

# Springtime means baseball for Club Sports

Games begin this month, offering baseball fans a slice of the American-pie pastime

Peter Martini  
for the Emerald

As spring approaches, so does baseball season. With professional players in spring training, the University team gears up for another season of Club Sports baseball.

The Ducks are coming off their first winning season since 1993, as they finished 6-5 last season under coach Rich Faye. The student-run team, coordinated by Regan Schaller, a senior psychology major, is entering this season with a new coach.

“We are just a bunch of guys who want to keep playing baseball.”

Kurt Langworthy  
student coach,  
club baseball

Kurt Langworthy has taken over as coach after spending last season as the pitching coach. Langworthy, a senior biology major, said he believes this group can complete another winning season with the players added to the roster.

“I’m excited about this season because we have more left-handed pitching,” Langworthy said.

The club sports baseball team is the only option for baseball fans in Eugene during the school year.

The University is the only Pac-10 school that no longer has a Division I baseball team. The athletic department dropped the baseball team as well as men’s and women’s gymnastics in 1981 due to a debt of more than \$450,000.

After choosing to drop gymnastics, the athletic department, forced by the restrictions of Title IX, had a choice to drop either

baseball or wrestling. They chose to drop baseball.

One factor in the decision of keeping wrestling over baseball was the popularity of wrestling in Oregon. Another was that wrestling competes indoors at McArthur Court, and baseball was played outdoors at Howe Field where the weather often forced cancellations.

Senior Associate Athletic Director Sandy Walton said the decision to drop the baseball team was unpopular with the Eugene community. The athletic department gave the community a chance to raise money to save the team, but they were unable to raise enough.

Walton, who has been with the department since 1978, said every year in March there is talk from the community about bringing Division I baseball back to the university. But because of the lack of funds and a facility to play there has been no serious talk within the athletic department.

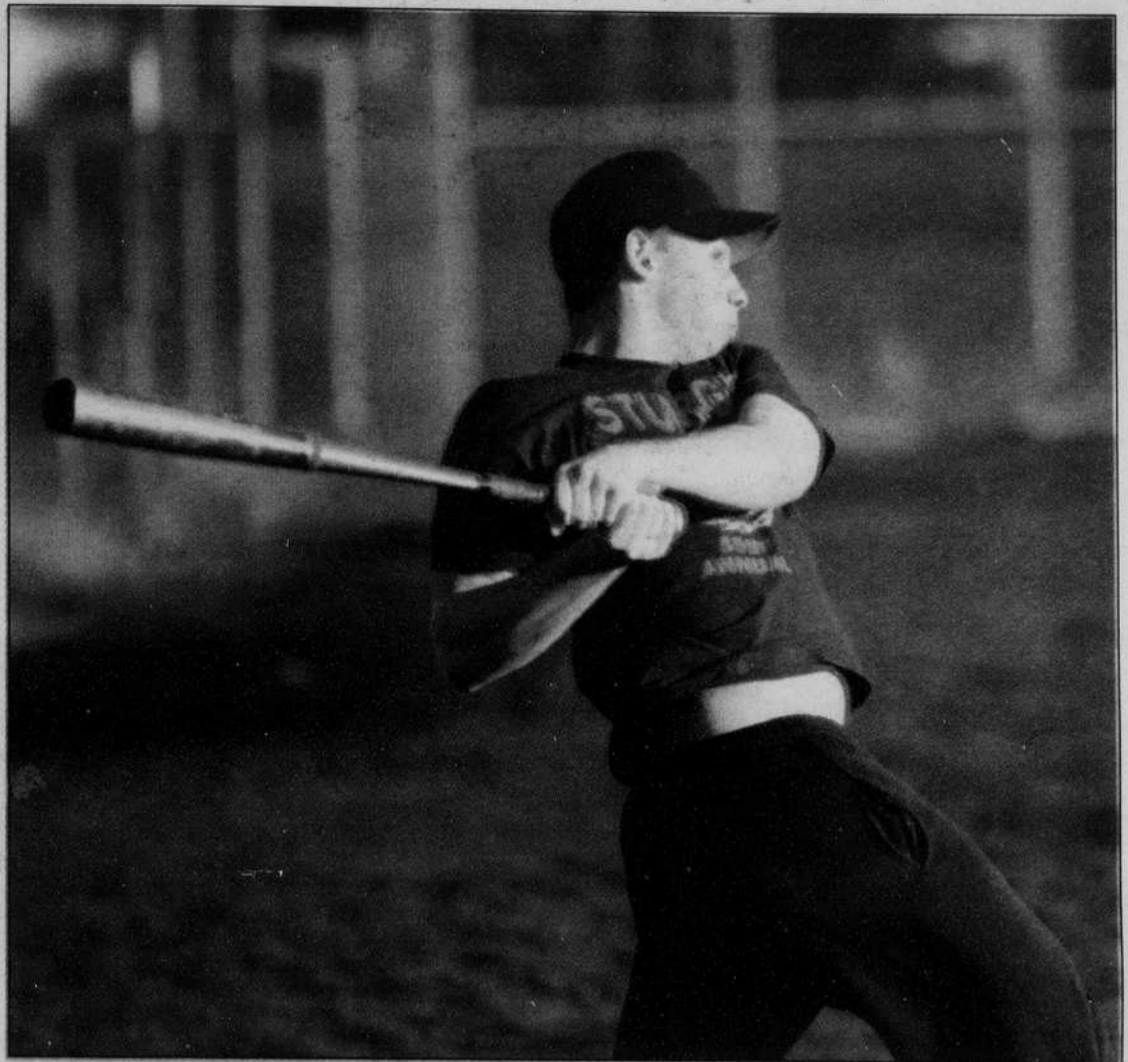
Some in the community feel the University should drop track and field because of the decline in ticket sales and popularity over the last 10 years, but Walton emphasized that this is not an option.

