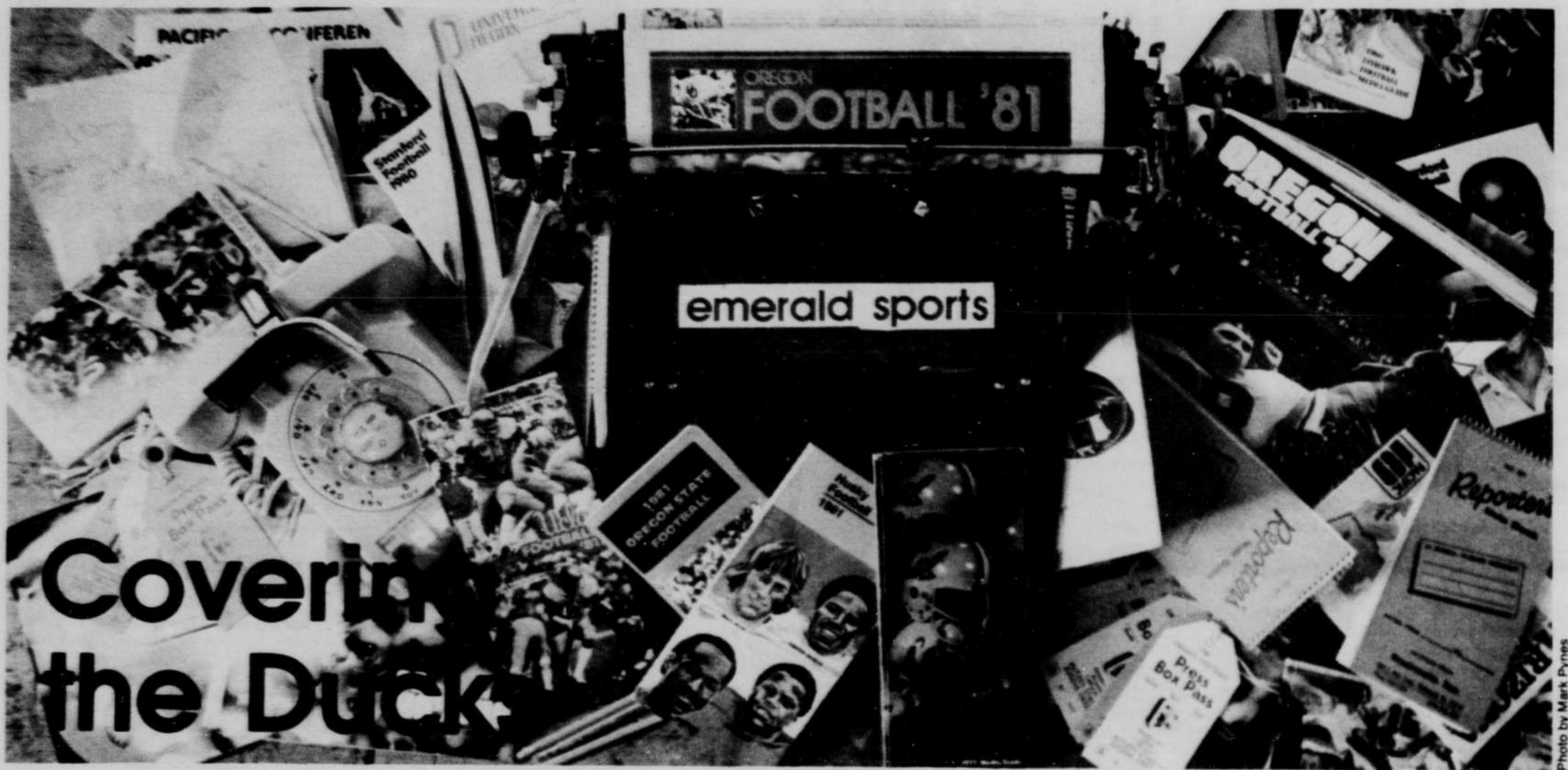




Covering the Duck

Photo by Mark Pynes

A day in the life of a college football sportswriter

By JIM LUND

It's the morning after the big game. Less than 24 hours earlier you watched from the stands as the University of Oregon swamped rival Washington by a score of 44-0. Now it's time for a cup of coffee, a piece of toast, and the morning paper.

"Ducks Bite the Huskies!" cries the headline of the sports section. You read on.

"The University of Oregon combined an explosive offense with an unyielding defense to roll to a convincing 44-0 victory over the Washington Huskies Saturday at Autzen Stadium." Hanging on every word, you continue. You learn that Kevin

Lusk completed 19 of his 20 passes for 270 yards and three touchdowns, while Reggie Brown carried 15 times for 180 yards. On the other side of the ball, Steve Brown had four interceptions and Mike Walter made 12 unassisted tackles.

This is how the story appears when it hits the news stands. But what goes into the story that

reaches your breakfast table? What is really involved in covering a team like the Ducks?

One man qualified to answer that question is Blaine Newnham, sports editor of the Eugene Register-Guard. According to Newnham, who has covered the Ducks since the days of Dan Fouts and Bobby Moore, reporting on a college

team like Oregon's can be quite interesting.

"It's the total involvement of the community and the freshness of new players each year," Newnham said. "In pro football, you basically have the same players. I covered the Oakland Raiders more than ten years ago, and Gene Upshaw and Art Shell are still on the team. It (college football) is different, it changes all the time."

Another appealing factor of the college game is its unpredictability. Fresno State's season-opening upset of the Ducks is an example.

"I've thought a lot about the game at Fresno State, which is kind of the essence of college football," Newnham explained. "A team of players that really nobody in the Pac-10 wanted got together and because of the emotion of the moment and because of the support of the community and because they were unafraid to try a lot of different things, they were able to win."

"I covered the Raiders for three years, and you don't find that situation. There isn't a Fresno State beating an

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