

'Rootin' Tootin' Hooton' cheers on Ducks

By **CHELSEA GORROW**
Eugene Register-Guard

Alice Hooton turned 87 this week, but as she ate her celebratory cookie and ice cream at The Wild Duck Cafe in Eugene New Year's Day, she wasn't thinking about 2015 or her birthday.

The self-proclaimed "Rootin' Tootin' Hooton" was there to cheer on the University of Oregon Ducks football team and their win at the Rose Bowl, 59-20 against Florida State.

"I've lived in Eugene since 1999. I've lived in this area since 1948, and this is my first watch party ever and my first time here," Hooton said. "I had no idea how much fun this would be. Everything couldn't have been nicer. The food was delicious, the service was wonderful, and the fact that we had the screens to watch the game — I'm almost out of breath with excitement."

Hooton said she's always been a big Ducks fan. She's taken classes through the university, and her youngest of three sons managed the UO maintenance department until his recent retirement.

Hooton lives in the Patterson Tower apartments, just 1½ miles away, and she said she's "so glad I lived long enough to be able to come here and try a meal here and be here to watch the game. It's extra special."

A few tables down from Hooton sat Colleen Kelly with Jack Voth and her 11-year-old son, Grant, who says he wants to grow up to be a Ducks quarterback just like his hero, Marcus Mariota.

"My son has every single jersey just about that they ever made, and in fact when Mariota started playing, Grant really fell in love with him early on. But you couldn't get that jersey in kids' sizes because they didn't know (Mariota) would be such a big player," she said.

So Kelly had the jerseys hemmed to fit Grant until kids' sizes became available, she said.

Grant did a push-up on the floor of The Wild Duck Cafe Thursday night for every point scored by the Ducks.

"For every single point," Grant said proudly, admitting that his arms were a little sore. "It's sort of a good luck charm, and that helped us get through all the years."

Kelly said she was born in Eugene and has been a life-long Ducks fan, graduating from the university in a year she wouldn't disclose.

"I lived in the same dorms as the ones where they housed the football players in so I got to eat, breathe, live, ev-



In this photo taken with a fisheye lens, an Oregon fan raises a banner in support of her team before the Rose Bowl NCAA college football playoff semifinal against Florida State.

AP Photo/Richard Vogel

PREP SCHEDULE

TODAY
Girls Basketball — Willapa Valley at Ilwaco, 7 p.m.

SATURDAY
Girls Basketball — Sutherlin at Seaside, 2 p.m.; Gaston at Warrenton, 3 p.m.

Boys Basketball — Gaston at Warrenton, 4:45 p.m.; Ilwaco at Willapa Valley, 7 p.m.

Wrestling — Astoria at Scappoose Tournament, TBA



AP Photo/Jae C. Hong

Oregon wide receiver Darren Carrington, front, scores under pressure by Florida State defensive back Trey Marshall during the second half of the Rose Bowl NCAA college football playoff semifinal, Thursday, in Pasadena, Calif.

everything with the Ducks so I learned all about football and it was really fun," she said.

She and her family were confident that the Ducks would win. And sure enough, the boys in green and yellow came through.

"I love the Ducks," Grant said. "People don't always think that the Pac-12 stuff is really important. I feel this is great exposure for not only Oregon, but also the entire Pac-12."

Grant also plays football, as a quarterback, and had the No. 8 jersey for his team just two years ago.

"Now, everybody wants to be No. 8, but he takes pride in the fact that he was No. 8 before everybody else," Kelly said.

Kelly described her family as "front row people," as they

watched the game in front of the biggest TV — a projector screen — set up at The Wild Duck Cafe for the game.

A few rows back sat alumnus Trevor Gant, who drove from Los Angeles to see the game with a group of his friends.

"It's just incredible for us to beat a team this badly," the 32-year-old Gant said, referring to the Ducks 59-20 win over Florida State. "I'm at a loss for words that we were able to win by so many points and we were sweating it in the first half, but then all of us just went crazy, turnover after turnover."

His friend, Tanner Baldus,

a UO student, described it as "the perfect game" because, "it's good, fighting in the first half, and it's like, 'alright, we've got our competitiveness going.' And then you just go straight for the win in the second half."

