

FOR THE THRILL OF THE GAME

A ROUGH GUIDE TO LOCAL SPORTS LEAGUES

BY URSULA EVANS-HERITAGE

The player gripped the smooth, wooden surface of the bat and his eyes tracked the motion of the ball as it moved towards home. At precisely the right moment he swung. Ball met wood, arcing up and out towards center field. He dropped the bat, put his head down and ran.

In the bleachers, a group of 20-something women cheered on their respective boyfriends, fiancées and husbands as they played softball. These aren't the Yankee wives and this isn't the Major Leagues. Vendors aren't hawking hot dogs and beer. You won't find a single player with a million-dollar contract. In this league they play for the pure and simple thrill of the game.

"I just love being together with the guys," said Jason Gress, who's coached a city league softball team for the past three years. Gress, 25, played baseball in high school and plans to coach again this year. While he said it's mostly just a fun bonding experience, he added that his team enjoyed the competitive aspect as well. "Guys thirst for competitiveness," he said.

A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN

But softball's not the only sport with a city league. As long as you're at least 18, you can play softball, soccer, basketball, sand volleyball and many other sports on leagues organized by the city of Eugene. And Ultimate Frisbee teams allow players as young as 14.

Register for these sports at the athletics office at Amazon Community Center, 2700 Hilyard St. in Eugene. More information about registration dates and fees can be found online at: http://www.ci.eugene.or.us/rec/athletics/athletics_schedule.htm

DESPERATE RUGBY HOUSEWIVES

If you're an aspiring athlete and you don't mind getting down and dirty, try rugby. A British sport started in the 19th century, rugby is kind of like football without all the protective gear. Sound fun? In addition to UO club rugby teams, there are other opportunities for both men and women to play. Eugene's Housewives Women's Rugby Club welcomes new and inexperienced players. Practice times are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6-7:30 pm. Call Kelly at 302-4994 or Jen at 685-0851 for location.

And guys, the Eugene Rugby Football Club is also looking for new players, no experience necessary. They practice Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6:30 pm at

South Eugene High School on the field adjacent to Patterson Street. The team was established in 1973 and is a Division III team in the Pacific Northwest Rugby Football Union. They sponsor local high school teams at SEHS and Thurston High School. For more information on how to get involved, send an e-mail to: recruit@eugenerugby.com



spring 1985. The club has started teams for high school boys at Churchill, Thurston, Marist, Sheldon and North Eugene, and for girls at Thurston, Liberty High School, West Salem High School and Sheldon.

E-mail ltbeeker@msn.com for more information.

KIDDING AROUND

Many parents are already familiar with Kidsports, a local organization that's existed for more than five decades and now has more than 2,000 different teams. Although

some may be hesitant to push their children into competitive sports, national studies document kids getting fatter and fatter. More exercise at a young age can help reverse that trend, along with teaching kids sportsmanship, teamwork and other valuable life lessons.

Kidsports offers six different sports over the year. The registration deadline for preK-4th grade softball/baseball is May 6 and the deadline for grades 6-8 and 9-12 sand volleyball is June 24. Fees vary and scholarships are available for qualifying families. Register at the Eugene office, 2190 Polk St., or the Springfield office, 2090-C Olympic St.

PLAYING WITH STICKS

The Eugene Men's Lacrosse Club is a B League team that's been playing since

©2005 Widmer Brothers Brewing Company, Portland, OR

CHOOSE DROP TOP® AMBER ALE.
Because other amber ales might have rusty barbed wire in them.

Honey malt and milk sugar helps create our smooth Drop Top Amber.
 -Rob Widmer

Other ambers? Anything but smooth.
 -Kurt Widmer

widmer.com