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**sports**

**Ducks topple No. 9 'Cats**

By Steve Turcotte  
Of the Emerald

It wasn't a typical Saturday night at Eugene's Mahlon Sweet Airport.

More than 300 people were milling about in near-freezing temperatures waiting for a 1:25 a.m. flight to arrive. It was doubtful they were waiting for a late-night flight to San Francisco.

At 1:30 a.m., the Republic plane's wheels touched the ground, and immediately the chanting began: "Rose Bowl. Rose Bowl. Rose Bowl." A few minutes later the plane's door opened and out came what the 300 people were waiting for.

The chanting quickly changed into cheers when Oregon's football team emerged from its three-hour flight from Tucson. So why were there 300 people cheering a football team that has won only a handful of games in the past couple of seasons? The reason: Oregon's 19-10 whipping of ninth-ranked Arizona.

"We have been season-ticket holders for three years now and we have seen the bad times, but not too many good times," said Duck fan Larry Buck. "Our wives think we are crazy — they'd rather sleep. But we think that this is really exciting."

Buck wasn't alone. "This is just great," said defensive end Steve Baack. "It's really hard to believe there are all these people out here."

Duck fans are hungry. They have waited for many, many years for an Oregon team to get off to a start like this year's club has. The Ducks are 3-3 overall and 2-0 in the Pac-10.

"I've waited for years to be able to do this," said Oregon fan Mike Parker of standing and waiting for the team to arrive. "This is the first time I've ever done anything like this. It's kind of ridiculous, but it's a lot of fun."

The Ducks deserved it. Coming into the game

as 24-point underdogs, they just didn't play the Wildcats close — they outplayed them from start to finish.

As was the case against California a week ago, the Ducks used the defense as the impetus to their victory over Arizona. The Oregon defense allowed the Wildcats just 113 yards rushing and 137 through the air for 229 total offensive yards. Going into the game, the Wildcats had been averaging 441 yards per outing — tops in the conference.

"Our defensive line dominated their offensive line," said Oregon coach Rich Brooks.

Oregon's defense, which got beat often earlier in the season, is showing signs of becoming one of the better units in the Pac-10. With lineman like Dan Ralph and Steve Baack chasing Arizona quarterback Tom Tunnicliffe, it was easy for the secondary to make four interceptions.

"They just didn't do anything," said Baack, who had four tackles and a sack. "They got that cheap touchdown (after an interception at the Oregon three) and that was it."

Oregon got the early jump on the Wildcats and never let up. The Ducks took a 9-7 halftime lead, increased it to 19-7 after three quarters, and after that the rest was history.

The victory thrusts the Ducks squarely into the Rose Bowl picture. They are tied with Washington for the lead in the Pac-10 and, with a win over the Huskies Saturday, Oregon would assume the unfamiliar position of first place.

"It's nice to be where we are," admitted Brooks.

But victory against Arizona did not come without a price. Most likely, the Ducks will lose offensive lineman Greg Schwab and safety Doug Judge for the remainder of the season due to knee injuries. In addition, offensive lineman Gary Zimmerman may be lost for a couple of weeks because of a sprained knee.



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