

Ducks, CSU 'practical' matchup pleased bowl

By Ashley Conklin
Emerald Sports Editor

ANAHEIM, Calif. — It was a "practical approach" that led to Oregon and Colorado State meeting in Freedom Bowl VII.

Don Andersen, the executive director of the Orange County Sports Association which oversees the Freedom Bowl, said that the OCSA wanted two teams in this year's Freedom Bowl that were happy to be here unlike past teams.

"We wanted to have teams that were anxious to be here," Andersen said. "We felt the best way to do that was to get teams from the WAC (Western Athletic Conference) and the Pac-10.

"These two teams almost reflect the bowl — on their way up," he said. "We didn't go to the Big 10, or the SEC, or Notre Dame. We took that practical approach

and it's come together."

Getting two teams that wanted to be in Freedom Bowl VII was important for Andersen, who took over as the OCSA executive director in March 1, as well as getting the game into the black.

Last year's Freedom Bowl between Washington and Florida drew only 33,858 fans and the two schools sold only 9,200 tickets — Washington 8,000 and Florida 1,200. On top of the poor attendance figures last year was the fact that only Freedom Bowl III in 1986 between UCLA and Brigham Young turned a profit and only because the home-area Bruins were in the game.

But that all changed this year because Andersen's practical approach worked.

Oregon sold more than 18,000 tickets to the game and another 11,800 were guaranteed by the WAC. Paid attendance at Freedom Bowl VII was 51,103 with actu-

al attendance at 41,450.

A crowd of 40,000 was needed, Andersen said, to make the game profitable.

While a marquee team such as an Illinois or Michigan from the Big 10 could have brought a bigger television market to the Freedom Bowl, Andersen said there wouldn't be the crowd needed to turn a profit like Oregon and Colorado State were able to generate.

So with the "practical approach" mindset, Andersen and the OCSA set out to find teams that could bring enough fans to make the game a financial success.

After bowl scouts were allowed to start seeing teams in action Oct. 13, at least one Freedom Bowl scout was on hand at every Oregon game through the Nov. 3 game with UCLA.

When the Ducks overcame a 24-13 fourth quarter

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