

Final Season: Dan Weaver



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This is the story of a former walk-on who is now the starting center for the University of Oregon football team. Unlike most of his teammates senior Dan Weaver was not offered a scholarship to play football at the UO. He came here for the right reasons — to be a student and play the game he loves — football. He said he would have played all four years even if he wasn't given a scholarship. "The most important part is just playing; the scholarship is just a recognition and level of respect that they give to you. The guys who stick it out for 4 years without a scholarship are the ones that I respect the most. It shows how much they love the game. In my opinion Dan Weaver is somewhat of a throw back. He is a stand up guy who has worked for everything that he has. Dan is the kind of guy that Oregon fans should embrace and tell their children to look up to. He is proof that anything can be accomplished if you put your mind to it. Walk on to starter, to full

ride scholarship. What's next for big number 63? The NFL? I think so. I predict that Dan will have a very successful season and be selected in the 4th round of this year's NFL draft.

Background

Dan is one of the few Ducks who is actually from Oregon. He was born and raised in Redmond which is located about 15 miles north of Bend. Dan attended Redmond High School where he was a star center and linebacker on a team that went 1-8 his senior year.

His individual talent did not go unnoticed as he earned 1st team Intermountain Conference honors. Dan also played basketball and baseball while at Redmond High. He was instrumental to the basketball team's success and he earned 1st team all league honors as a pitcher and first baseman. However, he was not talented enough to attract the attention of any major college football programs around the country. The main reason being that Dan was just too small. During his senior football season Dan was listed at 6'5", 225 pounds. He wasn't even close to the type of weight needed to play lineman at a Division I college, let alone a small college. But coach Zoumboukos encouraged Dan to walk on and try to get bigger. So Dan decided to commit himself to getting bigger and walk on to the UO football team. He entered fall camp his freshman year weighing a whopping 275 pounds. Dan was able put on 50 pounds in less than a year through hard work and lots of eating. "I had the frame to be big but basketball made me stay small. After basketball I just grew into my body." Dan said that the main reasons he chose to walk on to the Oregon football team were because his brother Jed Weaver played tight end for the Ducks, and was able to earn a scholarship after a few years & because he liked the family environment. His brother Jed had an extremely successful career at Oregon and is now the starting tight end for the San Francisco 49ers. Athleticism seems to run in the family since Dan also has a cousin Jeff Weaver who is a pitcher for the New York Yankees.

