

Laura Goss/Emerald

The Oregon offensive line will be reshuffled this week to compensate for injuries sustained in last week's overtime loss to UCLA.

Offensive line doubles as MASH unit

Starting left tackle Marco Aguirre is expected to miss the next four games with a knee injury

By Scott Pesznecker
Oregon Daily Emerald

To this point in the Ducks' 5-1 season, center Deke Moen has been an anchor for the offensive line.

For the past six games, he has known who he would be working with. To his right, he is used to seeing right guard Michael Klews and right tackle Josh Beckett. To his left, he is familiar with left guard Stefan deVries and left tackle Marco Aguirre.

But when the Ducks take the field against Southern California on Saturday, Moen will find himself in an unfamiliar situation in the aftermath of a physical game against the Bruins.

Aguirre is sidelined with torn ligaments in his knee and will be out for about four weeks. Beckett suffered a foot contusion and is listed as probable.

To compensate for the loss of Aguirre and Beckett, the Ducks will reshuffle their offensive line against the Trojans.

DeVries will slide from left

guard to left tackle. Klews will switch to the other side of the line to play left guard. Beckett will be replaced by Scott Fergus at right tackle, and sophomore Lee Gundy will enter the rotation at right guard.

Moen will be the only player on the line playing in his natural position. He said he is not worried about the adjustments in the line because the team knows how to work together in many situations.



MOEN

"We've got a few guys who can play in multiple positions," Moen said. "Klews can play the guard spot, and Fergus can play at right tackle. It's not going to be too different, but the key is communication. We want to go in there and continue to have good games."

Klews is also confident that the team's recent injuries will not affect the performance of the line. He said he can make a successful

switch to left guard because "everything stays the same."

"Gundy and Fergus work well together, and me and [deVries] never talk much anyway," Klews joked. "I talked to Deke, and he said I'd have no problem switching from left guard to right guard."

In the midst of the changes, the offensive line must deal with another problem. Replacing Reuben Droughns at running back could be Derien Latimer, making just his fifth career start.

"I'm not even worried about it," Latimer said, addressing the line's ability to defend him. "I hope we get Marco back soon, but our offensive line has been outstanding this year, and there are more people waiting in the wings to step up."

The offensive line has had success this season. Under its protection, Akili Smith leads the Pac-10 Conference in passing efficiency and is second in the conference in total offense. The line also gave Droughns the room needed to lead the Pac-10 in rushing.

Overall, Oregon leads the Pac-10 in rushing and total offense.



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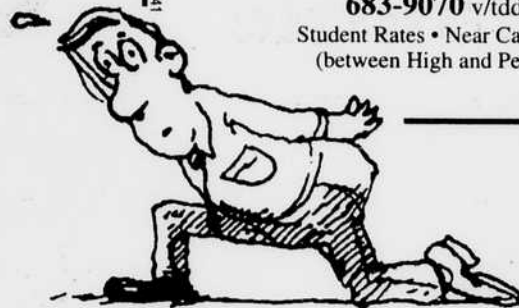
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