“Because of the tradition, track and field is safe,” Walton said.

During the summer, local fans support the Eugene Emeralds. The Emeralds are one of four half-season minor league baseball teams in Oregon. Major League Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig is making efforts to improve baseball, including a possible salary cap and possibly moving teams to new cities.

According to a recent article in The Oregonian, the Portland area is the 22nd largest market in the country, putting Portland near the top of a list should Selig force a team to move.

Langworthy said the team draws pretty good crowds during tournaments played at the Emeralds’ Civic Stadium, but when



Laura Smit Emerald

Micah Bodner, who plays on the University baseball team, gears up with the other players for the upcoming baseball season. The student-run team, coached by Kurt Langworthy, will compete against other college teams in the Northwest starting March 10.

they play at high schools, the crowds are a little slim. Langworthy said he thinks Eugene could support a Division I baseball team, however.

“If we had our own field, the University could support one [Division I team],” Langworthy said. Until this happens, Eugene’s only baseball choice before the summer is the club sports baseball team.

The team is run by students and funded by students. Univer-

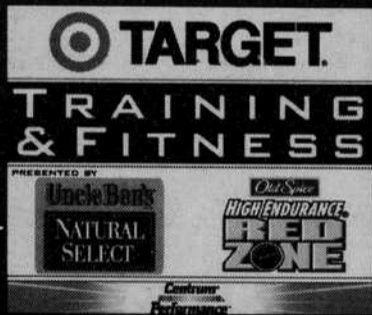
sity students try out in the fall and raise funds until the season begins in March. No player on the team is an athlete from a Division I sport at the University, and the coaches on the team do not recruit players from high school.

“We are at about an all-state high-school level,” Langworthy said. The team plays other college club sports teams in the Northwest.

Oregon opens its season in the

Sunnyside tournament on March 10 and 11 in Yakima, Wash. Eastern Washington, Montana and Idaho State will also participate in the tournament. The Ducks will play Humboldt State on March 17 and 18 at Marist High School. They also host Western Washington, Humboldt State and Weber State in a tournament April 7 and 8 at Civic Stadium.

“We are just a bunch of guys who want to keep playing baseball,” Langworthy said.



The Training and Fitness Challenge is a one day CROSS TRAINING competition open to all students. There will be two divisions - Men’s and Women’s. Each team will consist of 2 competitors who will compete in 5 events to win a trip to the National Championships in Los Angeles. All participants compete in these events:

#### Climbing Wall Competition

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

#### SAQ Obstacle Course

Your Speed, Agility, Quickness are put to the test

#### FUN RUN

Team relay (2 x 3/4 mi)

#### Basic Fitness Events

Sit 'n reach, sit-ups, and more...

#### Team Tug O' War

#### Prizes:

All participants receive a FREE T-shirt, product samples, and more. Champions will receive an expense paid trip to compete at the National Championships in L.A. Prize package includes travel to and from nationals, 3 nights lodging, local transportation, and a team adventure day.

Event Date: Saturday, April 21st

Cost: FREE!

More Info: Drop by 102 Esslinger or call 346-4113

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