

Come out & play

■ Club Sports offers students the opportunity to play competitively at a level different than NCAA

By Shantell Rice
for the Emerald

The Oregon Club Sports program is helping to redefine the role of the athlete in Eugene.

In high school, many of us had dreams of being NCAA athletes as we watched our teammates pin their opponents in less than thirty seconds or witnessed them shoot a basket from half-court to win the game, as we sat on the bench.

Many of us dreamed of hitting the game-winning home run in the bottom of the ninth inning or kicking the winning field goal, but as soon as high school was over, those visions — or hallucinations, perhaps — died tragically. Or have they?

There's a place where students can go and revive those dreams. A place where limits are tested and you're pushed until you're beyond the pain. It's now time to dig out those dreams that you've buried, dust off your bats, lace up your spikes or inflate those basketballs.

Yes, the definition of an athlete has been broadened.

Club Sports offers a place for students who aren't competing on the NCAA level to compete and a place where those sports that aren't NCAA competitive can be played.

"It's below intercollegiate athletics but above intermurals," said Genny Auyeung, the

women's water polo coordinator.

Club Sports is a place where students often gain a sense of belonging and a sense of being part of something bigger than themselves.

Sandy Vaughn, who has been the coordinator of Club Sports for the last 26 years, said students can gain many things from being involved with the program because they can get the feeling of teamwork.

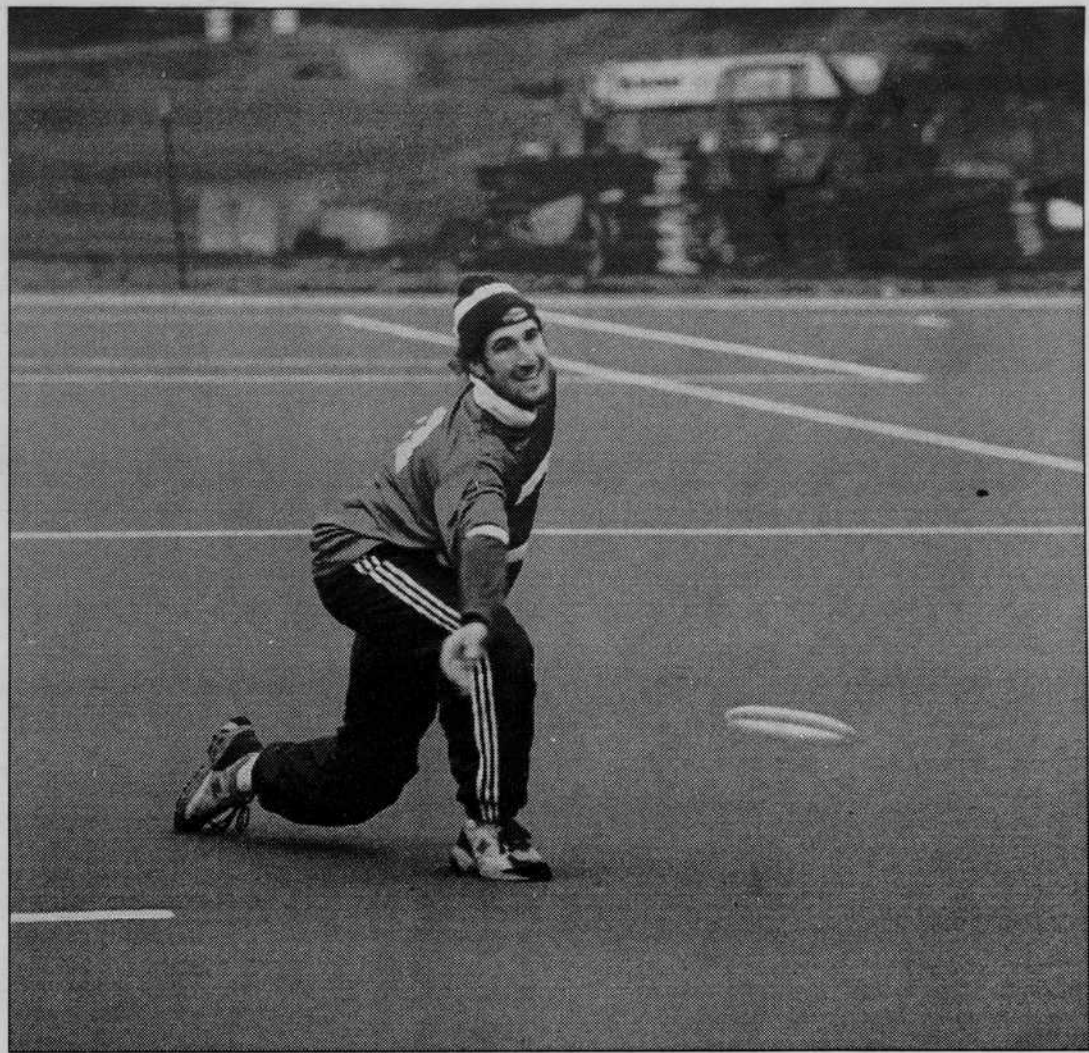
"It's the one place outside the classroom where students feel bonded to the University," Vaughn said.