Gant said he was "heartbroken" when the Ducks lost the national championship to Auburn in 2011 and he's looking forward to his team getting back to the championship this year.

See game coverage at <http://bit.ly/14i1tZi>

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AP Photo/Jae C. Hong

Oregon wide receiver Charles Nelson, left, dives just short of the goal line over Florida State safety Tyler Hunter



AP Photo/Mark J. Terrill

Oregon quarterback Marcus Mariota, right, scores past Florida State defensive back P.J. Williams during the second half of the Rose Bowl NCAA college football playoff semifinal, Thursday, in Pasadena, Calif.

Ducks: Oregon is a seven-point favorite against Ohio State

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The Ducks (13-1) and Buckeyes (13-1) last played in the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California, in 2010. Ohio State won that game 26-17. Now the Rose Bowl comes to Texas, but with so much more at stake.

Cardale Jones, Ezekiel Elliott and fourth-seeded Ohio State rallied, and then held on for a 42-35 victory over No. 1 Alabama at the Sugar Bowl on Thursday night.

Heisman Trophy winner Marcus Mariota and Oregon had it much easier. The second-seeded Ducks crushed Florida State 59-20 at the Rose Bowl.

"Oregon won by 40?" Ohio State coach Urban Meyer said, startled when he heard about the results during his postgame news conference in New Orleans. "I gotta go. We gotta go get ready for that one."

The oddsmakers have installed the Ducks as seven-point favorites.

The College Football Playoff, a four-team tournament that replaced the Bowl Championship Series, has provided a jolt to the sport.

The BCS matched the top two teams and didn't allow much room for error. An early slip often could spell doom for



AP Photo/Lenny Ignelzi

Oregon players celebrate their win over Florida State at the Rose Bowl NCAA college football playoff semifinal, Thursday, in Pasadena, Calif.

a team's national title hopes.

In the old system, it would have been very difficult for Ohio State to recover from a September home loss to Virginia Tech. The Buckeyes were a team looking for an identity back then. They had lost star quarterback Braxton Miller to a preseason injury and redshirt freshman J.T. Barrett was still developing.

Ohio State lost by 14 to the Hokies on the same day Oregon beat Michigan State.

Two weeks into the season, the Big Ten was already being counted out for the first playoff.

But a funny thing happened. Ohio State just kept getting better.

Barrett turned into a Heisman contender, but then

in the season finale against Michigan, he broke his ankle. In stepped Jones, who helped Ohio State blast Wisconsin in the Big Ten title game to earn the final spot in the playoff.

It was no fluke. The Buckeyes beat Alabama, eliminating the Southeastern Conference from title contention. After winning seven straight national championships in the



AP Photo/Jae C. Hong

Oregon wide receiver Darren Carrington, left, celebrates his touchdown with tight end Pharaoh Brown during the second half of the Rose Bowl NCAA college football playoff semifinal Florida State, Thursday, in Pasadena, Calif.

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— Urban Meyer

Ohio State coach startled when he heard about the results during his postgame news conference in New Orleans

"We know Oregon. I'll probably be able to call Oregon's plays because we study them and they study us," Meyer said. "There's a mutual respect."

For what it's worth, Ohio State is 8-0 all-time against Oregon.

And think about this: Alabama and Florida State were Nos. 1 and 2 in the final regular-season Associated Press and USA Today coaches' polls. There's a good chance that in the BCS the championship game would have been Tide vs. Seminoles with Oregon and Ohio State playing a traditional Big Ten-Pac-12 Rose Bowl for nothing but pride.

Now they'll take it to Texas for a championship game with which no one can argue.

BCS, it's now two straight seasons in which the SEC won't wear the crown.

Oregon's loss came at home, too, in early October against Arizona.

The Ducks have been a juggernaut since, winning nine straight games, all by double digits and scoring at least 42 points in each. Ohio State can put up some points, too. The Buckeyes haven't scored less than 31 since losing 35-21 to Virginia Tech.

The Ducks and Buckeyes run similar spread offenses.