



## Time for Oregon to bring back the national pastime



### THE HOME STRETCH

ROBBIE MCCALLUM

Ah ... springtime in Oregon. Saturday market is starting back up. Daffodils are blooming. The hail is driving sideways. Track and field athletes have come outdoors. So have tennis players. The local golf courses are beginning to fill up. And in the distance you can hear the crack of bats. Wait a minute. Those are aluminum bats! And the ball is big and yellow! This isn't baseball! More power to head coach Rick Gamez and the Oregon softball team, but the one thing lacking in the Oregon sports lineup is a good old-fashioned, all-American baseball team.

While the rest of the country enjoys apple pie and the American pastime, we in Eugene are left with tofu and track and field.

Unlike 335 other NCAA Division I schools, Oregon does not field a baseball team, and it's a crying shame. Oregon is one of the only major athletic programs in the country to not offer the men's sport (Wisconsin and Colorado are the others).

Budget cuts and NCAA rulings led to the baseball program's demise in the early '80s.

Title IX, the educational amendment created to prohibit sex discrimination in educational programs that receive federal financial assistance, made college institutions have at least one more women's athletic program than men's. That, coupled with the university's million-dollar budget cut in 1981, meant the 104 year-old program was first on the chopping block.

On May 13, 1981, the Ducks played their last game ever, a 5-1 loss to Washington to end the season with a record of 16-21.

"Like every game, we played to win," subdued coach Mel Krause told Emerald reporter Tamara Swenson. "It was our last game, but we played without any fanfare."

While other schools around the country enjoy a third marquee sport to follow the football and basketball seasons, Oregon fans are left in the lurch.

It is time for the Athletic Department to bring back baseball as a varsity sport.

Imagine lazy Sunday afternoons at Howe Field, packed with the same rowdy Oregon fans who packed Autzen Stadium and McArthur Court, cheering on baseball players who, for all they know, could end up in the majors.

If you've had the fortune to attend a Eugene Emeralds minor league baseball game, you'll know that baseball runs deep in Oregon. Balmy summer evenings at Civic Stadium are everything that is all-American. The only problem is, everyone has long left campus for home.

Sure, we have the softball team, but does Mac Court get as noisy for the women's basketball team as they do for the men? Alas, no. In fact, many more fans packed the Pit for the men, who barely finished the season at the .500 mark, than the NCAA-Tournament-qualifying women's team.

And this is not to say that I am against women's athletics. I would encourage the Athletic Department to add other women's programs in addition to men's baseball. Most schools around the Pacific-10 Conference have crew, gymnastics, swimming, lacrosse and water polo as women's varsity sports.

The worst part of the whole situation is that our dastardly neighbor to the north, Oregon State, has a fine baseball program. Not only are the Beavers one of the better programs in the Pac-10, they have been one of Oregon State's winningest programs ever.

Are we going to let Oregon State take the baseball spotlight in the state of Oregon? I say no.

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## Pac-10 continues dominance

Competition is at its best in the Pac-10, where five softball teams are ranked in the top nine

By Adam Jude  
Oregon Daily Emerald

This season, the Pacific-10 Conference reached a historic landmark in football and basketball.

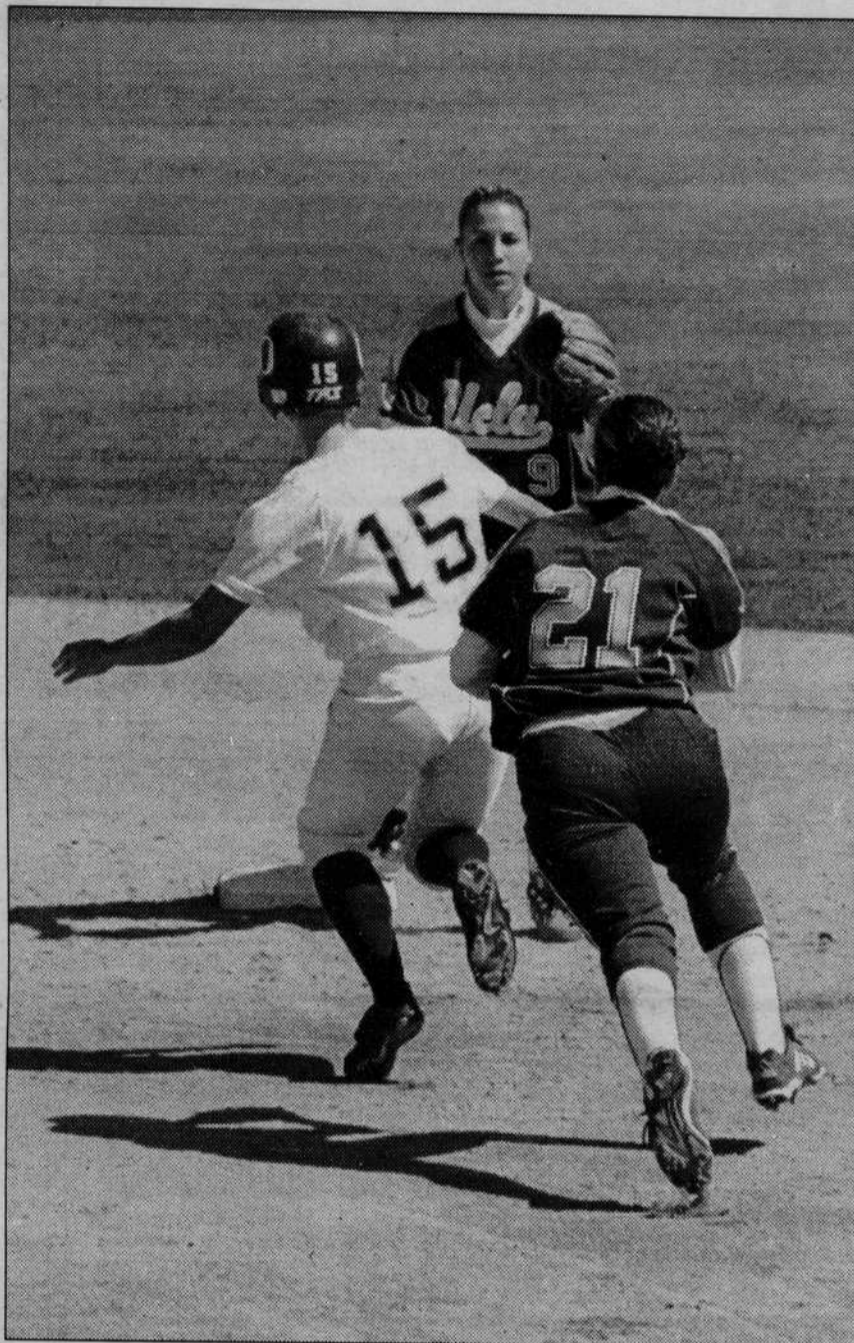
Three Pac-10 teams — Arizona, Stanford and USC — reached the Elite Eight in the NCAA men's basketball tournament last month, and three teams finished the football season ranked in the top 10 in the final Associated Press poll (Oregon, Oregon State and Washington). The only other conference to accomplish such a feat was the Southeastern Conference in 1986.

