

CONNER

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starter throughout most of the second half of the season, finishing the year with 31 tackles, four deflected passes and three quarterback sacks.

Conner was ready for a healthy and productive 1990, but the injury bug struck again earlier this year against Brigham Young.

"I pulled some ligaments on the side of my ankle," Conner said. "It was a really bad sprain."

After missing the Ducks' win over Utah State, Conner returned to the lineup against Washington and has been getting closer to full strength ever since.

"I'm at about 95 percent right now, and I'm feeling a lot better this week," Conner said. "It's probably the best I've felt since the first game this year."

Conner is pleased with the Ducks' success this year but believes that there is room for improvement in his game.

"I could do a lot better," Conner said, "and now that I'm healthy I will start improving in a lot of areas. I haven't been practicing because of my injuries and practice makes a big difference."

The injuries have been tough on Conner, but he believes that he is ready to put them in the past and concentrate on just playing football.

"Overcoming the injuries is probably the big-

gest challenge that I have faced since I've been at Oregon," Conner said. "The hardest thing to do is to watch my teammates play from the sidelines. But I think the more experienced you get the more you're able to avoid injury by doing things right and being stronger."

Many schools were interested in Conner, but he chose Oregon and he couldn't be happier.

"Cal recruited me as a tight end, but I really didn't want to play that position," Conner said.

The coaching staff, Rich Brooks specifically, was a major reason behind Conner's decision to come to Eugene.

"Coach Brooks was one of the main reasons," Conner said. "He was very sincere and it felt like the place for me to be. I think Oregon was the best choice for me then and still is."

Conner has set some pretty lofty goals for himself during the rest of his stay at Oregon.

"My goals are to be an all-Pac-10 linebacker next year and hopefully, if I'm lucky enough, go pro," Conner said.

If he doesn't make it in the NFL, Conner will definitely have something to fall back on. He currently carries a 3.6 grade point average and is pursuing a leisure studies major and Spanish minor.

"Academics are important to me," Conner said. "Coach Brooks and the other coaches stress it a lot. If you can't pass your classes then you can't play football."

center Scot Boatright, guard Andy Sunia and offensive tackle Todd Kaanapu — play for the final time at Autzen Stadium.

Oregon Notes: Musgrave continues to unleash his assault on the Pac-10 record book. With 121 passing yards against UCLA, Musgrave could jump past

Washington State's Jack Thompson and Stanford's Jim Plunkett to fifth on the all-time passing yardage list. ... Bowl scouts from the Aloha, Freedom, Copper and John Hancock Bowls will be at Saturday's game. The Ducks best bets appear to be the Aloha and Freedom Bowls.

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PREVIEW

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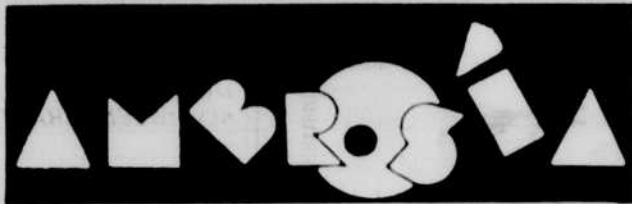
Several of Oregon's best players over the last four years — including Musgrave, split end Joe Reitzug, strong safety Rory Dairy, outside linebacker Peter Brantley,

center Scot Boatright, guard Andy Sunia and offensive tackle Todd Kaanapu — play for the final time at Autzen Stadium.

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