

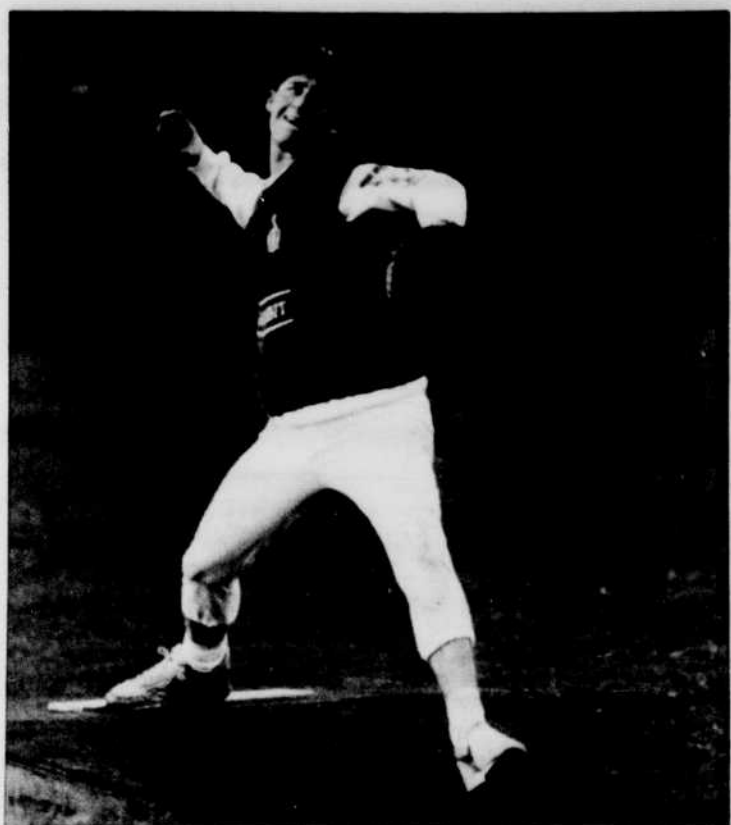


Photo by Mark Ylen

Oregon's Jim Bolin, who hit .412 at the plate last year, will see action and provide some depth at second base this season.

Sports

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"Due to a lack of batting cages, it will take us awhile to start hitting," Distefano explained. "We won't be hitting well in our first few games until we get our timing down."

"Having at least 40 games will be wonderful," he added. "Even if we get in a slump this year we have a long way to go and time to work out of it."

"We haven't faced a lot of live pitching and we're behind in our hitting," Eberhart said. "The teams we'll play have already played 10 games or so before we even start, so that will be a problem."

Both coaches said they believe the key for Oregon this season will be its ability to work well together as a unit and play sound baseball.

"We need to play smart baseball and play as a team," Distefano said. "We can tolerate physical errors, but not mental errors like missing the cut-off man."

"Obviously we'll make errors," Eberhart added. "We can't make mental errors. We need to keep our heads in the game."

The Ducks hit .311 as a team a year ago, but had problems scoring runs in the middle innings.

"We need to work on getting one run per inning," Eberhart said. "We had a problem scoring at times last year and need to improve that this year."

After today's game at Lewis & Clark, Oregon travels to George Fox College Wednesday

for a double-header. The Ducks will get extensive action over spring vacation, playing eight games in five days against NAIA teams around the Seattle-Tacoma area.

In fact, most of Oregon's schedule is composed of NAIA schools, including strong teams from George Fox, Lewis and Clark and the University of Puget Sound. The Ducks also will face a stern challenge in Pac-10 power Portland State.

The Ducks open their nine-game home schedule on April 6 against Chemeketa Community College. Oregon will play their home games at Eugene's Civic Stadium, the Hamlin Baseball Complex near Autzen Stadium, and at North Eugene High School.

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