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The former UO basketball player, an author and motivational speaker, meets with team before practice

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Former Oregon basketball player Greg Bell, now a motivational speaker based in Portland, met with the UO football team prior to its practice Thursday evening.

Bell, a reserve guard at Oregon in the early 1980s, is the author of “Water the Bamboo,” based on a leadership principle he formulated regarding the four-year germination period of giant timber bamboo. Ducks coach Chip Kelly read the book this season, and both he and record-setting running back LaMichael James cited its influence following Oregon’s Civil War win that clinched a berth in the Rose Bowl.

It takes four years of tending before giant timber bamboo sprouts, Bell teaches, but once it does it can grow as much as 90 feet in just 60 days.

Bell said his message boils down to valuing hard work and consistent effort over instant gratification.

“You trace people’s success, it doesn’t happen overnight, and the Ducks’ season was a great example of that,” Bell said following Thursday’s practice. “After the Boise State game, everyone jumped off the bus fast. Now they’re back on.

“Part of Chip’s message to the kids is, it’s about the effort every day. You’ve got to keep watering, keep it going, keep doing it no matter what. For me, that’s the difference I’ve seen in successful people. It’s the ones that put in the work. ...

“Look at Chip. He’s been working a long time at this. ‘Suddenly’ he’s coach of the year, but if you trace his roots back, he’s been doing this for a while.”

During his career at Oregon from 1981-85, Bell was twice named the basketball

team's most inspirational player and once named the team's top scholar-athlete. He earned a law degree from the university and briefly pursued a career in that field.

Bell then worked with the National Association of Basketball Coaches, spearheading the launch of its Coaches vs. Cancer campaign, before becoming an inspirational speaker and leadership coach.

"We've used a lot of aspects of what he's taught," Kelly said. "But now you hear it from the author himself, it's a pretty good deal."

Bell watched the Civil War from St. Louis, where he was conducting a leadership seminar, and said he plans to attend the Rose Bowl, in which the No. 7 Ducks will face No. 8 Ohio State on New Year's Day.

"The fact that Oregon embraced (his work), that Chip embraced it, tickles me to no end," Bell said. "This is a special place to me."

Four more workouts before holiday break

The Ducks began Rose Bowl preparations in earnest Thursday evening, the first of five straight days of workouts prior to the team's holiday break.

Kelly is treating the current series of workouts like a typical game week, complete with scout-team players in scarlet jerseys representing Ohio State. The Ducks will double up their efforts with a second week of practices in L.A.

Oregon worked out in the evening Thursday to accommodate coaches returning from recruiting trips but will be back practicing in the morning today.

Recruiting services tie three JC players to UO

Wednesday was the first day of the monthlong midyear transfer signing period, and the Ducks were anticipating three letters of intent from junior college athletes.

According to Internet recruiting services, Oregon's newest additions are to be offensive tackle Ryan Clanton, 6-feet-6 and 305 pounds, of San Francisco City College; tight end Brandon Williams, 6-4 and 245 pounds, of Joliet (Ill.) College; and defensive lineman Isaac Remington, 6-6 and 265 pounds, of Phoenix College.

Noteworthy

Redshirting freshman safety Brian Jackson practiced Thursday, three days after being cited by Eugene police along with walk-ons Ben Butterfield and Brian Harris in an incident involving pellet guns. Kelly indicated the players face some form of team disciplinary action. ... Grades are coming in after final exams ended a week ago, and Kelly remains hopeful none of the Ducks will have eligibility issues for the Rose Bowl. "We're waiting on four or five kids," he said. "We've got our fingers crossed."

... The team held a post-eligibility meeting Thursday, but it's not yet known how many UO juniors will request draft evaluations from the NFL. "I think they should," Kelly said. "Just find out where you stand." ... The only regular on Thursday's injury report was LB Bryson Littlejohn, who has missed two games with an ankle issue.

DUCK OF THE DAY: MICHAEL CLAY

Spotlighting a member of the Rose Bowl team

Basic info: 5-foot-11, 209-pound true freshman weak-side linebacker from San Jose, Calif.

Stats: Leads all UO reserves with 30 tackles in 12 appearances, with five against Purdue and Washington. Besides backing up Spencer Paysinger on defense, Clay contributes several ways on special teams, including as the long snapper for punts.

Bet you didn't know ... : Clay's mother, Sandra Ramirez, is 100 percent Mexican. "I'm fluent in Spanish, and that's really helpful for me, especially beyond football. As a little kid the first language I knew was Spanish."

Chose Oregon because ... : "I really liked Oregon in high school. Cal, I liked everything, but it was way too close to home. Colorado's campus was great, but I didn't feel like the program was as strong as Cal and Oregon."

Most memorable play: Some of his most extensive action defensively was in the second half against Purdue, and Clay was on the field when the Boilermakers threw incomplete on a late two-point conversion that would have tied the score. "My role was pretty much to pressure the quarterback, get in his face and make it hard to throw."

Quotable: "I've been in awe, coming in during the summer through fall camp. I'm playing with grown men; I came to fall camp as a 17-year old, and I'm playing with grown men, rotating in on defense and special teams. It's been an amazing experience as a true freshman."