

Best Bet

Soccer, World Cup Qualifier:
Mexico vs. U.S. Men's National Team
4:30 p.m., ESPN2



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Pro baseball in Oregon? That's worth the work



OUT IN LEFT FIELD

ADAM JUDE

On a beautiful day like today, don't you wish you could strap on the old glove, buy some peanuts or sunflower seeds and head over to the ballpark?

Yeah, the Oregon softball team is holding practices at Howe Field, but that's not what I'm talking about.

The Eugene Emeralds, the San Diego Padres' Single-A minor league squad, doesn't start until June, and even then, it's not the real deal.

Safeco Field may be one of the greatest places on earth, but the 300-mile trek to see the Mariners makes frequent trips unreasonable.

What I seek is not much to ask: just a mere Major League Baseball team. Nothing more. Well, maybe one more thing: a baseball stadium — and they only run for about \$300 million these days.

Lucky for me and the thousands of die-hard Oregonian baseball fans, Santa may grant this wish next Christmas.

As of Monday, a proposal to help solidify Portland as a main player in the bid to get a major-league team was sent through the state Legislature. The Oregon Baseball Campaign is one of several groups that went to Salem Monday to lobby House Bill 2941, which would authorize the use of \$150 million of Oregon lottery bonds to finance a new baseball stadium in Portland.

"Houston's new ballpark has a retractable roofs, it's downtown, and it has all the modern amenities, yet it cost just \$250 million," said Lynn Lashbrook, president of the Oregon Baseball Campaign in a released statement. "That's half the cost of the Safeco Field aberration in Seattle."

The idea of getting a franchise in Portland — the largest city in the country with only one professional sports team — is not a new one, but the opportunity has never been as tangible as it is now.

With professional baseball in financial turmoil (especially after our pal Alex Rodriguez became the greediest man alive), something is going to have to change. And the most likely possibility is that a franchise will move.

With teams such as the Montreal Expos, Minnesota Twins and Oakland Athletics struggling to keep afloat financially, a move may come as early as the end of the 2001 season.

A new team would likely bring in more than \$7 million in state revenues, Lashbrook said.

But it will probably take a little more to convince the Legislature. While more than 50 of the 90 legislators have supported the baseball bill, when it comes time to decide between funding for baseball and several other state needs, baseball may go down swinging.

Gov. John Kitzhaber, for example, has proposed that the lottery money be used for rural water systems, sewer lines and new roads.

As an avid baseball man, I wholeheartedly disagree with the politician. But I'm not responsible for the taxpayers' money, either.

To try to gain support, the Oregon Baseball Campaign will tour the state to promote this "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

If you would like to voice your desire to bring the great American pastime to this lovely state, sign the petition at www.oregonbaseballcampaign.com.

If you're apathetic about an Oregon franchise or don't want one, just keep your opinions to yourself.

Adam Jude is a sports reporter for the Emerald. He can be reached at ajude34@yahoo.com.

Ducks ponder value of WNIT



Chrystal McConnell Emerald

Junior guard Jamie Craighead said she'd play in the WNIT, but only if the seniors want to.

■ Oregon seems unsure about playing in the WNIT as its NCAA chances dwindle

By Scott Pesznecker
Oregon Daily Emerald

Now that an invitation to the Big Dance is almost out of sight, the Oregon women's basketball team could soon be faced with a big question:

To WNIT, or not to WNIT?

After losing on the road to Stanford and California earlier this month, head coach Jody Runge said that she wouldn't accept an invitation to the Women's National Invitation-



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Time is winding down for Oregon men

■ The Ducks will make one last push toward the NIT when they play their final three games on the road

By Peter Hockaday
Oregon Daily Emerald

If the Oregon men's basketball season is a giant game of Pictionary, then the Ducks are trying to draw an NIT bracket with "McArthur Court" written on it.

And the sand timer is close to running out.

Oregon backed itself into a major hole by losing to UCLA and Southern California last weekend in Eugene. The Ducks have three games remaining, all on the road and one against a top-10 opponent. Oregon will

most likely need to win two games to reach the NIT.