To his surprise Dan ended up playing

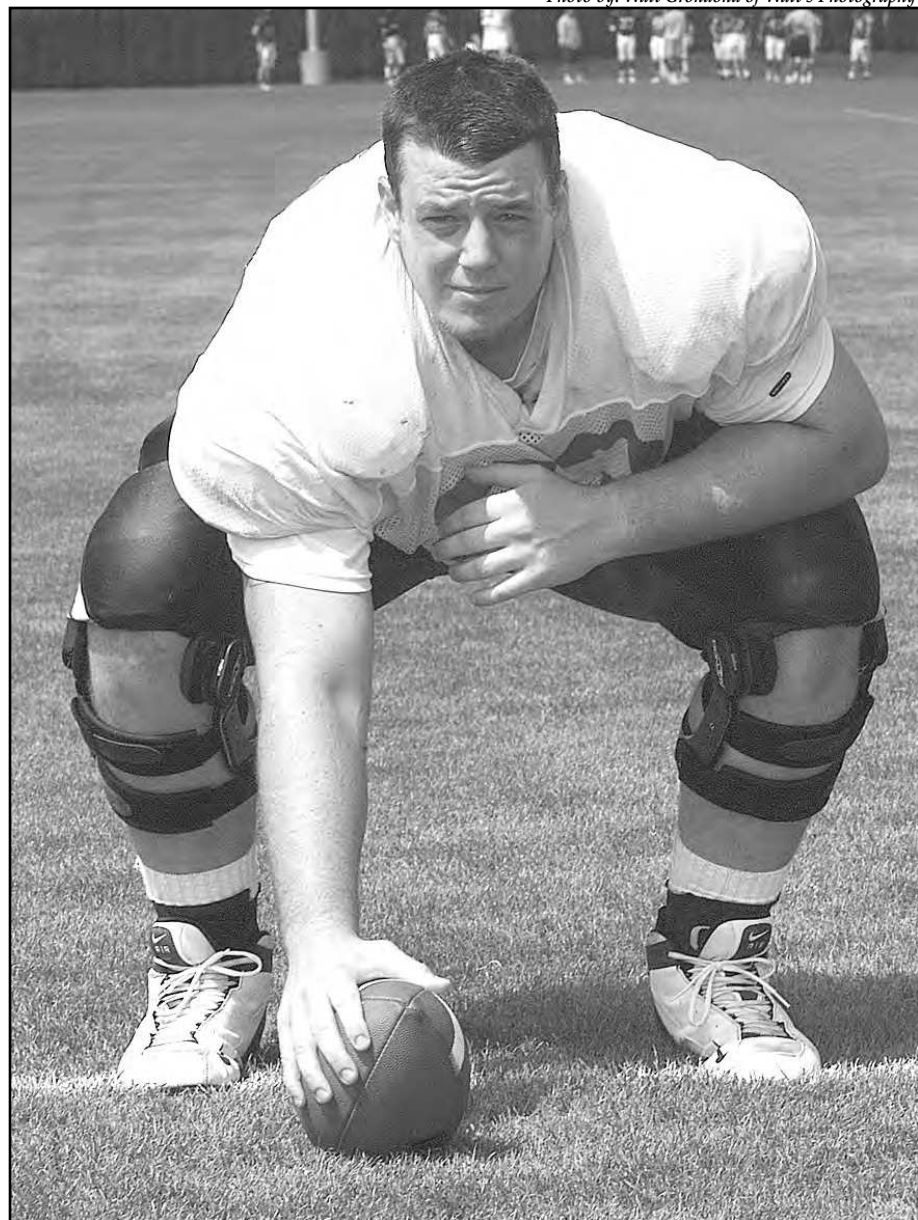


Photo by: Walt Grondona of Walt's Photography

Dan lettered as a freshman and earned the starting center position as a sophomore.

his true freshman season as a short snapper on field goals and PAT's. For those of you who aren't that familiar with football's hierarchy it's very rare for a walk on to play his true freshman year. I asked Dan if he was treated any differently when he was just a walk on. "When you are a walk on you don't get as much stuff. You are the low man on the totem pole, you get used stuff out of the equipment room but coach Zoom treats every player the same whether they're a walk on or on scholarship." The fact that Dan found a way to get on the field his freshman year is evidence of the kind of player that Dan Weaver is. He was part of a very successful Holiday Bowl team that went 10-2 that year. After a successful off season filled with running and conditioning Dan was again pushing for playing time his sophomore year. He said "I had a very good fall camp and I knew I was going to be the starter. He was in fact named the starting center going into the Wisconsin game and the rest is history. Dan was first notified that he would be receiving a full ride scholarship by coach Zoumboukos before the Wisconsin game. "Zoom called me into his office and told me that coach Bellotti was going to announce at practice that I had earned a scholarship. I knew it was coming but I didn't think it was going to happen as early as it did. It all happened pretty fast. Dan said the first person he called a told the good news to was his girlfriend Samie of 7 1/2 years and then his parents. I asked Dan what he thought the key to being a successful walk on was and

he said "The work ethic that I learned from my Dad and brother. I think that work ethic is the most valuable asset a person can have."

Dan the Scholar

Some people don't realize the amount of hard work that goes into being a football player at the University of Oregon. Each day players spend countless hours watching film, practicing, and attending meetings in order to prepare for their next opponent. In addition, each player must go to class everyday and pass their classes so that they can be eligible. There are many players that take the easiest classes possible in order to retain their eligibility each year. Dan Weaver is not like everyone else when it comes to hitting the books. He has demonstrated that he is a tremendous student as well as an athlete. Dan is a perfect example of what a student-athlete should be. He is taking full advantage of the educational opportunities that are available to him. Dan is majoring in accounting and thus far he has proven that he is an exceptional student. He is a two-time 1st team All Pac-10 academic team selection and 1st All-District academic performer. I asked him what he has done to be such a successful student. "I just transferred the work ethic that I had in football over to the classroom. I think a lot of guys work really hard in football and don't transfer that work ethic over to school. You have to transfer the work ethic throughout

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