

Mark McCambridge Photographer

Ducks like Justin Phinisee (31) who hail from outside of Oregon are taught the importance of Civil War tradition by locals and older members of the team.

RIVALRY

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go to a game, you realize how hostile and emotional it really is."

Matson also has an added incentive to avenge last year's loss to Oregon State. Matson's best friend and former Kamiak High School teammate Pat Loney is a tight end for the Beavers.

"It makes it a special rivalry," Matson said. "You never want to lose two in a row, especially when you have to hear about it for a year."

Mitchell may not be playing against a Mater Dei High School teammate Saturday, but his desire to win is still there. The Orange, Calif., native said once players move to Eugene, the game's importance grows on them. The true importance of the contest, however, isn't realized until the Monday practice of Civil War week when elder players share their thoughts.

"You pick it up that Monday," the

senior linebacker said. "Once you finish the game before, Monday practice (is when) you pick it up real fast. You realize what's going on, you start asking questions and you realize what this game is all about and what it means to the people here. You start buying into it and realizing how important it is to you as well because you end up living here for a while."

Williams, a Pittsburg, Calif., native and graduate of De La Salle High School, said that while it's fun to play against Stanford and California, his passion burns brightest during the Civil War. The sophomore wide receiver hopes one day to be able to explain the importance of the game to incoming freshmen.

"Hopefully I can continue my career here," Williams said. "And as the younger guys come in, just teach them to go out there and play with a lot of heart."

Contact the sports reporter at jonroetman@dailyemerald.com.



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