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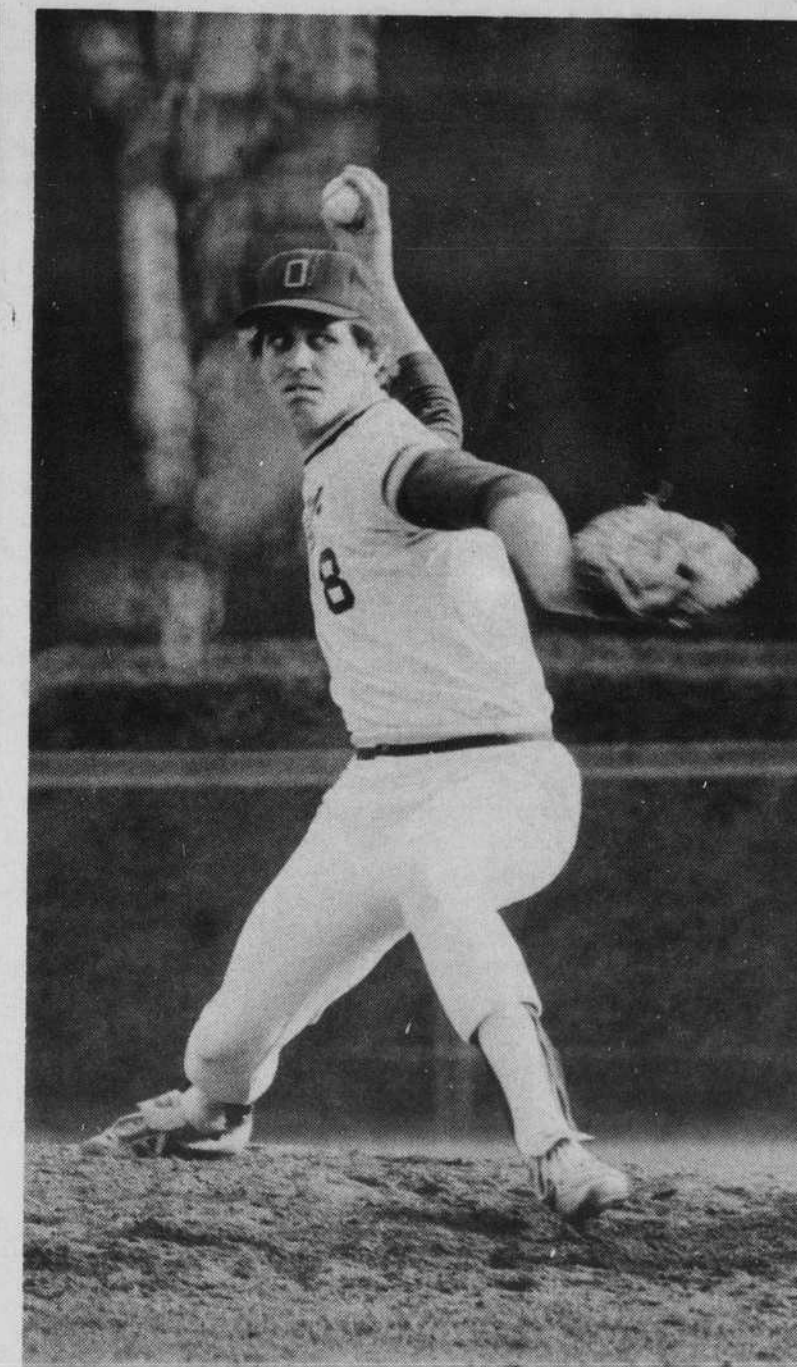
