

"I call him little spring. He's so small, but he's got so much energy. He gets it going, gets energized, and he makes plays."

Oregon's Justin Phinisee following fellow cornerback Aaron Gipson's two interceptions Saturday during a 56-14 win over Oregon State

■ In my opinion



LUKE ANDREWS
EXCESSIVE CELEBRATION

Ducks do their part, now await bowl fate

Cornerback Aaron Gipson entered the media room Saturday following a 56-14 rout of Oregon State wearing a bright green shirt that may have said it best: "I hate Beavers."

Call it revenge. Call it redemption. Call it what you will — there hasn't been a sweeter win for an Oregon team in a long while.

Especially when you consider the feeling last season for many of these players walking off the Reser Stadium turf after a demoralizing 50-21 loss to the Beavers that kept the Ducks out of post-season play.

When the hobbling Beavers entered Eugene and Autzen Stadium on Saturday in need of a win for bowl eligibility, it was payback time, particularly for Gipson, who was torched last season by Oregon State's Mike Hass (nine receptions, 154 yards, two touchdowns).

Gipson won the battle this time around, intercepting his sixth and seventh passes of the season and returning one 60 yards for a touchdown on the game's opening possession.

"Last year I played him with a hurt ankle and (Hass) kind of ran by us a couple times," said Gipson, who held Hass scoreless and under his per-game yards average. "I think I had more touchdowns than him today, so that's a good thing."

OSU really never had a chance in this game. With Kellen Clemens, the Ducks' senior leader turned assistant coach, speeding as fast as two crutches can carry him down the Autzen Stadium tunnel and an appreciative crowd on its feet during the introductions of 13 Oregon seniors, the Ducks again took care of business for their seventh straight victory.

Clemens' injury is just one of the many moments that have epitomized Oregon's motto this season: We've got your back.

The defense supports the offense and vice versa. When one is down, the other makes a play.

Now Oregon is 10-1, and, behind the tandem of sophomores Dennis Dixon and Brady Leaf, a perfect 4-0 without Clemens.

It speaks volumes about a team when it can lose a player of Clemens' magnitude and still entertain hopes of a Bowl Championship Series' bid, which brings me to my next point: What business does Notre Dame, at 8-2, have being ahead of Oregon in both major polls?

It figures that Ohio State, also with two losses, would be in front of the Ducks considering the Buckeyes have many recent quality wins and its losses were to No. 2 Texas and No. 4 Penn State.

However, the Irish really have no right to be in a BCS game, just as they had no right to be in the 2001 Fiesta Bowl when they received an at-large bid and were spanked 41-9 by Oregon State. If Notre Dame can hold on in its final game at Stanford next Saturday, odds are the Irish will claim one of the available bids.

But the Ducks only did what they could on Saturday against the Beavers. They took care of business and sent a memo to the BCS voters in the process. Whether the voters will receive that memo is a different question.

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■ Men's basketball

Ducks sprint past Savannah State

Oregon's Chamberlain Oguchi and Ray Schafer lead the way with 19 and 15 points, respectively

BY SHAWN MILLER
SPORTS EDITOR

Six-foot Oregon point guard Aaron Brooks emphatically dunked the ball with his left hand, signaling the end for Savannah State on Sunday night in front of 8,267 at McArthur Court. This occurred only one minute 36 seconds into the game.

"I know how energetic the Pit Crew gets. They seem to enjoy the dunks and highlights and stuff."

CHAMBERLAIN OGUCHI | Oregon guard

The score put the Ducks up 9-0 after Ray Schafer scored the first seven points of the game. Brooks' bucket was nearly enough to outscore Savannah State in the first half. The Ducks (1-0) allowed only 10 points in the opening 20 minutes of play and the fewest points to a Division I opponent since 1941 (15 vs. Utah), rocking the Tigers (1-1) 83-23.

The 60-point victory was the third-largest in school history.

A point of emphasis has been the play on the defensive end of the floor, an area in which the Ducks showed vast improvement Sunday. The Oregon defense forced numerous air balls and shot clock violations and allowed the Tigers to make only 17.5 percent from the field. In fact, Savannah State didn't even score until 9:09 into the game, at which point the Ducks had

already dropped in 17 points.

"We've been practicing that all week — getting defensive stops, pressuring the wings," said Schafer, who finished with 15 points.

Sixteen of the 27 forced turnovers were steals leading to 36 points. Nine of the 12 Ducks that entered the game recorded at least one steal. Oregon also blocked seven shots, led by Schafer and Chamberlain Oguchi with two apiece.

"They played real sloppy so we took advantage of it," Oguchi said.

