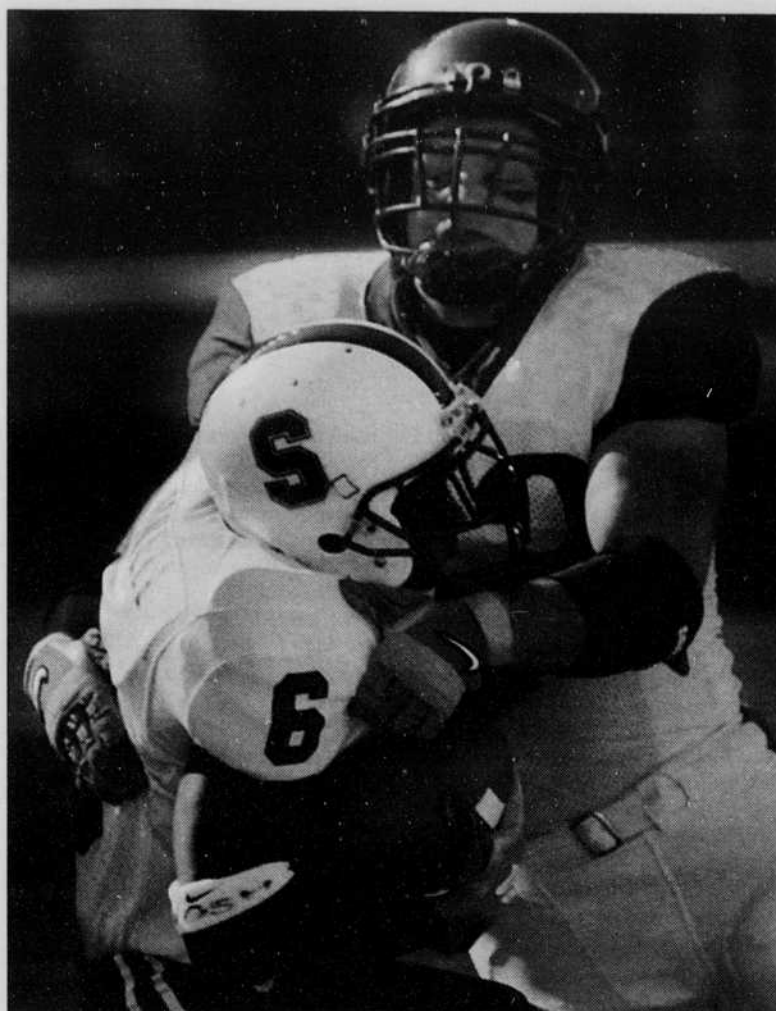
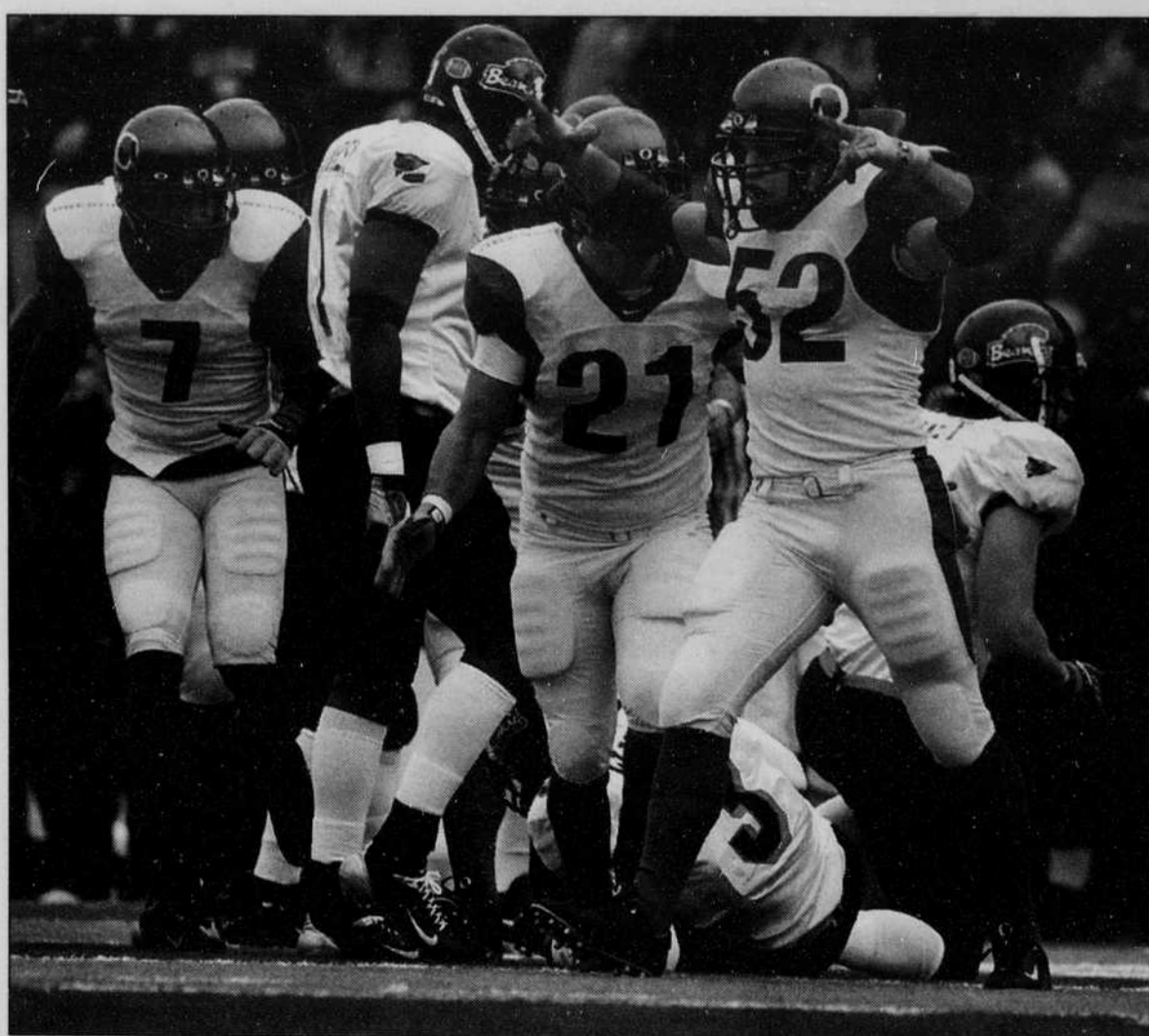




