

Sports

FOOTBALL

Former Ducks QB helps Silverton's Levi Nielsen



Silverton quarterback Levi Nielsen is enjoying his time in the recruiting process. PHOTO COURTESY OF LEVI NIELSEN

Pete Martini Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

The recruiting process can be an exciting time for any young athlete, and for Levi Nielsen, it also has been a learning experience.

The Silverton quarterback, who will be a senior this fall, doesn't have an offer yet, but he has visited five colleges and is taking steps to improve his stock as a prospect, including seeking help from former University of Oregon and NFL quarterback Chris Miller.

"It's definitely fun visiting and seeing schools," Nielsen said. "But it's also a stressful process. It can be confusing at times trying to figure out how interested coaches really are."

Last season for Silverton, Nielsen threw for 2,026, 19 touchdowns and 11 interceptions. He also rushed for 285 yards and seven touchdowns while helping the Foxes to a 7-4 record and the OSAA Class 5A state quarterfinals.

So far in his recruiting, Nielsen has made it to five college campuses — Oregon State, Portland State, Eastern Washington, Montana and Western Oregon.

Levi Nielsen

■ **School:** Silverton

■ **Year:** Senior

■ **Sport:** Football

■ **Position:** Quarterback

■ **2017 statistics:** Completed 146 of 270 passes for 2,026 yards, 19 touchdowns and 11 interceptions. Had 69 carries for 285 yards and seven touchdowns.

Although no school has given him an offer yet, he has been getting solid feedback.

The big thing coaches have been telling him is to keep the ball up and have quicker releases on his throws, rather than dropping his arm in longer windups.

Nielsen and his father, Steve, began researching potential people to help him with his throwing motion, and they took a chance on Miller, who played for the Ducks from 1983 to 1986, before playing 10 seasons in the NFL for the Atlanta Falcons, Los Angeles Rams and Denver Broncos.

"It was kind of a long shot because Chris doesn't really do private quarterback work," Levi Nielsen said. "My dad was just like, 'You know what, let's just give him a call and we'll see where it goes.'"

The Niensens gave Miller a call, explained the situation, and sent him film. After evaluating the film, Miller decided to help Nielsen.

"I did quite a bit of individual work with him," Nielsen said about Miller. "That was kind of the first time I ever did any one-on-one training. We worked really hard at just keeping the ball up. I think that could be a really big difference for

me, as far as getting an offer and not getting one."

Nielsen said he sees himself as a versatile player who could be in more of a pro-style system, or a more spread system that utilizes a dual-threat quarterback.

"I'm just trying to show them my different skill sets," he said.

Nielsen said he would also be open to playing another position at the next level.

"Obviously, I would love to play quarterback in college," he said. "But it can be tough to get scholarships for quarterbacks because schools usually take only one per year, so I'm not limited to being just a quarterback in college."

Nielsen also is focusing on his senior season at Silverton, and he knows he still has an opportunity to show what he can do on the field and with his team, and that could go a long way to determining if and where he could play at the college level.

"I really am a team guy, and I'm trying to focus on doing the best I can with my team in the fall," Nielsen said. "I try not to focus on myself too much, and hopefully I can become a late-bloomer."

Dress weather appropriate for shad fishing



Fishing
Henry Miller
Guest columnist

OK, so I drive to Clackamette Park in Oregon City on Monday to fish for shad.

The inspiration for the road trip was that the counts at the fish ladder at Bonneville Dam recorded 226,854 shad swimming upriver on June 25, 163,669 on June 26, and 214,056 on June 27.

So a total of, let's see, 6 plus 3 plus 4, carry the one ... a bodacious wad of fish, well over a half-million in three days.

Oregon City on the Willamette River is a long way from Bonneville Dam on the Columbia.

But shad don't go over the fish ladder at Willamette Falls on their annual spawning run, ergo no counts.

So Bonneville numbers are the best indicator about how thick the run of the largest member of the herring family are on Oregon's two main fluvial freeways.

I'm dressed for July 2: jeans, light short-sleeved knit shirt, summer-weight cotton fleece jacket.

Upon arrival, it's drizzling. Errata on the earlier statement.

I was dressed for July 2 ... anywhere outside of the Pacific Northwest, where a parka sometimes is appropriate beach wear on Labor Day weekend.

The drizzle made up in persistence what it lacked in volume.

It wasn't enough to get me to retreat, you understand, but fishing was something of a slog.

Not to mention the concerns for the camera gear.

The shad were there, but not in the abundance I was expecting.

Several anglers downriver were scoring consistently, tossing the usual suspects, tiny lead-headed jigs with bare gold hooks, the rigs augmented with a small sinker several feet up the line to aid in casting.

I managed to lose a few rigs on snags before evacuating the scene because of my concern that the fleece, now sheltering the camera bag, was approaching the saturation point of its wicking capacity.

If you would like to track the shad



My neighbor's kid, Ben, was dressed for soggy success during a shad trip a couple of years ago to Oregon City. Henry in 2018? Not so much.

HENRY MILLER/SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL

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