

Krause blends new talent

Depth emerges at each corner

By DOUG LEVY
Of the Emerald

Thanks to a blend of returning lettermen and junior college transfers, Oregon's baseball team appears to be a force in the Pacific-10 Northern Division.

The Ducks' roster is loaded, says coach Mel Krause. "I think we are legitimate contenders to win the Northern Division."

Perennial national power Washington State, ranked as high as fourth last year, and Oregon State, which won a school-record 33 games last season, stand in Oregon's way of a division title.

But with 13 returning lettermen and a potent hitting attack, the Ducks, 2-0 this young season, have the potential, says Krause.

Senior Randy Porter, who led the squad last year in home runs and RBIs, leads three other returnees who hit .300 or better.

But Krause took an additional step to improve last year's 19-21 team by recruiting a host of junior college transfers to bolster the pitching staff and add depth to an already deep outfield.

"It's been years since I've had this much flexibility," Krause says. "And, because of the depth, I'll be platooning a lot of players in and out until I've had a chance to see more of them."

Outfield — Possibly Oregon's strongest point. Porter, Steve Crum (.306), and Greg Moser (.311) top the list. Support will come from James Nutt (.247), Mike McLaran, Eric Martinez, and Dean Hummel. Krause plans to do a lot of platooning in the outfield.

Infield — There is plenty of talent, but who plays where is still a question mark, says Krause. However, Mike Black (.311) is a sure bet at second base and returnee Rick Moonitz (.275) appears set to replace graduated Doug Baker at short stop.

At third base, Kirk Cameron (.365 two years ago) faces a battle with Kyle Keaton and the

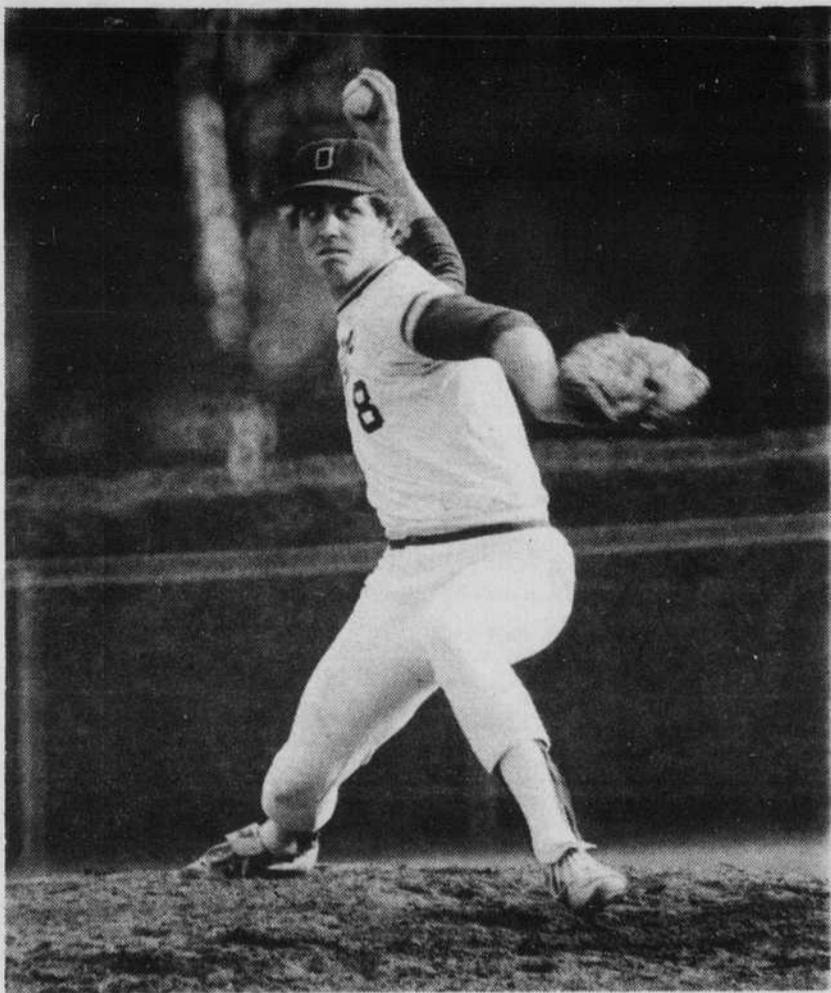


Photo by David W. Zahn

Dean Kegler is expected to lead Oregon's pitching staff this season, as the Ducks display depth at every position.

versatile McLaran. Russ Batzer looks to be an able first baseman, but will probably split time Porter. Again, there has been plenty of platooning in the early season.

Catcher — It seems only natural that four-year letterman Mike Carr (.273) would have a lock on the position, but Ted Hodges might make it into the lineup, Krause says.

Pitcher — Oregon's bullpen squad is headed by four-year letterman Dean Kegler, who posted a 4-2 record and a 3.00 ERA, plus senior Mike Talia (3-3, 2.96), and reliever Jim Givens (7-3, 3.17).

But it is crucial for the Ducks to find one more arm.

Junior Bill Gwinn (3-4, 6.23 ERA); Jim Hammack, a junior recovering from surgery; and newcomers Mann, Hummel, and Sam Mankey, a transfer from Southwestern in San Diego, could all step on the mound, Krause says.

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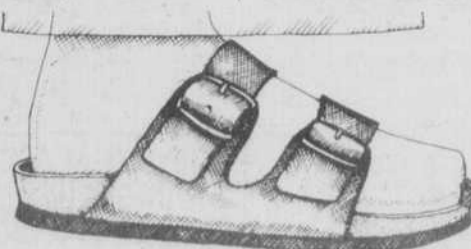
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