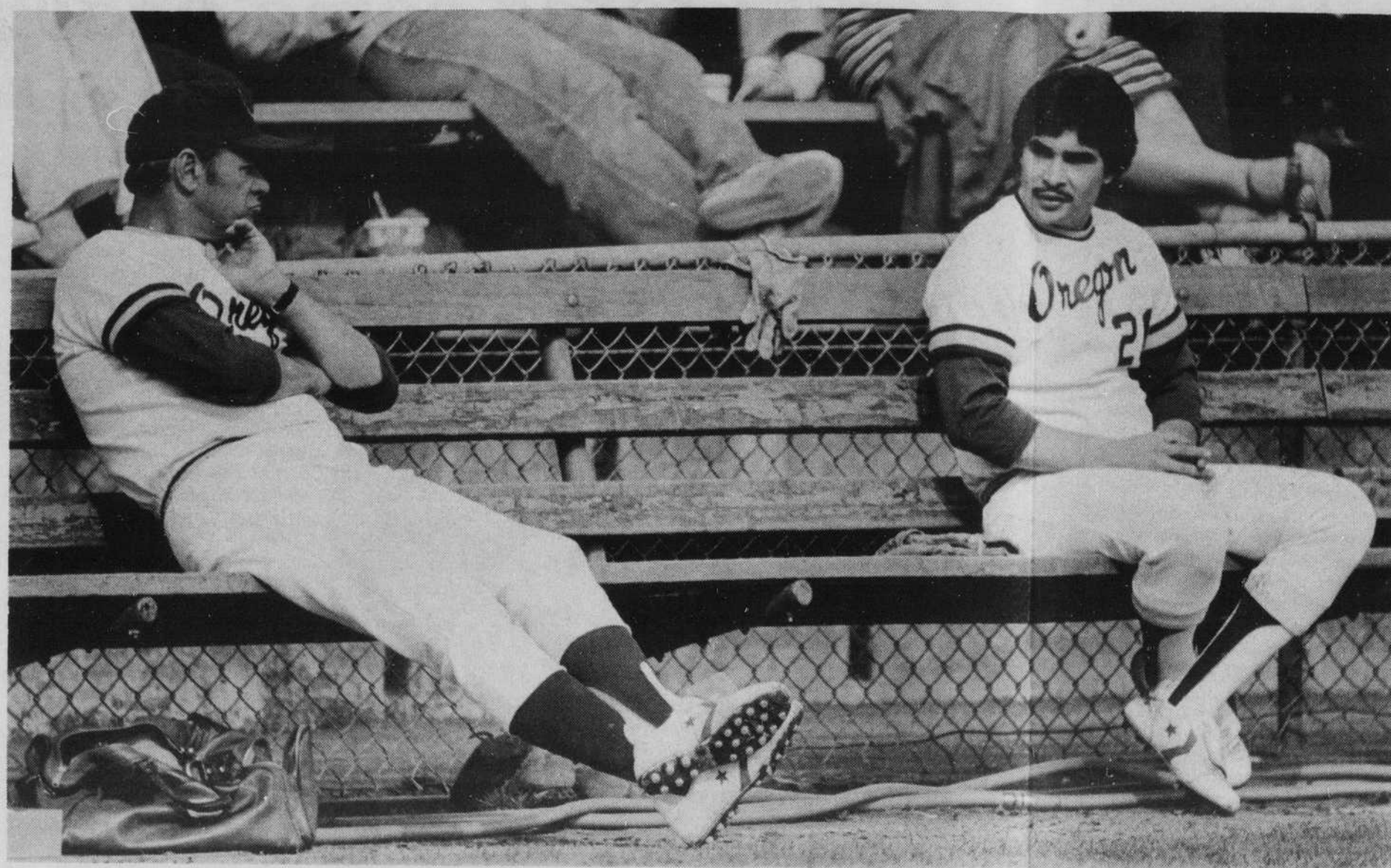
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Playing ball with a bare budget

