

Mike Crisp Emerald

Sirmon shows Nevada the running skills that helped make him a prep quarterback.

## Peter Sirmon

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to linebackers coach to make room for Nick Aliotti's return.

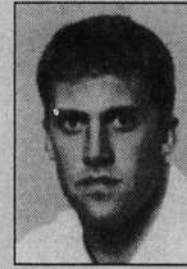
Sirmon has teamed with fellow starting linebackers Dietrich Moore and Matt Smith to anchor the defense and form one of the best linebacker units in at least the conference.

"They're awesome together," Foster said. "They're all three great 'backers. And we're gonna put 'em all three up for all-league because they're really the mainstay of the defense."

Sirmon, Moore and Smith all agreed that they have progressed as a unit to the point that any one of them knows where the other two will be and what they are thinking on a given play. That kind of comfort zone has allowed the trio to combine for 143 tackles, more than 29 percent of the Oregon defense's total.

"Right now, it's just smooth, and we just get a look from each other in certain situations and know what we're doing," Sirmon said. "I don't think there's one

## Peter Sirmon



Year: Senior

Position: Inside linebacker

Height/Weight: 6-2, 245

Hometown: Walla Walla, Wash.

**Notable:** Oregon's leading tackler and seventh in Pac-10 with 62 total, almost nine per game... paced conference in tackles as sophomore in 1997... missed most of last season with torn pectoralis muscle... played quarterback and safety as a prep.

standout that can do anything better than the other two. So in that regard, there's not someone [opposing offenses] can key on."

Both Moore and Smith, however, conceded that Sirmon has a lot to do with their success.

"The sense that he's all over the place makes everybody else feel comfortable," Moore said. "He makes the rest of us better just having him out there."

Smith, second on the team with 54 tackles, acknowledged Sirmon's all-around abilities.

"Pete's invaluable," Smith said. "He's everything you want in a 'backer — strong, fast, smart.

He knows the whole defense."

So maybe it's the bond that Sirmon has formed with his fellow linebackers that has him smiling these days.

But more than likely, it's probably Sirmon's newfound perspective that has him relishing his final days as Duck.

"There's more to life than just one aspect of it," Sirmon said. "Right now, it's football, and eventually it'll be something else."

Until then, expect Sirmon to continue making life anything but good for opposing offenses.

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