

john healy

# Autzen observations

As the 6,000 or so Washington fans at Autzen Stadium launched into another segment from Kool and the Gang's song "Celebrate," I was left to ponder a week's worth of Oregon football at the Oregon-Washington game Saturday afternoon.

That pondering left me with a satchel full of mixed emotions, ranging from anger to respect.

My emotions included:

- Sympathy tinged with amazement. Rick Bay, Oregon's athletic director, has his heart in the right place but his foot in his mouth.
- Anger. Many of Oregon's fans at Autzen Saturday should have stayed at home and watched the game on the tube rather than subjecting the rest of us to their obnoxious, fair-weather temper tantrums at the Ducks' "ineptness."
- Embarrassment. Oregon's rally squad, that cherished citadel of college football Saturdays, should apply for the first chorus line job that opens in Las Vegas and make room for somebody who will do something other than bump and grind — like lead cheers.
- Respect. Rich Brooks is one of the most underrated coaches in America, and it is a wonder he has ever won a game at Oregon considering the tools the people of this state have given him to work with.

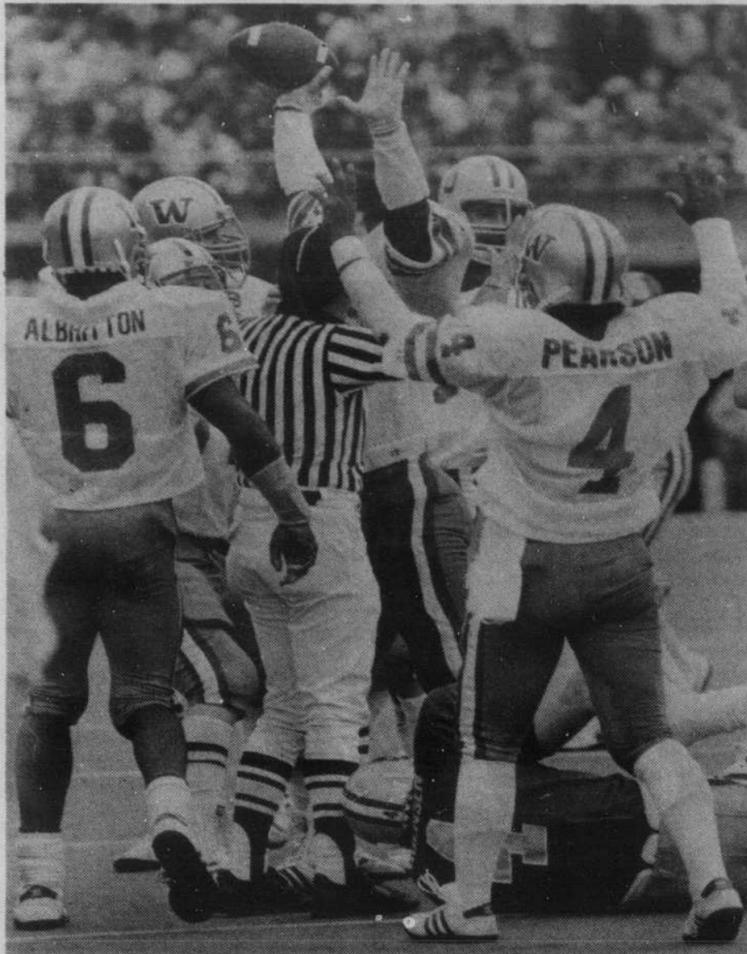
Bay started last week off with a bang when he announced that general admission tickets would be sold at reserved seat prices — a markup from \$6 to \$13.50. Bay claimed he was only looking out for the financial interests of the athletic department by allowing the ebb and flow of supply and demand to dictate ticket prices.

He also maintained that the possibility of changing ticket prices had been made public since last summer, and that other schools in the Pac-10 used a sliding scale of prices for home tickets dependent on the opponent.

But Bay's bombshell appeared to many fans to be solely caused by Oregon's sudden marketability because of its upset of then ninth-ranked Arizona and its 2-0 record in the Pac-10.

They resented having to pay through the nose to see the same Ducks that they had supported through consecutive two-win seasons.

I agree with their anger, but only because I disagree with



Mike Jorgensen got sacked — and along with him, Oregon's hopes of beating Washington.

Bay's approach to the increase, not the actual increase. The \$13.50 ticket made perfect sense, because income from gate receipts is one of two major sources of income for the athletic department, along with alumni donations.

In put it bluntly, money buys wins on Saturday afternoons. If Oregon fans want a winner, then they are going to have to pay for it, and one way is at the gate.

The decision thus becomes an individual one — if you want Rich Brooks to put a competitive football team on the field week in and week out, then you're going to have to pay for it. And that will often mean \$13.50 tickets. If you think that is too much money to pay for a winning program, stay home and mow the lawn or watch Nebraska versus Oklahoma on the tube.

But for those of you decide to forego the lawn, please do a little homework on this year's Oregon team before you open

your mouth and tell the rest of Autzen Stadium how much of a bum Mike Jorgensen is and how inept Oregon's offensive line is.

Maybe if you had been following Oregon football, you would know about the series of devastating injuries that have crippled the Ducks' offensive line, or that nobody has ever claimed Mike Jorgensen's strong suit is passing the ball. He was, after all, recruited as an option quarterback.

And you would know that last week's win over Arizona was an upset of gigantic proportions, and two wins in two Pac-10 games was a minor miracle, as was the win over Houston.

But instead you came to Autzen Saturday full of expectations that couldn't be met, and then like a two-year-old child denied a piece of candy, you proceeded to throw a temper tantrum.

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