



Erin Swanson-Davies Emerald

Sophomore Keenan Howry is the Ducks' leading receiver and has come up with several big-time catches in his two-year Oregon career, including the game-winning grab against Minnesota in the 1999 Sun Bowl.

**Keenan Howry**



**Year:** Sophomore  
**Position:** Receiver  
**Hometown:** Los Angeles

**In Brief:** Despite being slightly undersized for a receiver at 5-foot-10, Keenan Howry has caught 33 passes for 569 yards this season, good for first place on the Oregon team. His heroics are as recent as last Saturday, when he grabbed two touchdown passes to keep Oregon close to Arizona State. Howry made an immediate impact when he started for the Ducks as a freshman, capping his first season by catching the game-winning pass from quarterback Joey Harrington to beat the Minnesota Golden Gophers in the 1999 Sun Bowl. Howry should be recovered from a hip injury when he faces Washington State Saturday.

# Beyond his years

■ Oregon's sophomore receiver steps into a larger role and helps the Ducks put points on the board

By Scott Pesznecker  
 Oregon Daily Emerald

Keenan Howry was hurting when he entered the Arizona State game at the start of the second quarter on Saturday.

Even walking onto the field took a solid effort from the sophomore receiver, who hurt his hip when he took a knee from an Arizona player on a blocking assignment the weekend before.

The morning after the Ducks beat the Wildcats, the pain surging through Howry's hip was enough to keep him in bed. He didn't practice at all that week. Even walking was an aching chore.

So, before the Arizona State game, the coaching staff told Howry they wanted to rest him as much as possible. But the minute the Sun Devils jumped to a 21-7 lead with six minutes, 56 seconds left in the second quarter, Howry's brief rest ended.

The 5-foot-10 receiver took the field and it didn't take long for his presence to be felt.

"My first touchdown came in the second quarter. It was a really basic play, and they gave us a little funny look," Howry recalls, sitting in a chair in the Len Casanova Center after Tuesday's practice. "I ran the flag and kept the flag really skinny because the safety came down and the corner was really wide.

"Joey [Harrington] made a great throw and hit me right on stride, right on the end zone."

Howry's touchdown sparked an Oregon surge that left the game tied 21-21 at halftime. Howry pulled down another touchdown catch later in the third quarter, ty-

ing the game at 28 apiece and keeping the Ducks within striking distance.

Another Oregon win, 56-55 in double overtime, and another clutch performance on the books by the Ducks' young receiver.

"With the loss of Tony [Hartley], we knew that we wouldn't have any true receivers coming back except for myself and Marshaun [Tucker]," Howry said. "So we've had a lot of playing time. We've stepped up our roles in the sense that we've pretty much been the go-to guys this whole year."

Harrington, who entered the Ducks' starting lineup at quarterback midway through last season as a sophomore, knows how it feels to cope with high expectations at a young age.

Harrington said that Howry has elevated his performance to match his role without difficulty.

"Keenan plays beyond his years — he's shown that from the second he came in here," Harrington said. "He's done a tremendous job of coming in and learning a brand-new system. He came in early and was studying with the coaches and studying with the players and he was ready to play. He came in and that's what he's done, and he's become a very solid receiver for us."

Born Keenan Rashaun Howry on June 17, 1981, in Los Angeles, the Los Alamitos High School phenom joined the Ducks in 1999 after accumulating 73 receptions for 1,320 yards and two touchdowns his senior year.

He failed to snag a catch in his Oregon debut against Michigan State, but by the year's end, he'd tied the team lead in touchdown catches and finished third in receptions.

This season is shaping up to be even better for the young receiver. In eight games, he's caught 33 passes for 569 yards and four touchdowns. He's also become the

Ducks' top punt returner, averaging 6.7 yards per return.

"He's got marginal size, but honestly, he makes up for that with his ability to go get the ball," head coach Mike Bellotti said. "Hopefully he'll put on five or 10 pounds in the next couple years and provide a little bit more padding for that body of his. He's become a great punt returner, and I think he'll get better in all aspects as he gets bigger, faster and stronger."

How's this for playing beyond his years: Oregon gets possession of the football in the 1999 Sun Bowl, down by three points with time winding down.

The defining moment of the drive was a fourth-and-11 pass play from the Gophers' 44-yard line, when Harrington connected with Hartley, the Ducks' senior receiver, for the game-saving first down with three minutes left.

It was the last great catch for one of Oregon's most clutch players.

Fittingly, the next great catch was the game winner — a 10-yard pass with 1:32 remaining — and it fell in the hands of Howry, who could, by his senior year, very well be the Ducks' next Tony Hartley.

"He's matching Tony's performance at this point very well," Bellotti said. "As a freshman, they were very close, and as sophomores, he may have already exceeded Tony in that regard. Tony's legacy was the clutch catches he made and the consistency over the course of his career, and certainly with Keenan, that is still to be answered, but I'm sure he'll do those things."

For now, Howry complements a passing offense which is balanced by Tucker, a senior. Tucker has caught 31 passes for 518 yards and is a close second to Howry on the team in receiving yards per game.

"So far this season, we've caught almost everything," Howry said.

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