



LAURA GOSS/Emerald

Safety Gary Barker hauls Michigan State's Gari Scott to a short gain in the Ducks' Sept. 5 debut.

Defense: Pac-10's worst last season

Continued from Page 17E
take down your performance.

"In terms of what we do on the field, we are really an aggressive, swarming kind of a defense that has multiple fronts and multiple coverages. We're a defense of running and quickness."

Leading the charge on the field is inside linebacker Peter Sirmon, the Pac-10's leading tackler in 1997 with 104, including 17 for loss.

The 6-foot-2, 245-pound Washington native returns for his junior campaign and is joined at linebacker by Moore and Aaron Cheuvront, who played mostly special teams last season but started and recorded two tackles, one for a loss, against the Spartans.

The three play behind a defensive line that lost perhaps its MVP, Desmond Byrd, to graduation, but features three others who

were regular starters last season.

Leie Sualua started every game at tackle last season and is joined inside by Caleb Smith. Terry Miller and Saul Patu start outside on a line that Sirmon thinks will help lower his total tackles from a year ago.

"I don't think that the tackle numbers have to be that high this year," Sirmon said. "If the defensive line plays the way we think they can, that number could drop to 90 real quick. If they make some plays, if instead of running people down we're making stops at the line of scrimmage, then my job is easier."

But when asked whose play has impressed him the most thus far, Foster immediately mentions the secondary, led by unofficial team cheerleader and rover Michael Fletcher, free safety Brandon McLemore and cornerbacks Eric

Edwards and Rashad Bauman.

"Eric Edwards is solid, he knows his stuff and he's a great technician," Foster said. "He's solid as rock."

Also expected to garner significant playing time this season are free safety Justin Wilcox, nickelback Tamoni Joiner, rover Gary Barker, linebackers Garrot Sabol and Chris Vandiver and linemen Masi Heamish and Zack Freiter, said by head coach Mike Bellotti to be possibly the strongest player in Oregon football history.

"We weren't super healthy for [the Michigan State] game, and that was another thing that was a little scary," Foster said after the win. "We had one of our great defensive tackles not even suit out. Zack Freiter is a great player. He's going to be one of our best players, and he didn't even suit up."

PAC-10 Football Schedules

Arizona

Sept. 3 @ Hawaii
Sept. 12 @ Stanford
Sept. 19 Iowa
Sept. 24 @ San Diego State
Oct. 3 @ Washington
Oct. 10 UCLA
Oct. 17 @ Oregon State
Oct. 24 Northeast Louisiana
Oct. 31 Oregon
Nov. 7 Washington State
Nov. 14 @ California
Nov. 27 Arizona State

Arizona State

Sept. 5 Washington
Sept. 12 @ Brigham Young
Sept. 19 North Texas
Sept. 26 Oregon State
Oct. 3 @ Southern California
Oct. 10 Notre Dame
Oct. 22 Stanford
Oct. 31 @ Washington State
Nov. 7 California
Nov. 14 @ Oregon
Nov. 27 @ Arizona

California

Sept. 5 Houston
Sept. 12 Nebraska
Sept. 19 @ Oklahoma
Sept. 26 Washington State
Oct. 10 @ Southern California
Oct. 17 @ Washington
Oct. 24 UCLA
Oct. 31 @ Oregon State
Nov. 7 @ Arizona State
Nov. 14 Arizona
Nov. 21 Stanford

Oregon

Sept. 5 Michigan State
Sept. 12 @ UTEP
Sept. 19 San Jose State
Sept. 26 Stanford
Oct. 10 @ Washington State
Oct. 17 @ UCLA
Oct. 24 Southern California
Oct. 31 @ Arizona
Nov. 7 Washington
Nov. 14 Arizona State
Nov. 21 @ Oregon State

Oregon State

Sept. 5 Nevada
Sept. 12 Baylor
Sept. 19 @ Southern California
Sept. 26 @ Arizona State
Oct. 3 @ Utah State
Oct. 10 @ Stanford
Oct. 17 Arizona
Oct. 24 @ Washington
Oct. 31 California
Nov. 7 UCLA
Nov. 21 Oregon

Stanford

Sept. 5 San Jose State
Sept. 12 Arizona
Sept. 19 North Carolina
Sept. 26 @ Oregon
Oct. 3 @ Notre Dame
Oct. 10 Oregon State
Oct. 22 @ Arizona State
Oct. 31 @ UCLA
Nov. 7 Southern California
Nov. 14 Washington State
Nov. 21 @ California

UCLA

Sept. 12 Texas
Sept. 19 @ Houston
Sept. 26 @ Miami
Oct. 3 Washington State
Oct. 10 @ Arizona
Oct. 17 Oregon
Oct. 24 @ California
Oct. 31 Stanford
Nov. 7 @ Oregon State
Nov. 14 @ Washington
Nov. 21 Southern California

Southern California

Aug. 30 Purdue
Sept. 12 San Diego State
Sept. 19 Oregon State
Sept. 26 @ Florida State
Oct. 3 Arizona State
Oct. 10 California
Oct. 17 @ Washington State
Oct. 24 @ Oregon
Oct. 31 Washington
Nov. 7 @ Stanford
Nov. 21 @ UCLA
Nov. 28 Notre Dame

Washington

Sept. 5 @ Arizona State
Sept. 19 Brigham Young
Sept. 26 @ Nebraska
Oct. 3 Arizona
Oct. 10 Utah State
Oct. 17 California
Oct. 24 Oregon State
Oct. 31 @ Southern California
Nov. 7 @ Oregon
Nov. 14 UCLA
Nov. 21 @ Washington State

Washington State

Sept. 5 Illinois
Sept. 12 @ Boise State
Sept. 19 Idaho
Sept. 26 @ California
Oct. 3 @ UCLA
Oct. 10 Oregon
Oct. 17 Southern California
Oct. 31 Arizona State
Nov. 7 @ Arizona
Nov. 14 @ Arizona State
Nov. 21 Washington

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