

Kicking the cliché

Siegel makes the best of baggage that comes with being a place kicker

BY CLAYTON JONES
SPORTS EDITOR

Jared Siegel has been accustomed to the jokes and pranks that come with being a kicker.

But he isn't afraid to get them back. "One thing that teammates have to recognize quickly is that I have far more time than they do," Siegel said. "Both to plan and to execute."

Nick Steitz learned the hard way. Steitz had taken Siegel's helmet and covered it with so much athletic tape that it wasn't even recognizable.

Siegel planned his revenge. "I didn't want to be too blatant," Siegel said. "I would grab his helmet and over inflate it so that the first two minutes of practice, before he had a chance to fix it, it would be annoying and uncomfortable."

"I had a couple days of silent retaliation and felt he had served his penance."

Siegel also told of a time "someone" pranked punter Paul Martinez.

"I don't know who is responsible for it, but Paul Martinez ended up with eye black on the inside of his helmet, which is black (so he didn't notice)," Siegel said with a smile. "It's like the old kaleidoscope trick and the ring around the eye."

Martinez ended up with eye black on his face and everyone had a laugh.

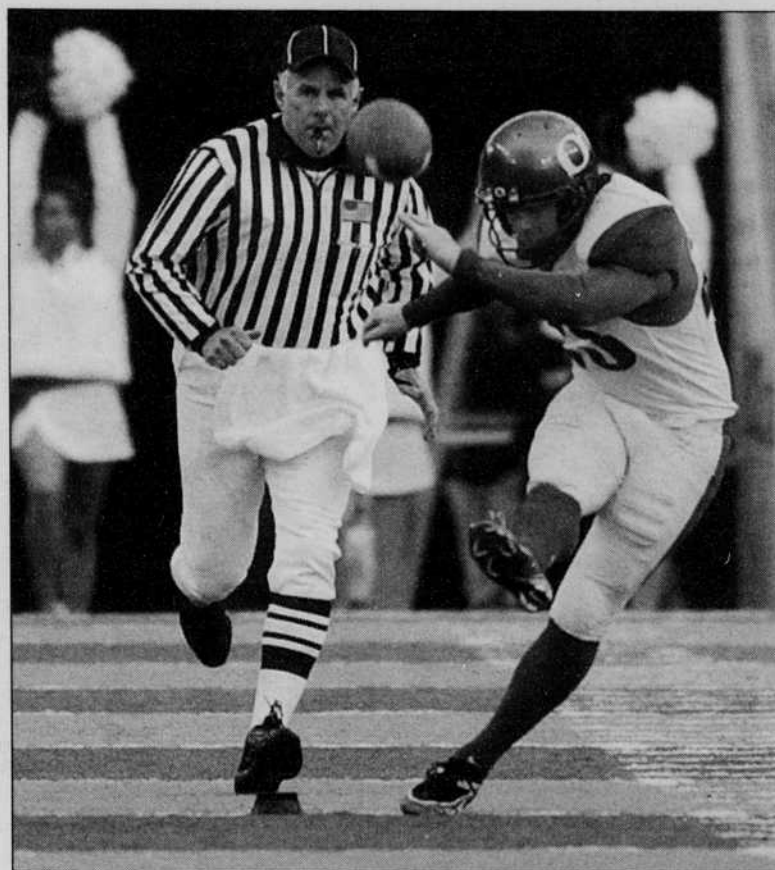
This contradicts the type of player Siegel is when he is on the field. The Sacramento native is an intense and highly competitive athlete. He is an All-Pac-10 performer who holds most of the kicking records at Oregon, including field goals, and is also the all-time leading scorer in Oregon football history.

"He's a great leader and is always the first one out at practice," punter David Dittman said. "He pushes you and always wants to see the max from you."

Siegel also expects that from himself.

Realizing his calling

In Siegel's youth, he participated in an assortment of sports, but when



ERIK R. BISHOFF | PHOTOGRAPHER

Off the field, Oregon kicker Jared Siegel graduated in three and a half years. He is working on his MBA and is expected to finish in the fall of 2005.

high school came about Siegel had to make some decisions.

"Eventually when you get older, you start playing fewer sports, so I narrowed it down," Siegel said.

Though he was playing football up until high school, he had never tried kicking.

"I kind of stumbled into it," Siegel said. "A week before our first game my freshman year my coach asked who could kick. Playing soccer I always had a strong leg so me and about 20 guys volunteered to kick."

The players went to try out after practice, Siegel said, but he still wasn't sure exactly how to do it.

"I imitated what I had seen on television," Siegel said. "I figured I should probably take steps and look official. Then I just cut it loose."

Siegel made the kick and said everything just took off from there.

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Kicker Jared Siegel is the program's all-time leading scorer with 309 points to date.

In my opinion

Cal's strength on both sides of the ball may be too much for Ducks

Can Oregon beat Cal?

That has been the question burning in my mind since they beat Washington last Saturday.

Anybody in his or her right mind has a yes or no answer to this question, but for me it's different.

The two halves of my brain are duking it out, trying to decide if Oregon can actually pull this off or if it's going to get steamrolled by the Golden Bears.

One half (my objective, journalistic, look-at-all-the-facts side) says no, Oregon can't beat Cal. The two teams aren't in the same league.

Oregon has lost to Indiana, but it was the first weekend of the season.

The Ducks also lost to Arizona State at home 28-13. The same Arizona State team was embarrassed by Cal 27-0 last week.

Cal has been dominant and, as everybody knows, it was one play away from beating top-ranked Southern California. If this game was played in Berkeley, Calif., it might have had a



CLAYTON JONES
SEVENTH INNING STRETCH

different result.

Cal is fifth in the country in scoring offense (39.0 points per game).

It is fourth in scoring defense (12.3 points per game). It leads the Pacific-10 Conference in both categories.

That doesn't bode well for Oregon.

Cal is beating teams by 28 points per game. The team hasn't allowed a point in its last two games.

Oregon's offense has the potential to be great, but it hasn't been consistent. Individually, Cal also stands out.

The Golden Bears have the fourth-best rusher in the nation, running back J.J. Arrington (158.0 yards per game).

Cal also has the sixth-most efficient passer in the nation in former Oregonian (went to school in Beaverton for a few years) Aaron Rodgers (167.8).

To put it in layman's terms, this team is crushing the competition and doesn't seem to have a weakness.

Cal's lowest rank in the major statistical categories in the Pac-10 is its — and no I'm not kidding — pass offense at No. 5 in the conference.

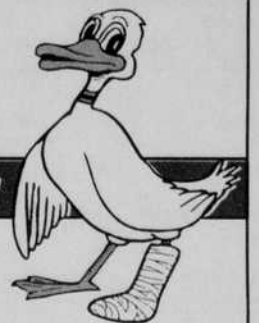
Oregon's defense has been playing well, but playing well against the bottom feeders of the conference. The Ducks haven't faced a running back of Arrington's caliber since Oklahoma's freshman sensation Adrian Peterson flattened them for 183 yards.

Not to mention that Rodgers is completing over 70 percent of his passes and is averaging almost nine yards per attempt, both first in the conference.

I know that Oregon's defense ranks in the upper half of the conference in

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