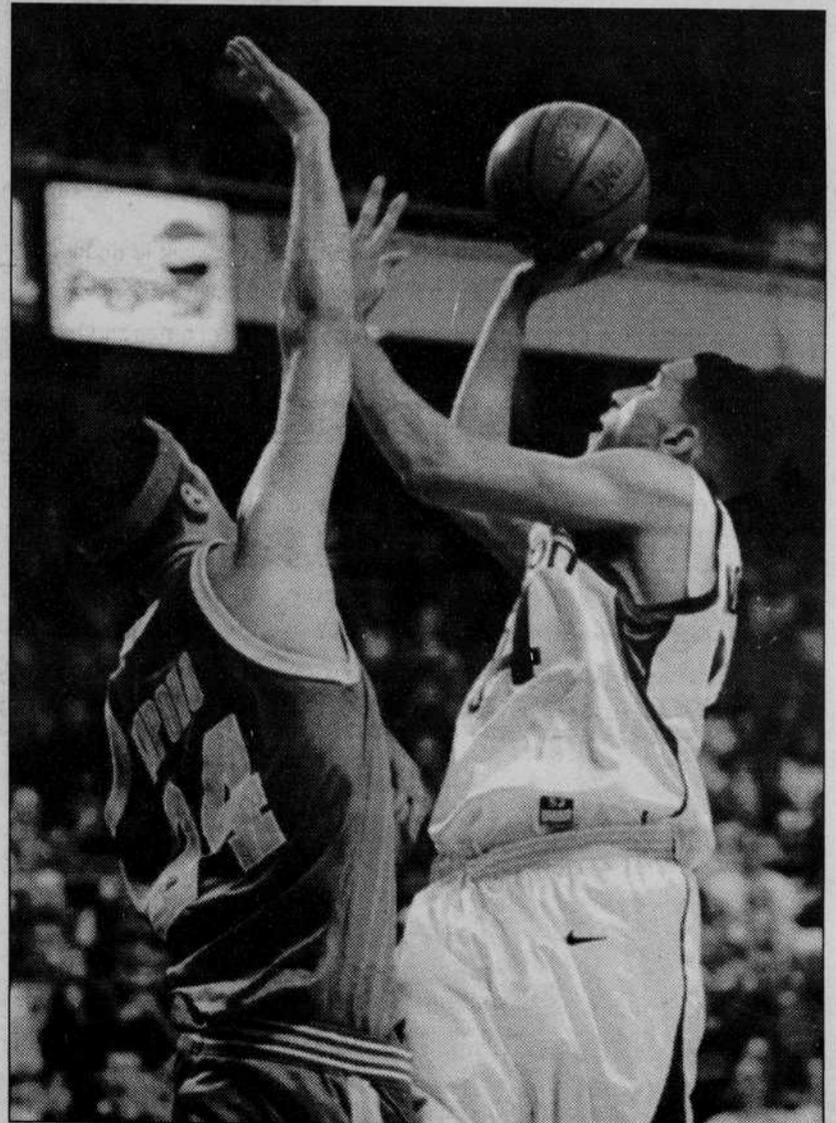
"Our goal is simple: We need two wins," Oregon head coach Ernie Kent said. "So we need to win a game this weekend."

Of course, even the non-ranked foes will be tough matchups for the Ducks. Arizona State, Oregon's Thursday opponent, defeated the Ducks by 27 points earlier this season.

Meanwhile, No. 9 Arizona has won six straight home games and, since losing to Stanford Jan. 6, has won 11 of its last 13. One of those losses came at the hands of Oregon Feb. 1.

Oregon State, the Ducks' final opponent, has played tough recently, losing by three points to UCLA in overtime and defeating USC by 15 points last weekend.

So Oregon clearly wasted a golden



Adam Amato Emerald

Oregon junior guard Anthony Norwood hopes to help save the Ducks' season this weekend when he returns to his home state of Arizona to face the Sun Devils and Wildcats.

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