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ROSE BOWL 1995



# Small Wonder

Chris Metz  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Scanning a typical Division I college football field on any given Saturday, not many 5-foot-9, 179 pounders appear on either side of the ball. The chances of such a small player playing, much less starting, on a big-time college football team are rare at best.

But for Oregon's Jeff Sherman, there was never a doubt in his mind that he would not only one day play for the Ducks, but he would be one of the most reliable contributors as well.

Sherman's career at Oregon has been a systematic checklist of personal goals. After entering the school as a walk-on, Sherman's first goal was to gain a scholarship and find a place on the team. Slowly his goals were attained, eventually finding Sherman in the starting lineup and leading the Ducks in tackles this past season.

"It went beyond all my goals and into my fantasies and dreams," Sherman said about his personal and team accomplishments in 1994. "I play on a vaunted defense and in a vaunted secondary, and I was the leading tackler. That means a lot to me."

For Sherman, his 107 tackles this season is a great source of pride for the North Eugene product. Coming out of high school, many people questioned his skills and size. But his critics should have been scouting the size of his heart as the free safety has become a quality defender, culminating this season with an honorable mention on the 1994 All-Pac-10 Conference team.

"I always thought everybody underes-

## JEFF SHERMAN



- Four-time All-Pac-10 Academic team
- Honorable mention 1994 All-Pac-10 Conference team
- Led Oregon in tackles in 1994 with 107

timated my talent," Sherman said. "I've tackled Heisman Trophy candidates, and I've intercepted great quarterbacks. I have confidence that I can do the job on anybody at anytime and also know that I'm capable of getting beat by anybody at anytime if I'm not smart and disciplined."

Discipline and patience is the key to Sherman's being where he is today.

Early in his career at Oregon, Sherman sat and watched one of Oregon's greats in the secondary in Eric Castle.

Finding it hard to break into the lineup, Sherman didn't really get his big chance until last season when he started three games at free safety. His 26 tackles and his special-teams play quickly gained the respect of his coaches and landed him the starting job from Day 1 in 1994.

"I know the coaches had a hard time playing a 5-foot-9, 175 pound free safe-

Turn to **WONDER**, Page 25B

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