

## VOLLEYBALL

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"LaReina is in great shape and has been playing well. That will be a real big help for us," he said.

Competing for playing time at the bitter positions will be junior Nicole Hedberg, sophomore Angee Henderson and freshman Emily Coleman. Freshman Amy McNeel was also expected to compete for time at the position, but a knee injury may force her to have surgery.

Freshman Karissa White and walk-on freshmen Kim Mullen and Kelly Sunada round out the team.

The Ducks will have their home opener Friday against California and will face Stanford on Saturday at McArthur Court.



Photo by Jeff Paslay  
Head volleyball coach Gerry Gregory embarks on his seventh season as head coach of the Ducks.

## DUCKS

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weren't playing well; if they play average again this year, they will watch instead of play."

The Ducks lost standout tight end Jeff Thomason to graduation but have many contenders for the job lining up. Six-foot-4, 240-pound senior Vince Ferry, best known for his game-winning catch against UCLA two years ago, is the starter followed by sophomore Willy Tate and senior O.B. Babbs.

Oregon's offensive line should be improved this year with the maturation of young players and the addition of three junior college transfers.

Senior tackles Matt Martin (6-6, 265) and David Collinsworth (6-4, 285) both started games last year but are being pushed hard by 285-pound junior college transfer Justin Starck and 6-7, 300-pound sophomore Steve Hardin.

Left guard Jon Tattersall (6-4, 280) started all eleven games last year and is an offensive co-captain, but 6-4, 295-pound junior college transfer Mike DiFonzo has also played well in the fall. Dan Mitchell will start at right guard.

Center is the most mysterious position for the Ducks as junior Tom Curran, freshman Eric Reid and 310-pound sophomore Heath Howlington have all been vying for the spot.

"Our depth on the offensive line is far superior to last year," Brooks said. "Starck and DiFonzo are good new players. Hardin, Howlington, Mitchell, Tattersall and Martin are all experienced. We have the ingredients of a good offensive line."

Oregon's offense averaged less than two touchdowns per game last season, a mark that must be improved if the Ducks are to win this year, but Brooks believes injuries were the main reason for the lack of scoring.

"We started last season with many of the people we have now and we were a good offensive team," Brooks said. "We started well last year and it all went south fast. We think we've improved but a good team must prove it."

Oregon's defense suffered a major blow before fall practice even began when safety Eric Castle was diagnosed with acute mononucleosis. He is expected to miss at least the first four games. The loss is a major one for the Ducks and for Castle, who is a potential All-American and NFL draft pick.

"When I found out I was angry and frustrated. I couldn't believe it," Castle said. "The doctors say I'll miss about the first four games, but I'll just take it week-by-week."

Oregon does have the depth to stay competitive without

Castle because they will move sophomore Chad Cota from strong safety to free safety and insert senior Paul Rodriguez at strong safety, the position he started at for the first five games of 1991.

"We are losing more than talent," Brooks said. "Eric is a leader, captain and a key part of our secondary. He is an outstanding player but we must go on without him."

The Ducks' cornerbacks are talented, but very young and inexperienced. Sophomore Herman O'Berry and freshman Alex Molden are the top candidates for the starting job and senior Devon Hosey returns after redshirting 1991.

The strongest and deepest part of Oregon's defense may be at linebacker, where three players who started at least five games last year return.

Junior Ernest Jones returns at right outside linebacker, where he started five games last year before suffering a knee injury.

Inside linebacker Joe Farwell, who lead the Ducks with 100 tackles last year, returns to add experience to the corps. Farwell started 10 games last year and 34 in his career. Junior John Taumoepeau will start at the other inside linebacker spot with redshirt freshmen Jeremy Asher and Rich Ruhl ready in case of injury.

Defensive end Jeff Cummins returns after redshirting 1991 with a foot injury, and the co-captain will be looked upon for strong play and leadership.

"We will be more aggressive this year," Cummins said. "The game plan is for more stunting

and more freedom inside to create — more freedom all together."

Junior Romeo Bandison will start at left end with Silla Malepeal set at nose guard. Depth at these positions will be provided by junior Gary Williams, sophomores D.J. Cabrera and Mark Slymen and redshirt freshmen Troy Bailey and Mitch Siegner. Injuries forced the Ducks to start eight different players on the defensive line last year but this season there is greater depth at the position.

Due to the graduation of Oregon's third all-time leading scorer Greg McCallum, the kicking game will be handled solely by junior Tommy Thompson who punted and kicked off for the Ducks last year. Thompson, an honorable mention all-conference choice last year, averaged 37.9 yards per punt last year, but more impressive was that his 71 punts were returned for only 79 yards.

He will be challenged for the placekicking job by Paul Burton, a true freshman from Sunset High School in Beaverton, who kicked a 57-yard field goal as a senior. Although Thompson has never placekicked for Oregon, Brooks feels he will do a fine job.

"Both kicking jobs are Tommy's to lose," Brooks said. "He has been placekicking well all spring. He has a stronger leg than Greg McCallum, but I don't know about accuracy."

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