

# Is Camden Lewis the next Jared Siegel? How one kick can change it all



By Tyson Alger (/author/tyson-alger/) Oct 30, 2019

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EUGENE, Ore. — One of the lasting images — or soundbites, if you will — from Camden Lewis’ game-winning kick last Saturday against Washington State was his confidence.

“I know I don’t suck,” Lewis said after his last-play 25-yarder lifted the Ducks past the Cougars 37-35. “If I’m not able to keep that stuff out of my head, then it’s going to get to me, and that’s a problem. You got to forget about that stuff.”

It was a moment that sent smiles through Oregon’s kicking community. Inside the Hatfield-Dowlin Complex after the game, Aidan Schneider wore a huge smile and could be overheard saying, “I’m just so happy right now.”

Schneider can relate because he, too, was a kicker and knows the pressure that goes along with having 50,000-plus fans watching the ball come off your foot. But Schneider never was on the receiving end of the wrath of rabid fans the way Lewis has been this season. Unlike Lewis, who missed his first career kick and was just 2-of-5 on field goals going into Saturday, Schneider was good from the start and finished his career as perhaps the most accomplished kicker in Oregon history.

Jared Siegel, though, had a better view into what likely was happening in Lewis' head leading up to that kick.

"I couldn't have been more excited for the team, but especially for a true freshman kicker," Siegel said Tuesday. "Obviously, a lot of shared experiences."

Oregon plays at USC this Saturday, and Siegel's "shared experience" came against the Trojans 18 years ago. At the time, he was a true freshman kicker. It was Week 3 of the season and going into that game at Autzen, Siegel had missed one of his first three field goal attempts and an extra point.

Then he missed a 39-yarder in the second quarter against the Trojans, and he thought that was the end of that. Mike Bellotti benched him for junior college transfer David Rosenberg, who hit two extra points but then had a 41-yard attempt blocked; that kick would have given the Ducks a 24-22 lead with 1:37 to play.

Oregon's defense then forced a quick three-and-out, Joey Harrington led the Ducks back downfield and Bellotti had a decision on his hands.

"As the team was driving down the field, both of us were warming up not knowing who would get the opportunity if we got into field goal range," Siegel said. "And ultimately we both stood there and Mike Bellotti looked at me, looked at him, looked at me, looked at him ... and then gave me the opportunity to win it.

"That rather casual moment kind of changed my career at Oregon."

Siegel made that 32-yarder with 12 seconds left, and would go on to make a lot more kicks in his career. He was Oregon's guy from 2001-04. He earned a first-team all-conference selection in 2002, when he drilled a 59-yarder at UCLA, which still stands as the longest field goal in school history. He is second in school history with 49 field goals (Schneider is first with 51) and fourth in scoring with 323 points.



Siegel received a victory ride after the 2001 USC game, and he said the best part about the game-winning kick was that it earned him the respect of his teammates. (Otto Greule / ALLSPORT via Getty Images)

Looking back at the USC kick in 2001, he said the biggest change for him was within the locker room.

“Anyone that’s attracted to team sports, you’re motivated by a couple of key drivers and winning as a team is certainly one of them,” he said. “But ultimately earning the respect of your teammates is high on everyone’s list. And as a placekicker, your ability to contribute just

looks so much different. You watch your teammates battle all game long, then it comes down to this, to this one play that requires a great snap, a great hold — things that are often overlooked — and at the end of the day the result is either hero or goat.

“... Before that moment, no fan in the stadium knew who I was. And after that moment, they did. But more importantly, probably about 50 percent of my teammates who didn’t really know me did afterwards. I gained their respect, and as an athlete that’s on the team, that’s one of the highest forms of currency that any of us are pursuing.”

Siegel’s kick wasn’t a walk-off. There were still a few seconds left on the clock, so it was more of a sideline mob followed by what Siegel described as “one of the world’s worst postgame interviews.” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8akTMgil9Y>)

“Certainly the one thing that probably no kicker actually practices is what it’s like to give an interview,” he said.

It wasn’t that bad. In fact, it had shades of what Lewis just went through. With a dozen microphones in his face Siegel looked, above all else, relieved.

