Bowl berth good opportunity, if done correctly



he 1992 Independence Bowl is a great opportunity for Oregon to show off its athletic and academic program to the country, if it is done correctly.

When the Ducks traveled to Shreveport, La. three years ago for the game, too many people went with the team for free. The Ducks can be partially excused for not being prepared for a bowl game because they had not been invited to a postseason appearance in 26 years, but as they prepare for their third bowl game in the last four years, the Ducks must be more careful

Four of the most controversial people the Ducks took to the 1989 Independence Bowl were Eugene Mayor Jeff Miller, Springfield Mayor Bill Morrisette and their wives. If Miller and Morrisette want to attend this year's game, they should be calling their travel agents. The only people the University should pay to send to the game are the players, coaches, a few school adminis-

trators and other people who need to be there.

The current price for a roundtrip ticket to Shreveport is \$450 if a person agrees to stay in town for at least four nights, said Karen Clark of AAA Travel Agency. If a person stays less than four nights, the price is \$900, said Clark.

This means that for every person the University sends to the game, it will cost \$450 for airfare. Assuming each person stays in a respectable hotel, say \$75 per night, the total cost per person is \$750 for the game.

This amount of money is 80 percent of the cost for in-state tuition for one term. With all the economic problems facing higher education, this money must be spent on students rather than four days and nights in Shreveport for people who have nothing to do with the Oregon football program.

The University has agreed to purchase 8,140 tickets at \$30 piece for the Independence Bowl. It's a lot, but it had to be done for Oregon to be invited to the game. The Ducks will be hard pressed to sell more than 5,000 of these seats, which means the unsold seats will cost the University about \$90,000.

Before people start comparing this year's trip to Shreve-

port to the 1989 trip, they must realize the differences. Bill Byrne, Oregon's athletic director in 1989, bought 14,000 seats and lost \$174,000 to assure the 7-4 Ducks would play in a bowl game for the first time in 26 years. A bowl game is not as important for the Ducks this year because the 6-5 record is questionable for postseason play, and the Ducks appeared in bowl games in 1989 and

The biggest difference between Oregon's appearance in the Independence Bowl three years ago and now is the number of tickets bought by the University. The 14,000 tickets Byrne purchased for the University in 1989 cost \$100,000 more than the 8,140 bought this year. In addition, Oregon was payed \$500,000 to appear in the 1989 game, compared to \$650,000 this year.

Add the \$100,000 less that the University spent to get in the bowl and the \$150,000 more they will be payed to appear, and it will cost Oregon \$250,000 less to play this year. This time around, Oregon should make at least a little money to play in the bowl

All money matters aside, the talk of a bowl appearance being embarrassing for a 6-5 team is

stupid. There is no reason to be embarrassed about going to a bowl game and even less reason to be embarrassed about being 4-4 in a conference that had seven teams receive votes in recent Top 25 polls

The 1992 Oregon Ducks are a good football team, not a great team and probably not as good as the Ducks' 1989 and 1990 bowl teams. But this is a good team. Oregon was in practically every game it played this year, and with a couple of breaks they could have been 8-3.

The factors that keep the 1992 Ducks from being considered a Top 25 team were clearly evident in their 9-6 loss against UCLA two weekends ago. Oregon entered the game 5-4, thinking they needed two wins to clinch a bowl berth. There was no excuse for the Ducks to come out as flat as they did and lose an important game against a weaker team. but they did. The UCLA game was the kind of game that a top notch team would win in a rout, but the Ducks didn't. Fortunately for the Ducks, great teams aren't the only ones who get bowl berths, a lot of good teams also do.

This bowl game is a great chance for the Ducks to showcase their football team to the entire nation and improve their

recruiting position. When a high school player watches the Ducks on New Years Eve on ESPN and realizes the Ducks are playing their third bowl game in four years, it will make a strong impression.

This year's Duck squad also deserves to play in a postseason game because of the obstacles they have overcome during the season. A lot of people believed that when Oregon went 3-8 last year it signified a return to past years of futility. After Oregon started 0-2 this year, people got even further down on the

It took a lot of heart for the Ducks to fight back as they did instead of fall apart. An Independence Bowl berth is a good way to reward the Ducks for not giving up, especially the seniors who have been a major part of the transition from a poor football program to a com-

Oregon head coach and athletic director Rich Brooks has taken a lot of criticism for handling both jobs, and budgeting this trip will be his first major undertaking. There is a lot of pressure on Brooks not to lose money on this trip. He has said he won't, and as long as he doesn't, the bowl appearance is something for all Oregon fans

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