

Football

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Academy in 1995.

Aside from giving rest to Oregon's injured players, Bellotti said he hopes this week turns the team's focus from what it has already accomplished to what it is about to.

"I'm pleased the way we played overall," he said. "But I think we stopped ourselves more than we'd like to do. In a close game, I think that we make a big difference."

But, Bellotti said, Oregon may have an advantage down the stretch because it has been able to use many of its reserve

players in its early season games.

"I think that's been every positive situation," he said. "We've been almost able to play our entire roster in our first four games. Our reserves have all had tremendous opportunities to get involved with and be a part of the team."

Following its game with Washington State, Oregon battles No. 4 UCLA in Pasadena, before returning home for its homecoming game with Southern California.

Sports brief

Sirmon likely out for season, Bellotti says

Oregon junior linebacker Peter Sirmon is expected to miss the remainder of the 1998 football season after undergoing surgery to repair a torn pectoralis major muscle near his right shoulder, according to head football coach Mike Bellotti.

Sirmon, who led the Pacific-10 Conference in tackles a year ago with 115, had recorded 24 stops in three games this season before being forced to sit out the second half of the game vs. San Jose State a week ago and missing all of Saturday's 63-28 win over Stanford. His totals included 12 tackles in this year's win at Texas-El Paso, and he posted three tackles for losses of seven, one quarterback sack and two passes broken up this season.

The injury was first detected during the start of fall drills in August and got progressively worse as the year wore on.

The surgery performed at Eugene's Sacred Heart Hospital Monday afternoon was considered to be the best of the two possible options, with Sirmon expected to be able to participate in spring drills. Had surgery been needed to repair damage to the tendon connecting the muscle to the bone instead of the breast muscle itself, he might have been unable to resume workouts until next fall.

The Walla Walla native and two-year starter was credited with 208 tackles, three fumble recoveries and two interceptions in just more than two seasons, was a consensus preseason first-team all-conference

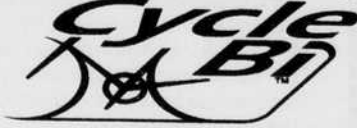
choice and was included among the candidates for the Butkus Award, given to the top collegiate linebacker in the country.

He will have only one year of eligibility remaining after redshirting as a true freshman in 1995.

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