

ANSWERS

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By Hank Hager
Sports Editor

A few holes and a few questions about Oregon's offense and defense sprang up at the outset of spring practices.

Now, take a peak after the Ducks finished their NCAA-mandated 15 workouts. Little, if anything, has changed.

Positions were slotted and filled

"I think people don't give us enough credit. ... They see the players that left but they don't see the players behind those guys who were watching great players like Keith Lewis and Steven Moore."

Marley Tucker
Oregon senior safety

while newcomers and walk-ons showed what they had. Very few who were slowed slightly — or completely — during the 2003 season returned during the spring.

Some could call the practices a wash. Others would call them useful.

Either way, very little foundation was laid during the spring.

"It's just a springboard to the summer," quarterback Kellen Clemens said. "We improved, but there's still a lot of things we need to get better at. The spring game and the spring practices only bring that to the forefront."

That's an expected answer from one of the offense's eight returning starters. Clemens widened the gap between his and the team's backups — Dennis Dixon, Johnny DuRocher and Brady Leaf — even though each of the three improved as the spring wore on.

DuRocher looks to be in the lead for the No. 2 spot, but Dixon, if he doesn't redshirt, could push him once he becomes more familiar with the offense.

"They made progress," Clemens said. "They got better consistently with each practice."

SPORTS BRIEF

Garnett named NBA MVP

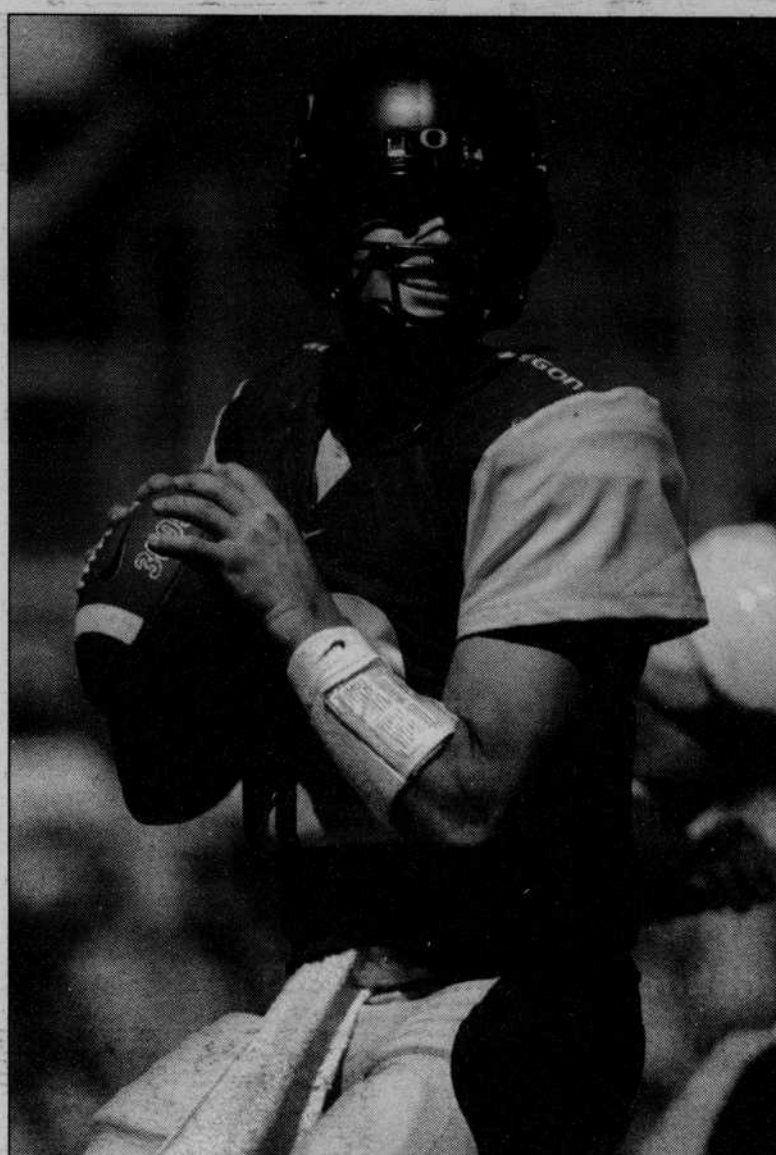
MINNEAPOLIS — It was a little more than seven months ago that Minnesota Timberwolves forward Kevin Garnett sat behind a table in the Target Center Skyway concourse, wearing a black suit and grinning from ear to ear between his diamond-studded earrings while announcing his new \$100 million contract extension.

