

RANGER

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brigade meet in each of the past ten years, an honor restricted to only the top two teams in the state.

This year's squad may be the best in Oregon's history.

At the Portland State Invitational held in December at Camp Bonneville, the team took first place out of seven schools, winning three of the five events contested.

"We were consistent in every event," explained team member and assistant commander Shane Wilde. "We were really dominant in the 10 kilometer run. We finished in 56 minutes, and the next team was 14 minutes behind."

By winning the invitational, Oregon once again qualified for the brigade meet, which will be held Feb. 14, 15, and 16th at Ft. Lewis, Wa. The brigade meet will include teams from as far away as Guam and Utah. If the team is able to make the top three at the brigade meet, they will qualify for the regional meet, something that has only been accomplished once in the school's history.



A ringer challenge team combines strength with speed and cooperation for a successful brigade meet in February.

"I think we have a great chance to make the regional meet," said team commander Rob Davidson. "We're the fastest team in school history. But we need to improve in some areas, like the rope bridge event and in our physical testing. We used to dominate the rope bridge, but other schools have improved their techniques and caught up to us."

Aside from the fact that

the sport keeps them in great physical shape, Wilde and Davidson also commented on the other benefits of ringer challenge.

"The sport has helped me gain experience in leadership," said Davidson. "The meets are a real gut check and they allow me to see how I perform in stressful situations."

"Ringer challenge has helped me physically," said

Wilde, "but I think it has also helped me to become disciplined. It shows others that you're motivated to do something that's difficult."

The ungodly practice time of 6:15 a.m. was established "because that was the only time where there were no conflicts between schedules," explained Davidson.

Major Tom Burgess, the ringer challenge coach and a professor of military science,

sees the early practice time as a necessity.

"The most important thing for these students isn't ringer challenge, it's their ability to maintain a high GPA. By having our practice early, we can guarantee that there won't be any class conflicts and that the students will have time to do their homework," said Burgess.

Ringer challenge is, surprisingly to some, a coed sport.

Oregon's lone female, Erika Ungern, is currently battling for a spot on the "A" team.

"Erika's probably our best athlete in the physical fitness testing," said Davidson. "She always scores a perfect 300 when she's tested. All she needs to do is improve in the 10k run and she'll be in our top nine."

Although the majority of the participants are involved in the ROTC program, the club is open to all university students. The one requirement of the squad is that all members must be enrolled in Military Science 199, the ringer challenge fitness class.

-Erick Studenicka

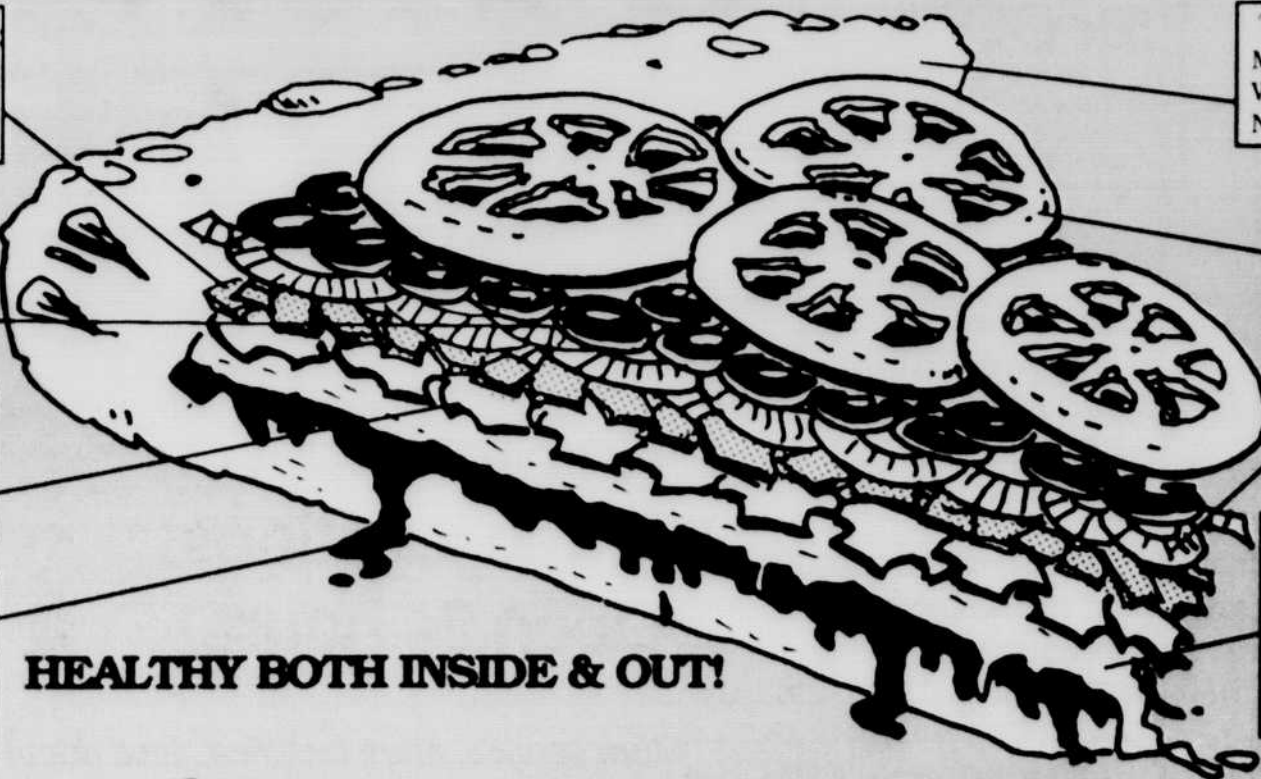
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