

WOMEN'S Softball

'Young but scrappy'

Warm weather, longer days and hints of extended sunshine usher in softball season, which will provide a young and eager Oregon women's team with an opportunity to prove itself.

Head coach P.J. Harlin beams with excitement while discussing the potential of the 1985 squad. Harlin fields a young team, with just one junior and one senior, but she is convinced that their "enthusiasm will overcome their inexperience." While other teams around the league rely on experience, Harlin says, "these kids play on guts."

Junior shortstop Jackie Coburn agrees, noting "we're young but we're scrappy."

With 15 of the 17 players coming from within the state, this team is truly "Oregon's bunch." And, as Oregonians, they're familiar with the obstacles posed by a fickle climate: It's often an uncertainty whether the weather will permit a scheduled game to be played.

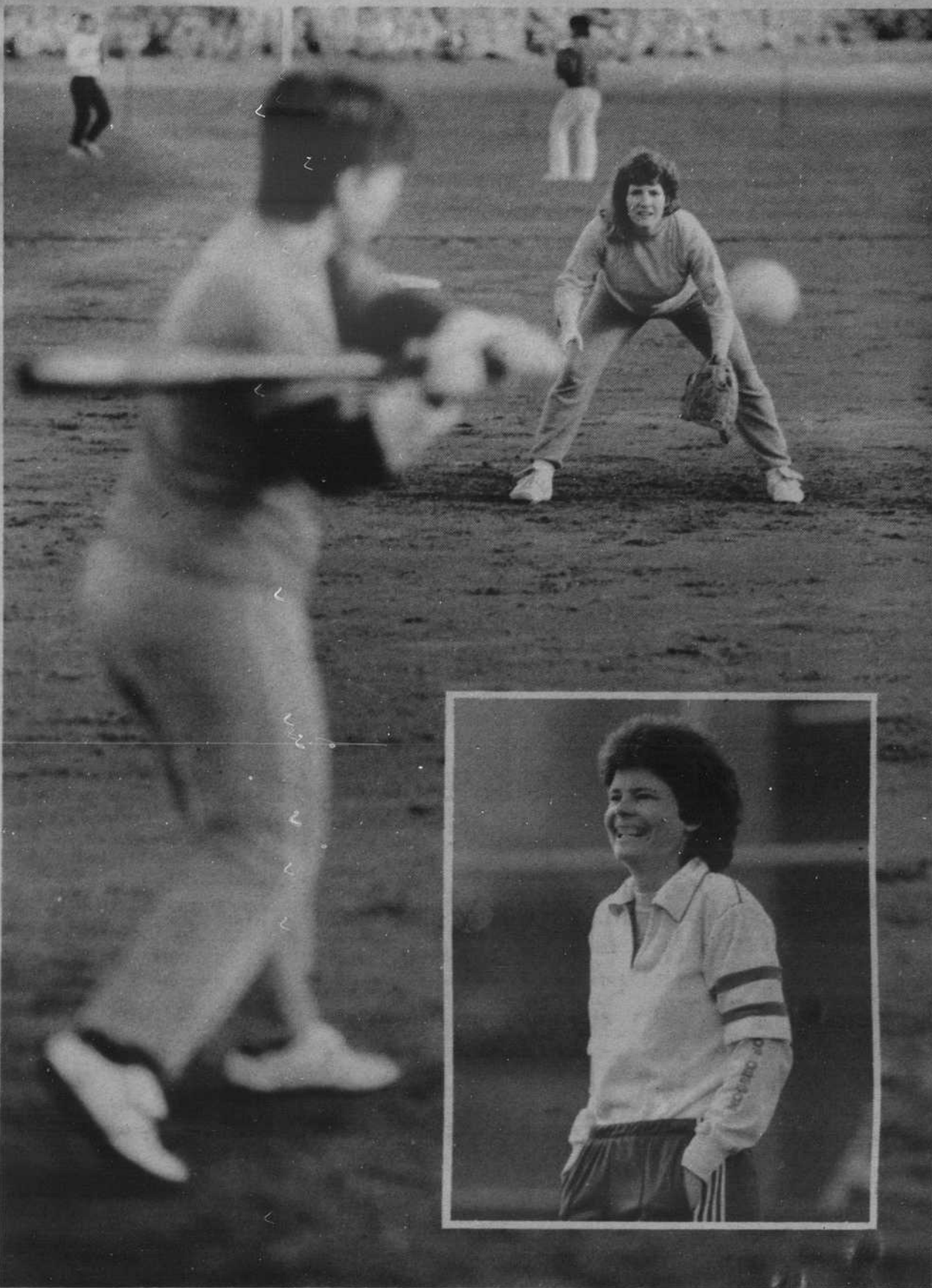
Harlin feels the rain may cause her girls to play too tentatively — other teams worry less about making errors since they know there will be more games. Although she would like to see more aggressive play, Harlin says there is evidence that the Ducks' tentativeness has helped out in the field. "Last year we had the lowest percentage of errors in the league," she says.

Story by Justin Much
Photos by Ross Martin

Harlin feels that her past teams have not been aggressive enough at the plate. The older players have made vast improvements in the batters box, and the freshmen are a solid lot who know how to play the game. Stronger hitting is one of the main reasons this team is picked as an early favorite to gain a berth in the NorPac playoffs at the season's end.

Harlin's confidence is boosted by the Ducks' largest pitching contingent since she's been at Oregon. Sophomores Sony Schroeder and Cindy Garrett bring experience to the mound. Schroeder played in Europe last summer, which helped to improve her game. Garrett

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P.J. Harlin

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