

■ In my opinion

# Oregon seniors say farewell to Autzen stadium this Saturday

Saturday's home game against UCLA will mark the final time Oregon seniors suit up for a game at Autzen Stadium.

I don't have enough room to mention everyone, but here are some memories of a few elder Ducks.

Michael DeLaGrange, offensive tackle, No. 77: At 6-foot-6, 350 pounds, "DeLa" is one of the biggest players in Oregon history. The Grants Pass native has filled in nicely when not injured.

Robin Knebel, offensive lineman, No. 79: The Roseburg native has been one of Oregon's most valuable linemen, as he is able to play all five positions. He was the top prep offensive lineman prospect in the state during his senior year at Roseburg High School in 1999.

Jerry Matson, inside linebacker, No. 52: One of the hardest working players in Oregon history laughed in the faces of those who told him he wasn't big enough, fast enough or strong enough to play at the Division I level. He leads the Ducks with 50 tackles this season, after amassing 81 as a junior. His hit on Oregon State kick returner Harvey Whiten during the 2003 Civil War — which made SportsCenter's Top 10 list — will be etched in the minds of Oregon fans forever.

Ramone Reed, outside linebacker, No. 18: Reed overcame the death of his mother last season and continued to work toward earning a starting role



**JON ROETMAN**  
ROUGHING THE PASSER

this year. He has more than earned the respect of his coaches and teammates, while collecting 46 tackles and a pair of interceptions this season.

Jared Siegel, kicker, No. 25: The most successful kicker in Oregon history, Siegel set school records for most points and most field goals made in a career this season. In all, he holds or shares 15 Oregon kicking records. His best season was arguably his sophomore campaign, when he connected on 49 of 50 extra points and 20 of 24 field goals.

Adam Snyder, offensive lineman, No. 72: At 6-foot-6, 320 pounds, Snyder has been dominant at both guard and tackle. A first-team All-Pacific-10 Conference performer last season, Snyder has protected three different quarterbacks during his Oregon career.

Chris Solomona, defensive end, No. 47: The San Pedro, Calif., native has stepped up this season with 31 tackles after earning a starting position. He has returned a pair of interceptions for touchdowns, including

one against rival Washington.

Nick Steitz, offensive guard, No. 74: At 6-foot-4, 319 pounds, Steitz has been solid at left guard for several seasons. When the Ducks need a tough yard, they usually run right behind the duo of Steitz and Snyder.

Marley Tucker, rover, No. 23: Coming off a solid junior season in which he started all 13 games, Tucker's senior campaign was slowed by an elbow injury he suffered against Arizona State. He intercepted two passes during his freshman season and logged a career-high 55 tackles as a junior.

Robby Valenzuela, defensive tackle, No. 99: One of the most overlooked performers in Oregon's recent history. While not as hyped as the likes of Igor Olshansky, Junior Siavii or Haloti Ngata, Valenzuela has helped cause mayhem in opposing backfields for three years. He delivered a thunderous blow to Stanford quarterback Trent Edwards this season, which knocked him out of the game with a bruised left shoulder and hand.

Kenny Washington, running back, No. 20: A dependable backup, who has supplied the Ducks with depth, Washington is most noted for his skills as a kick returner. He garnered first-team All-Pac-10 honors as a junior, averaging 31 yards per kick return.

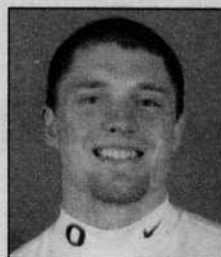
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## DUCK CAPTAINS

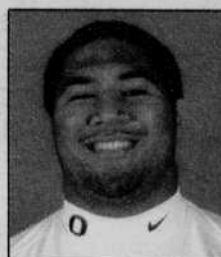
Four Ducks, two on offense and two on defense, were chosen as this game's team captains. Each will be looked upon to lead Oregon to a conference win over the UCLA Bruins.



**Adam Snyder**  
#72 Offensive Tackle / Senior  
Hometown: Whittier, Calif.



**Nate LiaBraaten**  
#88 Tight End / Junior  
Hometown: Bend, Ore.



**Chris Solomona**  
#47 Defensive End / Junior  
Hometown: San Pedro, Calif.



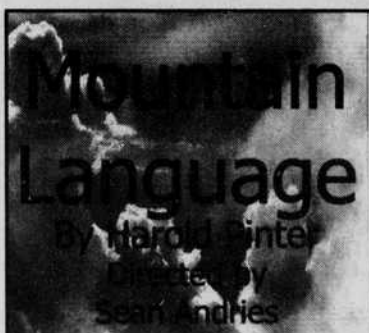
**Justin Phinisee**  
#31 Rover / Junior  
Hometown: Compton, Calif.

Snyder began his senior year as a candidate for the Outland Trophy, awarded annually to the top interior lineman in the country. In 2003, he became the first lineman to be named the Pacific-10 Conference Offensive Player of the Week since 1995. He also became Oregon's first-team All-Pac-10 offensive lineman, the first Duck to do so in 20 years. He also helped lead the way to a season-high 218 yards rushing against Oregon State last season. He has made a career 33 starts for the Ducks, his first against USC his freshman year. This will be his last game at Autzen Stadium.

LiaBraaten was a diverse athlete at Bend High School and a two-year letter winner in football, basketball and track and was the youngest starting tight end in Bend High School history. He also led Bend to a fifth-place finish at the state 4A championship and was eighth in the state in the javelin with a throw of 196 feet. He walked on to the Oregon football team and earned a scholarship after a solid 2003 spring showing. LiaBraaten had a career-high two catches against Michigan and scored his only career touchdown against Portland State his freshman year.

Solomona has used the time he spent behind the likes of Junior Siavii and Igor Olshansky to mature into one of the better defensive linemen in Oregon history. He started the first game of his career against Indiana in the 2004 opener and has 31 total tackles this season. He also has three sacks this season to go along with the most impressive stat: his two interceptions returned for touchdowns. He was tabbed as the nation's third-best junior college defensive lineman by SuperPrep magazine as well as the No. 6 overall JC prospect by JCFootball.com.

Phinisee has made the move from cornerback to rover quite easily after Marley Tucker's injury. He also has taken over punt return responsibilities and has returned 14 punts for 167 yards for an 11.9 yard average. His longest return of the season was against Arizona for 61 yards. On defense he leads the team with five pass-breakups. He also has an interception to go with 26 tackles in eight games played this season. Last season he finished fourth on the team in tackles and second among the Oregon secondary.

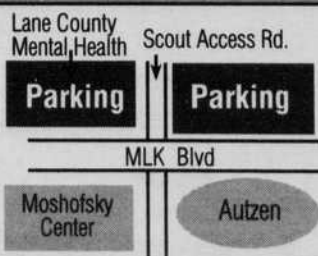


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