

SCHULER

Continued from Page 3

to be consistent," Schuler said. "We can't be on a roller coaster ride every other week."

The Ducks' defense has improved each year under Schuler. After ranking fourth in the Pacific-10 Conference in 1987, third in 1988 and second last year, the Ducks are poised to take over the top spot in the conference.

Considering his recent success with the defense, it may surprise some people that Schuler first made a name for himself 23 years ago catching a pass not defending one.

In 1967, Schuler, a starting wide receiver, made history by scoring the first Duck touchdown in Autzen Stadium. It is a moment that he looks back on and laughs about.

"I always tell my players that

really helped us understand what we needed to do to be successful against them."

Schuler journeyed back to the Pac-10 Conference in 1983 after landing a job at California, where he was defensive coordinator and secondary coach. In 1984, his Bears' defense finished second in the conference in pass defense and their 41 takeaways were the nation's third-highest amount.

Schuler returned to the Ducks in 1986 after spending one season as a special defensive assistant with the NFL's Los Angeles Rams. Schuler enjoyed working under former Duck John Robinson during his stay with the Rams but fulfilled a dream when he came back to Eugene.

"I had always hoped I could come back to Eugene," Schuler said. "I didn't really see myself

'I always thought it would be more fun to take Oregon to any bowl game than to take USC to the Rose Bowl because the whole state would go nuts and that's exactly what happened.'

— Denny Schuler

I caught 12 passes that day," Schuler said. "I had 11 in warmups and one, the touchdown, in the game."

Schuler began his coaching career as a graduate assistant for the Ducks before moving on to the Big Sky conference as a wide receiver coach for both Idaho State and Weber State.

After coaching defensive backs for a year at Washington State, Schuler began a seven-year stint at Utah State. He coached the Aggies' quarterbacks and wide receivers for two years before switching back to defense — a move he thinks helped the Ducks defeat the Cougars last weekend.

"I've been around those guys (the Cougars) for a long time," Schuler said, "and I think that

ending up anywhere else."

"I always thought it would be more fun to take Oregon to any bowl game than to take USC to the Rose Bowl," Schuler said, "because the whole state would go nuts and that's exactly what happened."

Brooks was more than happy to welcome Schuler back to Eugene.

"I had followed him throughout his career," Brooks said. "He had been successful everywhere he had coached."

Now that he's here and the Ducks are enjoying success, don't count on Schuler leaving anytime soon.

"I'm content here at Oregon," Schuler said. "I have a tremendous loyalty to this school."

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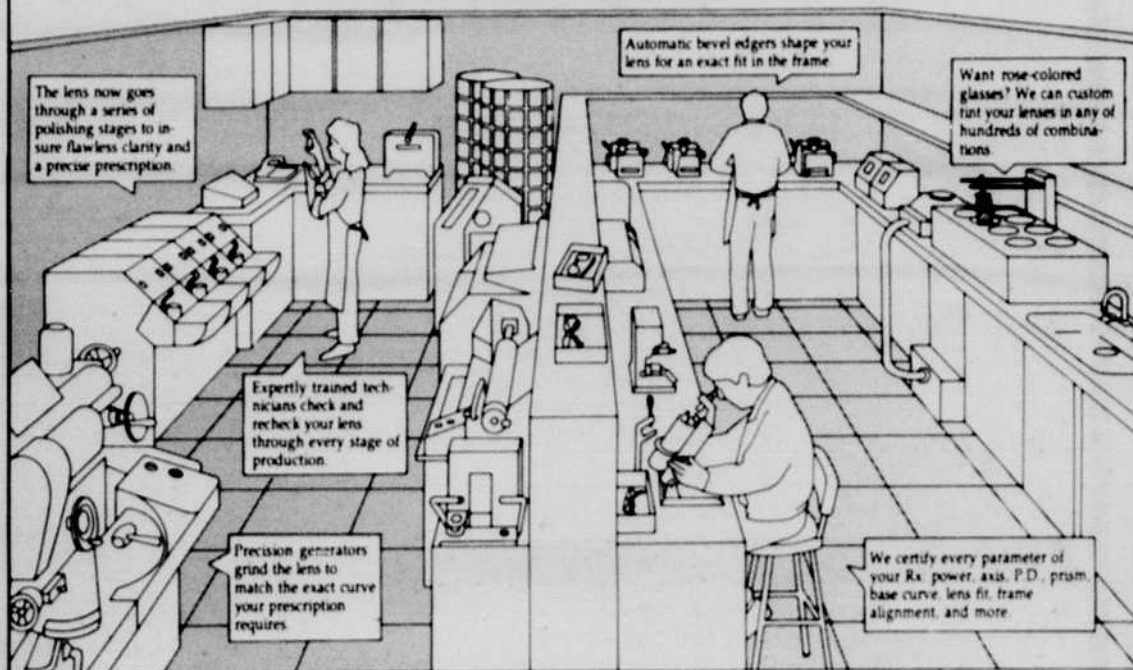
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