

*"I am the most loyal player
money can buy."*

Former MLB pitcher Don Sutton, who played for the Los Angeles Dodgers, Houston Astros, Milwaukee Brewers, Oakland Athletics and California Angels.

■ In my opinion



SCOTT J. ADAMS
INTENTIONAL GROUNDING

Above all, thou shalt be loyal to your team

Today's Hump Day special is for the fans — sports fans that is. One of the strongest relationships around is the love between a fan and his or her team. But what gives people the right to root for a certain team? I'd like to share the reasons why loyalty goes a long way, as well as my six-and-half-point protocol for weighing the validity of a fan's love. Hit the lights.

For starters, there's a reason why professional teams are either created in or re-located to certain cities and states: They represent the people in the community. I'm all for staying true to a team that hails from a region you used to call home, but don't you hate it when you come across Atlanta Braves or Dallas Cowboys fans who have never been farther east than Las Vegas or even close to crossing the Mason-Dixon Line? It doesn't make any sense to me. Those bandwagoners are what give fans a bad name and there are far too many of them.

Fans should embrace backing a team that has the same state abbreviation that graces their mail. Being able to relate to fans around you creates a sense of identity. Most importantly, you have next-door neighbors you can turn to when you feel like letting off some steam about your favorite college football team, which hasn't won a Rose Bowl since the Wilson Administration. To make a long-winded point short, you do a great service for your team in strengthening its local community, and you can carry your loyalty with you should you relocate.

Speaking of relocating, let me tell you about a young man who spent all but one single year of his life living what seemed like light years away from his team's home town. That single year was his first on earth and was spent in Palo Alto, Calif., where the San Francisco Giants and 49ers reign supreme on television. He moved south to Orange County shortly after his first birthday where he grew up sporting black and orange and red and gold. He may have been laughed at by his friends who felt cool wearing their Jim Everett and "Flipper" Anderson jerseys of the then-Los Angeles Rams, but he had the last laugh. Scott wa ... I mean, this boy has been loyal to his team since birth; he never forgot where he took his first step. You know what was most rewarding for him? Rubbing five Super Bowl wins into the faces of his school-yard pals. What a guy.

One thing guaranteed to up your passion for sports is your loyalty to a single team. As much as politicians are ridiculed for changing their standpoints and policies, so too are fans who flip-flop to the team with the shinier win column. Don't let a one-win season discourage you from being faithful. Come home to your team every night and stand up for it, because no two seasons are alike and even dynasties don't last forever.

A fair-weather fan is not a fan at all,

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■ Club water polo



COURTESY

Jon Ashford, a member of Oregon's water polo club, scores in a recent tournament held at Amazon Pool in Eugene. Oregon won the tournament after wins against Oregon State, Portland and Central Washington and a Washington State forfeit.

Oregon washes out its first foes

Oregon's water polo club starts its Northwest Division crown defense with a bang, ripping its opponents by 37 in four games

BY WILL SEYMOUR
FREELANCE REPORTER

The Oregon men's water polo club started its season with a splash, sweeping the opening league tournament Oct. 8-9 at the Amazon Pool in Eugene by a combined score of 54-17.

This season also marks the first title defense in the club's history, and spirits are high because the squad is virtually unchanged from last year's winning combination.

"We think we can play with the No. 1 team in the country and give them a run for their money," graduate student George Slavich said.

After winning four out of six matches at a warm-up tournament at UC Davis, the Ducks returned home for a rematch of last year's Northwest Division title game against Oregon State University. The previous contest against the Beavers ended in a 10-9 thriller, but Oregon put any chance of another close match away early, jumping out to a 9-2 lead and cruising to a 18-7 victory. The first match set the tone for the rest of the tournament, as the Ducks smashed the University of Portland and Central Washington by tallies of 17-5 and 14-5 respectively. Oregon was also scheduled to face Washington State,

but because of time constraints, the Cougars forfeited.

With more than half of the short water polo season already complete, the experienced Duck team can be forgiven for looking ahead to the postseason. Oregon returns all but one member of the squad that placed eighth in last year's national tournament, and that lone loss to the roster, Stephen Imperiale-Hagerman, returns for his second year of coaching the squad.

"A national championship is not out of the question," Imperiale-Hagerman said.

Leading the Ducks in the water will be first team All-American and Northwest Division MVP Mark Welch.

