

Oregon linebacker Dietrich Moore drags down Southern California quarterback Carson Palmer in the third quarter of the Ducks' 17-13 victory three weeks ago.

# Less is **MOORE**

*Oregon junior Dietrich Moore proves that an undersized but speedy linebacker can excel in the Pacific-10 Conference*

By Rob Moseley  
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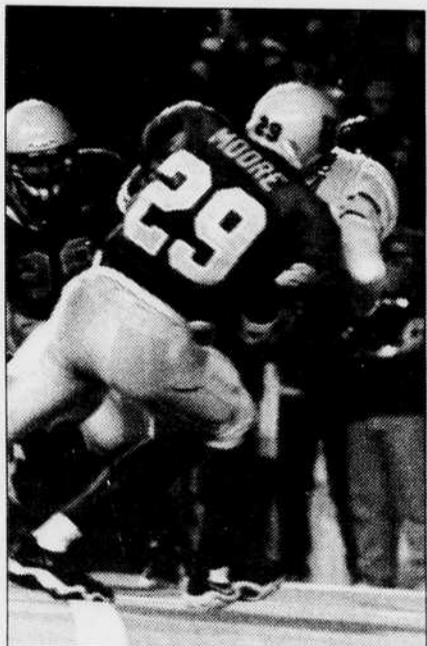
The tattoo on Dietrich Moore's left arm is of a football, with a length of barbed wire wrapped around the biceps connecting each end of the pigskin and a recognizable logo emblazoned on its laces.

The logo is the familiar "swoosh" of Nike, the athletic apparel company that took the name of the Greek goddess of victory, who Nike says "inspired the most courageous and chivalrous warriors at the dawn of civilization."

But for Moore, the symbolism of the "swoosh" refers directly to the company, although his success could certainly recall the attributes of the goddess.

"If you look at the industry Nike's in, they're on top," says the 6-foot-2, 211-pound junior from Anchorage, Alaska. "They're the best at what they do, and I strive to be that way myself."

And to great success so far this season. Moore is third on the Ducks with 71 tackles, including eight for a loss and two sacks. Add to that two forced fumbles, a pass broken up and one interception,



Moore has turned into a valuable defender against the run after beginning his career at strong safety.

against Arizona State last week, that was returned 78 yards for a touchdown and Moore seems to be personifying the Nike of mythology.

Moore, who was born on Elmendorf Air Force Base in Alaska, was a lightly recruited strong safety at Anchorage's Dimond High School when he got his tattoo. He was first contacted by Washington, his favorite team as a child, but the Huskies backed off after Moore tore ankle ligaments in the first game of his senior season.

Only the Ducks and Washington State continued their courtship, and Moore settled on Oregon, ironically the last school to begin recruiting him.

"That was the main reason I came, because I felt they believed in my abilities," Moore says.

Moore came to Eugene as a safety, but Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti quickly noticed the player's skills might be better suited for the linebacker position.

"It's been sort of a natural evolution with his talents and skills," Bellotti says. "The closer we get him to the line of scrimmage, the better he is. He's not the biggest linebacker there is, but he's a great tackler, a fierce competitor and obviously he showed last week with the interception that he still has some foot speed."

The interception in question is the 78-yard touchdown in the fourth quarter last Saturday.

Arizona State was facing third down when quarterback Steve Campbell dropped back to pass. Oregon was in a zone defense, and as Campbell began to roll right, the defenders adjusted. Drifting to his right, Moore found himself between two Sun Devil receivers when Campbell lofted a pass that Moore snared from the air.

That's when Moore displayed the athleticism that led to 1,100 rushing yards in his final two high school seasons.

"I saw a little crease and a lineman on my right coming up," Moore says. "I had nowhere else to go — I was on the sidelines so I was pretty much pinned — so I just took off running as fast as I could. I think I saw him reach for me, and he didn't grab me, and I saw another lineman coming from across the field, so I just started running as fast as I could and figured, hopefully I wouldn't get caught."

Seventy-eight yards of hoping later, Moore had his first career touchdown.

