Morton

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grabbed the second of his two interceptions for the season against California.

But once again, the Trojan coaches decided they needed Morton's talents on offense. Despite nagging hip, hamstring and ankle injuries, Morton ran for 214 yards in USC's final three games.

He has not been moved from tailback since and is happy with that security.

"This is the position I've wanted to play my whole life," says the 5-foot-8, 185-pound Morton.
"When I first came here, [the coaches] thought I would be a better corner because of my size and my speed."

Morton identifies that speed, which he also displays on the Trojan track team, as his "main game," but he also feels his decision-making ability as a tailback is improving.

"I have to really work hard on reading my blocks," says Morton, who ranks seventh in the Pac-10 in all-purpose yards with 117 per game. "[Head coach Paul] Hackett has done a great job. He's helped me a lot in running the ball with knowing where to run, when to cut back.

Injuries have plagued Morton throughout his career, and this season has been no exception.

After opening the season with a bang - namely, a 98-yard kickoff return for a touchdown on USC's first play against Purdue - and posting two 100-yard rushing per-formances in the first four games, Morton missed the Arizona State and Cal games with a bruised back.

He returned last week against Washington State and contributed 66 rushing yards and a touchdown after coming off the

bench in the Trojans' 42-14 win. Leading the team with 460 rushing yards and five touch-downs, Morton is back in the starting lineup for Saturday's game at Oregon. But Hackett says he plans to use both Morton and the bigger Petros Papadakis to keep the Duck defense off bal-

"Petros is a power runner," says the first-year head coach. "Chad, on the other hand, has much more in-line movement. His ability is to

make people miss. It's a great combination, great 1-2 punch."

Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti says he is well aware of Morton's blazing speed.

"Chad Morton is one of the fastest players they have on the field, and he obviously adds a speed dimension when he plays," Bellotti says.

Morton calls his first game at Autzen Stadium "one of our biggest games of the year" and says he is eager to see Oregon safety Brandon McLemore, a childhood friend.

"We'll probably talk before the game, but once the game starts, it's war," Morton says of McLemore.

With Johnnie starring for the Lions and Michael having played for the Buccaneers, Morton says he would love to become the third member of his family to fight such wars in the NFL.



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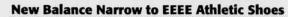




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