveness McClellan has shown by ranking sixth nationally in kickoff return average (32.4 yards per game) and all-purpose yards (160.7 per game).

"McClellan was obviously a key factor even before Hargain's injury," Brooks said, "but now he becomes even more important."

"Michael had a great game at Arizona," he said. "He's got big play capabilities. He has quickness and speed. He's done a tremendous job not only receiving the ball but returning kickoffs and punts."

A performance few football fans would have expected from McClellan before this season.

U of O Fleece Headquarters

Hoods \$15⁹⁵-\$24⁹⁵
Crews \$13⁹⁵-\$19⁹⁵
Pants \$19⁹⁵

10% STUDENT DISCOUNT WITH CURRENT I.D.*
*on non-sale items only

Largest selection in the Northwest:

- Patagonia
- Northface
- Woolrich
- Moonstone

McKENZIE OUTFITTERS

79 W. BROADWAY VALLEY RIVER CENTER
Mon-Thurs 9:30-6:00, Fri-Sat 9:30-6:00, Sun 10-5 (Reg. Center hours)

THE PIZZA ANSWER

Feast For Four

Buy a 16" 3 Item Pizza and 4 16oz Pops for **ONLY \$11.60**
(Reg. \$14.60)

Call Today — 687-8600

Name _____
Address _____

One coupon per pizza * Expires 10-5-90
Pizza Answer starts serving at 4pm M-F, 11am S & S

JUST DUCKY

Club Wash has something for just about every Duck with laundry. Including a big screen TV, a deli, music, video games and dry cleaning. Waddle on into Club Wash. It's real fun. It's real clean. Doing your laundry will never be the same.

club WASH

13th + Patterson • 342-1727

Having a garage sale? Get the word out with an ODE classified