



Matt Hankins/Emerald

Peter Sirmon, who led the Pac-10 in tackles last season, will be out for the rest of this season, thanks to a torn pectoralis muscle.

Injuries

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are not strong."

The outlook could be more promising, however, for true freshman Herman Ho-Ching, a tailback who strained knee ligaments in the Ducks' win over San Jose State on Sept. 19.

Having not yet used a redshirt season, Ho-Ching could apply for medical hardship status after this season if he still qualifies.

In order to qualify under normal circumstances, an athlete cannot compete in more than 20 percent of his team's contests, must play that 20 percent or less in the first half of the season and must be unable to return for the remainder of the season, O'Fallon said.

Having played less than three

full games, all in the season's first half, Ho-Ching would qualify for redshirt consideration should head coach Mike Bellotti deem him unable to play in the Ducks' remaining games.

"That's a perfect example," Williford said. "If he's unable to come back, we would have to apply with the NCAA to get that year back."

But, O'Fallon said, "If he returns to health, then hardship would not apply."

Should Ho-Ching miss the rest of the season, O'Fallon would file a petition to the Pac-10 detailing the significance of the injury and the circumstances in which it occurred. The NCAA would then issue a ruling in the case.

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