

Rose Bowl helps University

By Ryan March

Swelling with pride as we returned home from our recent trip to Pasadena, there were those of us who couldn't help but wonder how long it would take before our beloved *Emerald* published an unfounded bashing of the Ducks' long overdue success and national recognition. On January 12, Paul Van Sickle turned those fears into reality, with a confused commentary that painted a picture of our victimized University falling to the evil blows of Rich Brooks — the anti-Christ of education.

For those who may have missed the article, Mr. Van Sickle explained that our institute of higher learning is somehow suffering in the aftermath of Oregon's storybook season, and that the University is ignoring its educational responsibilities by supporting such a meaningless event. To support his claim that our Rose Bowl appearance received too much attention, Paul points to the fact that people seldom turn out by the thousands to witness such college events as the completion of the Knight Library renovation.

Funny, I never looked at it that way. Come to think of it, just last term I submitted a class project that was to be the pinnacle of my educational career, and that too, failed to draw a world-wide audience! Is it possible that such events simply weren't designed to attract spectators? Don't worry Paul, I realize that you were desperately trying to make a point, and since it appears that you're new at this, I'll pardon you for the false analogy.

Unfortunately, I can't seem to look past the collection of illogical arguments that made up the

remainder of your commentary. Take, for instance, your claim that the University has terminated its mission of "teaching and learning" by supporting a department standing simply for "playing and winning." First of all, we should give the good folks at Johnson Hall the benefit of the doubt and assume that somewhere in their professional backgrounds, they have acquired an ability to facilitate education in the wake of a weekend football game. If such a feat cannot be accomplished, then the problem lies in our administration — not in our athletic department.

Furthermore, if you would open your mind, just long enough to see what has transpired through this "Miracle Season," you might find that even football has "taught" us a great deal. As the Ducks rebounded from a 1-2 start to defy the odds and capture the first outright Pac-10 title in school history, thousands of onlookers learned once and for all, that there's never a good time to quit. Even as the "Gang Green" fell to defeat in Pasadena, more than 45,000 Oregon faithful remained standing as one, saluting a team that had gained national respect and illustrating a lesson that can't often be taught in the classroom — "sometimes even when you lose...you win!"

If, however, you aren't convinced by the philosophical implications of our athletic success, at least consider the financial bottom line. In your article, you conceded that the Rose Bowl had earned our University money, publicity and even a sense of prestige. What you concluded, though, was that none of these gains could lead to "academic improvement." I could be misinformed (I am, after all, an

admitted football fan), but it seems to me that a combination of money, publicity and prestige, is the closest thing to an academic success formula that this world has ever seen.

Without the Rose Bowl, do you think that this University could have pooled together the funds necessary to broadcast a 30-second commercial to an audience spanning 15 countries? Do you think that the student discount on course books would have increased, were it not for profits resulting from the sale of Rose Bowl merchandise? You mentioned that you once e-mailed former University President Myles Brand for information — how about dropping President Frohnmayer a line and asking him what impact all of this publicity will have on our "academic" institution.

The bottom line is that our athletic department is receiving money and recognition that will allow it to fund its own operations, so that you won't have to. You can try as hard as you wish to minimize the positive effects of our athletic success on our academic community, but you certainly can't say that it has taken anything away. On a campus so divided by social and political barriers, I simply can't see the value in cursing a department that has finally given our community something to celebrate together. If you can't bring yourself to enjoy the moment, and all of this agonizing "Duck Spirit" just gets too much for you, my only advice would be to head to Corvallis. At least, as a Beaver, you wouldn't have to worry about football success stories dampening your "college experience."

Ryan March is a senior majoring in business management.

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