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FOOTBALL SPORTS



 Oregon long snapper Tanner Carew (58) stretches on the field before warming up with his teammates. The Oregon Ducks host the No. 11 Washington State Cougars at Autzen Stadium in Eugene, Ore. on Saturday, Oct. 7, 2017. (Amanda Shigeoka/Emerald)

Oregon football's unsung hero: Tanner Carew

Kylee O'Connor — October 12, 2017 at 6:00 am

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In a position that requires nothing but consistency, Tanner Carew has been just that. Quarterbacks and coaches around him may change, but Carew has remained a steady part of the Oregon football team throughout his four years, even after an ACL tear.

Carew, a graduate of Chino Hills High School in California, has started 45 games for the Ducks. The one game that he didn't start in against Colorado late in the 2014 season was because he tore his ACL during practice in the week leading up to the game.

For most positions, that would mean that the player is out for the season. For Carew, he was out one game because of swelling and came back the next week. The Ducks went on to play Ohio State in the College Football Playoffs that year, so his surgery was delayed until after the game in January. Carew says that "maybe a punter" could play on a torn ACL, but even then it's not for certain.

"[Long snapper is] an interesting position," Carew said. "I could play on a torn ACL, but I couldn't play on a broken finger."

Carew did have to wear a knee brace, which he said took some getting used to. He had to change “a little bit of form, a little bit of follow through,” but overall, the ACL tear did not affect him.

“I just taped it and braced it up and played,” Carew said. “But it feels great now, so that’s all that matters.”

Long snapping is a position unlike any other on a football team. And when a long snapper is in the news, it’s usually is a bad thing.

“You want to go unnoticed,” Carew said. “... Normally, you don’t want to have any reporters coming up to you. Be consistent, be quiet about it and do your thing.”

Despite not receiving much adulation from the fans, Carew plays an integral role on the team.

“Tanner is very important,” head coach Willie Taggart said. “[Long snappers] don’t get a lot of credit, but for him ... to do it consistently and to get the punter the ball where he needs it in order to kick the ball — he’s big and he knows how important he is to our team.”

Although the long snapping position is unique, Carew trains like any other football player. He works on speed and agility, and especially enjoys lifting; however, Carew has to work on his position-specific exercises as well. As a long snapper, he must stay flexible, so he does a lot of stretching, in addition to stability training and core exercises.

To perfect his craft, Carew long snaps — a lot.

“In the offseason, I come in on my own and I snap nonstop,” Carew said. “Five days a week, at least, of snapping in the offseason. Here, in the season, every practice day. So, that’s countless. Millions and millions of reps of snapping.”

Coming out of high school, Carew was the No. 1 long snapper in the country. He’s done his part on the Oregon football team without any flaw or falter. Like many players throughout college football, Carew hopes that the next step for him is the National Football League.

“I would love to snap in the NFL,” Carew said. “That’s what I’m working towards, what I’ve always been working towards. It’s a dream of mine. I believe I have all the ability to do it and I think I’ve got a really good shot at it.”

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