





Fifth Street Public Market • Eugene, Oregon

◄GRID PROFILE▶

Conner big play man on defense

By Robert Weber Emerald Sports Reporter

Second down and seven on the Oregon 35-yard line. Stanford quarterback Jason Palumbis drops back and looks left before throwing a screen to halfback Glyn Milburn in the right flat.

It's a play that the Cardinal had used to perfection many times this year but not this time. Oregon outside linebacker Andy Conner is waiting in the flat for Milburn like he was in the Stanford huddle when the play was called.

Conner slams Milburn for a six-yard loss, stifling the only thing resembling a Stanford drive in the first quarter of a 31-0 Duck shutout last Saturday. The Cardinal never got that close to the Duck end zone the rest of the day.

"He (Palumbis) didn't even know I was out there," Conner said, "but I had the guy mantoman all the way."

Oregon fans have grown to expect big things from Conner over the past two years and he seldom disappoints.

Duck coaches say that Conner, a 6-foot-4, 236-pound junior, is talented enough to play with anybody, assuming that he stays healthy and hones his skills.

Denny Schuler, the Ducks' defensive coordinator, believes Conner is capable of playing in the NFL and adds that Oregon fans might not have seen him at his best.

"There is no doubt that Andy has the ability to play at the

Female Dog:

0-25lbs

25-40lbs

40-50lbs

50-60lbs

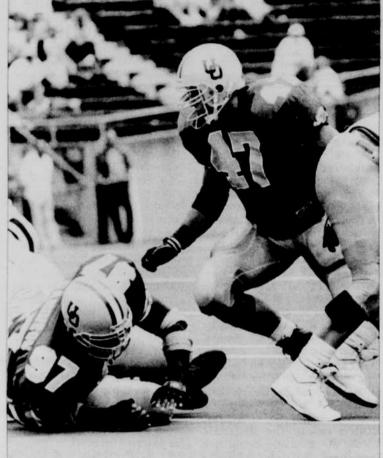


Photo by Andre Ranie

Junior linebacker Andy Conner (47) has overcome early season injuries to provide solid play for the Duck defense.

next level," Schuler said.
"He's still not playing at the level he wants. There's so much potential there that you are somewhat frustrated with just a good game because he's such a great athlete."

Schuler and the other coach-

es know that it will take a healthy Conner to reach that level of play.

"When Andy Conner is healthy and has his head on right, he's one hell of a football player," Nick Aliotti, Oregon's outside linebackers coach, said.

The only problem seems to be keeping Conner healthy.

After a healthy redshirt freshman year in which he saw action in seven games. Conner was ready to make a big impact in 1988. In the final scrimmage before the Ducks' opener, Conner was hit from behind while covering a kickoff and cracked three ribs, causing him to miss the first four weeks of the season.

"It was probably the biggest disappointment of my entire career," he said. "I was pass rushing very well, and they were thinking of making a new position for me to allow me to pass rush."

He returned against Arizona and established himself as a

Turn to CONNER, Page 11

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