“I’ve done it a thousand times,” he said then. “I just needed one more. That’s why we practice. It’s a great feeling.”

Eighteen years later, Siegel lives in the Portland metro area and is a partner at Delap, a Portland accounting firm. He’s still a big Oregon fan and a passionate member of the kicker fraternity. When Nevada’s Brandon Talton earned a scholarship following his 56-yard game-winner in Week 1 against Purdue, he said he had to hold back tears. He got emotional, he said, because he knows exactly about the highs and lows. He knows how much it hurts to miss. And he knows how good it feels when your team believes in you, as it likely is for Lewis this week.

That’s the feeling they’re all chasing, after all.

“It’s incredibly difficult to miss a kick and then mentally reset so you’re at full capacity for your next opportunity,” he said. “I think as you develop in your career and you establish yourself, not only do your teammates gain more confidence in you, you gain more confidence in yourself.



“One of the things about watching Camden hit that kick that made me so happy for him was just how transformative that could be for him, knowing that he belongs and has the opportunity to be a four-year contributor to an elite college football team.”

*(Top photo of Camden Lewis: Abbie Parr / Getty Images)*

### What did you think of this story?



MEH



SOLID



AWESOME

**Tyson Alger** ([author/tyson-alger/](#)) covers the Oregon Ducks for The Athletic. From Palmer, Alaska and a graduate of the University of Montana, he began his career in Hawaii before starting to cover the Ducks in 2014 for The Oregonian. Follow Tyson on Twitter [@tysonalger](#) (<https://twitter.com/tysonalger>).



12 COMMENTS

Add a comment...

**Doug F.** Oct 30, 2:05pm

Good story. Happy for this kid.



**Jason S.** Oct 30, 2:12pm

Not just the final kick but the entire WSU game definitely has the potential to be the launching point of a great kicking career for Camden. I think it definitely earned him more trust from his teammates and

coaches.

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**Ryan D.** Oct 30, 2:15pm

I like to think this piece was written just for Ed H.

Lol, but seriously. Good piece, Tyson. I have been critical of Lewis this season, so it was nice to see him have a breakthrough moment.

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**Alec E.** Oct 30, 3:00pm

Good for Camden man, I don't know how kickers handle it. I'm definitely not chill enough for the job.

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**Jon J.** 23h ago

Always nice to see a young man come through. The new track + field stadium is going to be awesome. 59,000+ in attendance SAT for a game against a team with a .500 record. Any discussion about expanding Autzen's seating capacity?

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**Alan S.** 18h ago

@Jon J. Doesnt even have to be a big expansion, maybe get it up to 65,000 and modernize the North end to resemble the South end, would be cool. Kinda like this guy did [chrisbence.com/architecture/Autzen/](http://chrisbence.com/architecture/Autzen/)

**Jim D.** 18h ago

@Jon J. The last time I remember any discussions on another addition to Autzen was several years ago and the consensus was that the immediate area infrastructure can't support the additional traffic that would be generated. Don't know if anybody has done any further studies.



**Dan P.** 13h ago

@Jim D. Hard to believe that being the reason (not saying it isn't). I read that they want to make sure Autzen sells-out each game and adding 6,000 more seats at this point would result in most games not being a sell-out.



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**Timmy T.** 23h ago

Love Lewis' confidence. Takes an enormous amount of guts to stick with it after his shaky start, but you can tell he's got the mental makeup to be a good kicker.



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**ROBERT R.** 22h ago

You're correct to point out that the kicker is often the scapegoat for things beyond his control—the snap and hold. The snap on the winning kick almost hit Maimone in the ribs. Great job by him getting the ball down.



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**John D.** 19h ago

Happy Oregon has a confident kicker - this game is so much harder without one. But if Oregon kickers are going to stay tight like, say, Gonzaga point guards - I'm good with that.



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**Patrick M.** 9h ago

@Tyson - thanks for writing this story. Not many folks - particularly the post Chip Kelly-era Duck fans - remember Siegel or the significance of his contributions. Few would argue, however, with the value of a reliable kicker when it counts. Hats off to Lewis for delivering against WSU. Hoping he's the next great leg in the Siegel / Schneider lineage.