While the popularity of football and basketball have brought the Pac-10 national recognition, as well as high revenues, other conference sports have dominated the national limelight in a greater fashion.

Take Pac-10 softball, for example. No other conference has won more NCAA softball titles than the Pac-10. And no other conference has a constant stream of talent coming into its programs like the Pac-10.

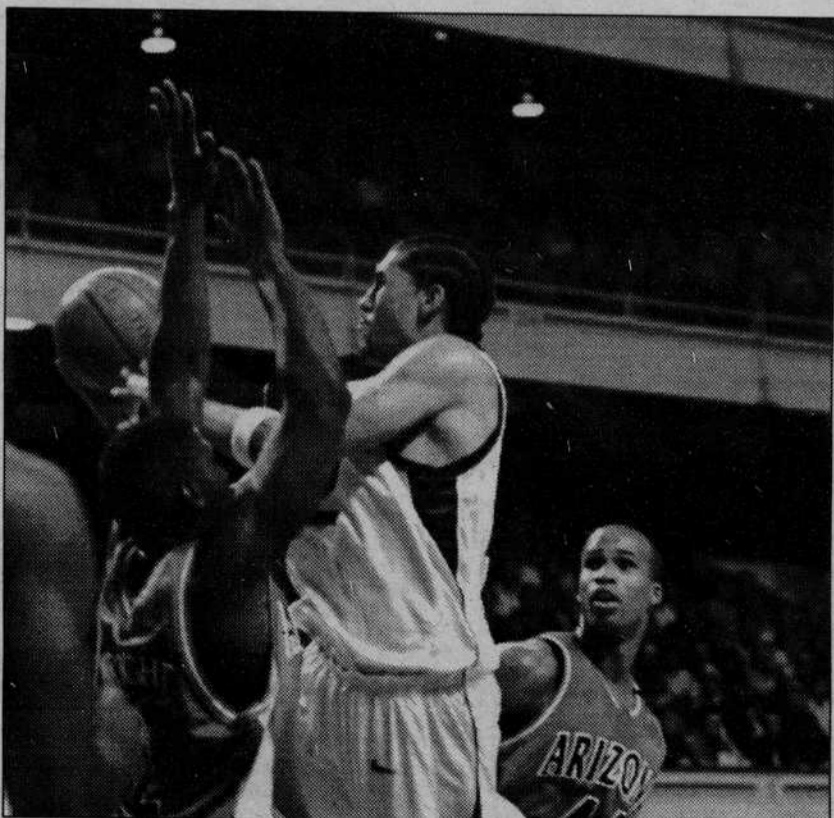
"There is no doubt, for anyone who follows the sport, that the Pac-10 is far and away the best softball conference in the country," said Larry Cain, director of media relations for the National Fastpitch Coaches Association. "It's the only conference where virtually the entire membership has the ability to be ranked in the top 25 at the same time. And there's not a word of protest from any other conference because it's legitimate."

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No. 1 UCLA began its season undefeated but is just 3-3 in the nation's toughest conference. Seven of the eight Pac-10 teams are ranked.

## Two key 'Cats decide to jump to NBA



Arizona's Michael Wright (left) and Richard Jefferson (right), seen here guarding Oregon's Bryan Bracey, have opted to head to the NBA following their junior seasons.

Just seven days after playing in the Final Four, Arizona loses two of the stars who accounted for much of its success

By Jeff Smith  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Apparently just reaching the NCAA men's basketball championship game was enough for two of Arizona's skilled juniors.

On Sunday, forward Richard Jefferson followed his "lifelong dream" and announced he would forego his senior season to declare himself for the NBA draft.

And then on Monday — one week after Arizona's season ended — forward Michael Wright followed Jefferson's lead and decided that he, too, has played his last game in a Wildcat uniform.

"I think we are all working towards the goal of being professionals, and I think this is my time to go after it with all my energies," Wright said.

The loss of Jefferson and Wright is

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