



The Fan

An Emerald reporter searches for the ultimate Duck fan

By **TERRY RHOADS**
Of the Emerald

Five minutes remained in the Oregon-Washington football game when the Huskies scored their final touchdown. For all practical purposes, another defeat had been pinned on the hard-luck Ducks.

For 40,000 fans, it was time to escape from their wet confines to shelter, the nearest bar, anywhere far from the battlefield of Autzen Stadium.

"Let's get the hell out of here," muttered one fan.

"Come on," said another, standing up.

"I've had enough too," said yet another.



Photos by Bob Baker

The broken-spirited group began to head for the aisles, but alas, one member remained sitting.

"Curt!" A guy from the group yelled to a friend as the crowd moaned in response to Duck quarterback Kevin Lusk's sack by the Husky line.

"Hey, we're leaving."

"Fine," snapped the fan, his eyes fixed upon the battered Ducks' sidelines.

A glutton for punishment, the group decided as they pushed themselves up the aisle.

Question:

Is the fan who continued to watch the Huskies pummel the Ducks: 1) A glutton for punishment? 2) In the true sense, a die-hard Oregon Duck FAN? 3) A future member of the Oregon State Mental Hospital in Salem?

Let the accused speak for himself.

"I'm not weird, stupid or anything," said Curt Rassmussen after he realized his party had indeed abandoned both the Ducks and him in the fleeting minutes.

"Hey, those guys are quitters. I'm a Duck," he answered to an inquiring reporter while glancing around for his ride back to campus.

"When God made me, he made me a sports fan. He also put me in Eugene. God realized the Ducks needed a few good fans and he just decided to make me one.

"Sure the team's biting it right now, but hell, I'm going to stick with them, and then when they start kicking some ass, I'm going to be the first one there!"

There seems to be a fine-line limit of love for the Ducks, as the above story exemplifies. But the real question is, where are the real Duck fans like Rassmussen — like the kind they used to have in the old days? You know, the type you read about in an old baseball or football novel.

A reporter decided to find out the truth — to find the real fans.

Does the true fan accentuate the positive aspects of his favorite team?

"I love them just as much as the next guy," said a disenchanted fan who asked to remain nameless. "But you can only do so much. I've been coming to their games for a couple of years now, and it's always the same old thing. You just can't get too caught up in it,



Photo by David Corey

or it'll make you cry."

He left early in the fourth quarter.

Does the best fan cheer for his team — or just say, "cheers!"

Some experts believe Jack Daniels, Henry Weinhard and a Bull are among the most loyal of all Oregon football supporters. This subject draws arguments. One Duck booster in his 40s cast his vote for Paul Masson. A young lady said "Aldo Cella," and a third fan, an Oregon student, simply replied, "M.D. 20/20."

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"Yeah, I like to drink here," said a student named Frank. "It helps me to forget what's happening on the field and to concentrate on what's sitting next to me."

"Hold it," said another student in a packed-but-happy student section. "I don't think all the credit can go to (Mr. Jack) Daniels — what about Coke, don't you think it helps the Ducks? I know it helps me."

Another student hearing his friends' answers offered this:

"You've got to be up for sports," he said with a small bottle of Southern Comfort in one hand and an umbrella in the other. "I mean, the football team gets pumped up in the locker room before the game, right? Well, most of us get pumped up during the game! It helps brings us closer to the action, and we can be more supportive of the team. We're both feeling the same thing: good."

"Well," a friend added, "we have to watch them, so don't ya think we have to get pumped up too?"

Continued on Page 12

Page 11