



Junior Zack Freiter (54), whose Oregon career has been marred by injuries, says he is 100 percent healthy and feels he can do what is needed to fill the hole injured Jason Nikolao left on the defensive line. Erin Swanson-Davies Emerald

'Freit' train rolls into Ducks' starting lineup

Junior Zack Freiter hopes to ease the loss of Jason Nikolao, who will miss at least two more games

By Scott Pesznecker
Oregon Daily Emerald

When defensive end Jason Nikolao was felled by a knee injury in Arizona State's first drive last Saturday, many observers may not have recognized the big Duck who took his place on the line.

For those who may have forgotten, his name is Zack Freiter. And yes, he will be starting in Nikolao's place Saturday when the "D" lines up against Washington State's airborne offense.

"I know the defense really well; I played hard; I practiced hard; I think I can get in there and get it done," Freiter said after practice Tuesday. "Hopefully I can just come out here and do my best, work as hard as I can during the week, [and] go out there and compete and have fun."

This season, Freiter has come off the sideline in five games to contribute 13 tackles, six of which were unassisted. He forced a fumble against Arizona and has recorded two sacks for a loss of 15 yards.

"I expect him to continue the level of play that he's been at this season. He's a strong, physical presence in there," defensive line coach Steve Greatwood said. "The biggest thing that's held him back from playing more is the fact that he missed all of training camp, so I've been trying to bring him along slowly. Well, that issue has been forced now, so he's got to step up and play a major role and a major amount of snaps."

The 6-foot-3, 275-pound junior came to Ore-
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Time for college football to create 'December Madness'



THE HOME STRETCH

ROBBIE MCCALLUM

Correct me if I'm wrong, but isn't the theory behind competitive sports that the top teams are tested until a true winner remains?

In every other sport but college football, the top teams are separated from the rest of the teams, pitted against each other in a tournament arrangement, and the winner rises to the top.

But in college football, only two teams face off for the national championship. The

rest of the contenders in the nation go to other bowl games, where they can finish the season with a win.

To me, this seems kind of silly.

A national college football tournament would decide the national championship by pitting the top teams in the country against each other in a five week frenzy. Only the real champion would survive the test. And the championship would be absolute — no controversy, no question about rankings or the Bowl Championship Series.

In the current situation, college football teams complete their regular season, sit for three to four weeks, then possibly play a bowl game that may or may not mean anything toward a national championship.

The nation's champion used to be decided by whoever was ranked first in the Associated Press polls. The BCS — a combina-

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Blocking has been Oregon's biggest obstacle this season

■ As the team continues to cling to some hope, Oregon's two-setter offense has proven its worth

By Adam Jude
Oregon Daily Emerald

In Oregon's 4-2 Flex offensive system, setters Sydney Chute and Julie Gerlach have capitalized on their need to be more aggressive for the volleyball team.

This season, the duo has combined for 236 kills, compared to just 75 during all of last season.

Head coach Carl Ferreira's scheme requires the setters to open their options and understand opponents' positioning.

"Their knowledge of the game

has improved tremendously," Ferreira said. "They're very intelligent and they know how to read a defense, which is something neither of them were doing at the beginning of the season."

According to Chute, watching film and communication on the floor has helped the setters become more of an offensive threat.

With another six Pacific-10 Conference matches remaining on the schedule, Gerlach and Chute have already combined for 651 total attacks. Last season, they tallied a total of just 201 attacks.

"Julie and I have put in the extra effort," said Chute, who is also averaging 6.27 assists per game.

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