Vaughn added that she has perhaps one of the best jobs on campus, working directly with students, assisting them in gaining the skills they need to run their individual programs. She said she watches them as they commit themselves to all aspects of the program, from being a team player to being a team manager.

The unique thing about Club Sports is that students are responsible for running their own club. They not only participate in their sport, but they also plan team competitions, fundraising events and make the travel arrangements. Students learn how to be accountable to one another.

"As a coordinator," said Ben Gottlieb, the men's water polo captain, coordinator and coach, "I basically set how the season will go, where the competitions are and when we practice."

Getting involved in Club Sports is also a great way to not only live out your athletic potential, but also build organizational skills

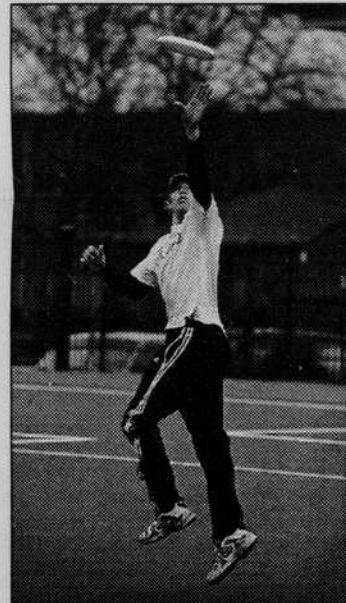


Photos by Kevin Calame Emerald

Andy Ripps (above) practices his ultimate frisbee flick, while Joe Kleffner (below) reaches for an airborne disc. Kleffner is the club's nominee for the Callahan Award, ultimate frisbee's equivalent to college football's Heisman Trophy.

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Genny Auyeung
women's water polo coordinator



that will help in all areas of life.

"I kind of feel like a mom to my team," said Auyeung. "The main thing is to be organized. Make sure everyone has their stuff together."

Another advantage to being involved in a club, these coordinators said, is the people you will meet. There are some co-ed divisions within clubs, although that varies depending on the sport. But oftentimes, the women's and

men's teams, although separate, will travel together to competitions, so the opportunities for lifelong friendships on and off the field are endless.

Club Sports allows for anyone to be on a team, but some sports require try-outs because of a limited amount of spots on the team. Spring term is a great time to get out and play, especially with people who do all the hard work because they love the sport.

SWOOSH CHALLENGE

The Swoosh Challenge is a one day CROSS TRAINING competition open to all students. Teams of 2 men and 2 women compete in 4 events to win a trip to the National Championship in Los Angeles. All participants compete in these events:

Climbing Wall Competition

Who can make it to the top in the fastest time?

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FUN RUN

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Cost: FREE!

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the NCAA
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