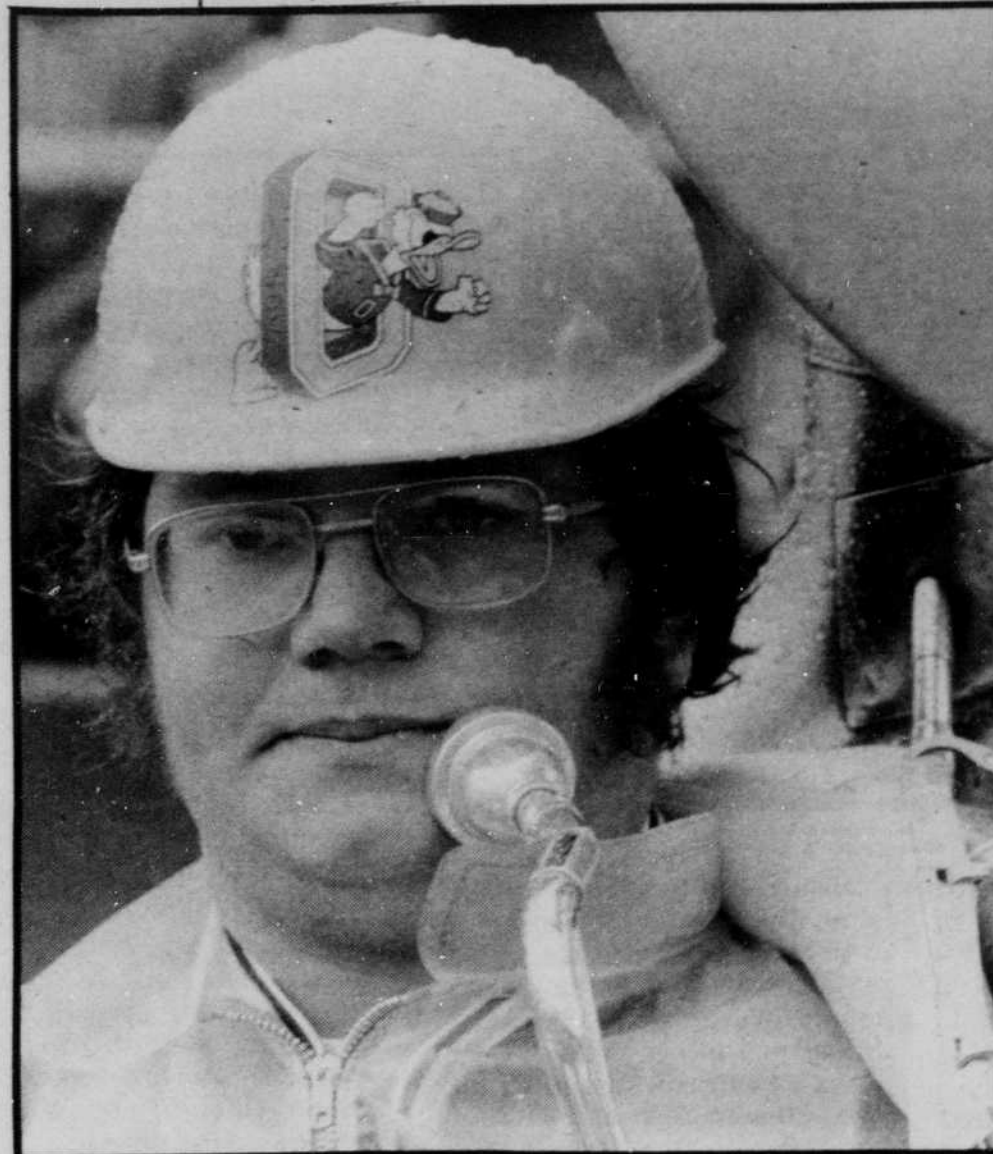




Story by Jody Murray  
Photos by Martha Stanton, Jimmi Harris, and Bob Baker  
Cover photo by Bob Baker



Usually, the words "Civil War" are sufficient to send an Oregon or Oregon State football player's heart a-pumpin' and eyes a-blaazin'. This year, however, there's another word that will spark some extra adrenalin for the 82nd edition of this Northwest free-for-all.

The word is "frustration." The Beaver camp in Corvallis is particularly afflicted by frustration this season. OSU's personal hell began with the opening season kickoff and hasn't ended, except for a brief respite three games ago when the Beavers upset Stanford. The remainder of the time, the Beavers have lost miserably, stumbling to a 2-8 record. Their coach, Craig Fertig, will be on the Oregon State sidelines for the last time this weekend against the Ducks after being fired at mid-season.

Meanwhile, the Ducks are coming into the rivalry straight out of the meat grinder of a 35-0 loss to UCLA last Saturday. The defeat not only destroyed Oregon's slim chances for a bowl invitation, but put a serious dent in their growing reputation as an up-and-coming team.

