

Sports Editor:
Adam Jude
adamjude@dailyemerald.com

Best Bet
NBA playoffs
Minnesota @ Dallas
6:30 p.m., TNT



Wednesday, April 24, 2002

Energetic Clayton springs into 'whatever' role

Free safety Stephen Clayton will backup Keith Lewis in the fall, but his presence will be felt on special teams

By Adam Jude
Oregon Daily Emerald

A broken bone couldn't keep Stephen Clayton from playing in the biggest game of his life. In fact, the special teams specialist, playing with a cast around his hand, recorded the game's first tackle in Oregon's Fiesta Bowl victory over Colorado.

But he doesn't recall much after that. "I got smacked — I got smacked bad," said Clayton, the Ducks' backup safety who suffered a concussion in the fourth quarter of the New Year's Day bowl game. "That's the hardest I've been hit since I've been here.

"I have to watch film to remember what happened in that game."

This spring, though, nobody has to watch film to recognize what Clayton is bringing to the field as Keith Lewis' backup at free safety. The 5-foot-11, 190-pound Clayton led the team with six tackles in Friday's scrimmage and also blocked a field goal attempt.

"I love Stephen Clayton," Lewis said. "I really think that he's playing better than me right now. Bottom line. I think he deserves a shot at running with the first group. We're close as a secondary, and I can say that like he's my brother.

"I really appreciate that he's pushing me and trying to get me right, but at the same time I need to push him and get him right."

Clayton, an energetic sophomore from Beaverton's Westview High School, said he's trying to get more familiar with the system this spring, after

missing most of last spring with his first concussion.

"I'm just trying to have fun and learn the basic stuff," said Clayton, who had seven tackles in eight games last season. "Obviously I'm backing up Keith. I'm just trying to solidify my spot as the No. 2 and be ready if I'm needed."

Come football season, though, expect to see more of the same from No. 7 on kickoffs.

"I want to be on a couple more special teams if I can," Clayton said. "I talked to special teams coach (Robin) Ross about that. I want to do whatever I can."

Bellotti 'excited' for draftees

Head coach Mike Bellotti hasn't had a chance to talk with his former quarterback Joey Harrington about Harrington's selection as the No. 3 pick to the Detroit Lions in the NFL Draft on Saturday. Bellotti has, however, met with four of the six Ducks drafted over the weekend.

"I've seen four of the six kids in person, they've come to my office and we've talked and hugged, and I'm obviously very excited for them," Bellotti said Tuesday. "I'm certainly excited to talk to Joey when he gets back. But I know there's probably a thousand other people that are on that list right now."

QB update

In the battle for the starting quarterback spot, junior Jason Fife and redshirt



Thomas Patterson Emerald

Backup free safety Stephen Clayton (7) led the team with six tackles and a blocked field goal in Friday's scrimmage.

Double header double vision

The Ducks host Portland State in a doubleheader after splitting two with the Vikings on Monday

