

DUCK FANS: Sisters sent a heavy-hitting rooting contingent

Continued from page 1

Rose Bowl was very much like a home game, fans reported.

“It really was like Autzen (Stadium) South,” said Maggie Bidasolo, a 16-year-old Ducks super-fan who traveled south with her father, Mike, for the big game. It was her third trip to the Rose Bowl. “About three-fourths of the bowl was all green-and-yellow. By the second quarter, we were just crazy. I never felt anything like that.”

The Ducks took a lead into halftime, then blew the doors off in the third quarter, forcing turnovers and capitalizing on them to crush the previously undefeated Seminoles by a record score of 59-20.

Thomas Arends had a premium spot for watching the game. His primary work

is recruiting so, although he does some logistical work during road trips, he readily acknowledges that game-time is fun-time for him.

“During the game... I’m just the No. 1 fan there on the sidelines.”

Arends started with the Ducks program as an intern in 2008 and worked his way into a full-time position. He checks the background of potential recruits, calling high school athletic directors and counselors to get an understanding of who a player is as a young man. It’s not just about talent. Arends and the staff look for character and for intangibles like how a player reacts to plays on the field.

It was exciting on New Year’s Day to see the results of that work.

“What an awesome game; what an awesome experience,” he said. “It’s a lot of guys coming together and working really hard.”

Fouts gives the young Sisters man a lot of credit.



Thomas Arends with the Rose Bowl trophy.



Maggie and Mike Bidasolo witnessed a thrilling victory at the Rose Bowl.

“Thomas, his fingerprints are all over this team,” he said. “They all look up to him and ask him for advice and stuff. We’re really proud of him.”

Arends’ family hit the road to join him at the Rose Bowl. Dennis and Nancy Dempsey and Paul and Mary Shea were also on hand.

Duck-mania was not just evident at the big game. The Bidasolos went to Disneyland on December 30, and found more than just Donald Duck there. The “Happiest Place on Earth” was a sea of green-and-yellow.

“The cheerleaders and band performed in front of the train station,” Maggie Bidasolo said. “From that point it was like a big pep rally ... it was really unforgettable.”

Maggie won’t be making the trip to Arlington, Texas, for the national championship game.

“No, we’re going to have a huge party at my house for that one,” she said.

Dan and Jeri Fouts plan to be there — weather and

air travel permitting. He’s broadcasting an NFL playoff game from Green Bay the day before.

“Getting out of Green Bay is always a challenge, but Jeri and I are planning to go down there,” he said.

And, of course, Thomas Arends will be there, from his vantage point as “No. 1 fan on the sidelines,” watching the team he works for contend for the first-ever national championship decided through a playoff series.

He’s looking forward to the big game on Monday, January 12, in the massive Dallas Cowboys AT&T Stadium.

“It’s so cool for the state,” he said, “it’s so cool for everyone for us to be in this game.”

Oregon minimum wage rises to \$9.25 in 2015

PORTLAND (AP) — The state minimum wage rose 15 cents Jan. 1 to \$9.25 per hour. That’s an extra \$234 a year for people working 30 hours a week.

State analysts say the change could affect as many as 142,000 workers and 8 percent of all jobs in Oregon.

The Oregonian reports that Oregon’s minimum wage is second-highest in the nation, behind Washington at \$9.45 an hour.

Oregon’s wage floor adjusts each year in line with inflation and is \$2 above the federal minimum in 2015.

Studies have shown that more than half of Oregon’s minimum-wage jobs are tied to the leisure and hospitality sectors of the economy. The law generally applies to all workers, including restaurant workers who receive tips.

The hike comes amid heightened local and national attention to the minimum wage. Critics on the left say the wage floor is too low for people to support their families and escape poverty. Critics on the right say higher minimum wages make it harder for businesses to grow and create new jobs.

After the state Legislature convenes in February with an expanded Democratic majority, lawmakers are likely to weigh a steeper hike.

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