Adam Amato Photo Editor

Redshirt junior Jerry Matson played football for the first time as a freshman at Kamiak High School in Mukilteo, Wash. This season, he is third on the Oregon defense with 72 tackles. Matson also has 12.5 tackles for loss, one sack and one fumble recovery.



Adam Amato Photo Editor

Linebacker Jerry Matson (52) grabbed his first college interception against UCLA, returning it 22 yards for a touchdown.

SINKER

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The 21-year-old took his time deciding which program he wanted to go into after high school. He opted to walk on at Oregon because the program meshed with his ideals.

"There were small schools I could go to, but I looked at them, across the board, and the linebackers," Matson said. "If you're going to roll the dice and gamble, you should gamble with the best odds. I looked at Kevin Mitchell and Eric Cheney and (former Ducks) Ty Tomlin and Wesly Mallard. They're all the smaller guys that played hard and played

"He brings a lot to the table. He seems like a guy who's nervous, but he's really not. That's just the way he is before a game. His motor keeps running all the time."

Kevin Mitchell
Oregon linebacker

fast. I was like, 'I have a better chance at doing that than doing what they're trying to do down at UCLA or USC or UW or anything like that.'"

The 6-foot-1 redshirt junior said he enjoys being "the hunter and not the hunted" as a linebacker. As a link between the secondary and the defensive line, Matson enjoys his role in the game and comes out ready to go hard constantly.

"Game day, he's pretty fired up," Siegel said. "He's not really very talkative. He keeps it all in and lets it build, and he really isn't the same guy on game day as he is any other day. By the time kickoff comes, he's just a savage."

The intensity Matson brings to the game has been recognized by teammates since his high school days. At Oregon, his passion is

appreciated and helps motivate teammates on game day.

"He brings a lot to the table," Mitchell said. "He seems like a guy who's nervous, but he's really not. That's just the way he is before a game. His motor keeps running all the time."

Matson's always on the go. Whether it's to practice, class or a presentation for one of his business courses, he's on the go and focused on what he needs to do.

He decided on his business major after he took a couple classes — including finance — and enjoyed them.

"I just always pictured myself as a business guy," Matson said. "I just took an entrepreneurship class. I'm

really interested in starting my own business, but I'd like to get some real-world experience first. Eventually, if I have a good enough idea, I'd like to be my own manager."

When Matson's not on the football field or hitting the books, he's likely outdoors. The Alaskan upbringing has stuck with him in the way of fishing and rafting. Before they moved, his dad was a fisherman in Alaska.

"Seattle had a lot of opportunities for me, and one of them was football," Matson said. "My mom said 'I don't want you playing football.' I said 'Mom, I don't get hit. I make hits.' 'I like that aspect.'"

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