

# Rooting for the Ducks



SAM BARBEE  
FROM THE SIDELINES  
Sports reporter

As a University of Washington alumnus, I was split about Monday night's national college football championship game between the University of Oregon and Ohio State University.

I've grown up in a household that holds contempt for Oregon football and had a hard time watching the Ducks in, arguably, the most important college football game ever played.

There was another side of it, though, a side that had been creeping into my mind since the Rose Bowl was played on New Year's Day.

I found myself halfway hoping Oregon would win.

I texted Eugene native and Oregon fan Erik Skopil, who is also a sports reporter for the East Oregonian, during the game and told him I was a 45 percent Oregon fan that night. It was the biggest number I could force myself to give. I said I would hope he would do the same for Washington.

"No doubt!" he wrote back. "Only root against them once a year."

I think that's the thing a lot of people have come to forget. The rivalry between Oregon and Washington, though fierce and dormant at the same time, is a once-a-year deal. It did hurt a bit to see Oregon where Washington once was, but there was something about it that was easy to understand.

First, it was the Pac-12, the conference the national media forgets about because of the horrible scheduling with which the league is inflicted. The games are too late for even me. I can't think of very many good reasons to stay up until 10:30 p.m. on a Saturday watching Colorado play Washington State. I mean, who cares? Obviously, I watch the UW games, but even then I know that if the Huskies play well, and maybe even pull off an

upset, nobody will see it. It hurts the league.

So, for a Pac-12 school to be in college football's biggest game is good for the league.

Oregon is also a Northwest school, which is a small brotherhood in major college football. There are just four of us, and, for the most part, two are afterthoughts.

For the Northwest corner of the United States to be featured so thoroughly is a good thing. I was rooting for the region.

Alas, Oregon got "Oregon-ed," meaning, a team pulled away at the end of the game to make a close-ish game not close.

At halftime I called my dad, and we had the same perspective on the situation, both about the conference and about the region. It's a perspective not a lot of Husky fans, and I would assume Duck fans, are willing to take.

Many, many Husky fans were openly rooting against the Ducks and rooting for Ohio State. The German noun Schadenfreude, meaning pleasure from others' pain, was rampant around the Washington community. I wasn't one of them. I was hoping the league would get to be on top for the first time in a decade, and, even then, that game was taken away from USC.

I would venture to say some will read this and think to themselves, "He's not a real Husky fan." Well, guess what? Four years ago I would have thought that same thing. I had a deep, irrational hate for Oregon that I couldn't explain. Now, I've taken a step back and looked at the bigger picture. Seeing Oregon State fans openly rooting for Oregon Oregon helped me and

SEE DUCKS/A8

# Grizzlies slip past Bulldogs



SAM BARBEE PHOTO

Hermiston's Dillon Zimmerly (20) rises for a short jump shot as Sunnyside's Julian Naranjo (22) defends during the first half of the Bulldogs' 47-45 loss Tuesday night in Hermiston.

BY SAM BARBEE  
HERMISTON HERALD

Sunnyside was winless and hungry.

The Grizzlies were 0-11, hadn't lost a game by fewer than nine points all season and had to drive an hour and 15 minutes to take on the Hermiston Bulldogs, who were playing their best basketball of the season.

Sunnyside was rewarded for its patience and hunger, downing the Bulldogs 47-45 Tuesday night in a tight and stressful affair at the Dawghouse.

Sunnyside freshman Trey Sanchez stole the show, leading all scorers with 18 points and made a key free throw with 2.3 seconds left to help the Grizzlies to their first win of the season. For the Bulldogs, Dillon Zimmerly scored 12 points on his 18th birthday, and Austin Naillon chipped in with ten.

Hermiston had a chance to win with eight seconds left in the game, but a costly turnover doomed the Bull-

dogs before a game-winning shot could be taken.

Hermiston head coach Jake McElligott said the missing ingredient for the Bulldogs was a lack of patience offensively, especially since they demonstrated that patience in their last two games against La Grande and Summit. He said his team was showing a bit of complacency, as well.

"They see that we're kind of struggling, scuffling coming into the game and can kind of see a light at the end of the tunnel," McElligott said of Sunnyside's hunger to win.

He said one of his main points before the game was for his team to get the Grizzlies down early and break their spirit.

Unfortunately for the Bulldogs (3-10), they weren't able to do that.

