

Humbly, Oregon's big O-line takes charge

■ The Ducks' offensive line has allowed just eight sacks this year, giving it the best record in the Pac-10

By Adam Jude
Oregon Daily Emerald

They are the unknown. They are the behind-the-scenes actors. They are the hidden heroes.

They are five, big (very big) humble men who make up the core of Oregon's offense.

They are the offensive line —

and they have been one of the keys to the Ducks' 4-0 start in the Pacific-10 Conference.

"They're a very underrated group of players," said quarterback Joey Harrington, who reaps the benefits of the line's protection more than anyone. "Nobody ever seems to talk about the Oregon offensive line, but they've done an

exceptional job for an extended period of time."

At a combined weight of 1,520 pounds, the starting linemen — left tackle Lee Gundy, left guard Jim Adams, center Ryan Schmid, right guard Joey Forster and right tackle Corey Chambers — have allowed just eight quarterback sacks this season, by far the fewest in the Pacific-10 Conference. Stanford is second with 13 sacks allowed.

Thanks to them, Harrington can

stand in the pocket and pass with efficiency, and Maurice Morris can consistently rush for 118 yards a game.

"There's satisfaction knowing that every time Joe throws a touch-down it's because of us," said Gundy, a 6-foot-6 inch, 325-pound senior. "Nobody says it, but that's about how it goes."

Nobody needs to say a thing. These mammoth men know their roles and know they aren't going to get much recognition for it. The satisfaction they have comes with the success of the entire team.

"I just like watching 'Mo run,'" said the 300-pound Adams, a junior. "If he can break past that first line of defense and get into the secondary he has a fair chance of taking it all the way."

And when the "stars" do put points up on the board, they don't forget how they got there.

"I try to make it a point that when we have a good drive, to tell them that I appreciate what they did and let them know that I didn't forget about them," Harrington said. "We wouldn't have a successful team without a successful offensive line. They're doing a great job and I think they deserve a lot of credit."

One of the keys for the line, said head coach Mike Bellotti, is that most of the linemen are versatile and able to play several positions.

"I've been very pleased. Lee Gundy has lived up to his role as the senior leader of that group. He's played several positions which has given us great flexibility," Bellotti said. "Jim Adams is capable of playing better, but he also plays two positions and I'm proud of him for what he's done."

"Those two and Ryan Schmid have been the rocks in that group that have been the foundation of our performance."

No matter what is said, the line-

men know their roles and know they have to continue to do them every game.

"You always have to give your quarterback time; you always have to make the big holes," Gundy said. "We have to grind people down. That's our job. People start out with just two- or three-yard runs here and there, but by the end of the game, they're poppin' five or 10 yards; that's our job — to grind

“I try to make it a point that when we have good drive, to tell them that I appreciate what they did and let them know that I didn't forget about them.”

Joey Harrington
Oregon quarterback

people down and give Joe time."

And there's just something special about this offensive group. Gundy says they are a "tight" group of guys that like to hang out together off the field as well.

"It's kind of magical for me because a lot of us came here together," Adams said. "We came here the same time as Joe and [tight end Justin] Peelle, and maturing with these guys, and then seeing them become these star players and watching them succeed, that's the biggest gratification I get."

They even like to joke around during post-practice conferences.

"I think Lee Gundy is just a terrible, terrible player," Harrington says in a loud, hysterical tone.

"Thanks Joe," Gundy replies with laughter, "I'll get you later."

While Gundy may get his revenge, Joe knows that Gundy and the rest of the line won't let anyone else get him.

LOUIE'S VILLAGE
Authentic Chinese Cuisine
RESTAURANT & LOUNGE
947 Franklin Blvd.
343-4480

All Ways Travel
• Last Day of Sale!!! •
London - \$269.00*
Paris - \$376.00*
Frankfurt - \$350.00*
Amsterdam - \$373.00*
*tax not included, restrictions may apply. Subject to change without notice.
Serving UO since 1990!!!
E-mail: awt@luv2travel.com
1200 High St.
338-4199
Student Travel Experts

twice as nice

**2 for 1
or
50% off**

an enrollment fee on a Keep Fit Club of Enrollment membership. Pay a one time processing fee and first and last months' EFT monthly dues and you're in! Offer expires 11/30/00

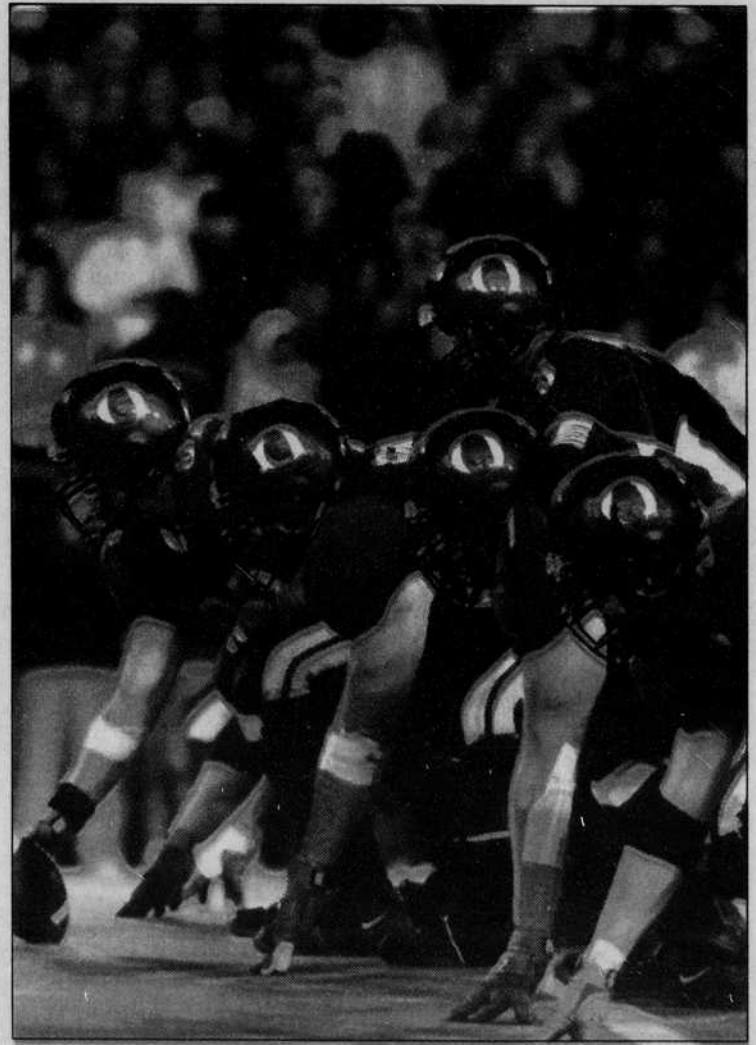
Downtown Eugene: 686-4653
Gateway Sport: 741-2444
Santa Clara: 461-7834

**9 Portland are locations, 2 Vancouver WA locations,
Also in Salem and Medford.**

429 LOCATIONS WORLDWIDE
Call now
1.800.204.2400

24 HOUR FITNESS
www.24HourFitness.com

No other discounts can be used with this offer. Must be at least 18 years old, or 12 with parent. No cash substitutions. Incentives may be offered for enrolling in other memberships. Babysitting available for a nominal fee. Facilities and amenities may vary per location. Not all clubs open 24 hours every day. Promotion available at participating 24 Hour Fitness locations only. Offer does not apply to Sporting Clubs by 24 Hour Fitness. See club for complete details.



Dan Brunell Emerald

The offensive line knows it must hold up for Oregon's offense to run smoothly.