So, needless to say, the desire to win will be doubly high on both sides this Saturday. Oregon State will be striving to grasp an oasis of satisfaction in a bleak desert of a season, while Oregon will be trying to save face after the humiliating loss to UCLA and finish with its first winning season since 1970.

But what happens on the field is only part of the story. The Civil War game has, over the years, been the catalyst for student emotions and activities as well as those of the players and coaches. Pranks have ranged from parades to dynamiting the big "O" on Skinner's Butte.

Most of these occurrences, however, are a thing of the past, as the unrest and political awareness of the Vietnam era stole away the fervor from sports in general and the Civil War in particular.

"It's never just another game, as far as the players are concerned," says Len Casanova, who coached the Ducks from 1951-66 and now serves the University as athletic director emeritus. "But in the late '60s and early '70s, students became apathetic and lost their interest in athletics."

Lately, indications of increasing school spirit have appeared. The efforts to resurrect the homecoming game this year is a case in point.

But will the fever and activities surrounding the Civil War ever return? Admittedly, it would

# CIVIL WAR

be difficult to recapture the ritualistic rapture that surrounded the game before the late '60s slump.

Take preparation for the 1935 game as an example. On the agenda the week of the contest was a rally, two dances, the "noise parade" and the burning of a wooden "O" on the butte. People with tickets for the rooster's section were required to wear white shirts and rooster's hats or they wouldn't be admitted to their seats.

Among the most important of the pre-game events was the bonfire. Freshmen were assigned to erect and guard the woodpile and try to prevent OSU saboteurs from setting off the torch ahead of schedule.

Another mainstay was the noise parade. Each living organization would create a float equipped with horns, sirens, and other means of audio destruction and try their hardest to bring down every building in Eugene. Awards would be given, of course, for the most ear-assaulting displays.

And then there were the incidents that no one could find on a schedule of events.

In 1937, some industrious individuals from

Corvallis snuck onto Hayward Field, distracted the attention of the freshman guards, and then burnt "OSU" into the mid-field turf. Oregon covered up the letters with cut grass, but couldn't stop the Beaver football team, which won 14-0. Frustrated Oregon students retaliated by kidnapping a few OSU students and using their bodies to paint the 50-foot-long "O" on the butte.

Oregon alum Warren Mack, who now teaches high school journalism in Cupertino, Cal., recalls a game at OSU in the late '50s in which an inebriated Oregon fan got more than he bargained for.

According to Mack, the Beavers' junior varsity team was deployed throughout Parker Stadium during the varsity game as a kind of vigilante squad. With only minutes left in the game, the intoxicated Oregon fan stepped into the endzone and began dancing and shouting a string of obscenities at the OSU fans.

The OSU jayvees jumped the hapless lush who emerged from the melee "wearing only a belt and a sock and still cursing, while bleeding from every pore," Mack recalls.

Sometimes the student aggression was directed at the teams themselves. The week before the 1955 Civil War, the Ducks were dealt a sound 44-7 thrashing by Stanford. The Oregon student body hung coach Casanova in effigy on game day. Later that afternoon, as Cas recalls, he was "crowned" by the students after his team crushed the Beavers, 28-0.

Casanova has seen some strange things happen on the field during the 15 Civil Wars that he has coached. In 1962, the Ducks came into the OSU game with a 6-2-1 record and an invitation to the Bluebonnet Bowl. However, the players had no knowledge of the bowl invite, since Casanova feared that it might steal away some of their intensity.

"I figured that I'd wait until halftime to tell them," says Cas. When he did, the Ducks were leading at the half, 17-7. In the second half, the Beavers closed to 17-14. Luckily, time was running out and OSU had to punt.

"We blocked their punt, but we were called for a penalty. They kicked again. Mel Renfro was standing on the three and decided not to field it, but it bounced and hit him on the leg." An OSU player pounced on the live ball, the Beavers won the contest 20-17, and the 1962 Bluebonnet Bowl went the way of the 1979 Garden State Bowl.



In 1955, the community began to crack down on student pranks. Six University students were charged with destruction of state-owned property after they burned a 12-foot-long "UO" into the grass at Parker Stadium. Each student was fined \$50.

By the mid-'60s, the merriment was on its way out, but not before the Daily Emerald made a pact with the Oregon State Barometer. In 1965, the publications made a bet — the paper of the losing school would publish its next issue with the masthead of the winning school's paper. The Civil War score that year: Oregon State 19, Oregon 17. That Monday, the Daily (Emerald) Barometer was a gracious loser, but noted that the issue was

"undoubtedly the finest piece of journalism ever to appear under the Barometer nameplate."

If they had known what was to come, perhaps the Emerald staff wouldn't have made the bet in the first place. Oregon State was in the midst of an eight-game Civil War winning streak (1964-71), the longest for either team in the rivalry's history.

By 1971, the Ducks were in the pit of disillusionment. This, combined with the spectre of Vietnam, marked the downfall of Oregon Civil War spirit. As the sports editor of the Emerald noted before the '71 game, "Since those days when frats, beanies and homecoming weren't irrelevant, Oregon has lost every year."

(Continued on Page 8B)

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