

McCallum continues march into record book

By Ashley Conklin
Emerald Sports Editor

It might not show up in the statistics, but Oregon placekicker Gregg McCallum might be having a better season than he did a year ago.

That might seem hard to believe considering McCallum led the nation in field goals with two per game last year and set single-season school records for extra points (37), field goals (24) and points scored (109).

McCallum hasn't been called upon nearly as much this season, largely because the Ducks are putting the ball in the end zone more frequently. Through seven games last season, Oregon had 28 touchdowns and McCallum had 16 field goals. This year the touchdowns have increased to 32 while the field goals have dropped to eight.

Those numbers don't mean that McCallum still isn't a vital part of the offense, however.

"We just haven't attempted as many field goals this year," Oregon Coach Rich Brooks said, "but he is kicking the ball better than he did a year ago in that he's three-for-three from 40-49 yards and one-for-two beyond that."

McCallum struggled on long attempts a year ago, making seven of 14 from 40-49 yards and missing his only attempt from 50-plus yards. Long distance attempts have been McCallum's specialties this season, however.

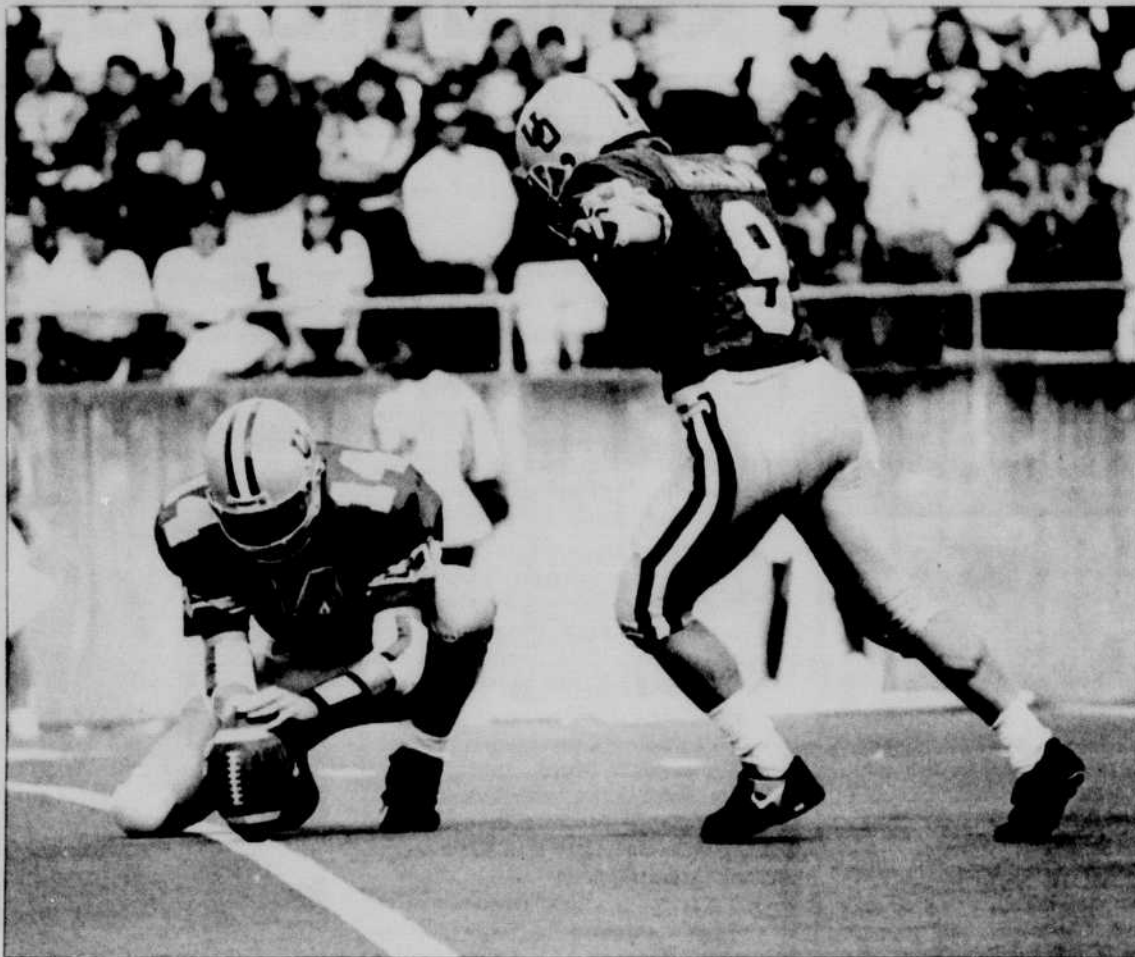


Photo by Andre Ranieri

Placekicker Gregg McCallum has improved on his long distance shots this season with a 51-yard blast against Arizona and a pair of 44-yarders.

He is three-for-three from 40-49 yards, including a 47-yarder against Washington and a pair of 44-yarders.

McCallum also nailed a career-long 51-yarder at Arizona

off the grass where he didn't have the advantage of kicking off of artificial turf. His only miss beyond 40 yards was a desperation 59-yard attempt at the end of the first half against

Washington.

Just like last year, McCallum has launched another assault on the Oregon record book.

McCallum's current extra point pace (he has 28 already)

would easily break his school record set last year, and his two field goals against Arizona State last week gave him 32 for his career, tying the school record held by Matt MacLeod and Kirk Dennis. It took MacLeod three years to reach that mark while Dennis did it in two years.

With 161 career points now, McCallum stands fourth on the school career list and MacLeod, with 180 points, is the only kicker ahead of him. The top spots are held down by Derek Loville (272 points) and Bobby Moore (226 points).

Washington State's Jason Hanson is considered by most to be the best kicker in the Pacific-10 Conference and was a first team All-American last season, but few Oregon fans, or Brooks, would argue against McCallum for those honors.

"I think he's an outstanding kicker," Brooks said. "He's just a great kicker, and he will have his name alone in the record books in a very short time — probably after this week's game."

At the beginning of the season Brooks said he wasn't able to tell what type of personality his team had, but he feels pretty good about how the Ducks responded after losses at Arizona and Washington.

After the Arizona loss, Oregon played perhaps its best game of the year in beating

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