"He's the most talented player on our team,"

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■ Duck football

Duck seniors look for big bowl bid

No. 20 Oregon, coming off an upset of the Sun Devils, goes for the kill against the Huskies

BY LUKE ANDREWS
SPORTS REPORTER

A lack of senior leadership on the Oregon roster a year ago may have been a major factor behind the Ducks' first losing season in 11 years.

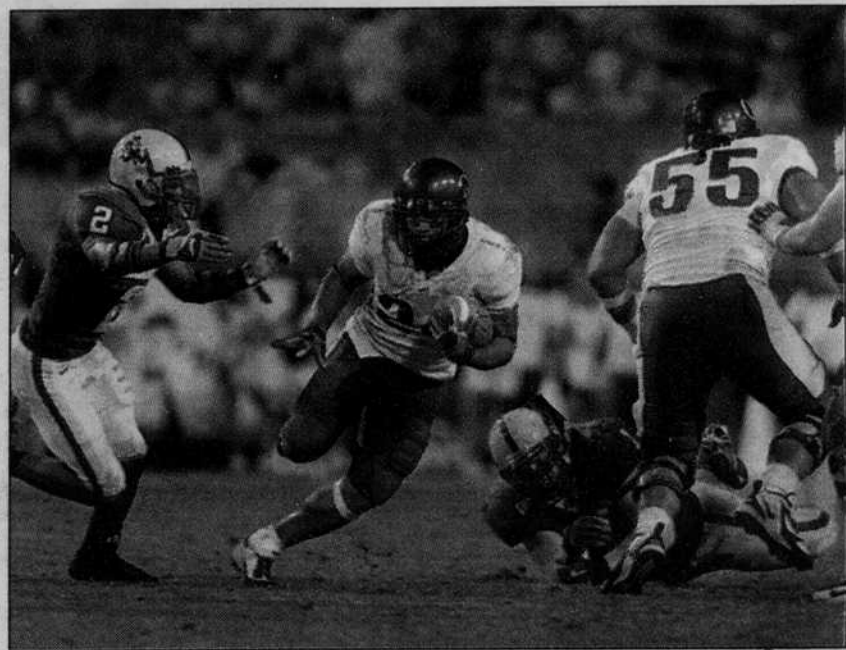
But inexperience no longer pervades the Oregon roster as the Ducks' 2005 senior class looks to reverse the fortune of last season's disappointing 5-6 record and restore Oregon's bowl tradition.

Led by quarterback Kellen Clemens, a three-year starter from Burns, the Ducks (5-1 overall, 2-1 Pacific-10 Conference) are one win from bowl eligibility after a road victory against Arizona State, a game in which Oregon fell behind 10-0 early before rallying.

"Instead of hanging their heads or going into a pouting mode, our seniors stepped up and spoke up and said, 'Hey we're not going to let this happen,'" Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said. "We did everything necessary to prove that we are a good football team in a hostile environment on the road."

The Ducks hope the crucial road victory will spark the march to another major bowl game — one similar to the Fiesta Bowl in 2002, the year the current seniors arrived at Oregon as freshmen.

"Last year was disappointing. We under-achieved, and it was tough," senior defensive end Devan Long said. "But I came in with these guys and I'm leaving with these guys and we want to leave the way we came in — with a nice



COURTESY

Oregon running back Terrence Whitehead accounted for 222 total yards Saturday during a 31-17 victory at Arizona State. Whitehead also scored two touchdowns.

bowl game."

The distinguished bunch includes, in addition to Clemens and Long, running back Terrence Whitehead, tight end Tim Day, wide receiver Demetrius Williams, cornerback Aaron Gipson, strong safety Anthony Trucks, cornerback Justin Phinisee and offensive guard Ian Reynoso.

"We have to go out with a bang," said Phinisee, who recorded his second interception of the season last Saturday. "All these seniors, we are hungry for it."

Whitehead's play against Arizona State may

best reflect the sense of urgency felt by the senior class.

The Los Angeles native finished with 222 yards of total offense and two touchdowns to help the Ducks upset the previously 17th-ranked Sun Devils 31-17. The total yardage helped Whitehead move to seventh, passing Don Reynolds and Terry Obee, on the school's career all-purpose running list. He now has 3,679 all-purpose running yards in his career.

"I think Terrence has had some games that are fairly remarkable, but that was one of the best I have ever seen," Bellotti said. "I was very

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