In Hermiston's first possession, the Bulldogs got three tries to score thanks to Cole Smith grabbing

SEE BULLDOGS/A8

# Rocky start Teams adjusting to new hand-check rule

## Coaches say refs don't always apply mandate

BY SAM BARBEE  
HERMISTON HERALD

It's been an all too common occurrence in local high school basketball games this season: A defender stymies an opponent on offense, only to be called on a foul.

That's because, before the 2014-15 basketball season started in Oregon, the National Federation of State High School Associations instituted new hand-check rules for all high school basketball teams. A hand-check is a defensive maneuver where the defensive player places his or her hand on an offensive player — usually on the hip — to maintain control of the opposing athlete and gains an advantage because of it.

The NFHS hands down rule books to the state associations in an attempt to even out the rules, so that each state — more or less — is playing by the same rule book.

Cindy Simmons, the Oregon School Activities Association associate director in charge of basketball and also a member of the national rules committee for basketball, said the hand-check rule has been a point of emphasis in this state for many years, but merely em-



SAM BARBEE PHOTO

According to the new National Federation of State High School Associations hand-check rule, Matison Aby (20) of Weston-McEwen should have been whistled for a personal foul for a hand-check on Stanfield's Cynthia Curiel in a recent game.

phasizing the rule wasn't doing enough to curb the hand-checking. So, she said, a new clarification of the rule was adopted.

The new rule, however, created problems for local teams. Fouls were up, and

the games went longer.

In one Echo girls basketball game early this season, more than 60 fouls were called. All Cougars coach JD Brazil could do at the time was shake his head and say that his players would

have to adjust because all the calls were correct, according to the new rules.

Simmons said the new rule clarification makes things fair for players,

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# UO, OSU fans join to cheer Ducks in championship game



SAM BARBEE PHOTO

Hermiston residents Jonah Lindeman, from left, Shey Hendon, Dave Duquette, F. Chavez and Alen Hendon celebrate a 70-yard Oregon touchdown pass in the national championship game at Nookies Restaurant and Brewery Monday night in Hermiston.

BY SAM BARBEE  
HERMISTON HERALD

Hermiston was quiet Monday night.

Businesses closed early. The streets were largely empty, and many eyes were steadily fixed on television sets as the Oregon Ducks faced off against the Ohio State Buckeyes in the first-ever College Football Playoff Championship Game.

The significance wasn't lost on many Oregon-natives.

"It means they have a chance to set the bar, to win in the new format, especial-

ly since they're meeting the team they played for the first basketball championship," Eugene-born Hermiston resident David Richards said during the game.

Disappointingly for University of Oregon fans, Ohio State won the game handily, 42-20, but it wasn't the first time the Ducks and the Bucks met to settle a national title.

In 1938-39, the Ducks, then officially known as the Webfoots, rolled through its regular season and met the Buckeyes for the NCAA championship. Oregon won

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## GO SEE IT

### Wednesday, January 14

No events scheduled

### Thursday, January 15

#### Girls Basketball

Umatilla vs. Riverside, 6 p.m.

#### Boys Basketball

Umatilla vs. Riverside, 7:30 p.m.

### Friday, January 16

#### Wrestling

Hermiston @ Oregon Wrestling Classic, Redmond, 8 a.m.

#### Girls Basketball

Hermiston @ La Salle Prep, 5:30 p.m.

Stanfield @ Pilot Rock, 6 p.m.

Echo vs. Powder Valley, 6 p.m.

#### Boys Basketball

Hermiston @ La Salle, 7:15 p.m.

Stanfield @ Pilot Rock, 7:30 p.m.

Echo vs. Powder Valley, 7:30 p.m.

### Saturday, January 17

#### Wrestling

Hermiston @ Oregon Wrestling Classic, Redmond, 8 a.m.

Echo/Stanfield @ Bonanza Tournament, 9 a.m.

#### Swimming

Hermiston @ La Grande, 12 p.m.

#### Girls Basketball

Umatilla vs. Vale, 4 p.m.

Stanfield vs. Heppner, 4 p.m.

Echo @ Wallowa, 4 p.m.

#### Boys Basketball

Umatilla vs. Vale, 5:30 p.m.

Stanfield vs. Heppner, 5:30 p.m.

Echo @ Wallowa, 5:30 p.m.