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Sports

Club baseball team hopes to avoid injuries this year

By Gary Henley

Of the Emerald

After finishing 7-12 last year, the Oregon club baseball program is looking to improve itself both on and off the field.

Manager Mark Lucich, in his evaluation of the team going into next year, says, "Basically, it's just a wait and see game. We'll have a number of good players, but we never know who's going to be around when the season starts."

Lucich said injuries were one of team's problems last year.

"We only had one catcher during the season, then he had back problems so we ended up

with no established catchers," he said. The team will begin the new season with three catchers.

couple of football players that played for us," Lucich said. The Oregon club baseball

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— Rob Searfus

"We had a whole range of ball players. We had a handful of good ones, like Chris Schultz and Pat Marsh. There was also a

team, which is largely made up of ex-high school players, begins its season in March, and continues through May.

Second baseman Rob Searfus is optimistic about the upcoming year.

"We're going to have a good team. I'm really looking forward to next season," he said. "We had a lack of pitching last year, but now I think we have some good pitchers that will help out.

"It's hard to get good pitching," said Searfus, who is entering his second year on the team. "Most of the good pitchers usually go to the community colleges or university teams."

Lucich, in his third year as manager, said the name of the game is pitching. "We have some potentially good pitchers on this team. One of the big problems, though, is that you need to play a lot of ball games to tell who the good players are, and we don't play many games," he said.

Searfus, who also acts as student coordinator of the team, has had a busy off-season raising funds for the team.

"Most of the fund raising is for the traveling. We'll be playing some road games in the Seattle-Tacoma area, and we might be going to California to play one," Searfus said.

Another important issue is where the team will play its home games next year. The current renovation of Howe field has left the baseball team with no on-campus site to play home games.

The Athletic Department recently approved a plan to convert Howe field into a two-field softball complex for the Oregon softball program. Searfus is unhappy with the way the situation with the field has been handled.

"There were some rumors last year about the field," Searfus said. "They (the Athletic Department) were saying that we knew about the renovation and that it was coming — they just didn't tell us when."

A load of dirt was dumped on the field before the Stanford game last year to begin the renovation.

Asked where the team will play its home games next year, Lucich replied, "at this point we won't have any home games. I'm in the process of scheduling the away games now, so we don't expect to be playing at home next year."

The team played only five home games last year.

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