

# Northcutt

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training camp, Northcutt was forced to fill a greater role.

And boy, did he rise to the challenge.

In 1997, Northcutt led the Wildcats in receiving and ranked fourth in the Pac-10 with 58 catches. This year, he is on track to eclipse last year's mark, having 49 catches midway through this season.

"I'm always working harder because I get more experience as I get older," Northcutt says. "If something happened last year, I've got to do it better this year. It takes a lot of hard work and staying late after practice, but I work harder than the next person."

Arizona head coach Dick Tomey agrees that Northcutt has improved.

"I think he's better," Tomey says. "I don't think the number of receptions indicates if somebody is better or worse. It's the team result that counts. Dennis is contributing to our team. I think he's a much better player than he was a year ago. He's blocking better and trying harder without the ball."

*"I don't need to lead right now, but soon it will be my turn to step up"*

**Dennis Northcutt**  
Wildcats receiver

Northcutt has done more than work without the ball; he has improved without even stepping onto the field. He often wakes up early in the morning so he can spend more time practicing or working out.

Teammates Jose Portilla and Rodney Williams — who are Northcutt's roommates — have discovered this the hard way.

"We try to outwork each other," Northcutt says. "They'll ask me if I want to work out and there's no way I'll say no. Sometimes I'll catch them early in the morning all ready to go, and there's no way they are going to say no because I'm younger."

As his role on the team continues to grow, Northcutt says he is

ready to be a leader. He looks forward to next year and says he wants it to be his best.

But until then, Northcutt says his role as a Wildcat is to work hard and continue to improve. He does not like to say that he is "the man" on the team because one man alone can't win a football game.

"Right now, this team has some really good leaders," he says. "I don't need to lead right now, but soon it will be my turn to step up."

Northcutt does admit he is, in a sense, already a leader. He says younger players look at his yardage and receiving and want to accomplish what he has done.

Many players in college football don't see heavy playing time until later in their careers, and Northcutt knows this can be frustrating. However, he has a way of looking at life that seems to put his career at Arizona in perspective.

"What I tell younger guys is that they don't have to wait to take their turns," Northcutt says. "You've got to be ready, because you'll get your shot. You just have to be ready when your shot comes."

## Sports brief

### Ice Hockey

It was the little mistakes that robbed the Oregon club ice hockey team of victory last weekend against last year's Pacific-8 Conference champion Southern California. These errors will have to be eliminated this weekend against Washington State if Oregon is to earn its first home win this season at Lane County Ice.

USC sealed the Ducks' fate with a 5-4 shootout last Friday and a 5-3 victory Saturday. These wins marked the fifth time in two seasons that the Trojans have had Oregon's number.

"We made small mistakes and they capitalized," said Oregon player Aaron Olson. "We need to avoid these against Washington State and play as a team."

Oregon split with the Cougars last season, who finished in fifth place in the Pac-8 right behind the Ducks. Oregon needs a sweep to bring its record above

.500 for the season.

"They are a well rounded, hard working team with no real star player," Olson said. "But we have a better team than we had last year."

The only injured Oregon player going into this weekend is Rob Chasen. Chasen is out indefinitely with a torn anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee, which he injured in the season opener against California.

Victories over Washington State could give Oregon the momentum it needs for next weekend, as it endures three games in Washington against the Huskies on Friday and Saturday and Western Washington on Sunday.

### Club Soccer

The Oregon men's club soccer team continues its three-game home stand this weekend with two games. Its first game is Sunday at South Bank field against the

University of Portland at 1 p.m. The last game for the Ducks will be Monday at 4 p.m. vs. Umpqua Community College.

### Ultimate frisbee

Members of the Oregon men's and women's club ultimate frisbee teams will be taking part in the Humboldt Harvest Tournament this weekend.

It will be Oregon's first trip to the annual co-ed Halloween tournament, in which each team participating will wear thematic costumes.

"It's all about costumes and fun and just playing," said team member Tiana Grzebek. "And it will be good for some of the new players to get introduced to the sport before we go to Santa Clara."

On Nov. 8, both teams will be competing against the best teams on the West Coast at the regional tournament in Santa Clara, Calif.

# Slow start for Seahawks offense

By Jim Cour  
The Associated Press

KIRKLAND, Wash. — The Seattle Seahawks gave Ricky Waters \$13 million to add his running talents to Warren Moon's passing.

After seven games, it isn't working.

Moon might miss his second consecutive start this week because of two cracked ribs and Seattle's running game is sputtering.

"I'm not disappointed in Ricky's play," coach Dennis Erickson said Wednesday. "Ricky's played good. When he's had some areas to run, he's run real well."

Not well enough, though. Going into a Sunday night home game against the Oakland Raiders (5-2), the Seahawks are 4-3 after escaping with a victory in San Diego last week.

They rank 22nd in the NFL on offense and 18th in rushing.

"I feel good. I feel healthy. I feel like I'm running hard. But we're trying to get things going right now as an offense," Waters said after Wednesday's practice.

Watters, held to a season-low

32 rushing yards on 18 carries against the Chargers, is averaging 3.8 yards and has run for two touchdowns. He has two 100-yard rushing games — giving him 23 in his career — with his third pro team but hasn't had a performance like that since Week 3.

In addition, he's caught 22 short passes for 131 yards, including five for 56 yards from backup quarterback John Friesz in San Diego.

"We think we can run the ball when we have to," Erickson said. "I have confidence that we can."

Said Watters: "I can look in the mirror and say, 'Hey, you're doing all you can for this team.' That's all I can do."

"Sure, it's very frustrating, but I don't think it's just frustrating for me. It's frustrating for the whole offense."

The Seahawks — and Erickson — bet a lot of owner Paul Allen's millions to bring Watters to Seattle. With pressure to get the Seahawks into the playoffs, Erickson knows the Seahawks' offense needs to improve dramatically in the final nine weeks.

Watters is a durable 6-foot-1, 217-pounder who has started in 71 consecutive games. He's also 29 and in his eighth season as a workhorse back in the league.

The Seahawks picked Watters over free agent Natrone Means and gave him a four-year contract that included a \$5 million signing bonus. This week, Watters ranks ninth in the AFC, while Means, now of the Chargers, is second in the conference with 800 rushing yards, 278 more than Watters.

"They're trying to use my talent," Watters said. "They're trying to get me the ball on offense. I think it's just a matter of time before it all comes together."

Watters will see an old friend across the sidelines this week in first-year Raiders head coach Jon Gruden, who was his offensive coordinator for three years in Philadelphia. Or maybe Gruden is an old enemy.

Gruden and Watters had their share of problems. Watters wanted the ball more than Gruden wanted to give it to him at times. After last season, the Eagles elected not to try to re-sign Watters.

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