



Photo by: Walt Gronadana of Walk's Photography

Mitchell was an integral part of the Moretti & Mallard Fiesta Bowl champion linebacking corps.

a dive to the fullback and I tackled him for no gain.

**DI:** What's been your secret to being so consistent and injury free over the last four years?

**KM:** Oh I am injured, I've had 2 surgeries, I had my knee and my shoulder done. I have just played through the injuries because I love the game.

**DI:** You recently got married, is it hard to be a football player and be married?

**KM:** We meant in high school so she pretty much knows what I go through and understands. She actually makes it really easy for me. When I come home everything is taken care of. I get in about 7:45-8 and that's the time that we get to spend together.

**DI:** What's the hardest part about being a student athlete for you?

**KM:** Time management, people don't understand, you have to go to class, then go to football and then you gotta go study.

**DI:** Did the defense do anything differently against Stanford?

**KM:** I think a lot of guys really brought up their intensity level. We came out ready to play both halves. We were really focused and the shutout was a really big deal for us. We just played harder. The games that we've won compared to the games that we have lost have been the same scheme with little extra's here and there. The only difference was the intensity level that we had.

**DI:** Describe the goal line stance from the Stanford game?

**KM:** The first 3 plays it was like this is cool we stopped them from getting in. Then we give the ball back to them for another go and they run the just keep running the same play. The last play we all knew a pass was coming and we stopped it.

**DI:** Why were you guys not successful defensively against Washington?

**KM:** Our blitzes were not getting through, the intensity just wasn't there at all, and we didn't come ready to play.

**DI:** Why has the team been having such a hard time in the second half?

**KM:** I don't know, for me it's really easy to come out after halftime, I feel as an athlete it's your obligation, how can you not want to play.

**DI:** Do you think that the coaches are responsible for how the team's performing?

**KM:** I don't think it's the coaches fault because they're not the one's who are out there playing. They are here all hours of the night and day putting together a scheme; it's just a matter of us executing it. You can't question the scheme because we've done the same scheme and beat Michigan so we know it works.

**DI:** Isn't it hard for corners to play in Oregon's scheme?

**KM:** It's really tough for corners; everyone wants to blame the secondary which I think is completely stupid. That's just what they see because the corners are visible. You don't see the backers blitzing and getting stopped in the hole and the lineman not getting any pressure on the quarterback. If you just blame the secondary you are completely wrong.

**DI:** Do you think the coaching staff should tailor the scheme to the players that they have each year or the players to their scheme?

**KM:** That's a good question; some players might not be able to pick up certain stuff which is understandable. I think it's just a matter of focusing and executing the scheme that they give us.

**DI:** If you were the defensive coordinator what would you do differently?

**KM:** I don't know, but I think I would keep doing what we're doing. It's proven to work in the past. We beat Texas, Colorado and Michigan who are all top-ranked teams so we know that the

scheme does work. It's just a matter of us players performing it. I feel that anything

Brian Schapper, BODOGSPORTS.COM



Coach Pellum says Kevin is the most "instinctive" (nose for the ball) player he's ever had.

our coaches call should work.

**DI:** What does the team have to do differently to turn this season around?

**KM:** The coaches are doing everything they can do. For us to be successful the players got to take it upon themselves. If they can look themselves in the mirror the day after the game and be O.K. with themselves than we will be successful.

**DI:** Can this team still have a successful season?

**KM:** I think we can. I am looking at it that way. We could go 8-4 and we could go to a good bowl game and finish our season on a good note and not let everything fall apart like last year. Everyone just needs to take it upon themselves for us to win.

**DI:** You're heading back home this weekend to play against UCLA. Does playing in L.A. give you have any extra motivation or added excitement?

**KM:** No, I have a lot of family and friends coming to the game. It's not any pressure for me, I actually enjoy it. Hopefully we can get a win again this year. I will get to see my family and stay at home that weekend. I also get to see my little brother play on Saturday night after our game.

**DI:** You've had a very successful career at Oregon; do you think you'll get a chance to play in the NFL next year?

**KM:** I really don't know. A lot of people say that my chances are great, but in reality I don't have any idea. The only thing that I know is that I would like to. I am going to workout as much as I can and try my best for the scouts. If it works out great. I would love to play and whatever happens, happens. It's out of my control. **O**