

EMERALD

Junior safety Jaiya Figueras suffered a season ending ankle injury in the fourth game of the 1995 season. Since the injury, Figueras has struggled to regain his past form.

Duck Disappearing Act

Strong safety Jaiya Figueras has been a virtual no-show in the Oregon defense this season

By Chris Hansen
Sports Reporter

You remember Jaiya Figueras, don't you? How about a little refresher: In game number two of last season, Oregon was losing 31-28 to Illinois midway through the fourth quarter. Illinois was beginning a drive inside its own 20-yard line when Figueras broke through on a safety blitz and sacked Illinois quarterback Johnny Johnson. Johnson fumbled the football back into the Oregon end zone and was recovered by Figueras for the winning touchdown.

The next weekend at UCLA, Oregon was leading 38-31 with only seconds to go in the game, and the Bruins were facing

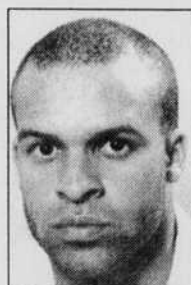
fourth-and-goal. UCLA tailback Karim-Abdul Jabbar took the handoff and ran to his left, put his head down and attempted to barrel his way into the end zone. Instead he was stuffed at the goal line by Figueras to seal Oregon's victory.

Two consecutive games, two consecutive game-winning plays by Figueras.

But the following week against Stanford, Figueras suffered a season-ending injury when he tore ligaments and broke his ankle.

After sitting out spring drills, Figueras was expected to come in this fall and make an impact in a Duck secondary that was in need of a playmaker other than Kenny Wheaton.

But so far this season, Figueras has been nearly a non-existent factor in the Ducks' defense. He has started only twice while playing the other games almost exclusively on special teams, a position he excels at.



FIGUERAS

So why is Figueras not seeing significant action on a defense that is in desperate need of someone to step up and make the big play? That depends on who is doing the talking. The coaches say he hasn't completely recovered from his injury. Figueras, on the other hand, says he is healthy and doesn't understand

why he isn't playing.

"I was hurting in fall camp because I hadn't played on the leg for so long," Figueras said. "But the coaches say that I'm too slow and flat-footed and not playing up to my ability and potential."

But head coach Mike Bellotti insists that

the injury is the reason for not playing Figueras.

"Being cleared to play and being ready to play physically and mentally are two different things," Bellotti said. "Part of it is the physical process of healing that takes place even after he is medically cleared. Then it is the mental process of having the confidence in that leg."

And Figueras' mental healing has been slower in coming than the coach would like.

"Sometimes there is an emphasis in thinking about what the next step will be," Bellotti said, "thinking about pushing off that leg, thinking about coming up to make a tackle and protecting that leg. The injury has not allowed him to be the player he was last season."

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Big game lights fire for harsh word-war

COACH: Husky head coach Jim Lambright had some choice words about the Ducks following his team's loss last season

By Ryan Frank
Sports Reporter

The fire burning in the Northwest known as the Oregon-Washington series had a little more fuel added to it last season.

Oregon's 24-22 squeaker at Husky Stadium on Nov. 4, was its second win over the Huskies in as many years, the first time that had happened since 1987 and 1988.

The victory put the Ducks on their way to their second-straight New Year's Day bowl berth and pushed the Huskies toward a Dec. 29 date in the Sun Bowl.

But at the time, Washington head coach Jim Lambright was not willing to settle for anything less than a New Year's Day bowl.

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UW quarterback ready to make his mark

HUARD: After seeing his older brother get booed last season, Brock Huard wants to redeem his family name

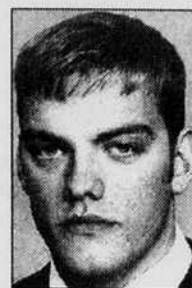
By Ryan Halvorsen
Sports Reporter

Before Washington's game against UCLA last week, there was a quarterback controversy. Now there is not. At least not this week, when the Huskies visit Eugene.

Brock Huard, the Huskies' redshirt freshman, will be making the calls this weekend against the Ducks while junior Shane Fortney will be on the sidelines giving his ailing knee a rest.

The starting role is nothing new to Huard as he has already started three of Washington's six games this season and has played in all of them. Huard has also already established himself as one of the top quarterbacks in the Pacific-10 Conference, ranking fifth in the league with 122.2 yards per game and 817 total yards passing in shared time.

Being part of the Huard family and being a Husky is nothing new either. Brock is the brother of last



HUARD

year's starting quarterback Damon; Brock grew up with the Huskies and now he finally is one.

"I would say that the two biggest factors [for going to Washington] would be playing in front of 75,000 Husky fans every game — being from the state of Washington and being a huge fan of Washington football — and secondly my family and friends," Brock said. "I wanted to be around them and share all of the

experiences with them because they are a big reason why I'm playing football anyway. If I would have gone somewhere else I would have had to make a whole new set of friends."

Huard is staying close to his family and friends, especially Damon, who, after a brief stint as a backup with the Cincinnati Bengals, has returned to Seattle to

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