

Gill: good memories, misguided fans



FROM THE SIDELINES

BY JAKE BERG

CORVALLIS — I have nothing but colorful memories of Civil War games at Gill Coliseum.

Last season when a Terrell Brandon-led Oregon team fell flat on its face at Gill, I had a great time. Not because the Ducks lost 84-76, mind you, but because what happened around the game was interesting.

Brandon scored a career-high 38 points in that game last January, and the contest was close all the way through, but the real charmer came as being part of the crowd.

The Ducks were 7-4 and had won four straight up to that point, thus attracting a decent amount of Oregon followers to Corvallis. I was among that crowd, which really paled in comparison to the number of Beaver backers at Gill.

But that was the fun of it.

Sitting at the very top of Section 1 (don't let the number fool you, they're the worst seats Gill has to offer), the Duck cheering section — including myself — was constantly booed and jeered by the surrounding Beaver fans. Oh, what fun!

A friend and I were sitting in front of a particularly rowdy group of Eugenians supporting the Ducks. The highlight of the game was when one of those fans got his quacker confiscated by Gill officials who said using the quacker violated building noise regulations.

Now I was starting to feel like the Duck basketball team — underdogs no matter how you look at it.

Things change so little over a

year.

Even in the ticket line one-and-a-half hours before the game Saturday, I was an underdog. A non-Oregon State student in front of me paid the the "student" price for a general admission ticket (\$4), and I — thankfully being the non-Beaver I am — expected the same price. Wrong.

I made the mistake of telling the young woman in the Gill ticket booth that I was from Oregon. Hey, what can I say? I'm honest, at least. "Seven dollars," is what she said.

Saturday's Civil War game was no different than last year's contest, either, except for the obvious fact that not nearly as many Duck fans bothered to make the trip. Though I counted hundreds of total "quacker backers" — students and others alike — at last season's match-up, by my count, I was only one of four student fans at the game Saturday. Sure, that's an exaggeration, but probably not by much.

Coincidentally, I sat behind the other three gentlemen, forming our own version of a pitifully small Oregon student section. From my seat, I could see the handful of Duck fans unlucky enough to get stuck in Section 1 (they should've listened to me) and another handful behind the Oregon bench. Even a family of Duck fans lingered a few rows behind me, against the Gill wall.

The feeling of being an underdog was overpowering.

One of the Oregon students sitting in front of me described the underdog feeling best. "We're dead, man," he said. "We're gone. There's nothing else to it."

But we didn't let that stop us from cheering on the Ducks. We were on our feet for every

"Sit down, you —in' hippie," yelled one Beaver fan.

Oregon score, clapping for every Beaver foul, and verbally patting the refs on the back for some favorable calls.

The Corvallis natives didn't take too kindly to us.

I gave the Ducks a standing ovation on nearly every basket for the first 30 minutes of the game, when Oregon was still in it. And for the first 30 minutes of the game, the Beaver fans explicated their intellectual interpretations of my personal character and choice of academic institutions.

"Sit down you —in' hippie!" yelled one.

"Shut up you faggot!" shouted another.

"—hole!" one said simply.

These aren't in any particular order, just how I remember them, and they didn't bother me because I didn't bother myself any of the above (well, maybe the third one sometimes). Besides, the Ducks were ahead much of the game, I was having too much fun to notice, and I had my fair share of retaliations, even if they were a bit more lame.

My favorite and most memorable fan was a young lady who seated herself directly two rows in front of me at the beginning of the game. When I began cheering for the Ducks during the introduction of the starting lineups, the girl turned around and squarely looked me in the eye.

"What's up with you?" she asked.

"Huh?" I asked in bewilderment.

"What's up with you?" she

said again, with annoyance.

"What's up with you?" I repeated, unable to think of anything quicker.

What else was I supposed to say? I had no idea what she was talking about.

After she told me I shouldn't be cheering for the Ducks, my blood began to churn a little, and I told her what was up.

"Don't lip off to me, little girl," I said with a hint of sarcasm in my smile and voice.

Well, she wasn't going to stand for that. She and her large group of female friends — which seemed to take up about half the section — proceeded to start a chant, rhyming, "— the Ducks! — the Ducks!"

And all this time I thought that was what they used the sheep for.

Now that I've looked at the memories of Civil War Past and Civil War Present at Gill Coliseum, what can I look forward to next year? What does the Ghost of Civil War Future hold for me at Gill? An Oregon win?

Could I actually get a seat where I wouldn't have to keep the blood flowing from my nose with an orange and black handkerchief?

Could the Oregon State fans realize that I am not the homosexual flower child they think I am and start mocking me for being the plain-ol' lazy college student I really am?

Or could I just realize that this is the way things are in Gill Coliseum, where the smell of manure that hits you as soon as you step outside makes you forget real fast about the creepy graveyard in front of McArthur Court?

Truthfully, though, fat chance on any of them.

Jake Berg is the sports editor of the Emerald.

Bears maul Oregon for two losses

The Oregon softball team's road trip ended Monday with a pair of losses at California in both teams' Pacific-10 Conference opener.

The Golden Bears swept the doubleheader 4-1 and 6-1 to improve to 13-1 on the year. The Ducks dropped to 6-4 overall.

Two California pitchers limited Oregon to just two runs and seven hits on the day.

Laura Schmidt was the only Duck to collect a hit in both games.

Oregon won both games of a doubleheader Sunday at St. Mary's, 12-1 and 7-1.

Kim Manning went five for eight on the day with four RBIs, three runs and three stolen bases. Marnie McCall was six for eight with three RBI, three runs and three stolen bases.

Pitcher Natasha Dumoski (2-0) picked up the win in the first game, working five innings and striking out seven.

Rachelle Taylor (3-1) earned the win in the second game. She pitched five innings and struck out nine.

Oregon's game on Saturday against Stanford was called on account of rain. A rescheduled game to be played at Howe Field is pending.

The Ducks return to action with a pair of doubleheaders at Willamette and Oregon State this weekend. Oregon next plays at Howe Field Sunday afternoon at 2:30 against Pacific Lutheran.



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