



Adam Amato Photo Editor

Redshirt senior Kevin Mitchell plans to try out for the NFL next year. "We'll just play it by ear and go from there," he said.

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said. "We didn't know how it would work out and then it just ended up that this was the place I was going to be."

"She's a big football fan. Her dad's a football coach at one of the junior colleges."

While all signs point to football being a part of their marriage, don't suggest that little ones running around with footballs are in the future.

Mitchell would much rather talk about football.

"Don't even mention that 'kid' word yet," he said.

The future that Mitchell is willing to talk about involves graduation after the fall 2004 term and football practice.

"We don't know where we're going to go or end up yet," Mitchell said. "Basically what it's going to come down to is I'm going to work out and try out for the scouts. If something happens, then we'll just play it by ear and go from

KEVIN MITCHELL

Before Oregon: Mitchell starred at Mater Dei High School in Orange, Calif., racking up 211 tackles and 18 sacks with the program. He is considered one of the best players to come out of Mater Dei.

Oregon: Collected 13 sacks and 255 total tackles in his first three seasons with Oregon. Played in 12 of the Ducks' 13 games last season.



Mitchell

there depending on how I do.

"If nothing, I'll just go back home and go back to school and get my master's — teach and coach — or I might go into law enforcement."

The redshirt senior is content for now, and there are eight games and four terms to worry about before the future is knocking at his door.

"I don't know what the future holds," Mitchell said. "I don't know if I'll ever play again. The only thing I can do is just work my hardest, give my best effort and the rest of it's up to the people in the front offices."

"It's out of my hands, so until then I'm just going to cherish everything. If my last snap comes, so be it — time to move on."

Mitchell needs 41 more tackles to enter Oregon's career top 10, but it's not that important to him.

"I'd give up all the tackles just to win football games," Mitchell said.

With the way Oregon is playing this year, it looks like Mitchell won't have to choose.

Contact the senior sports reporter at mindirice@dailyemerald.com.

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OK, so Stanford has played BYU and San Jose State. But you can't expect them to stick around much longer with an inexperienced quarterback, Trent Edwards, under center.

For the Ducks, a perfect season is a possibility that no one really wants to mention, but hey, why not? Oregon has cornered the market on fan noise, so Washington State, California, Stanford and Oregon State could have problems this season when each team visits Autzen Stadium.

The Ducks have to put up with taller, stronger Cougar receivers Saturday. That should be the key to a close game for either side.

The other three programs, especially Cal and Stanford, have shown visions of spectacular play this year, but haven't dominated teams as in years past. Cal has yet to show the same depth that allowed them to come back from the Pac-10 cellar last season, and Stanford is young and inexperienced.

Also, aside from Steven Jackson and James Newson, the Beavers have struggled offensively.

Here's where the interesting part comes. The Ducks have to go on the road for several tough games. Of course, the Ducks travel to UCLA for the third season in a row, and play at Washington on Nov. 1. They've also got an Oct. 3 date with Utah and a trip a week later to Arizona State.

That's where the ability to control their destiny comes into play. The Pac-10 has always maintained parity and, as pointed out before, that characteristic means more now than any season before.

The fact that the conference has four teams ranked this week is an enigma. In other words, it's probably not going to be something that happens very often this year. Therefore, if the Ducks can truck through the regular season at Autzen and defeat Utah on the road, they can set themselves up with big games against Washington and UCLA, and possibly even Arizona State — if the Sun Dev-

ils can bounce back from a 21-2 shellacking by Iowa last week.

The Huskies always get up for Oregon, whether either team is 1-10 or 10-1. UCLA, meanwhile, always seems to give the Ducks fits in Los Angeles, even though it seems the largest contingent of Oregon fans show up at the Rose Bowl.

Oregon has defeated the Bruins by a combined two points the last two games, 21-20 in 2001 and 31-30 last season.

The Ducks are expected to be on a high after defeating Michigan last week as most teams do after beating a top-five squad. The win gave them a sense of confidence lacking since the 2001 season.

More importantly, the win gives the Ducks an even bigger opportunity. That is, an open template to make the 2003 season their own. It's going to be interesting to see what they make of it.

Contact the sports editor at hankhager@dailyemerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.



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