

# PERSPECTIVES

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## Thumbs



### THUMBS UP

**To the Ducks:**  
For earning national respect and giving even non-football fans a reason to tune in on Saturday. Ultimately, we can forgive the turnovers.  
**To all the players on both teams:**  
For playing through heat, injuries and puke on the field to deliver one of the best college football games in recent memory.



### THUMBS DOWN

**To the Ducks:**  
For too many turnovers. One or two we could understand, but five?  
**To UCLA's Cade McNown:**  
For vomiting on the field, on national television in front of thousands of fans. We could have gone all day without that, Cade.

### CORRECTION

In "Goodall shares monkey business" (ODE, Oct. 16) the headline should have identified the monkeys as chimpanzees. The Emerald regrets the error.

# Fair weather funding

*Donors shouldn't wait for a winning season to dole out big contributions*

Don't get us wrong; we love the Ducks. Well, actually some of us are fairly indifferent to the Ducks. And some of us are inexplicably hostile toward the Ducks. For the most part, though, we love the Ducks.

And as the year draws to a close, it seems that we have yet another reason to love the Ducks.

The Oregon Campaign, a six-year fund raising effort by the University, will culminate this December having raised more than \$232 million.

The original goal of the Oregon Campaign was \$150 million and was raised to \$200 million when the campaign hit the benchmark ahead of schedule.

Here's where the Ducks come in. Contributions to the Oregon Campaign reached their highest levels during 1995-1996, the year after the football team made it to the Rose Bowl. The next most profitable year was 1996-1997, the Cotton Bowl year. The next time donors were feeling particularly generous was 1997-1998, the year the Ducks waddled down to Nevada for the Las Vegas Bowl.

You don't have to draw too heavily on your college education to see the connections here. The

donors who give to the Oregon Campaign are obviously people who care about the school, often alumni. Perhaps they care just a wee bit more when something happens to make the school more visible — like a big football year.

This is not a unique concept. Schools like Stanford and USC have been successfully milking the alumni-sports connection for years. To be fair, we have to acknowledge here that private contributors donated to the Oregon Campaign for a variety of reasons.

Sports may not have been the only impetus for the influx in funds, but it's a good bet that they were a major influence. Let's face it. Donors probably weren't scrambling for their checkbooks because of their enthusiasm for zebra-fish research.

Of course, none of this is to say that these contributions are bad. To the contrary, they present an enormous boon to all students. The new law school is one of the projects partially funded by the campaign. The administration also reports that an increase in scholarships, new equipment and new fields of study are all going to be made possible by the Oregon Campaign cash.

But there are questions here that beg to be asked. What if the football team hadn't gone to

three bowl games in four years? Would the Oregon Campaign have been such a ringing success?

One of the criticisms often leveled at private citizens who contribute to public entities like universities is that donors often disproportionately favor athletic programs. This is a thorny point to argue. If someone like, oh, let's say Phil Knight, wants to give \$25 million, and the University wants to take it, does anyone really care why he wants to give it?

Indeed, someone should care about how and why contributions are made. It is somewhat unsettling to think that we might not be able to provide funding for facilities and programs that enrich the educations of us all if the Ducks miss a touchdown or blow a field goal.

As the athletic program revels in what is shaping up to be a banner year, these concerns don't seem too weighty. Nevertheless, even the 1998 Ducks are subject to the vagaries of fate.

If alumni and other private contributors really want to show their commitment to the University, then they should support the institution as a whole all year long, not just when there's a big game on the line.

*This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses may be sent to ode@oregon.uoregon.edu.*

