

Brawls and boozers keep Duck fans away

Rich Brooks and the Oregon football team were "hangin' in November" Saturday before they played UCLA, hoping for a potential bowl berth. But where were all the student fans "hangin' "? Had the weather been truly awful, had the game meant nothing, had the opponent



From the Sidelines
Erick Studenicka

been a second-rate team, it might have been easy to understand

why the student section was only half full.

But none of those reasons seem to excuse Saturday's fan apathy. The weather was chilly, but it was nothing out of the ordinary for a November afternoon in Eugene. The opponent, UCLA, was a brand-name team, and the game's outcome would determine the Ducks' postseason future.

The fact that only 4,100 of 6,098 student tickets were even picked up epitomizes the fan apathy existing on campus. This indifference has forced athletic department officials to examine what can be done to improve student support.

"We're concerned as to what may happen if students continue not to show up," said Sandy Walton, the senior associate athletic director in charge of financial management. "Two years ago, students would line up at Gate E two hours early just to get the best students seats; now, the interest among students seems to be pretty dismal."

Walton said she is so concerned that she expects to speak with ASUO President Bobby Lee on the subject.

Hunt Holsapple, ticket manager for the athletic department, said he is perplexed by the lack of student fan attendance.

"It seems like the students haven't really grasped on to this team, maybe because of the bad start," Holsapple said. "But this team is, on the whole, better than some of the past bowl teams."

Several students said a "just-in-case" attitude prevails on campus.

"I wasn't sure if I was going to be able to go to the game, so I picked up a ticket just in case. I did a lot of studying instead and never went to the game," senior Karen Wiedmann said. "But I don't know why more students don't go to the games."

"Some students pick up three and four tickets in case their friends forget to get tickets," senior Jason Jones said. "Then the weather gets bad or someone gets sick and they end up not going."

Several students said many people do not attend games due to alcohol abuse and violence in the student sections.

"It's disgusting," senior Gail Caballes said. "I went to a game and was vomited on, so I'm not going back to the student section. I'd go though, if I were sitting in a reserved seat."

"I was in the student section two games ago," senior Molly Brewer said, "and there was alcohol and pot all around me. The people were rowdy and fights broke out. I'll still go to games because I'm friends with one of the players, but it's easy to see how many people don't go because of the vio-

lence."

Although there is a no-alcohol policy that allows security to check all containers brought into Autzen Stadium, boda bags are easily concealed. Once students are in the stadium, little is done to curtail their alcohol consumption.

It would seem unrealistic to place a ban on boda bags in the stadium, as it would require fans be frisked to enforce the rule. Neither the students nor security would be eager to implement a ban that would require the frisking of every person who enters Autzen Stadium.

But it may be time for students and the athletic department to voluntarily establish an alcohol-free student section. On the surface, it sounds stupid - an alcohol-free zone in a non-alcohol stadium. But more students might go to the games if they could be assured of watching the game in peace rather than deal with violent and drunken behavior going on around them.

Or maybe the athletic department should just establish an "alcohol zone." If security isn't going to enforce the alcohol consumption rules, maybe there should be a section of Autzen specifically set aside for drinking.

I propose to set aside Section 5 for next year's home games for all of the students who wish to drink. If they complain they're getting the crappy seats, I'd argue they'd be too drunk to see the game anyway.

And even if my experiment is a flop and no student chooses to sit in Section 5, it wouldn't really be that big of a deal. No one sits there anyway.

Erick Studenicka is a sports reporter for the Emerald.

Men open basketball season

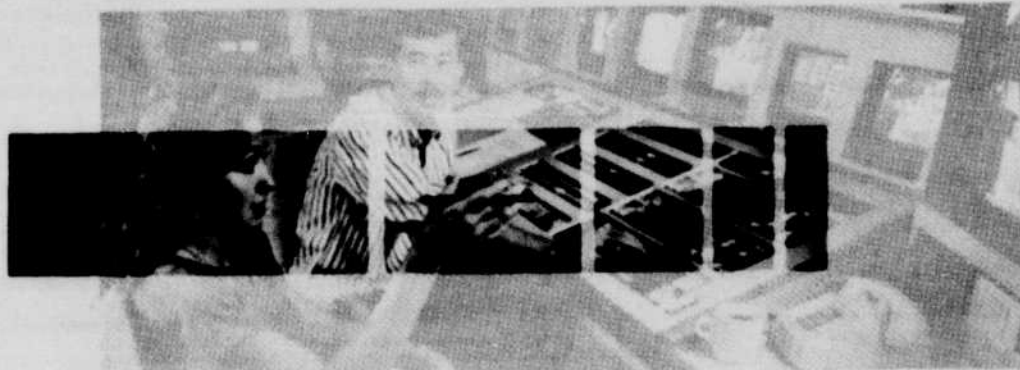
The Oregon men's basketball team opens its season with an exhibition game tonight against the Canberra Cannons at 7:05 p.m. in McArthur Court.

The game will not count toward season standings and should be a good tune-up for new head coach Jerry Green's team. Tonight's game will be the first game at McArthur Court for Green, who took over Don Monson's position last spring.

Oregon's lineup has not changed much from last year's 6-21 team.

The brightest spot for the Ducks is the return of senior Antoine Stoudamire, who has been picked by many publications as a possible All-Pacific-10 Conference player. Stoudamire averaged 20 points for the Ducks last year.

Also of note is the return of center Bob Fife. Fife redshirted last year after a preseason head injury.



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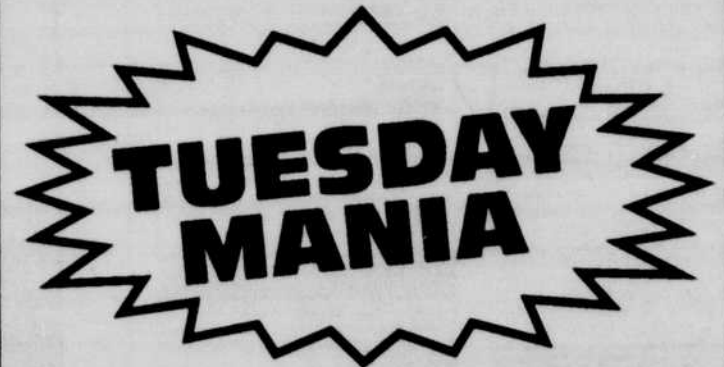
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