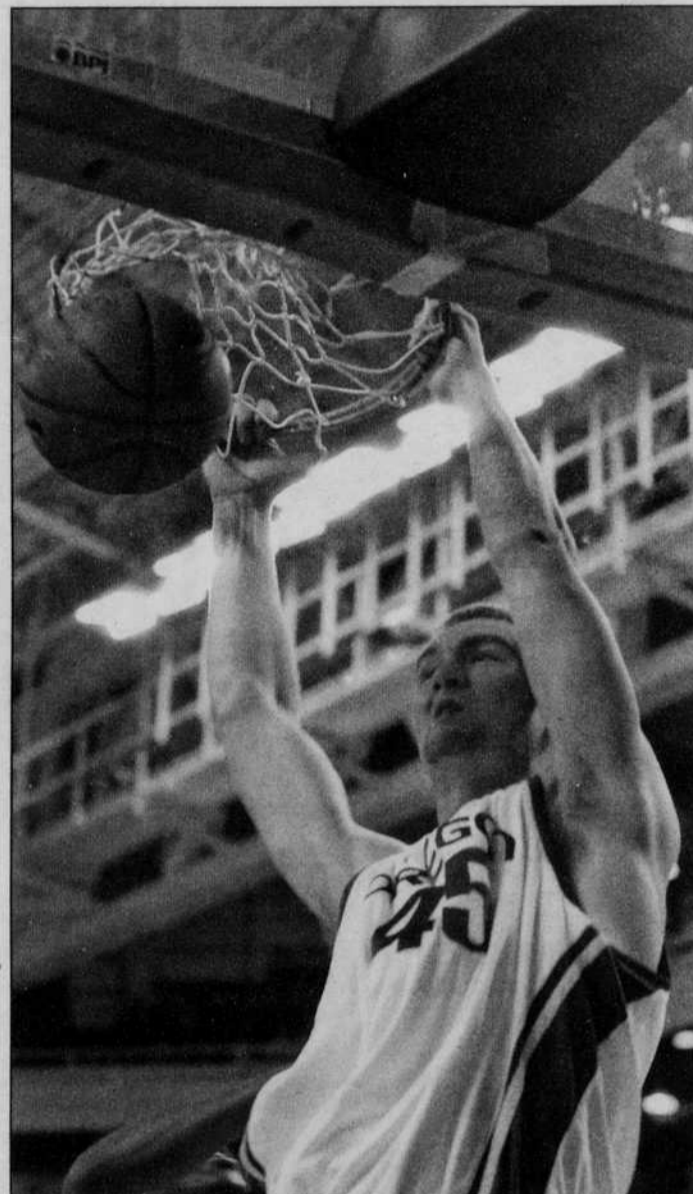
It wasn't just Savannah State throwing the ball away. Oregon players dove for balls continuously, something Oregon coach Ernie Kent is excited to see.

"I thought they hustled for 40 minutes," Kent said. "I thought their energy was very, very good in this game. So I was very pleased with their hustle and their effort even though it was an easy game to kind of play a lesser opponent."

Oguchi scored a career- and game-high 19 points, including 10 of Oregon's final 13 points. He made six of eight field goal attempts, including three of four from beyond the arc. Two of Oguchi's shots came on dunks, something that fired up the crowd as well as the Oregon bench.

"I know how energetic the Pit Crew gets," Oguchi said. "They seem to enjoy the dunks and highlights and stuff. But I think my teammates seem to enjoy it too."

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ZANE RITT | PHOTOGRAPHER

Oregon's Ray Schafer slams in two of his 15 points Sunday night against Savannah State, a game Oregon won 83-23. Schafer scored the Ducks' first seven points of the game as they rolled to a 17-0 lead eight minutes into the game.

■ Football notes

Williams closes in on many Oregon receiving records

Aaron Gipson's two interceptions against OSU vaulted him to the top of the national charts

BY SHAWN MILLER
SPORTS EDITOR

Records don't count for much in Oregon receiver Demetrius Williams' eyes; it's all about wins and losses. That is common for someone who doesn't play much or isn't on a top-10 chart, but Williams isn't one of those players. Instead, he ranks in the top five in four major receiving categories.

Midway through the third quarter, Williams proved why he is the ultimate team player. After Oregon State scored to cut into the Ducks' four-touchdown lead, it was Williams who caught four passes for 72 yards, including a six-yard touchdown to demoralize the Beavers.

Prior to that possession,

Williams had only one catch for 10 yards. But that didn't bother him.

"I just made the best of my opportunities," Williams said. "I feel Dennis (Dixon) did a good job of throwing the ball, put it where it needed to be, and it was my job to catch it."

A pending bowl game will be the final time Williams dons the green and yellow, and has the chance to take hold on the record books.

Williams is currently tied for first in touchdown receptions (10) and sixth in receiving yards (1,032) on the single-season list. For a career, he ranks fourth in touchdown receptions (20) as

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■ Women's basketball

Oregon survives sloppy play, beats Wolfpack 61-50

Senior Chelsea Wagner leads the Ducks with five three-pointers and finishes with 21 points

BY SCOTT J. ADAMS
SPORTS REPORTER

It was hard for Oregon players to be satisfied with their 61-50 win over Nevada Sunday at McArthur Court. The Ducks shot five of 20 from the field in the second half and were outrebounded 40-32 in a game that featured a combined 45 fouls.

"It was an ugly game that we won, but we're not satisfied with that," Oregon's Chelsea Wagner said.

The senior tied her career-high with 21 points in 30 minutes of play to lead Oregon. Her trio of first-half three-pointers lifted the Ducks to an early lead that they never let go of. She added two more in the second half to finish five of seven from beyond the arc.

She may have had Oregon's hottest hand Sunday, but she felt any of her teammates could have performed just as well.

"I was hitting my shot well tonight," she said. "We have so many players that can hit the shot and tonight it was me."

Oregon coach Bev Smith was pleased with Wagner's play throughout the game.

"I liked Chelsea's contributions," Smith said. "She was not afraid to shoot the ball."

Wagner's start Sunday was the first of the season for the shooting guard from Springfield High. She has been hampered by a past knee injury aggravated in Oregon's Nov. 6 exhibition game against

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