

University cuts four team sports

By TAMARA SWENSON
Of the Emerald

Four fewer intercollegiate sports will be played on the University campus next year, the University administration announced Thursday.

The four sports — men's gymnastics and baseball, women's golf and soccer — were cut after an extensive review of the athletic department budget that included each of the University's 20 sports and the athletic administration.

The athletic department's proposed 1981-82 budget of \$4,431,273 was slashed by \$945,803. Cutting the four sports accounts for about one-fourth of the reduction.

"These are the cuts that needed to be made to cut the budget and to keep the men's and women's programs on a parity level," said Ray Hawk, University vice president for administration and finance.

Money was not the biggest issue in the decision to drop men's gymnastics, he said.

"The biggest issue was that there is no competition in the Northwest. Even more devastating to the program is that the Oregon Scholastic Athletic Association (the governing body of high school athletics in the state) dropped the program (gymnastics) three years ago," he said.

The remaining cuts in the athletic budget will come from the athletic department administration. They include eliminating the deputy and associate athletic director positions, changing many full-time coaching positions to half-time, eliminating three classified positions and overtime wages, and significantly reducing promotion.

But the decision to drop the sports is causing the greatest furor.

"I will not accept the decision that's been announced without an appeal," said gymnastics coach Bill Ballester. "I can't believe they'd set a precedent for cutting sports by eliminating their most successful program."

The men's gymnastics team has ranked consistently among the top five teams nationally for the past five years.

"We were asked to excel. We did what they asked, and now they tell us we're through," Ballester said.

The appeals process will go through University Pres. Paul Olum, Hawk said.

"Unless any significant new information is introduced, I doubt the decision will change," Hawk added.

Olum gives coaches time

Athletic department administrators will be given time to respond to the administration's cuts in the athletic budget, University Pres. Paul Olum said at a press conference Thursday.

"It's a principal with us that when the administration makes a decision there is a little time for the coaches to respond," Olum said.

The decision to drop four University intercollegiate athletic teams next year came after a four-hour executive staff meeting Wednesday, Olum said.

The cuts in the athletic budget were based on recommendations from Ray Hawk, vice president for administration

and finance, and budget and management director Ralph Sunderland.

"We're not waffling about this decision," Olum said. "But if anyone knows of a magic way to fund the sports, why we're willing to listen."

The University still will field enough teams to qualify for competition in the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

Scholarships of athletes participating in the sports slated for elimination next year will be honored, Olum said.

"We're not legally obligated when we cut a sport, but as far as I'm concerned we're morally obligated. That's not the way we do things."

Little will be saved by cutting the two women's sports, but it was the most equitable decision, Hawk said.

"Those two sports were just added this year, while the other sports under consideration had stronger alumni and team ties with the University.

"It really boils down to a proportional issue. Nearly \$5 million was involved in the men's budget, while the women's portion of the budget is considerably less than \$1 million.

"We tried to keep the cuts proportional," Hawk said.

Cuts in men's sports will absorb 25.1 percent of the reductions in the preliminary budget, and women's sports will absorb 10.2 percent.

However, because the original women's budget already was scaled down, the cuts will mean a 16-percent reduction from the current budget — from \$610,345 to \$511,559.

The men's budget actually will increase 5 percent — from \$1,989,348 to \$2,096,431.

There will be no cuts in scholarships for football or basketball, the sports that produce most of the athletic department revenue. But \$40,000 has been cut from the football recruiting budget.

"Whether we can get through this year is still being evaluated," said football coach Rich Brooks.

Brooks, like the coaches of the other sports being retained, says he is disappointed that sports have to be eliminated. "It's a shame" that any sport has to go, Brooks said.

Even more devastating to the remaining sports may be the cut in full-time equivalency status of coaches. While the budget cuts won't reduce pay, the drop in FTE will cause many coaches to take a drop in salary.

"They cut my position to half-time," said wrestling coach Ron Finley. "Obviously, I can't live on half a salary.

The coaches originally proposed no pay increases as part of an effort to save all sports.

"We fought as hard as we could to keep them (the sports eliminated), but now we're all still wondering where the rest of the cuts will come from," Finley says.

The administration originally ordered the athletic department to cut \$1 million and to begin payments on a \$375,000 loan from the University.



Photo by Erich Boekelheide

The Hulk, he ain't

Dennis Renton of McAlister dorm basks in the glory of being "Mr. Walton" while Schaefer resident assistant Katy Welch looks on. Renton won \$50 by defeating three fellow McAlister residents and a Sweetser resident. The would-be matinee idols were judged in a suit and shorts by the Schaefer administrative board. Cries of "rigged" echoed through Carson dining hall when the decision was announced.