Krause pitches for top players by taking slow road to success

Coaching baseball at Oregon is like fighting Sugar Ray Leonard with one hand tied behind your back — there's only so much you can do.

Such is the task for Oregon's coach, Mel Krause.

He faces not only a thin budget but a scholarship limit that makes competitive college baseball in Eugene difficult.

In 1974 Oregon won the baseball's Northern Division title. Krause had 19 full-ride scholarships to offer prospective players, six of them for out-of-state athletes. But most important was that Krause had the financial means to stave off Oregon State, Washington and Washington State.

In 1975 the University cut funds to the

tennis, golf, swimming and baseball programs. For Krause, that meant 10 partial scholarships and no out-of-state scholarships. The team's record dropped to 19-21 in 1975 and to a dismal 14-27 in 1976.

Krause could no longer scoop up all the high school talent he wanted. He had to take the fast route to success by dipping into the junior college ranks and hope some transfers could blend with high school recruits to form a respectable team.

It has been a struggle, Krause says. Only now, he feels, does Oregon have a team that can compete for talent in the Northern Division.

But that still means careful and strategic recruiting.

"Financially, I recruit the skill positions first," says Krause. "Pitchers are the most important product, and then I go after the guys in the middle of the field."

"If a person is an outstanding hitter in terms of power and RBI, then I go to him."

But a kid who had a good high school career and wants to be rewarded with a full scholarship is not likely to get one at Oregon.

"I just have to tell them that there's only so much I can do. I might be able to give them tuition and room and board, but not books. But my personal feeling is that if you can't buy your own books you shouldn't be in college, anyway."

One thing Krause has been able to do is reward the player who produces.

Shortstop Rick Moonitz came to Oregon as a walk-on and now has a partial scholarship. Pitchers Dean Kegler and Jim Givens came here on partial scholarships — now they just buy their books.

"I try to reward players on performance," Krause says.

But money woes have affected things other than scholarships.

Each year, Oregon goes on a spring road trip to prepare for its league season. The trip costs \$6,000 — Krause gets \$1,500 of it from the University.

Revenue from two years of baseball alumni reunions helped make up the difference for this year's trip. But they were planned far in advance, and getting the extra money for next year is a serious concern.

"We haven't had an individual (baseball) fund-raiser since Lou Cryer,"

says Krause. Cryer left in 1976 to become commissioner of the Pacific Coast Athletic Association.

"And we're not allowed to go raise funds as individual coaches."

As far as any additional money, says Krause, "I'll just have to wait and see what the athletic director says."

With similar financial situations at Oregon State and Washington, the talented high school player in the Northwest might choose to skip college and go right into the minor leagues.

It's a big mistake, Krause says. "Most high school players, unless they are offered a large sum of money, are better off going to college. They get years away from home, an educational foundation and a higher level of competition than they had in high school."

Which returns Krause to square one — recruiting.

Krause has to get some of those high school players, along with some junior college transfers to fill his immediate needs.

Currently, the Ducks have 14 junior college transfers and 12 recruited from

Mel Krause and Eric Martinez watch the game (left), while Dean Kegler (right) earns his scholarship by pitching.

high school, so Krause is accomplishing his objective.

Six of the transfers are pitchers, giving Krause the kind of pitching experience he needs to compete at the Pac-10 level.

This team has the talent to challenge for the Northern Division title, despite the setbacks, Krause says.

Oregon is 10-7 and has lost both its league games, but most observers still feel it is a vastly improved squad from last year's 19-21 team.

"I think we should be better than our record indicates," says Krause.

The Oregon coach knows, however, that the Ducks will be hard-pressed to approach the glory year of 1974.

"All I ask as a coach, financial-aid-wise, is to be competitive with Oregon State and Washington."

By Doug Levy
Photos by David W. Zahn



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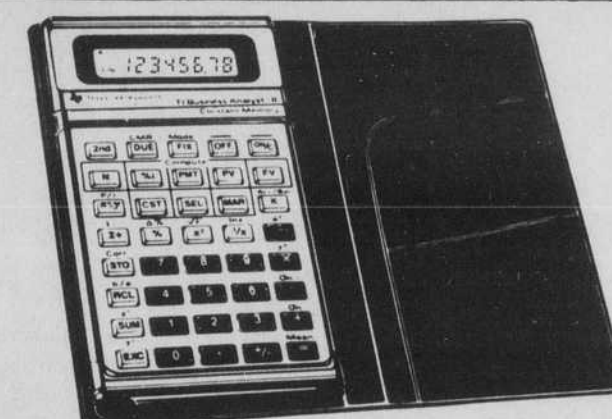
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Call Paul Primak, Foreign Study Advisor
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