



Corban's Jessie Isham at the NAIA Softball World Series in Clermont, Florida. DOUG PFEILER/CORBAN ATHLETICS

Corban launches \$6 million athletic fundraising project

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If all goes according to plan, the athletic facilities at Corban University will have a major upgrade in place for the 2019-20 school year.

The private Christian university in Salem has announced a \$6 million two-phase project that will include a stadium for soccer and track, a new FieldTurf softball field, and a FieldTurf practice field for intramural sports. The new facilities will include lights.

The largest athletic facilities project in school history meets several needs for Corban.

Corban's 70-plus member men's and women's track program does not have an on-campus facility on which to train, and the men's and women's soccer teams play their home games off campus, typically at the Capital Futbol Club on State Street.

Corban secured \$1.3 million in financial commitments the past two months before the school announced officially last week that it is raising money that will go toward funding a state-of-the-art athletic complex on campus.

"Right now we're just trying to meet the needs that we have," fifth-year Corban athletic director Greg Eide said. "We don't have a track, and we don't have adequate facilities for soccer, track, softball and intramurals."

The Warriors don't have an adequate on-campus facility for baseball either, and the program has a partnership with the Salem-Keizer Volcanoes to play their home games at Volcanoes Stadium in Keizer. An all-weather turf baseball field is part of a Future Phase of the University master plan.

The main problem for the soccer, baseball and softball programs is drainage issues on fields that are located on the flattest and lowest areas of campus. FieldTurf would alleviate those concerns.

Corban, which competes in the Cascade Collegiate Conference of NAIA, has 13 sports — seven women's sports and six men's sports — with more than 300 athletes.

The school is currently second in the CCC all-sports trophy competition, and 19th in the NAIA Learfield Directors' Cup standings that recognizes top athletic programs in NAIA. Both rankings are the highest in school history.

The Warriors have enjoyed considerable athletic success across the board in recent years.

The softball team reached the NAIA World Series Championship Game in June and finished No. 2 in the final rankings; the volleyball team advanced to the quarterfinals of the NAIA Volleyball Championship this month; the men's soccer team advanced to the NAIA National Tournament in November for a fifth consecutive year; the men's basketball team won the CCC Tournament last season and participated in the NAIA National Championships; and the women's cross country team finished 16th nationally this fall.

The stadium for soccer and track,



Master plan for Corban University athletic complex. CORBAN ATHLETICS



Corban University athletic director Greg Eide hopes the new athletic complex will be ready for the 2019-20 school year. GARY HOROWITZ/STATESMAN JOURNAL

which is part of Phase One, will have seating for approximately 1,000 people.

"It's really exciting. It means a lot to the school," men's soccer coach Aaron Lewis said. "It will increase the number of players on our teams. It's gonna help us in terms of practice times. It's gonna help us in recruiting and give a boost to the overall atmosphere of games."

Phase Two will include the softball field and intramural practice field.

Having the new athletic complex on campus should benefit Corban athletics and the school's fan base. No more travel

for practices and home games.

"I think you're gonna get more students at Corban watching games and more excited about all of the athletic programs because everything is right there, walking distance," softball coach Abigail Farler said.

Eide said groundbreaking won't begin until the project is fully funded. The goal is to raise the entire \$6 million by summer of 2019 "so we can start construction."

"We really look at this as not only helping meet our needs, but will meet the

needs of the Salem community and the greater Mid-Willamette Valley because we'd like to make these (facilities) available to other schools," Eide said, adding, "Down the road we'd like to think we could host (high school) state track and field meets, and soccer and softball championships."

Corban would also be able to host CCC tournaments and NAIA national play-offs.

In addition to the baseball field, an Events Center is part of a Future Phase that would include a new competition gym for volleyball and men's and women's basketball, and put the school in position to host tournaments.

The Events Center will be built around C.E. Jeffers Sports Center, and the existing court would become a secondary court used primarily for practices and intramurals.

Corban has an enrollment of about 1,000 students with nearly a third of the student body participating on sports teams. Eide said the new athletic complex could lead to the addition of other sports, like wrestling and women's lacrosse.

"It helps strengthen the whole business model when we can have adequate facilities that allow us to not only meet the current needs, but future needs of programs we might want to add," said Eide, who oversaw Scio High School getting turf football, baseball and softball fields in his one year as the school's athletic director.

"This would really help set up the college for generations. It would be a game changer."

Note: For additional information or to be part of Corban's athletic complex fundraising effort, contact Greg Eide at geide@corban.edu or 503-375-7021.

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