"I've been telling him all year that he was going to get one and go to the house," Oregon defensive coordinator Bob Foster says. "So that's him: Dietrich 'To the House' Moore."



Moore and Matt Smith have helped Oregon rebound from being the Pac-10's worst run defense in 1997.

It's that speed that sets Moore apart from the rest of the conference's linebackers. While, at 211 pounds, Moore is considerably lighter than the typical bruising linebacker, he makes up for it with speed and quickness.

"Those guys, those prototype 250-, 260-pound guys, a lot of the time they have speed, but it's not fast speed. They have speed for their size," Moore says. "I have speed for my size, which is faster than the guys I'm going against."

While his speed may be an obvious factor in his success, a more subtle attribute may be just as key.

In person, Moore comes across as an affable, soft-spoken gentleman who happens to play one of the world's most violent spectator sports.

"I'm kind of a quiet person at times, but football brings out the side of me people don't normally see," Moore says. "People who know me personally, I want them to think, 'That Dietrich Moore, he's a nice guy, but on the football field he's a reckless man.'"

"My mom always tells me, 'I don't know how you play that game sometimes,' and if you think about it, the pain and anguish we go through ... in the end, it's worth it. With the dividends you get, I think it's worth it."

No surprise from a man who values victory and success so much, he has a permanent reminder of it tattooed on his arm.

## Civil War no longer the rivalry it was

Much has been made in the past few weeks of the ferocious rivalry between Oregon and Washington. ESPN's Chris Fowler even said it's one of the top two or three college football rivalries in the country.

So what does that make the Civil War? Easy — an embarrassment if the Ducks lose.

Frankly, this rivalry means more to Oregon's players, coaches and fans because a loss would mean ridicule at the local level, the State level and the national level. With four consecutive Beaver pelts under their belt, the Civil War to the Ducks has become like getting into a pillow fight with your sister. It's lose-lose. If Oregon wins, it's considered the bullying big brother. If Oregon loses, God help us all.

### Opinion



Joel Hood

However, this season does offer some interesting match-ups for the Ducks. Tailback Ken Simonton, who has rushed for a team-high 920 yards and nine touchdowns this season, is one of the most productive Oregon State rushers this decade. Walk-on turned starting quarterback Jonathan Smith has thrown for more than 1,200 yards in only five appearances this season.

Still, Oregon State's offensive attack is more poo poo than potent. The Beavers still rank near the bottom of the Pacific-10 Conference in nearly every major statistical category on offense. And while Oregon State in one of the conference's best teams in turnover differential, its offense will, like clockwork, give up the ball in the most crucial of times. Smith was responsible for six turnovers in the Beavers' 20-19 loss to California at Parker Stadium two weeks ago.

It's been a season of close shaves for Oregon State, with losses in the closing minutes of each of their last three games. And it's a sign that things are looking up in Beaverville that that is no longer enough. In less than two full seasons at the helm, head coach Mike Riley has put together a tough, hard-nosed team that believes it can play with any team in the Pac-10. So far this season Oregon State has.

On the other side of the coin, Oregon doesn't have as much to play for in this

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game as in season's past. Win or lose, the Ducks will play in a second-tier bowl game. That's much different than the previous two seasons, when Oregon needed to win to warrant bowl consideration. For that reason alone, this game will be closer than in season's past — maybe too close for Duck fans.

Duck fans have been eerily silent in the week building to Saturday's game. There haven't been a lot of the Beaver jokes and put downs as in seasons past. Maybe it's silent confidence, or maybe Oregon knows it will have to prepare for the Civil War if it's the most important game of the season, which it would surely feel like if the Ducks are trailing in the fourth quarter.

That may happen down the road, but it won't happen this year. This is the final regular season game for Akili Smith, Jed Weaver, Damon Griffin, Stefan deVries, Josh Bidwell and 16 other Oregon seniors. This group is 3-0 against Oregon State in their careers and have taken all the drama and all the fun out of this rivalry.

Duck fans wouldn't have it any other way.

Joel Hood is the Sports Editor for the Emerald. He can be reached via e-mail at hood@gladstone.uoregon.edu.