



# Miracle Ducks of 1957-58 defied odds, pollsters



Oregon coach Len Casanova took his team from preseason obscurity to a near upset of top-ranked Ohio State in the 1958 Rose Bowl.

Trevor Kearney  
Oregon Daily Emerald

10:45 a.m., Nov. 26, 1957—While President Dwight D. Eisenhower was basking in the glow of his reelection and Brooklyn baseball fans were still mourning the loss of their Dodgers to sunny California, Oregon Duck football fans were pondering the post season football schedule.

10:51—The Oregon Ducks receive the official invitation to the 1958 Rose Bowl, the team's first since 1920.

10:58—The Student Union chimes sound in recognition of the Ducks' accomplishment, and some 2500 students gather near McArthur Court in support of the team and anticipation of buying their \$2.50 tickets.

During the 1957 preseason, the Rose Bowl was almost as distant to the Ducks as the state of Ohio.

In the major national polls, the team was ranked no better than second to last in the Pacific Coast Conference (PCC), which at that time consisted of only eight teams.

And facing four of the top rated teams in the nation — Oregon State, Pittsburgh, Stanford and UCLA — did not help the 1957 team's chances.

The Ducks, however, fought off criticism all year long and lost to only Pittsburgh, Washington and Oregon State. Against top-rated Pittsburgh, the Ducks held a 3-0 lead until



On New Year's Day, the Ducks faced the Ohio State Buckeyes in the 1958 Rose Bowl.

the Panthers scored a touchdown with 22 seconds left in the game to take the win.

The Ducks recovered and went on to drub UCLA 24-0 the next week, marking the first win against the Bruins since 1948.

Oregon also beat a strong California team 24-16, but ended the season with a 10-7 loss to Oregon State, dropping the team into a tie with the Beavers for the PCC title.

Oregon, with two players on the All-Coast team, was chosen over Oregon State for the Rose Bowl berth, pitting the surprise Ducks against the No. 1 ranked Ohio State Buckeyes.

Facing a strong Buckeye team

that finished the season 8-1 and was atop the Big Ten for the third time in four years, the Ducks were touted as 21-point underdogs.

As seems to be the fad any time, Los Angeles sportswriters ripped the underdog Ducks and mocked the New Year's Day match up.

"The Pacific Coast's representative doesn't deserve to be on the same field as Ohio State," the Jan. 7, 1958 *Emerald* recalled one L.A. sportswriter saying before the game.

"This will be the most sickening mismatch in Rose Bowl his-

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