Monday, Garnett sat in the same concourse, this time in a beige suit and in a pair of Adidas sneakers while accepting the NBA's Most Valuable Player trophy.

"I have to thank my teammates," Garnett said in front of teammates and close friends. "Although it's an individual award, it wouldn't be anything without those knuckleheads. It's a team game, and I've always kept that perspective."

Garnett, who last season finished second in MVP voting to San Antonio's Tim Duncan, won in a landslide. He picked up 120 of a possible 123 first-place votes from sportswriters and broadcasters in the United States and Canada. Duncan finished a distant second, and Indiana's Jermaine O'Neal was third.

"He's been such a consistent player



Erik R. Bishoff Photographer

Johnny DuRocher received some of his snaps during the spring with the No. 1 offense and looks primed to back up Kellen Clemens once the 2004 season starts.

Oregon's expected lineup of offensive players did nothing to change the team's 2004 outlook. Tight end Tim Day and wide receiver Demetrius Williams both missed parts of the spring, but neither seems to have lost any grip on their starting spots.

The offensive line was bruised up for most of the workouts, but the one hole — left by center Dan Weaver, now working out with the Denver Broncos — was filled by Enoke Lucas.

Terrence Whitehead was held out of contact drills because of injury, but he shouldn't be pushed out of his No. 1 spot at running back. And his immediate backup, Kenny Washington, also missed the spring but should still be the No. 2 come September.

Two other youngsters, fullback Dante Rosario and wide receiver Garren Strong, made strong

this season," ESPN analyst Greg Anthony said. "He plays on both ends of the court. That's the one thing I respect most about him: He doesn't take a night off. He deserves so much credit for that because not a lot of players do that."

Garnett, scheduled to receive a bonus for winning the award, averaged a career high in points (24.2) and rebounds (13.9). He finished with 1,987 points and 1,139 rebounds, becoming just the fifth player in league history to lead the league in both categories. He had 71 double-doubles, which includes eight games of at least 20 rebounds.

For the first time in his career, Garnett didn't have to shoulder the load. The additions of Sam Cassell and Latrell Sprewell in the offseason made things easier. Garnett no longer faces double- and triple-teams every time he touches the ball in the post, and he doesn't have to take every big shot when the game is on the line.

The trio earned a nickname, "The Big Three," halfway through a season in which the Wolves won their first Midwest Division title and earned home-court advantage throughout the Western Conference playoffs.

— Mike Wells
Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

arguments to either keep or claim a starting spot.

"We need more playmakers on both sides of the ball," Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said. "We'll get them eventually. We'll get some guys back healthy."

Those playmakers could come in the

2004 OREGON SCHEDULE

September

11	Indiana	12:30 p.m.
18	@ Oklahoma	TBA
25	Idaho	12:30 p.m.

October

2	Arizona State	12:30 p.m.
9	@ Washington St.	2 p.m.
16	Arizona	12:30 p.m.
23	@ Stanford	2 p.m.
30	Washington	12:30 p.m.

November

6	@ California	12:30 p.m.
13	UCLA	12:30 p.m.
20	@ Oregon St.	1 p.m.

EXPECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

WR	1	Garren Strong
LT	72	Adam Snyder
LG	74	Nick Steitz
C	55	Enoka Lucas
RG	59	Ian Reynoso
RT	79	Robin Knebel
TE	85	Tim Day
QB	11	Kellen Clemens
FB	44	Dante Rosario
TB	24	Terrence Whitehead
WR	6	Demetrius Williams

DEFENSE

LE	95	Darius Sanders
LT	96	Haloti Ngata
RT	99	Robby Valenzuela

RE	92	Devan Long
LB	18	Ramone Reed
LB	52	Jerry Matson
LB	84	Anthony Trucks
CB	5	Aaron Gipson
ROV	23	Marley Tucker
FS	28	J.D. Nelson
CB	31	Justin Phinisee

SPECIALISTS

PK	25	Jared Siegel
P	36	Paul Martinez
LS	48	Ryan Loftin
KR	20	Kenny Washington
	9	Ryan Gilliam
PR	31	Justin Phinisee

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