

Andros: 'It's one of the greatest rivalries'

By BOB WELCH
Of the Emerald

On the eve of the Oregon-Oregon State game, you'll see no bonfires glowing in the night air of Eugene or Corvallis. Nor will you hear the clanging of a noise parade or strained shouts of "Beat the Beavers" or "Kill the Ducks" ringing from the streets.

Curry Kirkpatrick won't be down at Duffy's getting background information on the rivalry for Sports Illustrated. Nobody will be camped at the ticket booths at Autzen Stadium. And television crews won't be rolling up I-5 from California.

But when game time arrives for the 79th annual Civil War Saturday does it really matter?

Nope. Nor does it matter that the winner won't get an all-expense paid trip to Pasadena or even a barrel of apples. There is sometimes more pride in a 2-9 team than in a 9-2 team, and, to be sure, that simple five-letter word has made the Civil War the fierce rivalry it is.

"I don't care what anybody says," said Dee Andros, "This is one of the greatest, most intense rivalries in the nation.

"I've been around some big ones—Oklahoma-Texas and Stanford-Cal, for example. And, believe me, this one rates right up there."

There was a time when the Civil War game kindled full-scale riots. Once in the later '30s after Oregon State had beaten the Ducks, a host of then OSC students flocked to Eugene, where they proceeded to block all the traffic on Hilyard and throw anyone driving a car into the Mill Race. Fans had it out with parts of goal posts after another game. And the thought of dating someone from the rival school was unheard of.

To be sure, the rivalry has changed. But the changes have been in the lack of spirit, in the stadiums, in the uniforms, in the style of play, not in the essence of the game itself.

Time has done little to dilute the almost innate intensity—hatred, if you will—that boils between the schools.

In 1927, an Oregon end named Ted Pope, when asked about the change of OSU's name from Oregon Agricultural College to Oregon State said:



"No matter what the Beavers may think about their new title, they are still the Aggies to us and we are going to beat them, rain or shine."

Half a century later, the names have changed, but the feelings of pride have failed to erode.

"I can't explain it," an Oregon State player told me last year. "But I must hate Oregon. I want to beat them worse than anything in the world."



To be sure, the spirit of yesterday has vanished from both campuses. But let's face it: When Tom Yaru looks over at the Beaver quarterback Saturday, it's not going to make a whole lot of difference whether there was a bonfire the night before or not. Nor will it matter much whether the Ducks are 8-2 or 2-8. Yaru's going to want blood anyway.

It's just that kind of game.

The rivalry has been fostered by the fact that the schools are only 50 miles apart and Oregon's only two major universities; that they've been beating heads since 1895 and that it's the last game of the season, the last chance to make amends for all those defeats.

Most of all, however, the rivalry has been fostered by the fact that Oregon is Oregon and Oregon State is Oregon State.

From the first time an Oregon student came up with an Aggie joke and an Oregon State student countered with a Duck joke, it was inevitable that the rivalry emerge.

Now there are Corvallis businessmen who would rather lose a triple-figure contract than lose to Oregon. And Duck alums who have pressured a coach into quitting because he couldn't beat the Beavers.

Of course, not every Oregon-Oregon State player goes to bed dreaming of bouncing a Beaver or a Duck into row 35. Some try to "keep it in perspective."

But they are the minority.

Most believe the game is certainly not a matter of life and death. Nope, they say, it's much more important than that.

'Read has never beaten the Beavers; Andros has lost only one game to the Ducks in ten years.

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