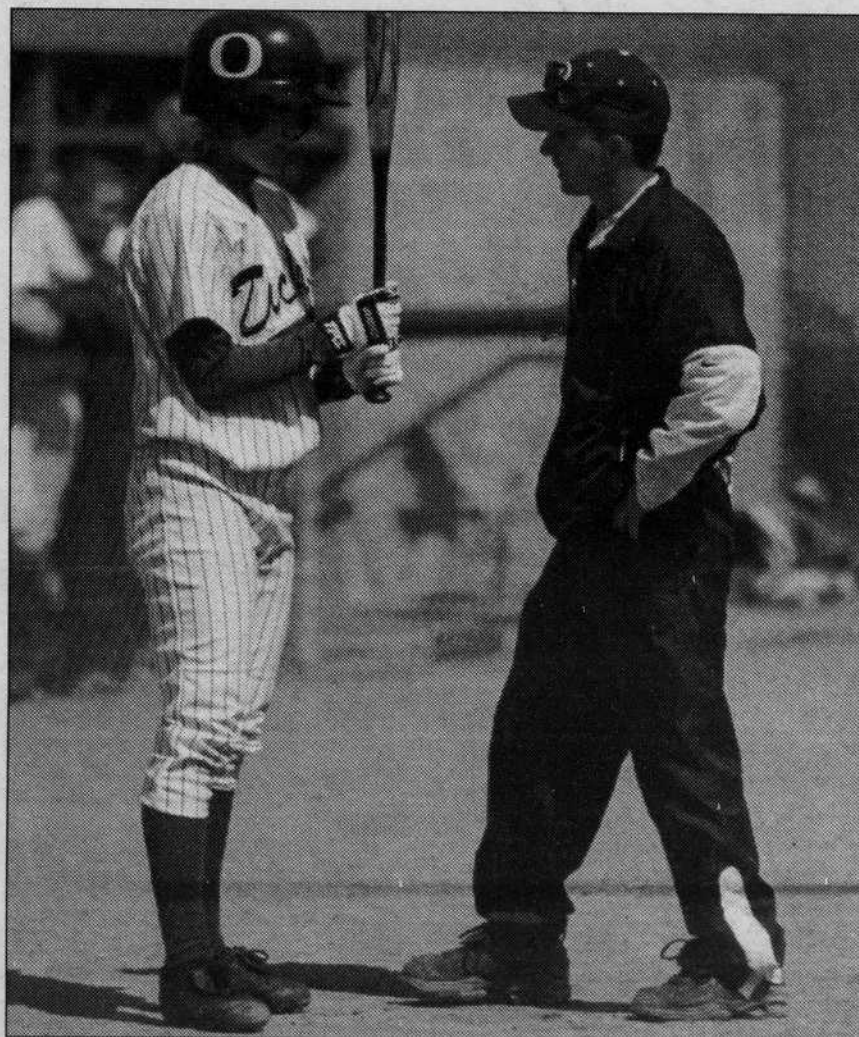
By Chris Cabot
Oregon Daily Emerald

With a day between doubleheaders against Portland State, the Oregon softball team took a much needed day off Tuesday.

After five games on the road in five days — Washington on Friday, two against UCLA during the weekend, and two at Portland State on Monday — the Ducks (19-22 overall, 0-12 Pacific-10 Conference) will host the Vikings (17-24, 6-8 Western Athletic Conference) in a doubleheader beginning 2 p.m. today at Howe Field.

Monday's doubleheader, which was rescheduled due to an April 10 rain-out, was split by the two teams. Oregon won the first game 6-0, and the Vikings fought back with a shutout of their own in the second, 2-0. The win in the first game broke Oregon's 12-game losing streak that began March 29 against Oregon State. All 12 losses came at the hands of nationally ranked Pac-10 opponents.

Oregon head coach Brent Rincon said that even though he expected the games against Portland State to be just as competitive as any of the games the team has played, he has been looking forward to playing today's games to "get back to the



Jonathan House Emerald

Oregon head coach Brent Rincon, talking to shortstop Lynsey Haij, hopes his team can come away with two wins today against Portland State in their second doubleheader in three days.

Curry joins elite Oregon list in WNBA

Edniesha Curry welcomes a chance to play with the Charlotte Sting after spending one year with the Ducks

By Hank Hager
Oregon Daily Emerald

For one season, Edniesha Curry and former Oregon star Jenny Mowe shared the same bench.

Although Curry never stepped on the floor for the Ducks in an official game two seasons ago, the pair was part of a squad that earned Oregon its eighth straight NCAA Tournament appearance.

Now, chances are the two will bump into each other on a WNBA floor. But it most likely won't be in the same uniform.

Asked what the two will say to



CURRY

ON TAP

Who:
Oregon softball vs. Portland State
What:
Doubleheader
Where:
Howe Field
When:
2 p.m.

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