

Deadwiler has many roles in life

By Steve Mims
Oregon Daily Emerald

Oregon receiver Derrick Deadwiler has filled many roles on the field for the Ducks this year. However, those are nothing compared to the parts he plays off the field.

Deadwiler is listed as a wide receiver for the Ducks, but has filled in as a kick and punt returner this year, as well as running the ball a few times. But when Deadwiler describes himself, it is as a Christian, a father and a soon-to-be husband.

Deadwiler will marry his fiancée Eileen Austin Jan. 22 and begin an instant family. Deadwiler has a three-year old son, Marquise, and Austin has a daughter, Drew, the same age. "We call it a mini Brady Bunch," Deadwiler said.

The two met in a church, a place Deadwiler has spent a lot of time recently. Deadwiler is one of a group of Oregon players who meet weekly for Thursday night fellowship, chapel services and at the 50-yard line after each game for prayer. Deadwiler gives some of the credit for Oregon's winning season to the weekly meetings.

"It has grown the team a lot closer," Deadwiler said. "Compared to years before when we were 3-8, or even last year, it is completely different. The team is so unified and I'd like to say that the services have a lot to do with it because we have a lot of guys out there on the 50-yard line and in chapel."

Deadwiler's performance on the field has been a boost for the Ducks as well this year. He currently leads the team with 40 catches and has been a steady influence on a talented, but young, group of receivers.

Oregon's receiving corps is made up of a lot of youngsters like redshirt freshman Dameron Ricketts and sophomores Kory Murphy and Cristin McLemore. Waiting in the wings is highly recruited Jamaal Wallace, who is redshirting this year to recover from knee surgery.

Although Deadwiler has been at Oregon only three years, that qualifies him as one of the graybeards among receivers. His leadership has been an important factor in Oregon's success this year, but he said it's not something he thinks about.

"I just try to be an example,"



JEFF PASLAY/Emerald

Oregon wide receiver Derrick Deadwiler has been a steady influence for a young group of Oregon wide receivers.

Deadwiler said. "If the other guys ask me something, like a route to run, I try to help. But leadership, if they look up to me, they look up to me."

However, as Deadwiler points out, the others may look up to him figuratively, but not literally.

"I'm usually looking up to them because I'm shorter," the 5-foot-9, 170-pounder said.

Deadwiler came to Oregon in 1991, but took a while to establish himself as an offensive weapon. Deadwiler redshirted the 1991 season and shared time last year with Anthony Jones and Ronnie Harris, catching 28 passes in eight games before suffering a fractured collarbone.

Deadwiler was projected as a starter entering this season, and he hasn't disappointed anyone. With two or three games left in his collegiate career, Deadwiler said he is looking to turn it up a notch.

"It's going to get more intense because guys are in shape mentally and physically," Deadwiler said. "It's not a matter of knowing something anymore,

because we know it already; it's a matter of doing it now."

Although he is new to the Pac-10 scene, opposing coaches have taken notice, including this weekend's opponent.

"Deadwiler is one of an outstanding group of receivers," Stanford head coach Bill Walsh said. "He makes big plays and has good speed to beat you deep. Deadwiler has the highest marks; he's the best of the young group."

Deadwiler made his biggest impact this year in Oregon's 42-41 loss at California, tying one school record with 11 catches and setting a new record with 234 yards receiving. However, that accomplishment was forgotten by many when Cal set a record of its own by coming back to win after trailing by 30 points.

Deadwiler has caught more passes than any other two-year Duck, and is among the top 20 all-time Oregon receivers. With 15 catches in his final two games, Deadwiler would pass Bobby Moore for the second-highest number of catches in one season.

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